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### John Wyclif and his Doctrine of the Church

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JOHN WICLIFF  
and  
HIS DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
in accordance with the requirements for the degree  
of Bachelor of Divinity.

Albert E. Meyer.

1930.

Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, Faculty Consultant.



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## The Life of John Wiclif.

Great movements do not as a rule rise in history suddenly and unheralded. Long before the storm breaks in upon us in all its fury the fierce and hurried march of the clouds, the heavy roll of thunder, and the blinding flash give us notice and warning of the approaching tempest.

Great movements are usually preceded by movements of feebler energy, but in the same direction. Neither did the great event which stands almost at the beginning of the modern era, the Reformation of the sixteenth century, break upon Europe and Christendom like a thunder-clap out of an unclouded sky. "There was many a premonition, many a roll of thunder, many a big raindrop falling and sheet of wildfire flashing before the first crash of the storm fell upon Europe".

Before Luther arose in Germany to expose abuses and denounce doctrines of the Papacy, there were men on the Continent and in England who in thought were precursors of Luther. Perhaps the whole truth lay not in their vision, but still they caught glimpses sufficient and firm enough to shake their confidence in the existing Roman hierarchy and to drive them from tradition deeper into Scriptures.

Among these precursors of Luther John Wiclif is preeminent. In point of time he is anterior to Huss of Prague, 1369-1415, of whom Luther learned many things. These two, Wiclif and Huss, no doubt are the two reformers whose influence on Luther is beyond calculation. And since Wiclif preceded even Huss, we may easily recognize the position of influence which the former occupied in relation to the Great Reformation.



Nor may we believe that Wiclif was father to all his doctrines. He also claimed an inheritance from his predecessors. We shall mention only the most important of these, Marsiglio of Padua and William of Ockham. Marsiglio "defined the Church as the whole body of Christian men, laymen, and clerks alike, the whole community of the Faithful. The supreme power of the Church is in the Church itself, and the Pope has not power of supreme judgment in either spiritual or temporal things. Excommunication is the right of the community of Christians alone, not of the Pope". William of Ockham, "Franciscan, born in England, but who spent most of his life on the Continent, was the other speculative intellect who united with Marsiglio in the Reforming work. He denied that the Pope was a spiritual autocrat. Popes are fallible and so are general councils, and the assembly of the faithful should be constituted both of clergy and laity, men and women" (1). From these men Wiclif traces his intellectual descent.

### I. Wiclif's Youth and Early Education.

There are but few medieval writers about whose early life we are satisfactorily informed. The contemporary data are as a rule fragmentary, and the most tangible facts based on later tradition. To no biography is this more applicable than to that of John Wiclif. In his early history we must be content with much fragmentary information.

Though Wiclif wrote a great deal, he makes no reference to his earliest home or to his parentage. Our oldest authority in regard to his birthplace is one John Leland, who travelled in search for historical materials in the latter

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 (1) Carrick, J. C. Wycliffe and the Lollards, pg. 24.



part of the reign of Henry VIII. Upwards of two centuries after the event of which he speaks, he mentions the fact that Wiclif was born at Spreswell, a good mile from Richmond in Yorkshire (1). Leland seems to contradict this statement in a different writing when he says that Wiclif was born in Yorkshire in the village of Wiclif. According to Lechler, Leland in the first instance is speaking of the birth place of Wiclif, and in the second of the place from which his family came, (2).

Wiclif sprang from the lower nobility of Saxon stock, which retained many of the German traits for a long time. To this day Yorkshire speaks an ancient dialect, which bears an unmistakable German impress (3). This Saxon stock is a hardy, honest, and capable stock, and therefore a highly desirable element in the fiber of any nation.

The date of Wiclif's birth is entirely unknown. Since he died of paralysis in 1384, historians have argued that he must have been advanced in years, so that it is unlikely that he was born much after 1320 (4). His biographers, following the lead of John Lewis, have usually accepted the year 1324 as the date of his birth.

Wiclif undoubtedly received his first instruction from the village preacher of Wycliffe and learned Latin grammar from him. Without doubt he spent his boyhood at home until he entered Oxford University.

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 (1) Lewis, History of the Life and Sufferings of John Wiclif, page 1 quotes Leland: "They sey that John Wiclif Haereticus was born at Spreswell, a poore village a good myle from Richemont".  
 (2) Lechler, I, 262.  
 (3) Lechler, I, 265.  
 (4) Poole, 62.



We have no accurate information regarding the time of *his* entering Oxford University. But it was the practice in those days to come up to Oxford quite young. It is uncertain into which college Wiclif was taken up when he arrived at Oxford, but the most probable assumption is that he entered Balliol College. This assumption is based on the fact that near Wiclif's home on the Tees was Barnard Castle, the home of John Balliol, the founder of Balliol College, and on the fact that Wiclif himself subsequently became Master of Balliol, an office which by statute could only be given to a Fellow of the house (1).

Student bodies in those days were divided into "nations". In Oxford we find Northern "Boreales" and Southern "Australes" nations. Coming from the north he joined the "northern nation", which upheld Saxondom over against the Normans, the rights of the people over against the king, the rights of England over against the Pope.

The curriculum of Oxford included the seven liberal arts, the Trivium- Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic- and the Quadrivium- Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy. It is almost unnecessary to add that at Wiclif's time Greek was unknown as a subject of study at Oxford, (2). "After about four years the scholar would determine, at the age of perhaps 17 or 18; three years of further study would enable him to incept, in other words to become a Master of Arts" (3).

We may add here that Balliol College was founded exclusively as a college of liberal arts, and it was not until 1340 that theological fellowships, six in number, were established.

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 (1) Poole, 63; Lechler I, 274.  
 (2) and (3) Poole, 64.



## II. Continued Education and Quiet Activity, 1345-1366.

We do not know exactly how long Wiclif studied at Balliol. But it is true that students gave many years to study in those days. It was not at all unusual to spend ten years in study at the universities. We have no official notice of Wiclif in these years until 1356, when he is listed as seneschal of Merton College, or, according to others who discredit this identification of Wiclif with the seneschal of Merton, until 1361, at which time he was elected Master of Balliol. Undoubtedly Wiclif received the degrees of bachelor of arts, and two or three years later that of master of arts, and then again after several years that of bachelor of divinity.

The records of Merton College, January 1356, mention a John Wiclif who held the office of seneschal or "Rentmeister". This man has been identified with our Wiclif by many and especially by Lechler. Against the identification historians have noted that Balliol College would not be apt to elect a member of another college to its head master. But we shall hear Lechler. In an apostolic writing to the Pope, Balliol College had asked the Pope for the right of uniting the Church of Abbotesly with Balliol Hall for purposes of charity. The reply of the Pope mentions the fact that the students received only a few pence a week and that as soon as they had completed their time of study they were dismissed because they could not continue their studies on account of poverty. This writing mentions the fact that the college had a new benefactor in Sir William Felton and that he would supply necessary clothing and 12 pence per week, so that the students could peacefully remain in the hall, even if they did not take their master's or doctor's degree (1). If Wiclif then entered Balliol College,

(1) Lewis, 4; Lechler I, 290.



the conditions of the school forced him to leave after completing his master's degree. It is easy to believe that He then spent several years in Merton College, before he returned to Balliol as Master of that college.

At any rate this fact is firmly established that in 1361 Wiclif was Master of Balliol. He must have been elected to this post several years after 1356, since in that year a certain Robert Derby held the position and it is certain that Wiclif was not his immediate successor, (1).

So soon as 1361 he accepted a college living, that of Fillingham in Lincolnshire, a small village ten English miles north west of Lincoln. Accordingly he was compelled to release the headship of Balliol, perhaps he even left Oxford for several years. In 1363, however, he was back again, this time resident in Queen's College, a fact which is explained by the practice of letting rooms not required by the college to other members of the University. At Queens Wiclif appears to have lived for part of the years 1363-1365 (2).

In order to train good men to reform the abuses in the Church, Archbishop Simon Islip in 1361 founded Canterbury Hall for twelve students. Islip appointed Wiclif head of Canterbury Hall, Dec. 9, 1365. In the letter of institution Wiclif is styled a person "in whose fidelity, circumspection, and industry, his Grace very much confided, and one on whom he had fixed his eyes for that place, on account of the honesty of his life, his laudable conversation, and knowledge of letters" (3).

- (1) Lechler I, 291  
 (2) Poole 65.  
 (3) Lewis, 13.



On March 31, 1367, the new Archbishop Langham, himself a monk, ousted Wiclif and filled Canterbury Hall with monks from Christ Church and thus overturned the will of the founder. It is true that according to the original regulations and the charter from the State, both secular and regular clergy were to have the right of studying at Canterbury, but from Wiclif's writings, De Ecclesia, c. 16, Lechler points out the fact that Archbishop Islip had changed the charter to read that only the secular clergy should be eligible to Canterbury Hall (1).

With splendid courage Wiclif protested against the injustice to the founder of Canterbury Hall and appealed to the Pope against the powerful head of the English Church. After a tedious delay of several years the Pope, Urban V, in 1370 decided in favor of his fellow monk Archbishop Langham and gave the opinion that "only monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, ought to remain continually in the college and that the seculars ought all of them to be expelled, that perpetual silence should be imposed on John Wiclif and his associates". In April 1372 this papal opinion was sustained by the English Crown to the indignation of Wiclif.

The year 1366 is accepted by most as the year when Wiclif received the crown of academic honors, the degree of Doctor of Divinity. This date is not established by any document. The only established facts are these that in 1365, when he was promoted to the Mastership of Balliol he was a master of arts; and from the royal appointment as commissioner in 1374 we know that he was a doctor of divinity. Between these two dates he received the doctorate of theology.

Wiclif resigned Fillingham in 1368 in order to nearer to the University and accepted the rectorship of Ludgershall in

(1) Lechler I, 309.



Buckinghamshire, twenty miles from Oxford, although it gave him a smaller income. We know that the interests of Wiclif lay very near to the University, for in 1368, before receiving the rectory in Ludgershall, he had asked the bishop of Lincoln for a leave of absence from his benefice for two years to study letters at Oxford. At Ludgershall he could combine his parochial duties with a frequent residence at Oxford, since the distance was not great.

### III. Public Activities in Religious and Political Matters, 1366-1378.

The career of Wiclif as an ecclesiastical politician dates from the year 1366 and runs straight on from that time, though his important writings on subjects involved in his political position are apparently some years later.

On May 15, 1213, King John had formally resigned the crown of England and Ireland and received them again from the Pope. King John had promised the Pope a yearly rental of 1000 marks. Since the death of Pope John XXII, in 1334, no tribute was <sup>has been</sup> paid. Benedict XII indeed demanded it but his demands were rejected. In the year 1365 Urban V demanded payment of these 1000 marks and also the arrears for 33 years. This was an inopportune time for the Pope to make such demands, for England was in the height of glory and power by virtue of recent victories, Crecy, 1346; Poitiers, 1356. The Popes, on the contrary, were living in the "Babylonian Captivity" at Avignon and were the creatures of the French kings. To pay tribute to the Pope at such a time, and while he was a vassal of the kings of France, was more than English pride could endure.

The King, Edward III, turned the demands of the Pope over to Parliament. Parliament ruled that King John had violated his oath by making England a vassal to the Pope without the consent



of the people; hence payment was refused and even resistance threatened (1).

Whether Wiclif had anything to do with counselling this policy is not known, but at least his advocacy was employed in defending it. A certain monk who passionately defended the papal claims, called upon Wiclif by name to defend the policy of Parliament. The tenor of Wiclif's document is entirely of an official character. "As," he says, "I am the King's chaplain I willingly take upon myself the task of making an answer" (2).

In his reply "Determinatio Quaedam de Dominio" Wiclif gives an account of the speeches made by seven lords "in a certain council" against payment of the tribute. In this reply he held that the King rightly took away church endowments if the clergy abused their trust; that clerical criminals were subject to the law of the land; that the King rightly refused tribute to the Pope, who emptied the pockets of the English people, even for the benefit of their French foes. The second Lord, for instance, argues that "no tribute or rent should be granted save to those who are capable" and therefore not to the Pope; for the Pope ought above all to be a follower of Christ, but Christ would not be a proprietor of civil lordships, and so neither should the Pope (3). This is Wiclif's doctrine of evangelical poverty.

At the time of this defense Wiclif was Warden of Canterbury and called himself the king's chaplain, "*peculiaris regis clericus talis qualis*". Just what that position included is not certain. Sergeant believes that it was a regular appointment as chaplain and that he spent some of his time every year in the train of the monarch, (4). Lechler holds that Wiclif was drawn into

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(1) Lechler I, 322.

(2) Poole 66.

(3) Poole, 66.

(4) Sergeant, John Wyclif, 105.



Parliament by the King as his representative, (1). At any rate Wiclif was a man of affairs and of address; by that spirited defense of England against papal demands he became a national character, the leader against the Pope's political plans.

The King petitioned Parliament in 1371 for 50,000 marks to carry on war. Hitherto the clergy had escaped taxation; but now when men saw some of the richest possessions in the hands of the church, the suggestion was made that the church also be subject to taxation. The monks vigorously objected to such a policy. Wiclif, however, defended it in his treatise on "Civil Dominion". It was evident from this that Wiclif favored the secularization of church property, a policy that did not commend him to the monks and begging friars, many of whom were grasping property owners. Wiclif at this time also favored the filling of high official offices with laymen instead of clerics.

Of the favor in which Wiclif stood at this time we have two proofs, both of the year 1374. In that year the crown nominated him to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, seven miles from Rugby, and in the same year, in July, he was appointed one of the royal ambassadors to confer with the papal representatives at Bruges. The negotiations were concerned with the old question of the Pope's right to interfere with Church appointments in England. Temporary concessions were made by both parties, but the results were illusory. The Pope drew the longer straw in the end. This appointment is indicative of the esteem in which Wiclif was held by the King and also of the trend of the court, for evidently it would not appoint a man inimical to its policies.

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 (1) Lechler I, 334.



The commissioners at Bruges had their reward. Wiclif was given a prebend in the collegiate church of Westbury, which he however soon resigned, because he was opposed to the tenure of benefices in plurality. He even his most bitter enemies never accused him of greed. Henceforth he was plain rector of Lutterworth and resided often at his living, though it is also certain that he gave up neither his occupation as a theological teacher at Oxford nor as an influential person in London, where he used to preach; even his enemies admit that his preaching made a powerful impression on nobles and citizens. x

This visit of Wiclif to Bruges had the same effect on him as Luther's visit had on Luther. He saw papal corruption at first hand. This visit to Bruges is noteworthy further for the meeting with the Duke of Lancaster and their close friendship. It was this Duke who shielded Wiclif from persecution in 1377.

Two years after the meeting at Bruges, the "Good Parliament" met, in April 1376. The ecclesiastical grievances presented to this Parliament were similar to those that had been debated at Bruges and again Wiclif seems to have been either a member of the Parliament, or to have influenced its decisions thru the pen.

The year 1377 marks the beginning of official persecution against Wiclif. Twice was he called before courts to answer for his doctrines, before the Convocation, and before the legates of the Pope.

We find no documents that inform us in regard to any particular doctrines for which Wiclif had to answer in 1377. This fact has led Lechler to believe that the persecution was connected with political events of the day. The prelates



had become embittered against Duke of Lancaster, and since they could not proceed against him, they took issue with his theological friend, Wiclif (1). But whatever the charges may have been, there can be little doubt that Wiclif's doctrines did not commend him to Rome and the English prelates, for he had vigorously protested against the possessions of the Church, against the greed of monks and friars, and against the unlimited power of excommunication which the Pope claimed for himself,(2).

On Jan. 27, 1377, Parliament convened, and Febr. 3, the Convocation, the clerical parliament, met. This Convocation summoned Wiclif for examination. But Wiclif did not come alone. He was accompanied by the Duke of Lancaster and the Marshall of England, Lord Percy, a posse of armed men, and four doctors of Divinity. The picture which Lechler draws of Wiclif at this time reads thus: "A tall, thin figure, covered with a long light gown of black color, with a girdle about the body; the head, adorned with a full, flowing beard, exhibiting features keen and sharply cut; the eye clear and penetrating; the lips firmly closed in token of resolution-the whole man wearing an aspect of lofty earnestness, and replete with dignity and character", (3). The assumption of authority with which the followers and protectors of Wiclif entered did not at all please William Courtenay, the Bishop of London. A quarrel ensued between him and the Lord Marhsall. When Lord Percy invited Wiclif to sit down, Courtenay objected that the defendant should stand before the court. The result was a rude brawl between the Marshall, John, the Duke of Lancaster and the English bishop. The court broke up in confusion. No sentence was passed and no official record kept of the proceedings.

(1) Lechler I, 368.

(2) Poole, 77.

(3) Lechler I, 369.



Wiclif escaped persecution through the protection of the Duke of Lancaster.

However, the enemies of Wiclif could not see this man, who had escaped censure from the Convocation, go scott free. Hence his ecclesiastical enemies next sought the aid of the Pope in suppressing this free thinker. The chief accusers of Wiclif in Rome were the English bishops according to John Foxe and Lechler. These collected some of Wiclif's sentences and sent them to the Roman Curia, (1).

In January 1377 Gregory XI had entered Rome and thus ended the 70 years of captivity at Avignon. On the 22nd of May Gregory issued five bulls against Wiclif; three to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, one to the University of Oxford, and one to the King. Enclosed was a list of 19 "conclusions" taken from Wiclif's writings; if found guilty of these he was to be imprisoned and to await the Pope's sentence. These 19 sentences were:

1. All mankind that have been since Christ have not power simply to ordain, that Peter, and all his family should have political dominion over the world.

2. God cannot give to man for himself and his heirs civil dominion for ever.

3. Charters of human invention concerning a perpetual inheritance hereafter, are impossible.

4. Every one that is finally justified, hath not only a right to, but in fact enjoys all the things of God.

5. Man can only ministerially give to his natural child, or to a child of imitation in the school of Christ, temporal or eternal dominion.

6. If God is, temporal lords may lawfully and meritoriously take away the goods of fortune from a delinquent Church.

7. Whether the church be in such a state or not, is not my business to examine, but the business of temporal lords; who, if they find it in such a state, are to act boldly, and on the penalty of damnation to take away its temporalities.

8. We know that it is impossible that the Vicar of Christ should purely by his Bulls, or by them with the will and consent of himself and his College of Cardinals, qualify or disqualify any one.

9. It is not possible for a man to be excommunicated, unless he be first and principally excommunicated by himself.

10. Nobody is excommunicated, suspended, or tormented with other censures, so that he is the worse for it, unless it be in the cause of God.



11. Cursing or excommunication does not bind simply, but only so far as its denounced against an adversary of the law of Christ.

12. Christ has given to his disciples no example of a power to excommunicate subjects, principally for their denying them temporal things, but has rather given them an example to the contrary.

13. The disciples of Christ have no power forcibly to exact temporal things by censures.

14. It is not possible even for the absolute power of God, that if the Pope or any other pretend that he binds or looses at any rate, that he does therefore actually bind and loose.

15. We ought to believe that then only does the Pope etc. bind or loose, when he conforms himself to the law.

16. This ought to be universally believed, that every priest rightly ordained has a power of administering every one of the sacraments, and by consequence of absolving every contrite person from any sin.

17. It is lawful for kings to take away the temporalities from ecclesiastics who habitually abuse them.

18. Whether temporal lords, or holy Popes, or saints, or the Head of the Church, which is Christ, have endowed the Church with the goods of fortune or of grace, and have excommunicated those who take away its temporalities, it is notwithstanding lawful, on account of the condition implied in the endowment, to spoil her of the temporalities for a proportionate offence.

19. An ecclesiastic, yea, even the Pope of Rome, may lawfully be corrected by subjects, and even the laity, and may also be accused or impeached by them. (1).

These nineteen conclusions may be classified thus:

- I. 1-5 deal with the right to possess and inherit property;
- II. 6.7.17.18.19 deal with the right to deprive churchmen of their property if they habitually misuse it;
- III. 8-16 deal with the disciplinary power of the church and other limitations of the power of the church.

The death of King Edward III on the 21st of June necessarily prevented any immediate action on Wiclif. At this time he still stood in high favor with Parliament. As soon as Parliament met, in October, he was consulted by it as to the right of withholding the national treasure from passing out of the country even at the Pope's demand. In his "Responsio" Wiclif boldly argued that Parliament had the legal right to do so.

The bulls against Wiclif were not signed by Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London until Dec. 18, 1377, (2).

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(1) Lewis, pg. 46.

(2) Lechler I, 380.

(2) Lechler I, 380.



The bull presented to the University had little effect. Wiclif stood too high in esteem of Oxford to be in danger there; the University authorities asked time to consider the matter, but no action followed.

Thirty one days after the signing of the citation Wiclif was supposed to appear in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in order to be examined by the papal legates. However, it seems that this summons was changed to a slightly later date and different locality. He appeared at the palace at Lambeth March, 1378, to answer these 19 condemned articles. He himself had previously handed a written defense of these supposed errors. The result of this meeting might have been unfortunate had not the Princess of Wales, Johanna, mother of the young king, sent a messenger on the eve of the appointed day, forbidding the bishops to pass sentence against Wiclif. And while the bishops were pondering how to obey the Pope and not offend the Princess, the meeting was cut short by an inroad of London citizens with a crowd of rabble at their heels. This double protection sufficed to stop proceedings. Wiclif escaped scotfree, or, at the most, with the mild request that he would speak no more about the conclusions in question (1).

Apparently Wiclif did not take this event seriously, for he rather used this triumph to publish his great work on theology, "Summa in Theologia", in Latin and in English. A part of this work is the "De Ecclesia", in which he sets forth his doctrine of the church.

Thus Wiclif had twice been protected in proceedings against him. The Duke of Lancaster had shielded him from hierarchical interference and the Princess of Wales and the

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(1) Poole 82.



citizens from papal condemnation. Henceforth Wiclif withdraws from the arena of politics and appears solely as the reformer of the Church.

#### IV. The Last Years of Wiclif, 1378-1384.

We have now traced Wiclif's life up to 1378. Up to that time he had twice been persecuted, in 1377 by the English episcopacy, and in 1378 by the Roman Curia. Both times he had appeared in person, and both times he found protection the esteem in which he was held by the State and the citizens. Now for three years he was free from every serious interference.

Immediately after the affair at Lambeth occurred the schism in the Papacy. On March 27 Pope Gregory XI died; his successor Urban VI was elected April 7. The French members of the cardinals' college were highly dissatisfied at the return of the Curia to Italy; the violent, tyrannical behavior of the new Pope soon brought matters to a crisis. The validity of his election was called into question; it was declared void, and in September an Antipope was chosen, who took the style of Clement the Seventh. Clement was supported by France, followed by the Spanish kingdoms, Naples, and Scotland; while England and the north (Flanders, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland) remained loyal to Urban. For nearly half a century there were two lines of Popes, Urban and his successors holding their own in Rome; while Clement returned to Avignon and continued the tradition of the Babylonian exile.

Wiclif at first maintained a neutral attitude toward the events in the Papacy; he even thought well of Urban VI and trusted that he would begin the much needed reform in the Church. But



when the rival popes hurled the most terrible curses at each other, mutually excommunicating each other, then they no longer had even the semblance of Christ's Vicars on earth. They stood forth in their true color. Wiclif grew bolder and firmer in his denunciation of the Popes. They were "false prophets", "false popes", "apostates", and even "members of Satan's kingdom". The Pope now became the Antichrist to Wiclif. This event in the Roman Church, which split Christendom into two camps with two hostile Supreme Pontiffs and Vicars of Christ changed Wiclif from a critic to a declared opponent of the Papacy. No doubt these events had a strong bearing on Wiclif's doctrine of the Church.

In his earlier years Wiclif had thought well of the begging monks, but about this time, 1378, he began his attacks on them as supporters of the Pope. When four monks approached Wiclif in 1379, while he was very ill, and asked him for a retraction of the things he had said of them, Wiclif rose up in his bed and shouted to them "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the friars", (1). Later in his attacks on the doctrine of Transubstantiation the monks come in for frequent censure and condemnation. In fact, he never relented in his denunciation of these men who had left the ways of God and fallen into selfishness and rather perverted the people than converted them.

As early as 1362 Wiclif had doubts about Transubstantiation. But he did not publicly deny that the elements in the sacrament suffered any material change by virtue of consecration until the summer of 1381. He then published 12 theses in regard

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(1) Dallmann, 43.



to the Eucharist, denying the doctrine of transubstantiation.

These 12 sentences are:

1. Die geweihte Hostie, welche wir auf dem Altare sehen, ist weder Christus noch irgend ein Teil von ihm, sondern ein wirksames Zeichen von ihm.

2. Kein Pilger auf Erden vermag mit leiblichem Auge, sondern nur mit dem Glauben, Christum in der geweihten Hostie zu sehen.

3. Ehemals war der Glaube der roemischen Kirche, wie in Berengar's Bekenntniss ausgesprochen ist, dass Brod und Wein, welche nach der Segnung zurueckbleiben, die geweihte Hostie sind.

4. Das Abendmahl enthaelt, kraft der sakramentlichen Worte, sowohl den Leib als das Blut Christi, wahrhaftig und wirklich, an jedem seiner Punkte.

5. Transsubstantiation, Identification und Impanation, welche die Taeufer (Namengeber) von Zeichen in dem Lehrstueck vom Abendmahl annehmen, lassen sich nicht in der Schrift begruenden.

6. Es widerspricht den Lehren der Heiligen, wenn man behauptet, es sei in der wahren Hostie ein Accidens ohne Subjekt.

7. Das Sakrament der Eucharistie ist in seinem Wesen Brod und Wein, und hat, kraft der sakramentlichen Worte, den wahren Leib und das Blut Christi an jedem Punkte.

8. Das Sakrament der Eucharistie ist im Bilde Christi Leib und Blut, worin Brod und Wein verwandelt wird; davon bleibt die Beschaffenheit nach der Consekration, wiewohl dieselbe in der Betrachtung der Glaebigen zuruecktritt.

9. Dass ein Accidens ohne Subjekt sei, laesst sich nicht begruenden; wenn dem also ist, so wird Gott zu nichte und faellt jeder Artikel christlichen Glaubens.

10. Jede Person oder Sekte ist ketzerisch, welche hartnaeckig verteidigt, dass das Sakrament des Altars fuer sich bestehendes Brod sei, in seinem Wesen unendlich geringer und unvollkommener als Pferdebrod.

11. Wer immer hartnaeckig verteidigt, dass genanntes Sakrament ein Accidens, eine Qualitaet, Quantitaet, oder ein Aggregat von solchen sei, verfaellt in die obengenannte Ketzerei.

12. Waizenbrod, in welchem allein zu konsekrieren erlaubt ist, ist im Wesen unendlich vollkommener als Bohnen- oder Kleienbrod; und diese beiden sind im Wesen vollkommener als ein Accidens. (1).

These heresies of Wiclif were promulgated extensively, and therefore the Chancellor of Oxford, William Berton, was bound to take cognisance of them. He himself was at loss what to think of them. Hence he called in 12 men; 2 were doctors of law and 10 doctors of theology; only 2 of them did not belong to the order of monks. These men declared the sentences of Wiclif heretical.

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(1). Lechler, I, 652.



The Chancellor of Oxford then sent out two sentences that summarized Wiclif's doctrine regarding the Lord's Supper and condemned them. But neither the Chancellor nor his colleagues could break Wiclif's arguments from the Bible. The Reformer appealed not to the Pope nor to bishops, according to the invariable custom of the times in matters of heresy, but to the King himself. In reply to this appeal John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, promptly sent down a messenger to Oxford, enjoining Wiclif to say no more on this question. Wiclif, however, continued to maintain his theses and was evidently not afraid of the University taking more serious measures against him.

In order to supply moneys for recent wars, the taxes in England at this time were a heavy burden. The peasants especially suffered under this burden of overtaxation. In 1381 the ruthless collection of a poll tax was the occasion for the revolt of the English peasantry. Under such leaders as John Ball, Jack Straw, and Wat Tyler they revolted in Essex, Kent, Suffolk and elsewhere. They marched on London and sacked the city; the palace of the Duke of Lancaster in the Savoy fell a prey to their devastating activities. Archbishop Sudbury was only the most conspicuous of a large number of victims.

The enemies of Wiclif heaped the blame for this rising of the peasants on Wiclif, just as later Luther's enemies held him responsible for the instigation of the Peasant's War in Germany. But there is no evidence to connect Wiclif personally with the revolt. John Ball, one of the leaders, indeed, made a confession that he learned the doctrine of transubstantiation from Wiclif. Both Poole and Lechler exonerate Wiclif from any blame. From the fact that Ball had been a pupil of Wiclif for 2 years nothing can be ascertained.



Thousands of others heard Wiclif in Oxford and they did not all become his followers, so that their teachings must be laid to the account of Wiclif. Lechler rather believes that this confession of Ball in prison was wrung from him by his enemy Courtenay. The statement that he learned his doctrine of transubstantiation from Wiclif is unhistorical, for in 1381, in the same year when Wiclif began to teach publicly that doctrine, Ball was imprisoned. Ball's assertion is invalidated further by the documentary evidence that he was excommunicated as early as 1366, long before Wiclif exposed himself to ecclesiastical censure (1).

When order was restored, the energetic and powerful William Courtenay, an old enemy of Wiclif, succeeded Bishop Sudbury as Archbishop of Canterbury, and he immediately took active measures for repressing Wicliffite opinions. He called a court to try Wiclif's doctrines May 17, 1382. A motley crew it was that assembled at this synod: in this assembly we find 10 bishops, 16 doctors of law, 30 doctors of theology, 13 baccalaureates of divinity, 4 baccalaureates of law, (2). Courtenay was careful in choosing his men, selecting only such as were known for their Roman leanings. They met in the monastery of the Black Friars in London. The first session was interrupted by an earthquake which shook all London. The very elements seemed to rise in protection of this man. But Courtenay encouraged the pale judges by telling them that the elements were awaiting this cleansing. Wiclif's explanation of this earthquake was God's condemnation of his enemies, as the earthquake at Christ's crucifixion had been God's condemnation of his enemies. He refers to this court as the "Earthquake

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 (1) Poole, 106; Lechler I, 661.

(2) Lechler I, 667.



Council". He himself does not appear to have been present at this assembly, very likely suffering from his first stroke of paralysis.

At this council 24 articles were brought against the Reformer. Of these 10 were condemned as heretical, 14 as erroneous. The first ten deal with doctrine, especially with Wiclif's denial of transubstantiation; the last 14 deal particularly with church government (1). On May 28 the Friar Peter Stokes, the Carmelite Doctor of Theology in Oxford, received the mandate to publish the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrines at Oxford. All bishops were ordered to publish this condemnation and to forbid the preaching of these heresies. On Sunday May 30 a large procession of clergy and laity marched through the streets of London to St. Paul's where the condemnation of Wiclif was read in public by the celebrated divine John Cunningham, a Carmelite Doctor of Theology.

As a sequel to the condemnation of Wiclif by this council the most prominent Wicliffites at Oxford were dismissed. In order to enforce his decrees, the Archbishop persuaded the King to order the imprisonment of all persons in the State who should maintain the condemned propositions. As a result Wiclif's adherents were forced to flee or recant. Armed with authority from the King it was an easy matter to hunt down the disciples of Wiclif. On July 13 the Archbishop pronounced the ban on several of the most prominent followers of Wiclif, on the doctors Nicholas Hereford and Philip Repington, and the baccalaureate John Aston. Hereford protested severely against this action and even went to Rome in order to appeal in person against transubstantiation to the Pope.

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(1) Lechler I, 669.



And on this same day, July 13, Courtenay also prevailed upon the King to order the Wicliffite Chancellor of Oxford, Robert Rygge, to publish the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrines and to banish from the city and the University Hereford, Repington, and Aston, (1). Even the writings of Wiclif were to be gathered and sent to the Archbishop.

All these attempts at suppressing Wicliffism were directed against the disciples of the Reformer. His person was not molested. He went on fighting the Antichrist with a vigorous pen. His "Trialogus," a series of discussions between the three advocates Truth, Falsehood, and Wisdom, is a dialectic treatment on the central Roman dogma of transubstantiation. He absolutely and finally rejects the cherished dogma of the papacy in this treatise, (2).

On Nov. 18, 1382, the ecclesiastical court met. It is held by many that Wiclif was called before this body to answer once more for his doctrines, (3). It is certain that no recantation was extorted from him. On the following day Parliament met; Wiclif appealed to it in a writing, in which he reiterated four grievances which called loudly for reform: "the monastic orders which ought to be abolished; the lawfulness and righteousness of secular lords taking away Church property which was abused; the withdrawing of revenues from evil-living clerics, and the teaching of the Scriptural doctrine of the Eucharist as against transubstantiation" (4).

After this Wiclif left Oxford and retired in peace to his rectory at Lutterworth.

- (1) Lechler I, 690.  
 (2) Carrick 134.  
 (3) Lechler I, 696.  
 (4) Carrick, 140.



After Wiclif arrived at the conviction that the Pope was not a faithful shepherd of the Church and that monks lead multitudes of people astray, he stressed preaching as a part of his work to counteract the pernicious influence of the Curia. He himself made a powerful impression as preacher in London and both nobles and citizens heard him in great numbers. He rightly considered preaching the most important part of a minister's work. His principles of preaching were these: the Word of God only is to be the subject matter and this is to be preached in a simple manner, adapted to the people, so that they may reap a real benefit from a sermon.

Besides preaching himself, he trained and sent forth itinerant preachers. These "poor priests", as they were called, travelled through the country, preaching in simple but earnest fashion God's Word. These Wicliffite preachers were contemptuously called Lollards. Carrick explains this name from the fact that they sang in a low voice - from the German "lollen"-psalmsingers, or from Walter Lollardus, who on the continent taught his principles (1). At the beginning of the movement the Lollards were chiefly Oxford graduates, trained by Wiclif himself and sent by him all over the land. Their commission was to preach the gospel, not to dispense pardons, or celebrate masses. As the movement progressed laymen also joined the ranks of these itinerant priests. "Knowledge of reverence for Holy Writ, an unbleached sheepskin, a broad hat, and a pair of sandals made up the moral and material equipment of Wiclif's Poor Priests" (2).

These preachers appear on the scene somewhere about 1382, when Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, complained to the

(1) Carrick, 199.

(2) Sergeant 195.



Bishop of London of "certain unauthorised itinerant preachers, who, as he had happily been compelled to learn, set forth erroneous, yea, heretical assertions in public sermons, and they do this under the guise of great holiness but without having obtained any episcopal or papal authorization" (1).

But Wiclif was not content merely to be a preacher and to send out preachers. He was convinced that the Bible should become the property of all men. That is the motive which lead him to undertake a translation into the vernacular of the whole Bible. His estimation of Scripture differs fundamentally from that of the Roman Hierarchy. In his treatise on the "Meaning and Truth of Scriptures" he holds that Christ is the author of the Scriptures, and as the Word of God it should be in the hands and heart of everyone, cleric and lay (2). Again he argues that "though there were a hundred popes and all the friars in the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the Gospel than we should from all that multitude" (3). Small wonder then that he should try to bring this book, "without which one cannot find Christ", into the hands of all men, especially the laity.

There were translations of separate books of the Bible previous to Wiclif's translation, but he is the first who completed the translation the whole Bible. In regard to the manner of translation the following particulars may suffice. Wiclif himself began with the Gospels and likely completed the New Testament. His disciple Nicholas Hereford worked on most of the Old Testament; the rest was finished by another,

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 (1) Carrick, 200  
 (2) Carrick, 177.  
 (3) Dallmamm, 57.



possibly Wiclif himself, about 1382, (1). After the translation was done, Wiclif kept improving it. Afterwards the whole was revised by his friend and assistant in his parish work at Lutterworth, John Purvey. This second edition was finished shortly after Wiclif's death. The translation was made from the <sup>Vulgate.</sup> Vulgate

This translation of the Bible must no doubt be regarded as Wiclif's greatest contribution to posterity. This, more than all his preaching and protesting against papal error, gave the people the truth at first hand, not previously passing through the adulterating lips of pope and monk. An example of his translation follows: " As a corn of seneveye, the which whann it is sowun in the erthe is lesse than alle seed is that ben in erthe; and whanne it is bredd, or quykened, it stygheth up in to a tree, and is maad more than alle wortis, or erbis; and it shal make grete braunchis, so that briddis of hevene mowe dwelle undir the shadewe therof" (2).

Of the importance of this translation for the English language Lechler says : " Wiclif's English Bible marks an epoch in the developement of the English language, almost as much as Luther's translation does in the history of the German tongues. The Luther Bible opens the period of the new High German. Wiclif's Bible stands at the head of the Middle English" (3).

We may here briefly note some of Wiclif's views on doctrine. He gave the Bible the credit of being an "infallible book, true in all its parts, the only authority for the faith of the Church" (3). "By ordinance of Christ priests and bishops are all one and all pastors are of equal grade; and all Christians are spiritual priests; Church and State are to be kept separate" (4).

(1) Lechler I, 404.  
 (2) Sergeant , 205

(3) Lechler I, 453.  
 (4) Dallmann 39.



"The two sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not empty signs, but real means of grace". "The worship of saints and images he rejected". "For confirmation and extreme unction he finds no warrant in the Bible". "Indulgences are blasphemy, lewdest heresy", (1). Against him we must mention that he did not as Luther grasp the central doctrine of Scripture-justification by faith alone. While he taught that Christ is the only Mediator between God and man, and tho he often expatiates on the love of Christ, he ascribes a certain degree of meritoriousness to good works performed after conversion (2).

Wiclif spent the last years of his life at Lutterworth, performing his parish duties and writing profusely. He kept up his literary activity to the very last, issuing sermons and tracts and polemical writings.

In 1383 a crusade was ordered by Pope Urban against his rival Clement VII. The bishop of Norwich was invited by a papal bull to gather an army and proceed against Clement. This was the occasion for Wiclif's bitter denunciation against the Papacy, "The Crusade". War between the rival Popes, the Vicars of Christ is unthinkable. Never was he more effective in cutting deep into Roman corruption than in this polemic.

Some historians hold that as a result of this venomous denunciation Wiclif was cited to Rome by Pope Urban, but the frailty of age and a stroke of paralysis a year or two previous made such a trip impossible. Lechler fails to find sufficient evidence for this view, for no chronicler tells us plainly that Wiclif was cited, (3).

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 (1) Dallmann, 40.41.

(2) Buchheimer, 126.

(3) Lechler I. 713.

(3) Lechler I, 713,



On the 28th of December 1384, while hearing mass, he received a final stroke of paralysis; his tongue was lamed, and he never spoke again. He died on New Years eve, and was buried in the chancel of the church at Lutterworth, the town he made immortal. We have an account of his death by a certain Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, who wrote down in 1441 the sworn evidence of an eyewitness : "And the same Wiclif was paralysed for two years before his death, and he died in the year of our Lord 1384, on the sabbath, on St. Sylvester's day, on the eve of the Circumcision; and in the same year, that is on the day of the Holy Innocents, as he was hearing mass in his church at Lutterworth, at the time of the elevation of the host, he fell down, smitten by a severe paralysis, especially in the tongue, so that neither then nor afterwards could he speak, to the moment of his death;" (1).

After his death, the Pope was petitioned to order Wiclif's body to be taken out of consecrated ground, but the Pope refused. Archbishop Arundel presided over a synod in 1397 that condemned 18 of Wiclif's conclusions; in 1409 an Oxford committee condemned 267 of his errors and burned some of his books. Even in Behemia a bull was issued against Wiclif, 1410. Finally, in 1415 the Council of Constance, which condemned to death Wiclif's great disciple, John Hus, ordered the remains of Wiclif to be burned and cast away and his books to be burned. Thirteen years later, 1428, this decree was carried <sup>out</sup> by a Richard Flemming, a former disciple of Wiclif. His bones were burned and the ashes strewn into the river Swift, which flows past his church at Lutterworth. Such was the end of Wiclif.

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 (1) Sergeant, 355.



Conclusion.

It is a remarkable fact that in spite of hatred toward Wiclif on the part of the English episcopate and the Roman bishops, he was during his life never judicially declared a heretic. He never formally broke with the Church as Luther did. Wiclif may deservedly be called the earliest protestant, not because he revolted against authority, but because he went back to the first and strictest authority of all, the holy Scriptures, and rejected its merely human accretions. No doubt this high claim for the authority of Scriptures was the source of that power which enabled him to deep into papal corruption. He boldly asserted the right of the layman to read God's Word himself and to believe for himself, without the mediation of priests and bishops.

In Church History he is the first really reforming personality. Thoughts of reform had been current prior to his time, but no personality had laid all its vigor and vitality into the work of reforming the Church as did Wiclif. He is the first person of significance that concentrated his mature years, a mind schooled in all the learning of his time, to the task of rebuilding the Church according to apostolic purity. His influence on his successors, Huss, and later Luther, is beyond our computation, but we believe that the title "Doctor Evangelicus" and the description "The Morning Star of the Reformation" sum up very fittingly his activity in behalf of the Gospel of Christ and his influence on the subsequent Great Reformation of Martin Luther.



B. Wiclif's Doctrine of the Church.

Before we enter upon the discussion of the doctrine of the Church proper, it may be well to ask, What did Wiclif regard as the sources of Christian knowledge and truth? In his great Bible apology "On the truth of the Holy Scriptures" he says "God's Word is the basis for every article of faith, the example and mirror in which the Christian may detect every error. The Holy Scripture is the faith of the Church". Again "the Bible alone is infallible, true in all its parts, the only authority for the faith of the Church" (1). Such principles in regard to the sources of Christian doctrine give promise of great things and give us license to expect biblical doctrines from John Wiclif.

In his treatise on "The Church and her Members" Wiclif presents this definition of the Church: "The Church of Christ has three parts. The first part is in bliss, with Christ head of the Church, and contains angels and blessed men in heaven. The second part of his Church are saints in purgatory; and these sin not of new, but purge their old sins... The third part of the Church are true men that live here, that should be after in heaven, and that live here Christian mens' lives. The first part is called overcoming, the middle part is called sleeping; the third is called fighting Church" (2). This threefold division was not peculiar to Wiclif but was familiar even to the Scholastics of the Middle Age (3). The Church on earth then is composed of those men that will be saved, of the true believers, the communion

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(1) Dallmann 37. 38.

(2) T. Arnold, Select English Works of John Wiclif, Vol. III, pg. 339, The Church and her Members. (3) Lechler, I, 542.

(3) Lechler, I, 542.



of saints. He upholds the unity of the Church in heaven and the fighting Church in these words "and all these (three parts) make one Church" (1). The Church is the totality of the elect, the whole number of those that shall be saved.

"And this Church is mother to each man that shall be saved" (2). The eternal foundation of the Church lies in man's election to grace, in his predestination. Wiclif is here, of course, speaking of the invisible Church.

It is evident that Wiclif thus opposed the definition of the Church common in his day, according to which men defined the Church as the visible Catholic Church, the Hierarchy of Rome, the congregation of bishops in Rome, priests and prelates as such. He writes : "When men speak of the holy Church, they understand prelates and priests, monks and canons and friars and all men that have crowns (tonsure), though they live never so cursedly against God's law, and on the contrary call men of the world (secular) not of the Church, though they live never so truly after God's law and end in perfect charity" (3). It is manifest then that Wiclif did not identify Church with clergy, that he included only clerics and excluded all laymen from the Church.

The head of the Church is Christ: "and head of this Church is Christ, both God and man" (4), and not the Pope. The Pope himself cannot be sure whether he is a member of Christ's Church. " but how should men know that this pope is

(1) T. Arnold, The Church and her Members, c. 1. pg. 339.

(2) T. Arnold, The Church and her Members, c. 1. pg. 339.

(3) T. Arnold, Treatise Octo in Quibus seducuntur simplices Christiani, pg. 447.

(4) T. Arnold, The Church. etc. pg. 339.



any of them that Christ speaks to ? Certainly this pope knows not himself, and hath little matter to hope it; for in good works and suitable to Christ should this pope ground his hope" (1). Again, he calls the Church the spouse of Christ . "Christ's Church is his Spouse" (2).

Wiclif held that the Church comprises those who have been elected by God in eternity. If then men trace their conversion and their membership in the Church to God's act of election in Christ, it follows that men are not dependent upon the mediation of priests and bishops and their connection with the local church organization. Man has a free and immediate access to God thru Christ. In other words every Christian is a priest of God. Wiclif supports the doctrine of the universal priesthood of the believers.

When Wiclif speaks of the totality of the elect, he thereby indicates a contrast, the non-elect. The decree of election is to him a twofold disposition of God. The elect God has ordained to everlasting life; the rest will receive punishment according to his foreknowledge. The elect Wiclif calls "praedestinati", the unbelievers "praesciti". He does not speak of a decree of damnation. Only once, says Lechler, did he find the expression "reprobi" in Wiclif's writings for those who are lost, (3).

Some students of Wiclif are of the opinion that he identified the "totality of the Elect" with the Church on earth, the visible church. Only the elect are in the Church; the ungodly are not members of the Church, not even of the outward organization. They point to such passages as

(3) Lechler, I, 545.

- (1) The Church and her Members, c. 7, pg. 355 in T. Arnold.  
 (2) The Church and her Members, c. 1, pg. 339, in Arnold.  
 (3) Lechler, I, 545.



these : "And here we take as belief that each member of the holy Church shall be saved with Christ"... "and containeth no member but only men that shal be saved" (1). "But nevertheless all that shall be saved in bliss of heaven are members of the holy Church, and no more" (2). He seems to uphold the view that only the elect are members of the Church. He frequently contrasts the members of the holy Church with the members of the fiend and disciples of Antichrist. "Each member of Christ is saved; and each member of the fiend is damned" (3). "And so men say commonly that there are here two manners of churches, holy Church or Church of God, that in no manner may be damned, and the church of the fiend, that for a time is good and lasteth not; and this was never holy Church, not part thereof" (4).

But Wiclif also expressed the opinion that the term "the sum of the elect" in the sense of the Church does not include the hypocrites within the Church. He makes the distinction that within the Church we find both real believers and hypocrites. This corresponds to our distinction of "visible" and "invisible" church. In a sermon of the Gospel on the royal wedding and the guest without a wedding garment he says "And so here in this Church are some ordained to bliss and some to pain, although they live justly for a time (5).

(1) The Church and her Members, Arnold, III, 339.

(2) Octo in Quibus Seducuntur Simplices Christiani, Arnold III, 447.

(4) Arnold, I, Sermons of Wiclif, pg. 50.

(3) The Church, etc. Arnold, III, pg. 339.

(5) Arnold, I, Sermons of Wiclif, pg. 50.



Again he speaks of enemies without the Church of Christ and of those within the Church. "But they be wolves within that say that they have cure of souls, and ravish God of his sheep; and feed them not justly, but rather move them to sin".. "Some are wolves without the fold, and some are wolves within, and these are more perilous, for homely enemies are the worst" (1). In both of these quotations Wiclif takes note of the fact that also in the Church of Christ on earth not all are real sheep, but that some are enemies of the Church, some are sheep of the Antichrist. The hypocrites also seem to belong to the Church; they are members of the "visible" Church of God. The Church proper is composed only of those who really believe in Christ, of the elect. The hypocrites may be in the Church but they are not of the Church, they do not belong to it. Lechler remarks in his biography that as a matter of fact Wiclif remained in uncertainty in regard to these two views. He finds no evidence for attributing one view to the early part of his life and the other to his maturer stage, (2). The view that within the Church on earth many unbelievers are mixed in, so to say, is biblical, and the view that all who are members of the Church on earth shall be saved is not. The hypocrites are not members of the true Church; faith in Christ, not outward membership in the organization of the Church, is the criterion of a true follower of Christ.

This much is established definitely that the elect, the true believers, alone are the real members of the Church, or of the body of Christ. Since we cannot penetrate the heart

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 (1) Arnold, Sermons of Wiclif, I, pg. 140.  
 (2) Lechler, I, 551.



of man, we cannot know who is in fact a member of the Church. Whether our neighbor is among the elect or not is one of the secrets of God. And to this doctrine Wiclif joins the error that a Christian cannot be sure of his own membership in the true Church, cannot be sure that he will be saved. "For no pope that now liveth knows whether he be of the Church, or whether he be a limb of the fiend, to be damned with Lucifer... And we take this as belief, or truth that is next to belief, that no man that liveth here knows whether he shall be saved or damned, although he hopes beneath belief that he shall be saved" (1).

We add a few quotations from Luther and our Confessions for the sake of testing and comparing Wiclif's doctrine of the Church with that which the Reformation set forth on the basis of Scripture. Luther held that faith alone is the criterion that decides membership in the Church of Christ. He says : " Denn das heiszt nicht ins Himmelreich kommen, dasz ich unter die Christen komme und das Evangelium hoere, welches auch die Heiden tun koennen und ohne Taufe geschieht....Sondern das heiszt im Himmelreich sein, wenn ich ein lebendig Glied der Christenheit bin, und das Evangelium nicht allein hoere, sondern auch glaube. Sonst waere ein Mensch eben im Himmelreich als wenn ich einen Klotz und Block unter die Christen wuerfe, oder wie der Teufel under ihnen ist". (2). The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says : "Die Menschen sind die rechte Kirche, welche hin und wieder in der Welt vom Aufgang der Sonne bis zum Niedergang an Christum wahrlich glauben", (3).

(1) The Church and her Members, Arnold, III, 339.

(2) Luther, St. Louis, XI, 490.

(3).Apology of Aug. Conf. in Triglotta, pg. 228, Art. VII.



Luther writes : "Christus ist wohl ein Herr aller Dinge, der Frommen und der Boesen, der Engel und der Teufel, aber er ist nicht ein Haupt denn allein der frommen, glaeubigen Christen, in dem Geist versammelt. Denn ein Haupt musz eingeleibt sein seinem Koerper, wie ich aus St. Paulo, Eph. 4, 15.16 bewaehret, und muessen die Gliedemaszen aus dem Haupt hangen, ihr Werk und Leben von ihm haben", (1).

### Conclusion.

We note that Wiclif broke entirely from the Roman doctrine of the Church. He rejected the definition that the priestly order and the hierarchy comprise the Church, that the Pope is the visible head of the Church, that only those men are true members of the Church who accept the supremacy of the Pope and of his doctrines and commandments. Against this definition Wiclif asserted that the believers constitute the Church. The Church embraces the elect, the communion of saints.

When he divides the Church into three parts and mentions the saints in purgatory as one division, he is following the Catholic division. That is an error, for the Bible does not grant existence to the doctrine of purgatory which the Catholic Church holds. That the visible Church on earth contains also hypocrites and that these, tho in the Church, are not of the Church, is in accord with the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Against the claim that no man can be sure of his salvation we quote Romans 8, 38 : "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able so separate us

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(1) Luther, St. Louis, XVIII, 1025.



from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

Of chief importance is that Wiclif broke away from the Roman definition of the Church and defined it as the whole number of those who believe, who shall be saved, the communion of saints. Faith in Christ makes of a man a believer. In this doctrine he pointed the way for his successors John Huss and Martin Luther.

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