

## THE ORIGINS OF THE REFORMATION

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# THE ORIGINS OF THE REFORMATION

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TO  
PATRICIA  
IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE

## PREFACE

THE origins of the Reformation are to be sought much farther back than the beginning of the sixteenth century, which witnessed the revolt of Luther against the mediæval Church. The Reformation was the ultimate outcome of a complex movement of reaction and, more or less, of emancipation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from mediæval conditions in Church and State, which marks the transition from the mediæval to the modern age. Throughout these centuries a variety of forces or factors were operating towards the religious upheaval to which the religious genius and indomitable will of Luther, in the fullness of time, gave the decisive impulse. Their operation is discernible in the political, economic, social, constitutional, intellectual, as well as the religious and moral history of the late mediæval period. Each of these forces or factors contributed to prepare the way for the great disruption of the Church in the early sixteenth century known as the Reformation.

In the political sphere there is the rise of the national State, in virtue of the growth of the national spirit and the consolidation of nations like France, Spain, and England under the strong national king, which leads to conflict with the papacy in the interest of the national State and the national Church. In the economic sphere there is the widespread antagonism to the exactions and corruption of the papal fiscal system. In the social sphere there is the persistent attempt on the part of the masses to secure emancipation from the personal and civil disabilities of the feudal system, with which the mediæval

Church is closely identified, which leads to a series of insurrections, throughout these centuries and into the sixteenth, on behalf of a new social order. In the constitutional sphere there is the attempt to limit the power of the pope by that of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and achieve a practical reformation, which finds expression in the great reforming Councils of the fifteenth century. In the intellectual sphere there is the new culture, begotten of the Renaissance, which gradually transforms the old scholastic culture and opens a new era in art, science, philosophy, education, and theology. Finally, in the sphere of the religious and moral life there is the reaction against the mediæval doctrinal system and the moral declension of the Church in the striving, on the part of individual reformers and reforming sects, to reform faith and practice on the scriptural model, and that of the early Church.

It was from this complex movement of reaction and emancipation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that the Reformation in the sixteenth sprang. The purpose of this volume is to unfold the operation of these forces in the relevant history of the late mediæval period, in which the origins of the Reformation lie, and without which the mission of Luther and his fellow-reformers in the sixteenth century would hardly have been possible. It is from this point of view that I have envisaged the period. It is the dominant motive of this review, which may serve as an introduction to the actual history of the Reformation. Without such a preliminary review the Reformation cannot be adequately understood or interpreted. How these forces thus operated towards this climax I have indicated on occasion in the course of it, and in the concluding chapter I have attempted to do this in conjunct fashion, as the result of the historical evidence reviewed in the preceding chapters.

I am greatly indebted to F. C. Nicholson, Esq., M.A., Librarian of Edinburgh University, and his staff; to Dr Meikle, Librarian of the National Library of Scotland; to L. Newcombe, Esq., Librarian of the National Central Library; and to Dr Mitchell Hunter, Librarian, New College, Edinburgh, for their unfailing help in enabling me to make use of the extensive sources, primary and secondary, on which this study is based.

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# The Origins of the Reformation

## CHAPTER I

### THE MEDIÆVAL EMPIRE AND PAPACY

#### THE TWO POWERS

THE two dominant powers in the Middle Ages were the empire and the papacy. A series of forceful emperors of the Saxon, Franconian, and Hohenstaufen dynasties exemplified from the middle of the tenth to the middle of the thirteenth centuries the imperial idea as it had been revived by Charlemagne. Similarly a series of great popes from Gregory VII. in the second half of the eleventh century to Innocent III., Gregory IX., and Innocent IV. in the first half of the thirteenth asserted and augmented the ecclesiastical dominion which a Leo the Great and a Gregory the Great had founded amid the ruins of the Roman Empire of the West. Emperor and pope thus played the part of supreme ruler in the secular and ecclesiastical spheres respectively. Theoretically, if not actually, the emperor, as the representative of the universal rule of Rome, is the supreme secular ruler on earth, from whom all other rulers hold their kingdoms, and whose supreme political power is divinely ordained. "The Romano-German Kaiser," says Gierke in his statement of this theory, "as immediate successor in title to the Cæsars, was by divine and human law possessed of the *imperium mundi*, by virtue whereof all kings and peoples of the earth were subject unto him."<sup>1</sup> Hence, for instance, the claim of Frederick I. (Barbarossa), under whom the imperial power reached its zenith, to be invested by divine providence with the government of Rome and the whole globe (*urbis et orbis*), and

<sup>1</sup> "Political Theories of the Middle Age," 19. (Trans. by Maitland 1900.)

that of Frederick II. with a universal monarchy (*mundi monarchia*).<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the pope, as the supreme head of the Church, is the universal ecclesiastical ruler, and his universal jurisdiction is, in a still more special sense, by divine appointment. The two dominate the Church and the State, which, in theory, form the two sides of the one universal kingdom or community of God, and through which the divine order and purpose are realised in the world.<sup>3</sup> Distinct in their respective spheres, they yet in this larger sense form a whole.

This theory did not, however, correspond to the actual political or ecclesiastical situation. The mediæval emperor was not really the successor in power or jurisdiction of the Roman Cæsar. From the time of the disruption of the Roman Empire in the fifth century the imperial unity had been permanently broken, and even the vast empire of Charlemagne in the West in the beginning of the ninth century embraced only the western half of the old empire, and not even the whole of that. Moreover, alongside the mediæval empire there had gradually grown up independent states, whose rulers claimed to hold their crowns in virtue of the same right as the Kaiser held his, *i.e.*, from God, and whose claims the theory was fain to admit.<sup>4</sup> Practically the idea of one supreme ruler in succession to the Roman emperor became a fiction as the result of the growth of powerful nations like France and England, over which the mediæval emperor had no real jurisdiction. The kings of France, in particular, energetically asserted, on occasion, their sovereign independence within their own realm.<sup>5</sup> Similarly the mediæval pope was not in reality the universal ecclesiastical ruler he claimed to be, for the Eastern Church effectively disowned and resisted the papal claim to supreme jurisdiction over the whole Church. The theory was thus, in both cases, the expression of an aspiration, not of actuality.

In the case of the pope, however, it came nearer to actuality than in the case of the emperor, for, unlike the emperor, the pope was recognised as the supreme ecclesiastical head of the whole of the West. The principle of nationality, which thwarted

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Carlyle, "History of Mediæval Political Theory," iii. 173 (1915); v. 142 (1928), in collaboration with R. W. Carlyle.

<sup>3</sup> Gierke, "Political Theories," 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 f.

<sup>5</sup> Carlyle, iii. 176 f.; v. 143 f.

the political pretensions of the emperor, was for long not incompatible with the idea of a universal ecclesiastical power, which included in its jurisdiction the western nations as well as the western mediæval empire, and, in contrast to the theoretical claim of the emperor, formed, in this respect, an appreciable bond of unity between them. As supreme spiritual ruler of the West, the pope had thus the advantage of the emperor in the extent and greatness of his ecclesiastical power. Of the two, he was, from this point of view, the greater potentate, especially when the papal throne was occupied by men of superlative ability and energy like Gregory VII. and his more eminent successors.

#### THE DUEL BETWEEN EMPEROR AND POPE

Moreover, under the régime of these great ecclesiastical rulers the papacy ultimately put forth and strove to vindicate the claim to superiority over the State as well as the Church. The older theorists had not only posited the theory of the two powers embodied in pope and emperor. They held that they were co-ordinate, were equally instituted by God, and of equal validity in their respective spheres.<sup>6</sup> The theory did not, however, work smoothly in practice, and ere long there broke out that long duel between pope and emperor which absorbed so large a part of mediæval history. At first, the emperor, in the person of a Charlemagne, was by far the more powerful of the two potentates, and the popes were content or constrained to reckon with the fact and cultivate the imperial favour and goodwill. But from the eleventh century onwards they did not hesitate to assert claims which practically involved the inferiority of the imperial to the papal power. Hence the long struggle with the emperors from the age of Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) in the second half of the eleventh century to that of Innocent IV. in the middle of the thirteenth. Throughout this period of bitter strife between the ecclesiastical and the imperial powers the papacy reached its zenith as the champion of the theocratic conception of government. According to this conception the temporal is subordinate to the ecclesiastical power. The pope, as the

<sup>6</sup> Gierke, 16 f.

immediate representative of God on earth, is, in his capacity as supreme spiritual lord, supreme over both emperor and kings and in the last resort his will must be obeyed on pain of rebellion against God Himself. Gregory VII. (1073-85), for instance, in his conflict with Henry IV., maintains the papal right not only to excommunicate, but, as the competent, divinely ordained judge in secular as well as spiritual things, to depose emperor or king who defies the papal will, and confirm the election of his successor. To him belongs the power to grant or withdraw political authority in virtue of the prerogative to bind and loose conferred on Peter and his successors.<sup>7</sup> Innocent III. (1198-1216), "the true Augustus of the Papacy," as Gregorovius<sup>8</sup> entitles him, assumes an even more lordly tone. He claims not only to be the vicar of Peter, as Gregory was content to call himself. He is the vicar of Christ, even of God. He is above all peoples and kingdoms, lord of the world as well as the Church. He possesses the fullness of power (*plenitudo potestatis*), is less than God, but greater than man, judges all, but is judged by God alone. While the German princes may elect the emperor, it is his prerogative to decide whether he is fit to rule, to appoint and depose kings. To him belongs the right to bestow the imperial crown and make provision for the government of the empire in case of an imperial vacancy. He has been exalted to a throne on which he judges all other potentates. The papal stands to the imperial power as the sun to the moon, though he might concede that the secular power is entitled to exercise its authority within its own sphere.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Carlyle, "History of Mediæval Political Theory," iv. 125 f.; Gregorovius, "History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages," iv., Pt. I., 194 f. (Eng. trans. by Hamilton, 1896); M'Ilwain, "Growth of Political Thought in the West," 207 (1932).

<sup>8</sup> "History of the City of Rome," v., Pt. I., 101 (1897).

<sup>9</sup> R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, "History of Mediæval Political Theory," v. 151 f. (1928); cf. II. 214 f.; Luchaire, "Innocent III.," iii. "La Papauté et l'Empire," 16 f., 68 f. (1906). A. J. Carlyle contends that the popes did not claim a supremacy over the state (ii. 213 f.). But surely the claim, in case of controversy between pope and emperor, to decide the issue and compel obedience to the papal will, under penalty of deposition, was equivalent to the assumption of supreme authority over the civil government and an audacious interference in secular things, under the specious pretext of ecclesiastical expediency. The interference might be based on the papal right to intervene in matters of sin (*ratione peccati*), to act as judge in respect of the sins of all Christians (*de peccato*), kings included. But matters of sin might, consciously or unconsciously, be made the means of undue encroachment on political rights.

Innocent IV. (1243-54), in his feud with Frederick II., reiterated these lordly claims, and went the length of declaring that there was no power ordained by God outside the Church. Moreover, the pope did not derive his imperial power from the Emperor Constantine. On the contrary, after his conversion, Constantine was invested with the imperial dignity by the Church, to which both swords, the temporal and the spiritual, belonged, though it ceded the use of the former to the emperor. To the pope as its head, the emperor owed obedience and fidelity, and because of his disobedience and infidelity, Innocent, at the Council of Lyons in 1245, deprived Frederick of the imperial dignity and forbade his subjects to recognise him as emperor or king.<sup>10</sup>

The claims of these mediæval popes sound audacious enough, especially in view of the early Christian conception of the kingdom of God as purely spiritual and its recognition of the indefeasible rights of the temporal power as ordained by God. It is not surprising that there were not lacking protests on behalf of the autonomy of this power on the part of the imperialist champions within and outside the schools. Nevertheless, the forceful popes who made these claims had both the strength of will and the political ability to maintain them throughout the long duel with a Henry IV., a Frederick I., and a Frederick II. They were greatly aided by the political situation and the tendencies of the time, which, while weakening the empire, placed at their disposal forces which they were both alert and able effectively to use. The antagonism of the Italians to the rule of a German imperator brought them the support of a powerful party in Italy itself, which was known as the party of the Guelfs in contrast to the Ghibelline or imperialist party. The incoherence of the Germano-Italian empire, the growth of independent nations beyond its borders, the weakening effects of feudalism in Germany and Italy on the imperial power played into their hands.

Hence the vast prestige and power which accrued to them as the result of their successful statesmanship in the great politico-ecclesiastical conflict that rent Church and State and thundered on throughout those mediæval centuries. This

<sup>10</sup> R. G. and A. J. Carlyle, "History of Mediæval Political Theory," v., 293 f.; Gregorovius, v., Pt. I., 242 f.

successful statesmanship was not necessarily the expression of mere personal ambition on their part. In those rough centuries the assumption of the right of the spiritual power to interfere and even dictate in secular affairs had its redeeming features. It might at times bring to bear on politics the claims of right, of morality against brute force, and might be a check on political despotism. In alliance with the League of the Lombard cities, for instance, the popes contributed to vindicate the liberties claimed by these cities against their imperial master. Nevertheless, the claim of the ecclesiastical power to dictate in secular affairs might easily become an intolerable menace to the political sovereignty of the rising nations as well as the empire. The danger was not lessened by the fact that the pope, as the ruler of the States of the Church, had himself become a secular as well as an ecclesiastical sovereign and might use his spiritual power to further his secular interests and make it a pretext for an arbitrary interference in the affairs of other States. Moreover, the assumption of temporal power by the spiritual head of Western Christendom was not only a political danger. It was a danger to the Christian religion itself and was ultimately to contribute to the overthrow of the papal ecclesiastical authority in a large part of Europe, as incompatible with and detrimental to true religion as well as the political interest of the secular power. "If the Emperor who called himself King of Kings and Cæsar Augustus was the most unreal of mediæval unrealities, the Pope who would be at once successor of the Apostles and feudal lord from the Rubicon to the sands of Africa was worse, he was a contradiction in terms. The Papal States were a veritable body of death to the true spiritual life of the greatest institution in human history."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A. L. Smith, "Church and State in the Middle Ages," 210 (1913).

## CHAPTER II

### BONIFACE VIII. IN CONFLICT WITH PHILIP IV. AND EDWARD I.

#### THE NATIONAL MONARCHY

SUCCESSFUL in their struggle with the mediæval emperors, the popes found more redoubtable antagonists in the rulers of the nations which, in contrast to the declining empire, were rising into strong political unities in the West. Their rise was the result of the growth of the monarchic power at the expense of that of the feudal nobility, of the gradual fusion of races under the national king, of the dawning consciousness of a common national heritage, of the rise of the middle class and the recognition of its right to a voice in national legislation, of the development of a national language and literature. The sense of nationality, which was weak in the Middle Ages, might still be in the making at the end of the thirteenth century, owing to the disintegrating influence of the feudal system, especially in France. But it was stronger than in the case of the empire, which extended over the Alps into Italy, and was no organic unity such as nations like France and England were tending to become under the rule of their more energetic kings. Moreover, the widening of the National Council by Philip IV. of France and Edward I. of England, so as to include the representatives of the Commons along with the barons and clergy, both accentuated the national unity and augmented the royal power in the assertion and defence of the national sovereignty. With the support of the States-General in France or the Parliament in England, the national king of the type of a Philip and an Edward was more than a match for the claimant to universal sovereignty at Rome. At the beginning of our period this superiority receives striking illustration in the conflict with Pope Boniface VIII. in the closing years of the thirteenth and the opening years of the fourteenth century.

## 8 The Origins of the Reformation

In the first half of the thirteenth century the popes had cultivated the goodwill of the French monarchs in their duel with the Emperor Frederick II. Their successors supported the successful attempt in 1266 of Charles of Anjou to wrest the crown of Sicily from Manfred, Frederick's natural son and successor as King of Sicily. Throughout the remainder of the century French influence was in the ascendant in Italy in spite of the Sicilian Vespers, which put an end to Charles' oppressive régime in Sicily, and the mediocre popes of this period were fain to conciliate it.<sup>1</sup>

### POPE BONIFACE AND HIS ROYAL ANTAGONISTS

With the election of Benedict Gaetani as Boniface VIII. in 1294, a pope of more forceful personality took possession of the papal throne. As cardinal and even as pope he made use of ecclesiastical funds to buy up a large number of estates and transform them into an extensive family barony for his nephews, embracing the whole of lower Latium from the sea coast as far as Subiaco. "He extended the system of papal nepotism, by which in the sequel a long series of popes established the fortune of their family by raising their nephews to princely estate."<sup>2</sup> Unlike his predecessor, the simple hermit pope Celestine V., whose abdication he appears to have contrived,<sup>3</sup> he had acquired large experience of ecclesiastical and political affairs as papal legate to Sicily and France. With diplomatic ability he combined a profound knowledge of canon and civil law and a ready eloquence. A man, too, of commanding presence, handsome, headstrong, violent-tempered, self-assertive even to arrogance, and endowed with the imperious spirit of the great popes, though devoid of their political genius. Such was the pope who ventured to champion against the French and English monarchs the papal supremacy, which his great predecessors had vindicated against the emperors.

Philip does not seem to have been personally so energetic

<sup>1</sup> See Gregorovius, "History of Rome in the Middle Ages," v., Pt. II. (Eng. trans., 1897); Browning, "Guelfs and Ghibellines," 25 f.

<sup>2</sup> Baethgen, "Zur Geschichte des Hauses Gaetani," "Hist. Zeitschrift," 1928, 50 f.; Galasio Caetani, "Domus Caietana" (1927); Previté-Orton, "House of Caetani," *Edinburgh Review*, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Gregorovius, v., Pt. II., 525.

and able as Boniface, and the initiation and execution of the strong measures of his reign were apparently due to the ministers by whom he allowed himself to be influenced, and on whom, according to Villani, he was very dependent. If not himself a strong man,<sup>4</sup> he had the sagacity to choose strong men as his counsellors. Notable among these "knights of the king" were the jurists Pierre Flote and Guillaume de Nogaret, masters, like Boniface, of the civil law, and champions of the national monarchy against both Church and feudal nobility, and of the independence and indefeasibility of the national sovereignty. The influence of the jurists had been growing in France since the revival of the study of Roman law at Bologna and the founding of law schools at Montpellier, Angers, Orleans. It was from the armoury of Roman jurisprudence that they borrowed the weapons wherewith to parry the papal claims and to vindicate the right of the national king to be master within his own realm. If the papacy could make use of this jurisprudence to buttress its claim to absolute power, this adjunct was equally available to the secular state.

In Edward I. the pope had to deal with a ruler well fitted by his strength of character and his ability as a statesman and an administrator to be the leader of a strong national policy. He had successfully coped in his father's reign with the baronial opposition to the royal power, and had succeeded as king in rallying all classes of the nation in its support. He was, in one respect, at a greater disadvantage than Philip in relation to the pope, who claimed to be the feudal superior of his kingdom in virtue of the recognition of this claim by King John. But such a claim was only fitted to stir and steel the opposition of one who felt himself to be master in his own realm, and was not minded to brook outside interference.

#### BONIFACE AND PHILIP IV.

The conflict originated in the assumption by both monarchs of the right to lay a special tax on the clergy of their kingdoms,

<sup>4</sup> See the contemporary estimates of Philip IV. given by Langlois, "Histoire de France," ed. by Lavissee, t. iii., Pt. II. (1901), which differ from the usual representation of him as pre-eminently a strong ruler. For the opposite view, see F. Funck-Brentano, "The National History of France" (The Middle Ages), 352 (Eng. trans., 1922).

without the papal sanction, on the outbreak of war between them in 1294. Both were in need of money to carry on the war and both demanded a subsidy from the clergy. The majority of the French clergy complied. But a refractory minority protested and appealed to the pope, who had in vain striven to restore peace.<sup>5</sup> Boniface replied by promulgating in February 1296 the bull "Clericis Laicos" peremptorily forbidding all clerics of whatever condition to pay such taxes, imposed without express papal sanction, and all kings and rulers to exact them without this sanction on pain of excommunication.<sup>6</sup> He was only asserting an old claim which French and English kings had recognised. They had on occasion sought and obtained the papal permission to tax the clergy for some special object, such as a crusade.<sup>7</sup> But, in the face of such an international crisis, the temptation was strong to ignore the papal will and take advantage of this source of revenue in the pursuit of what they considered the national interest, especially as the clergy was possessed of so large a share of the national wealth. Neither paid any heed to a fulmination, the dictatorial tone of which was no longer in keeping with the political trend of the age.

Philip retorted by prohibiting the export of French gold and silver from the kingdom, and thus cutting off the revenue which the pope derived from France.<sup>8</sup> Boniface gave vent to his indignation at this impious presumption in a fresh bull, in which he arraigned his arbitrary, oppressive régime and threatened to ally himself with his enemies. Whilst disclaiming any intention to disallow the feudal taxes which the clergy were bound to pay in virtue of feudal obligation, and even admitting their liability to aid the king by an extraordinary grant in time of national danger, he reiterated his demand that he must first obtain his permission.<sup>9</sup> There was no little force in his arraignment of Philip's oppressive régime. But its minatory

<sup>5</sup> "Registres de Boniface VIII.," I., Nos. 698, 732, 868-69; "Calendar of Papal Registers, Papal Letters," i. 562, 567-8; Raynaldus, "Annales Ecclesiastici," xxiii. 188 f., ed. by Theiner (1871).

<sup>6</sup> "Registres de Boniface VIII.," I., No. 1567 (1907); "Magnum Bullarium Romanum," ix. 110 f.

<sup>7</sup> See, in the case of Edward, Milman, "History of Latin Christianity," vii. 54; of Philip, Langlois, "Histoire de France," iii., Pt. II., 129 f.

<sup>8</sup> "Ordonnances des Rois," xi. 886.

<sup>9</sup> Bull, "Ineffabilis Amoris," Sept. 1296; "Registres," I., No. 1653; Raynaldus, xxiii, 193 f.; Mansi's ed., iv. 210 f.

tone was ill-fitted to secure the royal repentance, and its only effect was to call forth a pamphlet warfare against the principle of the immunity of the clergy from taxation, and the assertion of the indefeasible sovereignty of the king. "Before there were clerics," we read, with astonishment, in one of these effusions, "the King of France already [?] possessed the guardianship (*custodiam*) of his kingdom, and the right to legislate for its security." The Church consists of the laity as well as the clergy, and the clergy are equally bound to contribute to the defence of the State to which they owe their security. What right has the vicar of Christ to interdict the payment of tribute to Cæsar, which Christ expressly sanctioned, especially as the clergy owe so much to the liberality of Cæsar? For them to refuse to pay taxes is to aid the enemy, betray the State, and incur the accusation of treason. Finally, the King of France, strong in his right, disdains the papal threats, whilst honouring the Catholic Church and its ministers, who owe much to him and his ancestors.<sup>10</sup>

Before this defiant spirit, which he had so rashly evoked, and the remonstrances of the French clergy, who represented the impossibility of complying with the bull, Boniface was fain to beat a retreat. He had too many enemies in Italy (the Colonna faction at Rome and the Aragonese and Ghibelline factions in Sicily) to run the risk of adding the French king to their number. In another bull (July 1297) he revoked the prohibition and expressly recognised the right of the king to decide as to the necessity of imposing taxation for the defence of the kingdom and subject the clergy to such taxation without the papal sanction.<sup>11</sup> He not only retracted the bull "*Clericis Laicos*," but showered favours on Philip and his ministers.

#### BONIFACE AND EDWARD I.

Meanwhile Edward had been showing equally scant respect for the bull "*Clericis Laicos*," which was directed against

<sup>10</sup> See Langlois, iii., Pt. II., 133 f. For the controversial literature to which the conflict gave rise, see Scholz, "*Die Publizistik zur Zeit Philipps des Schönen und Bonifaz VIII.*" (1903); R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, "*History of Mediæval Political Theory*," v. 394 f.

<sup>11</sup> *Inconsulto etiam Romano Pontifice*. "*Registres*," I., No. 2354; Raynaldus, xxiii, 218 f.; "*Bullarium*," ix. 113.

him as well as Philip.<sup>12</sup> In view of its great wealth, he concluded, as Philip had done, that the Church should contribute to the defence of the State in such a contingency. The English clergy had, in fact, earlier in the reign (1280) recognised their liability to taxation in response to his demand for a so-called "voluntary" grant.<sup>13</sup> On the outbreak of the war with France in 1294 they offered a contribution of two-tenths for one year. But Edward would be satisfied with nothing less than half of their income for one year, and insisted on compliance. The situation was indeed pressing, for he was on the verge of war with Scotland, whose independence he was bent on infringing, as well as with France, and the clergy were compelled to pay. In the previous reign the taskmaster of the clergy had been the pope,<sup>14</sup> whose exactions, at which the weakly Henry III. connived, had helped to ally them with the barons in a common revolt against the royal authority. Under Edward, the king himself threatened to assume this oppressive rôle in virtue of political necessity, and the clergy were now disposed to turn to the pope for protection against their new taskmaster. In this emergency they found a resolute leader in Archbishop Winchelsey and in the bull "*Clericis Laicos*," a handy pretext for non-compliance with further demands. Unlike the French clergy, who had practically recognised the royal right to exact a contribution, they professed at a Parliament held at St Edmunds in November 1296 their inability to make a grant in defiance of the papal prohibition. They must at least, they protested, at a subsequent meeting of Convocation (January 1297), first obtain the permission of the pope before complying.

Edward was, however, as little disposed as Philip to admit the right of the pope to control his policy, and at his instigation the chief justice decreed that, as they had refused to recognise their obligations to the king in deference to the pope, they should forfeit the king's protection. They were thus placed in the position of outlaws and might be robbed and maltreated with impunity. "As you have not kept faith with me," burst out Edward angrily to their deputies, "I am not bound to you

<sup>12</sup> Raynaldus, xxiii. 192; Wilkins, "*Concilia Magnæ Britanniae et Hiberniae*," ii. 222 f.

<sup>13</sup> Stubbs, "*Constitutional History*," ii. 113 (2nd ed., 1877).

<sup>14</sup> See on this point, Gasquet, "*Henry III. and the Church*" (1905).

in any wise."<sup>15</sup> He further expressly prohibited them from attempting anything prejudicial to the royal authority in deference to the papal bull,<sup>16</sup> and ultimately, at a synod held at St Paul's in March 1297, the opposition collapsed in deference to the arguments of two lawyers and two Dominican monks, who emphasised the necessity of aiding the king in time of war in spite of any papal inhibition.<sup>17</sup> The archbishop alone, whilst leaving his clergy free to do as they thought fit,<sup>18</sup> maintained an uncompromising attitude and was subjected to very harsh treatment in consequence.

The virtual retraction by Boniface of the bull "Clericis Laicos" put an end to the friction between king and pope for the time being. Two years later it again became acute on the ground of Edward's policy towards Scotland, which had involved him in a repressive war against the Scots, who refused to acknowledge his unwarrantable claim to the overlordship of the Scottish kingdom. On the defeat of Wallace at Falkirk in 1298 the Scots appealed to the pope, and it was this appeal that brought Boniface and Edward once more into conflict. The pope responded by a letter (June 1299) which he commissioned Archbishop Winchelsey to deliver to Edward, and which the archbishop ultimately, in August 1300, handed to him at Sweetheart Abbey in Galloway.<sup>19</sup> In this document, which was evidently prompted by the Scottish commissioners, who had repaired to Rome to plead the national cause, Boniface forcibly rebutted the English pretension to the overlordship, whilst claiming, without adducing any proofs, the feudal superiority of Scotland for himself as pope. Edward, he concluded, had merely taken advantage of the contingency of a disputed succession to extort the recognition of a claim which had no foundation in right, and had abused his power to subject the Scottish kingdom and imprison and oppress clerics as well as laymen, who resisted his violent proceedings. If, however, in spite of these notorious facts, he persisted in his

<sup>15</sup> Capes, "The English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," 33 (1900).

<sup>16</sup> Wilkins, "Concilia," ii. 224.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 225.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 225.

<sup>19</sup> "Registres de Boniface VIII.," II. No. 3, 342-43; "Annales Londinienses," ed. by Stubbs, "Chronicles of Edward I. and II.," i. 104 f.

claim, let him send commissioners to Rome to present his case for the papal judgment and decision.<sup>20</sup>

The papal arguments and the summons based on them threw Edward into a violent temper. "As long as there is breath in my nostrils," he angrily exclaimed to the archbishop, who ventured to add some words on the duty of obedience, "I will defend what all the world knows to be my right."<sup>21</sup> On reflection, however, he deemed it expedient to attempt a formal refutation of the papal contentions. To this end he summoned a parliament to meet at Lincoln and directed the universities and the heads of religious houses in England to collect evidence in support of his claim. After lengthy deliberations the parliament professed to find this evidence conclusive, and gave decided expression to its conviction in an epistle to the pope signed by 104 of the nobility (12th February 1301). From ancient times, contended they, the English kings, and they alone, had exercised superiority over Scotland. They could not, therefore, admit the counter-claim of the Holy See, nor would they suffer their king to submit his rights in this or any other temporal matter to the pope's judgment and decision. Such a proceeding would be subversive of the rights of the crown, the royal dignity, and the liberties, customs, and laws of the kingdom, which they were bound to maintain and defend, and would maintain and defend with all their might and by the help of God.<sup>22</sup>

Three months later (7th May 1301) Edward sent a personal reply which he was careful to explain was not to be taken as a recognition of the papal right to judge his claim, but simply as an act of courtesy. In this missive he amplifies the arguments of the barons by a lengthy review of the historical grounds of the English claim, in which the fables invented by Geoffrey of Monmouth and other credulous English chroniclers are passed off as history. The Trojan Brutus who conquered Britain after the Trojan war and divided the land among his three sons, the eldest of whom, Loclin, was supreme over the other two, who reigned in Scotland and Wales respectively, was, it

<sup>20</sup> "Calendar of Papal Registers, Papal Letters," ii. 584 f.; "Annales Lond.," 108 f.; Rishanger, "Chronica," 198 f. (ed. by Riley); "Bullarium," ix. 115 f.; Raynaldus, xxiii. 246 f.

<sup>21</sup> Walsingham, "Historia Anglicana" (ed. by Riley), i. 82.

<sup>22</sup> "Annales Lond.," 122 f.; Rishanger, "Chronica," 208 f.

seems, the ultimate and indefeasible source of his own claim to be overlord of the Scottish kingdom.<sup>23</sup> From this sample of his arguments we may gauge the historic worth of most of the others. In contrast to the solid contentions of Boniface, they must be pronounced for the most part pure trifling. The pope had, in fact, by far the best of the dispute, saving his own pretension to the overlordship, which it would have required as much fable to render plausible as in the case of that of Edward. But he was too much engrossed in his renewed quarrel with Philip to follow up the contest. Moreover, the denial of his right to interfere in the temporal concerns of the English monarchy, to which the barons had given such decisive expression, afforded no prospect that further interference would be of the slightest avail. He accordingly left the continuation of the argument to Baldred Bisset, the Scottish ambassador at Rome, who parried the tale of Brutus with the more patriotic, but equally mythical tale of Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh, the foundress of the Scottish kingdom, and adduced the fabulous Donation of Constantine as a sufficient reason why the pope was the suzerain of Scotland.<sup>24</sup> The significance of the episode lies in the unequivocal declaration of the independence of the English king, in matters temporal, of papal intervention. Boniface erelong, in fact, belied his own arguments by ordering the Scottish bishops to cease their opposition to Edward.<sup>25</sup>

#### RENEWAL OF CONFLICT WITH PHILIP

On the other hand, the harmony between him and Philip proved of short duration. The Jubilee of 1300, which brought crowds of pilgrims to Rome, intensified the self-exaltation of the pope and quickened the spirit of domination. He is said to have appeared during the Jubilee clad in the insignia of empire, with the two swords, the emblems of the spiritual and the temporal power displayed in his presence, and to have exclaimed, "I am emperor." The story is very probably an invention of his enemies. But he certainly allowed himself to indulge once more in very imperious language towards his

<sup>23</sup> "Annales Lond.," 112 f.; Rishanger, "Chronica," 200 f.

<sup>24</sup> See Lingard, "History of England," ii. 555 f., and Fordun's "Chronicle," ed. by Skene.

<sup>25</sup> See "Registres," III., Nos. 4725-26, and "Fœdera," i. 942.

secular opponents in Italy and elsewhere. His high notions of his prerogative were sedulously nurtured by the Flemish envoys, whose count Philip IV. had deprived of his territory, which, like Edward in the case of Scotland, he was eager to incorporate in his dominions, and who urged him to vindicate his prerogative against their enemy. In this exalted mood came the news that the French king had arrested and instituted proceedings against Bernard Saisset, Bishop of Pamiers, and seized his temporalities on a charge of treason, in defiance of the fact that a bishop could not be tried by a secular court. In response the angry pope demanded the liberation of the accused bishop and revoked his concession in the matter of clerical taxation<sup>26</sup> (December 1301). In a second missive<sup>27</sup> he gave vent to his ire in his most autocratic vein, roundly asserted his superiority as pope over all kings, denounced Philip's misgovernment and tyranny in Church and State, and intimated his intention of convoking a council of the French clergy at Rome to take in hand the reformation of the kingdom, with or without the co-operation of the king. "God," insisted he, "has set us over kings and kingdoms to pull up and destroy, disperse and scatter, build and plant in his name and by his doctrine. . . . Persuade not yourself, therefore, that you have no superior and that you are not subject to the head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He who thinks so is a madman; he who maintains it, an infidel."

Philip's reply was very drastic. If tradition may be trusted, he burned the obnoxious bull in the presence of his courtiers (11th February 1302). Whether tradition reports truly or not, he certainly published a garbled version of it,<sup>28</sup> along with a pretended reply in order to excite public opinion against his antagonist. In this reply he contemptuously denied point

<sup>26</sup> Bull, "Salvator Mundi"; "Registres," III., No. 4422; "Bullarium," ix. 116 f. The assertion that the bishop as the pope's legate was commissioned to demand the release of the Count of Flanders, and that in doing so he publicly asserted the papal supremacy over the temporal power and thus enraged Philip, is lacking in proof. The bishop was arrested on a charge of using treasonable language against Philip in his diocese. Raynaldus, xxiii. 290 f. See Langlois, iii., Pt. II., 142.

<sup>27</sup> Bull, "Ausculata Fili"; "Registres," III., No. 4424; "Bullarium," 121 f., which incorrectly places it under the year 1303.

<sup>28</sup> It is evident that this shorter effusion, in which the pope claims that the king is subject to him in temporal as well as spiritual things, did not emanate from Boniface, but was composed by Flote or Nogaret for a polemical purpose.

blank the papal assumption of superiority. "Philip, by the Grace of God, King of France, to Boniface who calls himself pope, little or no greeting. Let your grand fatuousness know that we are subject to no one in things temporal, and that to us belongs by royal right appointment to vacant churches and prebends, etc." <sup>29</sup>

With popular opinion on his side he determined to appeal to a national assembly (April 1302) composed of the three estates to vindicate the national sovereignty against papal usurpation, and thus anticipated Boniface's plan of appealing to a council of the French clergy at Rome. After a spirited denunciation of the papal régime and the denial of the papal claims by Flote in the name of the king, the barons and the third estate explicitly, the clergy less directly, declared for the independence of the crown. Abashed for the moment, Boniface protested that he claimed superiority only "in matters of sin." "We have been a doctor of law for forty years and we know very well that there are two powers ordained by God. We do not wish to encroach on the jurisdiction of the king, but the king cannot deny that he is subject to us in respect of sin" (*ratione peccati*). But matters of sin were capable of a wide interpretation by imperious ecclesiastics of the stamp of a Boniface, who went on to declare in the presence of the king's envoys his power to depose their recalcitrant master if he did not amend his ways.<sup>30</sup>

#### THE BULL "UNAM SANCTAM" AND ITS SEQUEL

The defeat which the Flemings inflicted on Philip at Courtrai in the following July, and which cost Flote his life, seemed to the angry pope a divine judgment on an impious king and nation, and strengthened him in his resolution to hold the Council, which was attended by a number of French prelates, in spite of the royal inhibition. As the outcome of it he fulminated the famous bull "Unam Sanctam" (November 1302) as a manifesto to Christendom of the indefeasible rights of the papacy. This celebrated effusion is made up of a series of dogmatic assertions based on Scripture texts, which are

<sup>29</sup> This pretended answer, which was of course never sent to Rome, is given in "Bullarium," ix. 123.

<sup>30</sup> Langlois, "Histoire de France," iii., Pt. II., 142 f.

wrested to suit the doctrine of the papal superiority in Church and State, and on theoretic scholastic reasonings, which tend to confirm the doctrine. It declares that outside the Church there is neither salvation nor remission of sins. The Church is one body under Christ its head, whose vicar is Peter and his successors. It distinguishes, indeed, between the two swords representing the temporal and spiritual powers. But the temporal power, though entrusted to kings, also belongs to the papal prerogative, from which it is derived, is to be wielded by kings on behalf of the Church and in accordance with its will, and is subject to the spiritual. "One sword," it is expressly stated, "ought to be under the other, and the temporal authority to be subject to the spiritual." To the pope as the vicar of Christ and successor of Peter accordingly belongs the right to institute and to judge the temporal power. But he himself can be judged by no one except God, his authority being not human, but divine, conferred by Christ on Peter. "Whosoever, therefore, resists this resists the ordinance of God." Moreover, the pope is not only the superior of kings. His authority is universally binding and subjection to it is absolutely necessary to the salvation of every human being. "We declare, assert, and define that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."<sup>31</sup> The bull is an epitome of claims made by the papacy during the previous two centuries.

This arrogant deliverance and the general excommunication against those who should impede the faithful from freely resorting to Rome were not formally directed against Philip, who was not mentioned by name in either. But it was easy to read between the lines who the culprit was, and this preliminary explosion of papal arrogance was not fitted to pave

<sup>31</sup> "Registres," III., No. 5382; Raynaldus, xxiii. 303 f. The bull, with a discussion of its significance and of the Ultramontane attempts to soften it (for instance, the contention that only the closing sentence is dogmatic and refers only to the ecclesiastical primacy of the pope) is also given by Berchtold, "Die Bulle Unam Sanctam" (1887). See also Ehrmann, "Die Bulle Unam Sanctam" (1896). A translation is given by Henderson, "Historical Documents of the Middle Ages," 435 f. In the table of contents he wrongly gives the date as 1299. It is given almost *in extenso* by Hefele, "Conciliengeschichte," vi. 347 f. M'Ilwain concludes that the bull contains "no explicit claim to a direct power in temporal matters," "Growth of Political Thought," 246. Rivière, rightly in my opinion, maintains that it does, "Le Problème de l'Église et de l'État au Temps de Philippe de Bel," 89 f. (1926). Boase seems to agree, "Boniface the Eighth," 323 (1933).

the way for the concession of the particular demands which Boniface commissioned Cardinal Lemoine, as his legate, to make, with a significant reference to the consequences of non-compliance. Philip must revoke the inhibition disallowing the French prelates to go to Rome, must make amends for the burning of the papal bull, must recognise the rights of the pope in regard to the collation of benefices, must admit that the exclusive right to administer and to tax ecclesiastical property belonged to the Holy See, etc.<sup>32</sup> To these demands Philip returned a fairly accommodating answer. The death of P. Flote, the soul of the anti-papal party, and the fear of invasion and revolt consequent on the disaster at Courtrai seem to have unnerved him for the time being. But Boniface would be satisfied with nothing short of complete submission and directed the cardinal to reiterate his demands and his threats. He had, however, presumed too much on the weakness of his adversary, and in his presumption he overreached himself to his own utter undoing. In W. de Nogaret, Flote's successor as chief counsellor, Philip found another jurist resourceful and resolute enough to counter the policy of moderation and, with the help of the Colonna faction, the pope's Italian enemies, with whom Philip was in close relation, turn the tables against his overweening antagonist. If, reasoned the unscrupulous Nogaret, the pope persisted in deposing the king, why not arraign and depose the pope?

In support of this expedient he presented a scathing and, it should be added, a reckless indictment against him in a harangue to an assembly of nobles and prelates in the royal presence (March 1303). Had he not intrigued to bring about the abdication of his predecessor, Celestine V., in order to usurp his place? Was he not a thief and a robber, who had not entered the fold by the door? Had he not, moreover, heaped upon himself crime upon crime—simony, blasphemy, heresy, and even worse? Was it not, therefore, the king's duty to bring about the assembly of a General Council to judge him and in the meantime seize and imprison him pending its decision.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Raynaldus, xxiii. 325 f.

<sup>33</sup> Dupuy, "Histoire du Differend d'entre le Pape Boniface et Philippe le Bel," 14 f. (1655); Renan, "Études sur la Politique du Règne de Philippe le Bel," 22 f. (1899); Langlois, "Histoire de France," iii., Pt. II., 156 f.

To concert measures to this end with the pope's enemies, Nogaret repaired to Italy, and meanwhile, at a subsequent meeting in June, these charges, proofs of which were not vouchsafed, were amplified by Plaisans, Nogaret's substitute, until Boniface stood in the pillory of legal ingenuity a monster, from whom the Church must be delivered by a General Council. The project of a Council, having been formally approved by Philip, was at his insistence adopted by the bishops present, and ultimately by dint of the manipulation of the royal emissaries, by a large proportion of the French clergy.

Averted of these outrageous proceedings, Boniface repelled with disdain the enormities laid to his charge, and, in his summer retirement at Anagni, drew up a bull denouncing in turn the crimes of Philip and proclaiming his determination to proceed to extreme measures against him and his associates, unless they repented and rendered due satisfaction (15th August 1303).<sup>34</sup> Finally he drafted another bull excommunicating him and absolving his subjects from their allegiance, which he intended to affix to the door of the Cathedral of Anagni on the 8th September. He had not, however, reckoned with the conspiracy which Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna had been busy hatching against him in Italy, and a grim disillusion awaited him. Before dawn on the 7th September 1303 Nogaret and Colonna swept down on Anagni at the head of a band of mercenaries amid cries of "Death to Boniface," "Long live King Philip," overpowered all resistance, burst into the papal palace, and confronted the aged and weak pontiff reclining on a couch in full pontificals, and clasping the cross to his breast. "Since I am betrayed like Jesus Christ," spoke he, "I shall at least die as pope." Colonna raved forth imprecations and threats and, but for the intervention of Nogaret, would have killed him.<sup>35</sup> To his furious outburst he only answered, "Behold my head, behold my neck." With more self-restraint and

<sup>34</sup> "Registres," III., No. 5383.

<sup>35</sup> The English chroniclers, Rishanger, Walsingham, and Knighton exaggerate the violence used. There is, for instance, no proof of the tales that Colonna struck him a blow with his mailed fist, and that they carried him to prison on horseback with his face to the tail (Walsingham, i. 103). See Gregorovius v., Pt. II., 590 f.; Renan, "La Politique Religieuse du Règne de Philippe," 44 f.; Döllinger, "Akademische Vorträge," iii. 223 f. (1891). The best original account is given in the "Annales Regis Edwardi Primi Fragmentum III.," ed. by Riley, Rolls Series 28; Villani, "Storie," I. viii. 63.

with artful hypocrisy, Nogaret played the part of judicial accuser, set forth the charges in the indictment against him, and arrested him pending his trial by a General Council. "I shall be happy to be condemned and deposed by Ratarins," contemptuously returned the brave old man. Their followers sacked the palace and for a couple of days remained masters of the town. But they were too weak to complete their audacious enterprise in the face of the revulsion which quickly brought the people of Anagni and the surrounding district to the rescue. They drove them with considerable loss into flight and their victim was conducted by an escort of Roman cavaliers back to Rome, where he died a few weeks later, in his 86th year, from the effects of the shock on a frame enfeebled by age and the bitterness of so brutal an outrage (11th October).

Equally fatal was the shock to the mediæval papacy. "The tomb of Boniface VIII.," it has been well said by Gregorovius, "is the gravestone of the mediæval papacy, which was buried with him by the forces of the age."<sup>36</sup> The national monarch had achieved an unequivocal triumph where even the greatest of the emperors had failed. Boniface's great predecessors in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries had emerged victorious from the struggle with the emperors, because the empire was becoming largely an anachronism. But though the empire, as the expression of the universal State, could not oppose to the papal claims the strength of an organic unity, the principle of the independence of the secular power, for which the emperors had done battle, had not been finally crushed in their struggle with the popes. With the rise of the strong national monarchy, this principle was to find its vindication in the developing sense of nationality which, embodied in the national king, was destined to become the dominant political force in Europe. Boniface failed in the renewed struggle with the secular power, in its national form, because he failed to interpret aright the spirit and trend of the age, and presumed to maintain pretensions which were no longer in accord with the actual political situation. His arrogant rashness had provoked its own discomfiture, though the scene in which it culminated at Anagni is far from creditable to Philip and his agents. Boniface fell as the victim of brutality and trickery as well as of his

<sup>36</sup> v., Pt. II., 597.

own arrogance. "My power," he had vaunted to P. Flote, "embraces both the spiritual and the temporal." "Maybe," was the laconic reply, "but your power is verbal; that of the king is real."<sup>37</sup> There was, indeed, a danger lest the strong national king might substitute material power for moral right in the vindication of principle or in the interest of policy. Certainly the method of the vindication is, in this case, anything but indefeasible. Whilst appealing to legal right, against the pretensions of Boniface, Philip and his jurists were not conspicuous for their observance of moral obligation in the pursuit of policy or principle, of which the papacy in its best days had, on occasion, been the champion. The case against Boniface had been brought forward for a political purpose and seems to have been largely invented by the ingenuity of Philip's jurists. It had been carried to a tragic triumph by mingled cunning and brutality.

This ugly feature of unscrupulousness appears with equal crassness in the treatment meted out to the Knights Templars some years later. The order had become extremely rich and had outlived its vocation of protecting the Holy Land. Its wealth promised a welcome booty to the impecunious monarch, and the resourceful Nogaret was equal to the task of providing a pretext for its destruction in a variety of exaggerated or false charges of heresy, impiety, and immorality, which many of the doomed victims were forced by torture to substantiate, but which most of them subsequently retracted.<sup>38</sup> Many who would not recant or recalled their recantations were burned alive, including the Grand Master himself, De Molay, and several other of its chief officers. In their violent treatment of the Order, Philip and his unscrupulous ministers anticipated the spoliations of the Reformation age. The French monarch,

<sup>37</sup> Rishanger, "Chronica," 197. The saying was probably invented. If so, it was well invented. See Mann, "Lives of the Popes," xviii. 329 f. (1932).

<sup>38</sup> A long list of the charges will be found in a bull of Clement V., who directed certain commissioners to enquire into them, "Bullarium," ix. 127 f. The documents and details of the proceedings against them are given by Dupuy, "Histoire de l'Ordre Militaire des Templiers." See also Ehrle, "Archiv für Literatur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters," v. 2 f. (1889); Langlois, "Histoire de France," iii., Pt. II., 174 f.; Lea, "History of the Inquisition," iii. 238 f. (1887); "Histoire Général," ed. by Lavissee and Rambaud, iii. 84 f. (1894); Döllinger, "Akademische Vorträge," iii. 245 f.

in fact, practically assumed the supremacy over the French Church as well as the State which Henry VIII. was formally to arrogate 200 years later over that of England. The only difference consisted in the fact that while Henry, in asserting his supremacy, absolutely renounced the papal authority, Philip, after overthrowing one pope, continued to recognise the authority of his successor, who submitted to be the creature of his will.

Despite the outrage of Anagni, Benedict XI. was fain to annul the proceedings of Boniface against his royal aggressor. Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who succeeded him as Clement V. in 1305, besides erasing from the papal registers the charges of Boniface against Philip,<sup>39</sup> went the length of absolving Nogaret<sup>40</sup> and decreeing at Philip's insistence the excommunication<sup>41</sup> and the official suppression of the Templars (April 1312),<sup>42</sup> after the Council of Vienne had in vain demanded an impartial enquiry into the charges against them. Fortunately for his reputation, he refrained from giving a verdict on the *ex parte* charges of heresy, immorality, etc., adduced by Boniface's enemies in the course of his posthumous trial in 1310-11.<sup>43</sup> With Clement, who took up his residence at Avignon, began the period of the Babylonish Captivity, during which the papacy was largely the dependent of the French king.<sup>44</sup> Truly a startling transition from the age of a Gregory VII. and an Innocent III.

With this conflict the political factor making for the Reformation starts on its course during the next two centuries. It was destined to contribute powerfully to the ultimate overthrow of the papal supremacy in a large part of Western Christendom. "From the age-long struggle with the empire the thirteenth-century papacy emerged victorious; but almost immediately, in the age of Philip le Bel and Edward I., it came face to face with the feudal states of Europe and with the

<sup>39</sup> "Bullarium," ix. 145 f. (1310).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 148 (1310).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 134 (1308).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 148 f.

<sup>43</sup> For a dispassionate examination of these charges see Boase, "Boniface the Eighth," 364 f. Wenck, on the other hand, maintains that he was a heretic ("Hist. Zeitschrift," 1905), but he relies too much on the veracity and good faith of the prosecution.

<sup>44</sup> See De Nangis (Continuator), i. 349 f.

vigorous, if still undeveloped, principle of national sovereignty. It was this political conception—the conception which transformed Western Christendom into the independent states of Europe—that made the question of reform within the Church a question of politics, and in the final analysis it was this political conception which determined the course that the movement for reform was eventually to take.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Barraclough, “Papal Provisions,” 15 (1935). The political factor was, however, by no means the only one that determined the course of the reform movement.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PAPACY AT AVIGNON

#### DECLINE OF PAPAL PRESTIGE AND AUTHORITY

THE result of the tragedy of Anagni was the transference, for nearly three-quarters of a century, of the metropolis of Western Christendom from Rome to Avignon and the accentuation of the decline of the papal prestige and power. The substitution of an insignificant town, situated in the territory of the Count of Provence, who was also King of Naples, for the eternal city as the papal capital was in itself a significant indication of this decline. More than one pope<sup>1</sup> had already sought an asylum in France, but it was only to return to Rome as victor in the struggle with the emperors Frederick I. and Frederick II. To the Christian consciousness of the age of these masterful popes the idea that the head of the Church could be crowned anywhere but at Rome or take up his permanent abode in a land north of the Alps would have been unthinkable.<sup>2</sup> The ancient city of the Cæsars, reminiscent of a world-wide dominion, had from the days of a Leo I. and a Gregory I. been the seat of an ecclesiastical empire embracing the nations of the West. Rome had materially helped to make the popes what they had become in the grandest period of the papacy—the ecclesiastical heads of Western and Central Europe—and had given plausibility to their claim to be the supreme rulers of the Church universal. Their universal sway was, indeed, still recognised by the nations of Central and Western Europe, and it might be true that, the papacy being a universal institution, it mattered little where the pope resided. But with the transference of the metropolis of Christendom from the ancient capital of the

<sup>1</sup> Alexander III. and Innocent IV., see Moeller, "History of the Church," ii. 270 and 283.

<sup>2</sup> See Renan, "Le Papauté hors de l'Italie," in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1880), t. xxxiii. 109. Mollat points out that a number of the popes resided and some of them were consecrated away from Rome, though not outside Italy, "Les Papes d'Avignon," Pref. (4th ed., 1924).

Roman Empire on the banks of the Tiber to an insignificant Provençal town on the banks of the Rhone, the idea of the universal papal monarchy lost greatly in impressiveness. No city could replace Rome, with its hoary traditions of empire, as the seat of the papal government, because none could confer on it the prestige with which its association for nearly a thousand years with the eternal city invested it.

Moreover, with the transference of the pope from Rome to Avignon, the papacy became largely a French institution. During the seventy years, *i.e.*, from 1305 to 1376, that it remained in what the Italians called the Babylonish captivity at Avignon, a series of seven French popes occupied the chair of St Peter. Clement V., John XXII., Benedict XII., Clement VI., Innocent VI., Urban V., Gregory XI. were successively elected by the College of Cardinals, whose members were likewise nearly all of French nationality. Pope after pope was not only a Frenchman, but created batches of cardinals largely from the bishops of the French Church. The government of the Church during this lengthy period was thus practically in the hands of Frenchmen, and this French predominance involved the predominance of the French king over this government. The subjection of the Avignon popes to Philip IV. and his successors has, indeed, been exaggerated.<sup>3</sup> Even the pliant Clement V., for instance, would not go the length of formally pronouncing Boniface, at Philip's instigation, guilty of the crimes which his accusers heaped upon his memory, and would not use his influence to get Philip's brother, Charles of Valois, elected Emperor of Germany. Nor did these popes cease from asserting and even emphasising on occasion the far-reaching claims of their predecessors over the civil power,<sup>4</sup> in the case of Ludwig of Bavaria, for example, with whom some of them came into conflict. Certain it is, nevertheless, that, though they might assert themselves on occasion, their freedom of action was greatly limited by their dependence on a succession of French monarchs. In political affairs especially they were fain to play the part of abettors of French policy. In the

<sup>3</sup> See Pastor, "History of the Popes," i. 59-60 (Eng. trans.); Renan, "La Papauté," 127 f.; Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," 23 f. (1903).

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Rocquain, "La Cour de Rome et l'esprit de Réforme avant Luther," ii. 369 (1895).

long war between France and England, for instance, the attempted mediation of a Clement VI. was merely the intervention of the partisan of Philip VI.<sup>5</sup> In the renewed quarrel between the empire and the papacy, which John XXII. initiated, Benedict XII. was forced to waive his pacific efforts in deference to the political interest of Philip VI. in its continuance.<sup>6</sup> Again, pope after pope evaded the demand that he should free himself from French thralldom and return to Italy, not merely because existence was more pleasant and more secure for them and their cardinals at Avignon than in faction-torn, anarchic Rome, but because the French monarch interposed his veto for political reasons. Avignon might not be a French city, but it was separated from French territory only by the breadth of the Rhone, and at Avignon the will of the French monarchs virtually controlled that of the popes in matters political and seriously compromised their position as heads of the Church. As far as matters political were concerned, "Avignon was (generally speaking) but the shadow of Paris, the voice of the vicar of Christ none other than that of the most Christian king."<sup>7</sup> The Avignon papacy continued, in fact, to afford to Europe an object lesson in that subjection to France, which the triumph of Philip over Boniface inaugurated.

The result was disastrous to the papal authority. To the other nations these popes appeared as the dependents and partisans of the French kings rather than the common head of Christendom. "The Avignon popes, without exception," says a Roman Catholic historian, "were all more or less dependent on France. Frenchmen themselves and surrounded by a College of Cardinals in which the French element predominated, they gave a French character to the government of the Church. This character was at variance with the principle of universality inherent in it. . . . (It) necessarily compromised the position of the papacy in the eyes of the world, creating a suspicion that the highest spiritual power had become the tool of France. This suspicion, though in many cases unfounded, weakened the general confidence in the head of the Church, and awakened in the other nations a feeling of antagonism to the ecclesiastical

<sup>5</sup> See Rocquain, ii. 470 f. and 478 f.; Mackinnon, "History of Edward III.," 257 f. (1900).

<sup>6</sup> Rocquain, ii. 446 f.

<sup>7</sup> Mackinnon, "History of Edward III.," 108.

authority which had become French. The bonds which united the states of the Church to the apostolic see were greatly loosened and the arbitrary proceedings of the court at Avignon, which was too often swayed by personal and family interests, accelerated the process of dissolution." <sup>8</sup>

This antagonism found, as we shall see, decisive expression in Germany, England, and Italy. The attempt of a French pope like John XXII., for instance, to intervene in the conflict between Frederick of Austria and Ludwig of Bavaria for the imperial crown provoked the resentment and opposition of the Germans, reopened the old controversy over the papal and the imperial rights, and called forth the emphatic denial, on the part of the imperial champions William of Occam, Marsiglio of Padua, and others, of the papal claim to supremacy over the Church, let alone the State. Similarly the partisanship on the side of France of some of these popes during the war between England and France excited the antagonism of the English king and people, and resulted in the refusal to submit to the exactions by which the popes, on a variety of pretexts, drained the realm of large sums, which were in part used to subsidise the French king. In Italy the misgovernment of a series of French papal vicars drove the states of the Church into repeated revolt. Though the revolt was suppressed by military force by the bellicose Cardinal D'Albornoz, whom Innocent VI. sent to Italy, it broke out afresh, under Gregory XI., in the powerful league which Florence formed in opposition to the papal misgovernment. In Rome itself the impatience of the people at the long protracted absence of the head of the Church exploded at last in 1347 in the attempt to restore the Roman Republic under the tribune Cola di Rienzi, who proclaimed the government of the Roman people, vainly dreamed of a free and united Italy, and naïvely summoned the princes of Europe to do homage to the revived government of the Romans.<sup>9</sup> It seemed, indeed, as if the Avignon papacy must either end in schism, or witness its authority limited to the country of which it was the protégé and the tool.

<sup>8</sup> Pastor, "History of the Popes," i. 59 (1908).

<sup>9</sup> See Gregorovius, "History of Rome," vi., Pt. I., 227 f.

## EXTORTION AND CORRUPTION

These French popes were, on the whole, ill-fitted to repair the damage to the papal prestige and influence consequent on the conflict between Boniface VIII. and Philip IV. Clement V. was too obviously the tool of Philip, too arbitrary in his financial expedients, and too compliant in his lavish benefactions to his relatives and other benefice hunters to uphold the respect due to his office. His successor, John XXII., was certainly not lacking in self-assertion in the renewed controversy with the empire on behalf of the papal supremacy. With a fiery energy he combined a financial ability, which materially, if rather unscrupulously, enhanced the papal revenue and enabled him, like Clement V., to enrich his relatives and courtiers. His energetic administration undoubtedly furthered the material interest of the papacy. Whether it was equally serviceable to the spiritual side of his office is not so palpable. His austere and more spiritually minded successor, Benedict XII., as well as his numerous contemporary critics, certainly did not think so. Benedict set himself to reform "the innumerable abuses" which his predecessors had bequeathed to him, only to incur persistent antagonism and contempt for his pains. His reign was too short to effect an appreciable improvement. In any case, his reform policy was nullified by the prodigal aristocrat who, as Clement VI., succeeded him, and who, in his love of pleasure and pomp, his worldliness, his broader-mindedness, his pliability, was his complete antithesis. "My predecessors did not know how to be popes." "No one should depart dissatisfied from the papal presence." These sayings, which well reflect his glaring prodigality in lavishing ecclesiastical dignities and benefices, contrast with that ascribed to Benedict, in condemnation of papal malversation. "A pope should be, like Melchizedek, without father, without mother, without genealogy." Clement's prodigality resulted in periodic deficit, and this financial chaos was a serious handicap to the last three Avignon popes—Innocent VI., Urban V., and Gregory XI.—who were forced to resort to oppressive expedients to keep the papacy above water. All three were reformers whose good intentions, if very imperfectly realised, testify to their personal

probity and a more befitting sense of the moral obligation of their office.

There is thus substantial reason for the charge of extortion and corruption which some of the Avignon popes would fain have eradicated. The growing centralisation of ecclesiastical administration in the papal curia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries continued into the fourteenth. This centralisation meant encroachment on the rights of prelates, chapters, and patrons. It meant further the concentration of a vast amount of business in the curia, and while increasing the papal revenue, increased at the same time the expense of the central administration. Moreover, the loss or limitation of the revenue derived from the states of the Church, consequent on the removal of the papacy to Avignon, and the extravagance and corruption of the papal court led to a vexatious use of the old financial expedients and the invention of new ones. The papal fiscal system was a very complicated one. There were charges for papal relaxation of the canon law in the form of dispensations, issued from the papal chancery, indulgences, exemptions, and special privileges. By means of reservations and provisions the popes reserved an increasing number of benefices and exercised the right of appointing or "providing" to such benefices throughout the Church at the expense of those of bishops, chapters, patrons. In theory the pope claimed, in fact, from the time of Innocent III., in virtue of his plenary power, to dispose of all benefices, to tax all Church property, and even, as God's representative, to dispose of it at will.<sup>10</sup> Clement IV. in 1265 applied the theory in the case of all those falling vacant in consequence of the death of the incumbent at the Holy See. His application of the theory was widely extended by Clement V., John XXII., and Urban V.<sup>11</sup> By the constitution "Execrabilis" (November 1317) John ordained that those holding a plurality of benefices with cure of souls, which under his predecessor had become a grave scandal, and for which a papal dispensation was, by canon law, necessary, should retain only one such benefice and surrender the others within a month on pain of deprivation, though they might

<sup>10</sup> Bauer, "Epochen der Papstfinanz," "Hist. Zeitschrift," 1928, 459 f.

<sup>11</sup> Lunt, "Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages," ii. 343 (1934); *ibid.*, i. 85.

combine with this a single benefice without cure of souls. He further reserved the redistribution of the benefices thus vacated to himself. The reason adduced for this enactment is the execrable and insatiable ambition of the benefice hunters and the evil effects of this practice. The need for this reform was, indeed, clamant. At the same time it only aggravated the abuse of papal reservations and provisions which it enabled him to multiply, and which, if the English chronicler Adam of Murimuth may be believed, brought to the papal treasury "a countless store of treasure."<sup>12</sup> The popes even made money out of the expectations of candidates for prospective vacancies (*expectantiae*), while the frequent promotions of the holder of a poorer benefice to a richer one both increased the number of vacancies and augmented the papal revenue from this source.<sup>13</sup>

From all benefices subject to papal reservation and provision the popes reaped a rich harvest in the form of taxes known as "services" and annates payable by beneficiaries on appointment or confirmation by them. Services (*servitia communia*) were exacted from patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and, in certain cases, priors to the amount of one-third of the first year's income of these higher benefices of the annual value of 200 florins and upwards, in the case of episcopal sees, 100 florins in that of monasteries. In addition, they were under obligation to pay fees and gratuities to the curial officials and their servants (*servitia minuta* and *sacra*). From these services John XXII. derived 1,123,003 florins during the eighteen years of his pontificate. These payments, which John XXII. and Urban V. greatly extended, were often the cause of serious financial embarrassment to the newly appointed prelate, who was liable to excommunication if he failed to pay, and consequently excited widespread discontent. Like the higher, the lower clergy were taxed on appointment by the pope in a portion of the first year's income of the benefice (*Annata*, *Fructus primi anni* or first fruits). Clement V. first<sup>14</sup> made use of this financial expedient in the case of England, and

<sup>12</sup> The Constitution *Execrabilis* as given in "Extravagantes" "John XXII.," tit. iii. c. 1. A trans. in Lunt, ii. Doc. 348. Adam of Murimuth, "Continuatio Chronicarum," 286, 174 f., ed. by Thompson. See also the "Constitution *Ex Debito*," Lunt, ii. Doc. 347.

<sup>13</sup> Villani, "Storie," i. Lib. XI. c. 20 (ed., Recanti, 1729).

<sup>14</sup> Lunt, "The First Levy of Papal Annates," *American Historical Review*, xviii. 63.

John XXII., later known as "the father of annates," extended it to the whole of Catholic Christendom. The popes further claimed the revenue of the benefice during the vacancy (*Fructus medii temporis*). In virtue of the Jus Spolii, which Urban V. made of universal application, they were entitled to seize the personal property of deceased clerics, high and low. Add to these a variety of other expedients, of which they took advantage to fill their coffers. Peter's pence, for instance, or tribute from the faithful.<sup>15</sup> Theoretically this tax was leviable on all nations. Actually it was levied only on England, the Scandinavian kingdoms, Bohemia, Aragon, and Poland. Tributes were, further, imposed on vassal princes on their accession in the case of England, Naples, Sicily, Aragon. Aids or subsidies, which though originally voluntary, practically became obligatory under penalty of censure for refusal, were levied to meet some special need. All ecclesiastical incomes were further liable to an income tax, usually a tenth, for some special purpose, such as a crusade, which the pope sometimes diverted to his own use<sup>16</sup> and was fain, on occasion, to share with secular rulers. Appeals from the ecclesiastical courts of all countries, which had to be paid for, brought in enormous fees, while procurations or fees were payable to the papal nuncios or legates in the countries visited by them, and by prelates on the occasion of visits which they were obliged to pay periodically to the Holy See. Add, further, the large sums represented by the benefices to which the cardinals and other officials were "provided" without the obligation to perform the duties attached to them.<sup>17</sup>

These taxes had the sanction of canon law and their assess-

<sup>15</sup> Raynaldus, "Annales Ecclesiastici," xxiv. 66.

<sup>16</sup> Rocquain (ii. 373 f.) holds that, though John XXII. urged the crusade against the infidel, his object was merely to obtain money. Mollat ("Cambridge Mediæval History," vii. 286 f. 1932) gives a more favourable view of the zeal of the Avignon popes for the crusade.

<sup>17</sup> On the fiscal system of the Avignon popes, see Lunt, "Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages" (1934). A valuable collection of documents. Trans. with illuminating introduction. Mollat, "Les Papes d'Avignon" (4th ed., 1924). In referring to my "History of Edward III.," this writer misprints my name as MacKinson, p. 273; Samaran and Mollat, "La Fiscalité Pontificale au XIV. Siècle" (1905); Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," i. 46 f., 96 f. (1903); Flick, "Decline of the Mediæval Church," i. 86 f. (1930); Barraclough, "Papal Provisions" (1935); Tihon, "Les Expectatives" (1925); Göller, "Das Liber Taxarum der Päpst. Kammer" (1905), and "Einnahmen der Apostolischen Kammer" (1910); Bauer, "Die Epochen der Papstfinanz," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1928, 457 f.

ment and collection were subject to detailed regulation. The financial business of the *camera* under the papal *camerarius* or chamberlain was, in fact, conducted in accordance with a carefully contrived system. A hierarchy of local collectors, whom Clement VI. greatly increased, and who were armed with the power to excommunicate defaulters, received and forwarded the taxes to the chamberlain through the papal bankers (principally Italian merchants), who received a percentage of the proceeds.

This fiscal system is bitterly denounced in contemporary chronicles and documents, and has been severely criticised by many modern writers. Among contemporary critics were some of the popes themselves, notably the upright Benedict XII., who strove to suppress the malversation of the curial officials and their innumerable hangers-on. Marsiglio of Padua, who wrote in the reign of John XXII., is uncompromisingly denunciatory. "What else is there [at Avignon] than a concourse of simoniacs from everywhere, what else than the clamour of lawyers, the onrush of quibbling benefice hunters, and the onset on the just? There, the right of the innocent is so greatly endangered or so long deferred, if they are unable to buy it, that at length, drained and fatigued by innumerable labours, they are compelled to abandon their just and pitiable suits. For there human laws thunder forth, but divine teaching is silent or rarely makes itself heard. There, discussions and decisions for the invasion of Christian countries, and the getting and seizing of them by arms and violence from those to whom their protection has been lawfully committed. There is neither solicitude nor counsel for the winning of souls."<sup>18</sup> "The greater part of the priests and bishops are little or insufficiently skilled in sacred Scripture in virtue of the fact that the temporalities of benefices are sought after by ambitious, greedy, and litigious persons, who obtain them by begging, bribery, or worldly power. I remember to have seen and heard that most of the priests, abbots, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries are fallen so low that they do not know how to speak grammatically."<sup>19</sup> Marsiglio is the sworn enemy of Church and priest, and may be prejudiced. Alvarez Pelayo, the Portuguese Franciscan who wrote the "De Planctu Ecclesiæ,"

<sup>18</sup> "Defensor Pacis," ii. 24.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 20.

also in the reign of John XXII. (1332), is an extreme defender of the plenary power of the pope and papal penitentiary, and therefore predisposed in favour of the traditional ecclesiastical régime. He thus writes from first-hand knowledge, and his testimony is equally uncompromising. "Whenever I entered the apartment of the papal chamberlain, I saw brokers and tables heaped with gold, and clerks counting and weighing florins."<sup>20</sup> "Gold," wrote the Bishop of Mende, W. Durand, who demanded the radical reformation of the Church, "in head and members . . . is omnipotent at Avignon. Without it nothing could be done."<sup>21</sup> Equally damning is the testimony of W. le Maire, Bishop of Angers.<sup>22</sup> Catherine of Siena, who spent several months at Avignon in the effort to persuade Gregory XI. to return to Rome, sees in a vision Christ making a new scourge to cast out "the merchants, impure, greedy, avaricious, and puffed up with pride, who sell and buy the gifts of the Holy Spirit."<sup>23</sup> At the papal court, she declared, "her nostrils were assailed by the odours of hell."<sup>24</sup> Similarly, to Petrarch the Avignon of Clement VI., which he knew by long residence, is a second Babylon, a hell on earth, where they buy and sell Christ like merchandise.<sup>25</sup> St Catherine was a sentimental visionary, if also a noble representative of practical Christianity, with a vivid imagination and a gift of flowery speech; Petrarch a poet and an Italian patriot, to whom the Avignon popes were renegades, and who was not above suing for benefices, though he refused office as secretary in the curia. Declamation is not demonstration, and generalisations of this kind must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt and confronted with official documents. Villani, for instance, who too credulously retails the Italian gossip about Avignon, avers that John XXII. died worth 15 million florins besides a large sum in valuables, which he assesses at another 10 millions.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> "De Planctu Ecclesiæ," ii. 7.

<sup>21</sup> "De Modo Celebrandi Concilii," iii. 33; Heber, "Gutachten und Reformvorschläge für das Viienergeneralkonzil," 40 f.

<sup>22</sup> Heber, "Gutachen," 37 f.

<sup>23</sup> E. G. Gardner, "St Catherine of Siena," 165 (1907).

<sup>24</sup> "Acta Sanctorum," iii. 900. *Fætorum infernalium vitiorum.*

<sup>25</sup> "Epistolæ Sine Titulo," 296 f. (ed., 1554).

<sup>26</sup> "Storie," I. xi. 20. Ehrle computes that he left over 700,000 gold florins. "Archiv für Literatur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters," v. 159 f. This is still a very respectable amount, making allowance for the higher value of this sum expressed in modern currency. Leclercq calculates that

This is a gross exaggeration and emphasises the need for caution and criticism in dealing with the generalisations of the chroniclers.

The corruption and luxury to which the papal fiscal régime ministered made it all the more intolerable. The papal court under Clement V., John XXII., and Clement VI. vied with every other in its pomp and extravagance as well as its rapacity. Simony virtually disappeared from the list of ecclesiastical offences at Avignon. And simony was not the worst of the vices that disgraced the papal capital. According to the Bishop of Mende the papal court under Clement V. was the seat of gross licentiousness. Its members did not hesitate to make profit out of the houses of ill-fame which abounded in the neighbourhood of the churches and even the papal residence.<sup>27</sup> So widespread had the sin of incontinence become that the bishop proposed as a remedy the sanction of clerical marriage, as in the Greek Church.<sup>28</sup> According to Villani, Clement V. lived in open immorality with his mistress, the daughter of the Count of Foix, and the charge of a lax morality is also made by him against Clement VI.<sup>29</sup> These stories appear to be the mere fruit of Italian gossip,<sup>30</sup> though the charge, in the case of Clement VI., is reported by more credible writers than the Italian chronicler.

On the other hand, the increased traffic in benefices, the far-spread net of papal taxation furnish undoubted evidence of the ecclesiastical commercialism masquerading in the guise of Christianity at Avignon. This sordid aspect of the ecclesiastical side of religion aroused protest and denunciation too vociferous and too persistent to be explained away as mere rhetoric, even if they should not be taken at their face value. There is, in fact, truth, if also overstatement, in the charge of the exploitation of Western Christendom by the Avignon papacy. "After having taken upon itself the moral and religious direction

it represents between 45 and 56 millions of francs (pre-war value of the franc), "Hist. des Conciles," vi., Pt. II., 778. The chamberlain's account of John's estate in detail is given in Lunt, "Papal Revenues," i. 152 f.

<sup>27</sup> "De Modo," ii. lit. 10.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 46; Rocquain, ii. 346; Renan, "La Papauté," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, xxviii. 132.

<sup>29</sup> "Storie," I. ix. 58; II. iii. 43; Hefele-Leclercq, "Hist. des Conciles," vi., Pt. II., 890 f.

<sup>30</sup> Mollat, "Les Papes d'Avignon," 54, 89 (4th ed., 1924).

of Christendom," says Rocquain, "the papacy had aimed at the domination of the world, and now it seemed to lower itself to the rôle of a financial company exploiting in common the wealth of Christendom."<sup>31</sup> Papal provision to benefices might be minutely regulated by canon law. It might be the means of ensuring the promotion of poor or scholarly candidates. It might be a check on the abuse of episcopal provisions and the appointment of unworthy candidates by chapters and patrons. But it inevitably led to the recourse to Avignon of a host of benefice hunters, who intrigued and bribed for promotion. During the period immediately following the coronation of Clement VI. (1342) between 80,000 and 100,000 petitioners for preferment flocked to the curia. Though the number on the accession of Clement was exceptionally large owing to the determined refusal of Benedict XII. to countenance this abuse, it appears to have been normally on a large scale. Moreover, the popes were only too apt to yield to the temptation to find in this practice a means of maintaining a large number of officials, from the cardinals downwards, to whom they "provided" benefices in distant lands, without the obligation to perform the duties attached to them. They too readily ignored the interrelation in canon law between benefice and office (*beneficium* and *officium*) and treated the tenure of such benefices as a private right of civil law without due regard to the public interests involved and explicitly recognised by canon law (*ius beneficiale*). "The serious charge against the curia," observes Mr Barraclough, "is that instead of providing for the central officials from the revenues of the central administration, it granted them benefices in distant churches, simply as benefices, with little or no regard for the *officium*, with a view to which the *beneficium* had been established. To this charge in the final analyses no answer can be made."<sup>32</sup> "Few would deny that the popes rarely performed this task vigorously or resolutely and at some periods approached it very half-heartedly. . . . There is ample evidence that the papal administration of benefices by means of provisions and reservations was felt in the fourteenth, and indeed from the

<sup>31</sup> "La Cour de Rome," ii. 373.

<sup>32</sup> "Papal Provisions," 71 f. (1934). See also Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," i. 184.

middle of the thirteenth century, to be a grievous and unjustifiable burden.”<sup>33</sup> In confirmation of this conclusion we may cite the testimony of Marsiglio. “And what is more horrible, I have known and seen a man under twenty years of age and almost completely ignorant of the divine law invested with the episcopal charge of a famous and populous city, though he not only lacked priestly ordination, but had not even received ordination as deacon or subdeacon.”<sup>34</sup>

In view of this and other abuses, which aroused a widespread antagonism to the papal régime, there is no little force in Berlière’s contention. “It is at Avignon that we may go in search of the origins of the Protestant Reformation.”<sup>35</sup> At all events the bishops of Mende and Angers anticipate the reformers of the early fifteenth century in their arraignment of the evils rampant in the curia, and throughout the Church, and in their insistence on a radical “reformation in head and members.” Already we hear the ominous demand for the limitation of the papal power in the government of the Church, the co-operation of pope and council in the clamant task of reform, and the periodic assembly of General Councils, to which they virtually ascribe the sovereign authority in the Church.

The extortion and corruption of the Avignon papacy provoked resistance as well as remonstrance in Italy, France, Germany, and England. “The methods in exerting pressure, so as to hasten the payment of taxes and overcome resistance, combined to make the papal treasury universally execrated. . . . The accounts of contemporaries leave us in no doubt as to the general feeling. The fiscal measures of the popes of Avignon, though there was reason for them . . . excited the most lively discontent throughout Christendom. Not to mention the statements of chroniclers, we get from documents

<sup>33</sup> “Papal Provisions,” 69 f. Mr Barraclough has written an illuminating monograph on the subject as the result of his own extensive researches and those of French, Belgian, and German scholars. While his book may be described as a sort of apologetic for provisions, he is fain to admit that the examination of the Papal Registers and other sources has confirmed to a certain extent the complaints of the chroniclers and others regarding the growing corruption of the Church during the Avignon period. At the same time he maintains that the opposition to provisions was one-sided and interested. See also his “Public Notaries and the Papal Curia” (1934).

<sup>34</sup> “Defensor Pacis,” ii. 20.

<sup>35</sup> “Suppliques d’Innocent VI.,” xxii., quoted by Barraclough, 29.

in the archives and from the very accurate books of the collectors themselves a right idea of the state of mind of the clergy." <sup>36</sup>

In Italy, where the continued truancy of the popes was bitterly resented, revolt broke out at Rome, Florence, and in the states of the Church. In France the papal collectors were at times roughly handled.<sup>37</sup> Similarly in Germany, where the clergy of Cologne and other Rhineland towns in 1372 vigorously resisted the exactions of Gregory XI. "In consequence of the exactions with which the papal court burdens the clergy, the apostolic see has fallen into such contempt that the Catholic faith in these parts seems to be seriously imperilled. The laity speak slightly of the Church, because, departing from the custom of former days, she hardly ever sends forth preachers or reformers, but rather ostentatious men, cunning, selfish, and greedy. Things have come to such a pass that few are Christians more than in name."<sup>38</sup> "The pope," wrote Duke Stephen of Bavaria, where the agitation was likewise very defiant, "lays a heavy tax on the income of the clergy and has thus brought ruin on the monasteries. They are, therefore, strictly enjoined, under severe penalties, to pay no tax or tribute; for their country is a free country, and the princes will not permit the introduction of such customs. The pope has no right to give orders in their country."<sup>39</sup> Many of the towns were equally recalcitrant.<sup>40</sup> In England, as we shall see, the antagonism culminated in the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire.

<sup>36</sup> Mollat, "Cambridge Mediaeval History," 279 f.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, "Les Papes d'Avignon," 381.

<sup>38</sup> Lacomblet, "Urkundenbuch für Geschichte des Niederrheins," iii. 627, quoted by Pastor, "History of the Popes," i. 91.

<sup>39</sup> Freyberg, "Geschichte der Bayerischen Landstädte," i. 265; quoted by Pastor, i. 92.

<sup>40</sup> "Chroniken der Deutschen Städte," iv. 306; vii. 189; ix. 583; Pastor, i. 73.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION

#### THE SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

EQUALLY significant was the disaffection towards the Avignon papacy on religious as well as political and economic grounds. To the more spiritual minds of the age it represented the spirit of this world, not the spirit of Christ. Its worldliness and corruption seemed a travesty of Christianity. Hence the urgent demand for reform on the part of bishops like William Lemaire of Angers and William Durand of Mende, which they submitted to the Council of Vienne (1311-12).<sup>1</sup> It found emphatic expression in the stricter section of the Franciscan order, known as the Spirituals, who emphasised the obligation of poverty against the laxer section of the order, known as the Conventuals, and the spiritual side of religion against a secularised papacy and Church. This spiritual tendency may be traced far back into the Middle Ages. In the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, in particular, there appears a widespread movement of antagonism to the secularised Church and its official priesthood in the interest of a simpler and more spiritual religion. It is a laic, popular, and, to a certain extent at least, an anti-sacerdotal, anti-ecclesiastical movement. It finds its most positive expression in the "heretics" of the period, in the Poor Men of Lyons, for instance, whom Peter Waldo founded and who developed into the widespread Waldensian sect, and in the Cathari or Patari, whose spiritualism was based on a Manichean-Gnostic conception of the universe (dualism) and whose powerful organisation threatened the supremacy of the Church in Italy itself and in Southern France,

<sup>1</sup> Lemaire's work is edited by Port, "Melanges Historiques," ii. 389 f. "Collections des Documents inedits" (1887). That of Durand was entitled, "De Modo Concilii Generalis Celebrandi" (1671). Summary of both in Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," i. 55 f. See also Hefele-Leclercq, vi., Pt. II., 646 f. (1915).

where they were known as Albigenses. Within the Church the movement took the form of a religious revival, which sought to leaven the dominant ecclesiasticism with the primitive evangelical spirit. In this form it appears in the writings of Joachim, who towards the close of the twelfth century founded a religious community at Fiore among the mountains of Calabria, and who derived his inspiration from the Bible, especially from the prophets and the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> Like the Montanists of old, he is the exponent of the religion of the Spirit, whose advent to purify both the Church and the world and inaugurate the true kingdom of God is at hand. Like them he divided the divine dispensation into three periods—those of the Law, Grace, and Love, corresponding to the reigns of the Father, Son, and Spirit, respectively.

#### ST FRANCIS AND HIS ORDER

Joachim was the precursor of St Francis, whom he seems to have influenced,<sup>3</sup> and in whom the evangelical reaction within the Church found its most potent champion in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. An ardent votary of the mediæval Church and breathing the superstitious atmosphere of the age, he was, nevertheless, inspired by the passion for evangelical simplicity of life and faith. "The Most High Himself," he says in his Testament, "revealed to me that I ought to live according to the model of the Holy Gospel."<sup>4</sup> His rapt enthusiasm and deep human feeling impelled him to eschew the solitary, egotistic life of the cloister and to found an order which, unlike the older orders, should live in the world as Christ lived in it and save it by self-denying love in the service of the poor and the outcast. In contrast to a secularised and wealthy Church, if not in active antagonism to it, his followers were to exemplify the life of strict poverty, making themselves poor as Christ made Himself poor for the sake of others, living by alms and accounting nothing their own. Implicitly, if not expressly the Rule which he gave to the order, is based on the doctrine that Christ and the apostles possessed

<sup>2</sup> On Joachim see Gebhart, "Mystics and Heretics in Italy," 70 f. (Eng. trans., 1922), and Bett, "Joachim of Flora" (1931); Tocco, "L'Eresia nel Medio Evo" (1884).

<sup>3</sup> Sabatier, "Vie de St François," 56, 58 (23rd ed.).

<sup>4</sup> "Testament" in Sabatier, 389 f.

no property, and enjoins the strictest conformity to their example in this respect. "The brothers shall appropriate nothing to themselves, neither a house, nor a place, nor anything, but as pilgrims and strangers in this world, in poverty and humility serving God, they shall confidently go seeking for alms. Nor need they be ashamed, for the Lord made Himself poor for us in this world."<sup>5</sup>

The spirit of St Francis was entirely at variance with that which had transformed the Church in so many respects into a worldly institution and made the current ecclesiastical religion seem a travesty of primitive Christianity. His ideal of complete self-renunciation in the service of others ere long, in fact, proved too high for his followers, and the inevitable lapse from the self-denying enthusiasm of its founder, to which all monastic fraternities sooner or later succumbed, was the result. The order attained an immense popularity and influence. Donations were lavished upon it and even in the lifetime of St Francis degeneration from the ideal of evangelical poverty became apparent. To maintain a vast fraternity in the condition of indigence and humility contemplated by its founder was indeed an impossibility for ordinary human nature, and in spite of the protests and antagonism of a strict party, it ended by accommodating itself to the natural course of things. The ingenuity of Pope Gregory IX. enabled the dominant party to get over the difficulty of the Rule and the Testament in which Francis forbade any alteration of it. In 1231 Gregory suggested that the Testament of the founder could not bind his successors, and adduced the distinctions between the ownership and the use of property. In other words, the ownership of the possessions of the order could be vested in third parties or trustees for its use. This device was improved on by Innocent IV., who in 1245 directed that the ownership should be vested in the Roman Church and the usufruct allowed to the order, and this solution was finally enacted by Nicolas III. in the bull "Exiit Qui Seminatur" (1279).

#### SPIRITUALS AND CONVENTUALS

With the evasion thus devised by successive popes the strict party was by no means satisfied, and the strife between

<sup>5</sup> Henderson, "Historical Documents of the Middle Ages," 346.

it and the moderate party, respectively known as Spirituals and Conventuals, flamed on throughout the thirteenth and into the fourteenth centuries. The Spirituals regarded the Rule as divinely inspired and their founder as a second Christ, and the laxity of their opponents as sacrilege. However exaggerated their notions in these respects, they certainly represented the real spirit of St Francis, in whom the type of the primitive Christian is unmistakable. They certainly had ample cause, in the growing demoralisation of the order, for their protests, though their exaltation of the religious merits of poverty shows a rather morbid tendency. Even to the primitive Christian spirit diligence in business was not incompatible with religious devotion, and the predilection for poverty and mendicancy is not essentially a Christian virtue. They were at all events swimming against the stream, and the persecution, to which they were subjected, intensified their antagonism to their age. This antagonism found startling expression in a book called "The Everlasting Gospel"—an effusion of the apocalyptic type—which was derived from the sixteenth chapter of the Apocalypse and which appeared at Paris in 1254. It consisted of the three exegetical works in which Joachim of Fiore developed his apocalyptic prognostications and which are undoubtedly authentic. To these the author, an Italian Spiritual of a visionary turn of mind named Gherardo di Borgo San Donnino, added an Introduction and explanatory glosses,<sup>6</sup> perhaps in collaboration with, certainly under the patronage of John of Parma, the spiritual general of the order for the time being. In this Introduction the Everlasting Gospel, as proclaimed by Joachim, will displace the Scriptures, which have lost their vitality, in the last age of the Church. The writer attacks not merely the ecclesiastical abuses of the time. He proposes to revolutionise the Church itself. The papacy is doomed. Spiritual men are not bound to obey the pope or to pay heed to his judgment in spiritual things, which he does not understand. The Greeks did well

<sup>6</sup> Renan, "Nouvelles Études d'Histoire Religieuse," 258 f. (1884); Gebhart, "Mystics and Heretics in Italy," 183 f.; Bett, "Joachim of Flora," 98 f. The actual text of the Introduction which contained the distinctive teaching of Gherardo has been lost, but the gist of this teaching is preserved in the investigation by a commission of cardinals nominated by the pope.

to separate from the Roman Church. They are more in accord with the Spirit than the Latins and are nearer to salvation than they. Antichrist is about to appear in the person of a simoniacal pope, and the beginning of the age of the Spirit will take place in six years' time, *i.e.*, 1260. It will be the age of the reign of love and liberty. A new spiritual priesthood (the Spirituals) will displace the ecclesiastical priesthood. The sacraments and the current sacerdotalism will be done away; the new spiritual priesthood will lead the attack on the anti-Christian Roman Church, and spiritual religion will take its place.<sup>7</sup>

Little wonder that this revolutionary blast poured a storm of opposition and animosity against the daring anarchist and his associates of the Spiritual party. "The Everlasting Gospel" was the fruit of a genuine and inevitable moral and spiritual revulsion from the worldly ecclesiasticism, which accorded so ill with primitive simplicity and spirituality. But its visionary spirit was a menace to both the Church and society and might easily have led to the disillusion and chaos attendant on such apocalyptic attempts at reform. Pope Alexander IV. did not, however, give the movement a chance of proving either its efficacy, or, what is more probable, its fanatic fatuity. He directed a commission of three cardinals to examine the book at Anagni, and as the result of their examination ordered it to be secretly burned (July 1255). Gherardo, along with his associate Leonardo, was thrown into a dungeon, where he languished in irons eighteen years. John of Parma was compelled to make way for Bonaventura as General and retired to Rieti. But these severities did not crush the spiritual tendency nor end the quarrel between the two sections of the order. Even the extreme Joachimites continued to exist, though under the rule of the mystic Bonaventura, the Spirituals mostly shed their extravagances. Both tendency and quarrel survived into the fourteenth century and their vitality appears in undiminished force under both Boniface VIII. and John XXII. Both espoused the side of the Conventuals and persecuted their opponents, and some of the more extreme of the latter in Italy went the length not only of defying the papal authority, but of electing a pope of their own in

<sup>7</sup> See the extracts from it given by Renan, 284 f.

opposition to Boniface.<sup>8</sup> Boniface set the Inquisition on their track, to escape which they fled to Sicily. Others who do not seem to have gone so far, but merely insisted on the strict interpretation of their Rule, sought refuge on an island in the Ægean. Jacopone da Todi, who belonged to this group, and composed the "Stabat Mater," was incarcerated in a dungeon for five years until the death of Boniface brought him release. Those of the South of France found a leader during the last thirty years of the thirteenth century in Pierre Jean Olivi, whose writings were several times condemned as heretical, though he himself always professed submission to the Church, and on his deathbed in 1298 expressly acknowledged Boniface as pope. But his saintly reputation and the persecution of his followers revived the spirit of the Everlasting Gospel, which once more found expression in apocalyptic effusions denouncing the Church as the Great Whore of Babylon and predicting the advent of the new age.<sup>9</sup> Clement V. and the Council of Vienne vainly attempted to bring about a compromise between the two parties.<sup>10</sup> The result was only to accentuate the strife, and at length John XXII., who certainly had no personal predilection towards the profession of poverty, decided for the Conventual interpretation of the Rule (April 1317)<sup>11</sup> and once more set the Inquisition to work to crush the recalcitrant Spirituals as heretics, who were also known as Fraticelli in Italy and Beguines in France. Four of them were accordingly tried and burned at Marseilles<sup>12</sup> and many more shared their fate during John's Pontificate.

The Inquisition did not, however, succeed in stamping out the movement. It only created a new sect which maintained its defiance to the pope as Antichrist and claimed to be the true Church—the Church which the Spirit would ere long establish in place of the papal and sacerdotal travesty of it. This sect might be a remnant of narrow visionaries, whom a barbarous

<sup>8</sup> Lea, "History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages," iii. 38 (1887).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 47 f.

<sup>10</sup> The Constitution, "Exivi de Paradiso," Hefele-Leclercq, "Hist. des Conciles," vi., Pt. II., 703 f.

<sup>11</sup> Bull, "Quorundam Exegit," "Extravagantes Joannis XXII.," tit. xiv. c. 1, 117 f., ed. by Jacobus Fontanus (Antwerp, 1572).

<sup>12</sup> See "Lettres Secrètes et Curiales de Jean XXII.," I., No. 245, 328, 408, etc., ed. by Coulon (1906); Balusius, "Miscellanea," i. 198 f. In another bull, Dec. 1317, John refers generally to these adherents of the strict observance of the Rule, as Fraticelli.

persecution tended to unhinge, though they strove to practice in their own fashion the evangelical life of self-denying humility and goodness, and seem to have been guiltless of the vices which their enemies laid to their charge. But the tendency they represented was only an extreme form of a genuine and justifiable protest against the demoralisation of the mediæval Church, which had reached its climax in the Avignon papacy, and this protest was by no means silenced by their condemnation and persecution. It found voice in apocalyptic form, in fact, throughout the fourteenth and into the fifteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

#### JOHN XXII. AND THE CONVENTUALS

Of more importance in its immediate far-reaching effects was the outburst of a bitter controversy between Pope John and the Conventual section of the order. This controversy had reference to the question, not whether the order, as the Spiritualls contended, should strictly observe the law of poverty in accordance with the Rule, but whether the Franciscan doctrine that Christ and the apostles had eschewed all rights of property was orthodox or heretical. In spite of their bitter warfare with the Spiritualls, whose persecution they had strenuously abetted, the Conventualls had steadily maintained this doctrine, whilst striving to evade its practical application. It had been recognised by Nicolas III. in the bull "Exiit," and, however inconsistently in view of their practice, the Conventualls held to it as an essential of their profession and even of the existence of their order. The long strife with the Spiritualls had, however, tended to discredit the doctrine itself as well as the spiritual application of it, and the Dominicans now made use of it as a means of scoring against their Franciscan rivals. At the trial of one of the Spiritualls at Narbonne in 1321, the Dominican Inquisitor took exception to the assertion that Christ and the apostles possessed nothing, either individually or in common, by right of property. A Franciscan present, who was asked his opinion, contended that it was perfectly orthodox. The Inquisitor maintained that it was heretical and ordered him to recant. Instead of recanting,

<sup>13</sup> See Döllinger, "Kleinere Schriften," 533 f. (1890).

the Franciscan appealed to the pope.<sup>14</sup> John XXII. referred the question to the theologians, who ultimately declared against it, whilst an assembly of the Franciscan order at Perugia in May 1322, over which the general, Michael of Cesena, presided, not only upheld the contention, but in a missive addressed to Christendom at large declared it to be a doctrine of the Church on the ground of the bull "Exiit" and other papal deliverances.<sup>15</sup> This bold declaration tacitly called in question the right of the pope to adjudicate further in the matter. In response John angrily condemned the subterfuge by which his predecessors had distinguished between the ownership and the use of property and had vested the possessions of the order in the Roman Church, and finally (November 1323) in the bull "Cum Inter Nonnullos" declared the Franciscan doctrine to be anti-scriptural and heretical (November 1323).<sup>16</sup>

It was now the turn of the Conventuals to experience the persecution which they had excited against their Spiritual brethren, and to incur the odium attached to the Fraticelli, among whom they were now classed. Michael of Cesena, the general of the order, Bonagrazia and William of Occam, two of its most distinguished members, who vainly strove to modify the papal attitude, fled from Avignon (April 1328) and sought the protection of John's arch-enemy, the Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria, whose cause they espoused. In consequence of their association with the Emperor Ludwig in his contest with the pope, the special point at issue between John XXII. and them is lost in the larger controversy over the question of the papal claims in both Church and State, which they challenged in far-reaching fashion. To this contest I now turn.

<sup>14</sup> Raynaldus, xxiv. 189.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv. 190 f.

<sup>16</sup> Raynaldus, xxiv. 232; "Extravagantes Joannis XXII.," tit. xiv. c. 4, 158 f.; Baluze, "Vitæ Papatum Avenionensium," i. 139, 166.

## CHAPTER V

### RENEWED CONFLICT WITH THE EMPIRE

#### JOHN XXII. AND THE EMPIRE

THE death of the Emperor Henry VII. in 1313 was followed by a disputed election and civil war in Germany between the adherents of Ludwig of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria, the two candidates between whom the suffrages of the German electors were divided. On the same day, 25th November 1314, Ludwig was crowned King at Aachen, Frederick at Bonn by their respective partisans. Ludwig had, however, received the larger number of votes in the electoral college, and ultimately he triumphed over his opponent at Mühldorf, where he defeated and took Frederick prisoner. Both had notified the curia (the papal see being vacant owing to the death of Clement V.) of their election, and requested their coronation by the pope as emperor.<sup>1</sup> In response, John XXII., after his election as Clement's successor, instead of acknowledging the claimant with the majority of votes as king, recognised both under the title of "King elect."<sup>2</sup> He thus for his own ends preferred to perpetuate the political impasse in Germany, and in the course of the struggle between the rivals, claimed that the jurisdiction of the empire belonged to the pope in the case of a vacancy, on the ground that God had conferred on Peter all power in heaven and on earth (bull, March 1317).<sup>3</sup> In consequence of this plenary power the pope virtually claimed to be the feudal superior of the empire, and to him, whose vassal the emperor is, rightfully reverts the administration in a contingency of this kind.<sup>4</sup> The weakness of the empire in the second half of the thirteenth century and the early years of the

<sup>1</sup> Müller, "Der Kampf Ludwigs des Baiern mit der römischen Curie," i. 11 (1879).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 26 f.

<sup>3</sup> Raynaldus, xxiv. 55 f.

<sup>4</sup> Müller, i. 39 f.; Riezler, "Die Literarischen Widersacher der Päpste zur Zeit Ludwigs des Baiern," 8 (1874); Mollat, "Les Papes d'Avignon," 202.

fourteenth had encouraged the popes in their policy of asserting their overlordship over Germany. Though their pretension to supremacy over the civil power had received a rude shock at the hands of Philip IV., Boniface VIII. had browbeaten Philip's contemporary Albrecht I. (1298-1308) into the admission that the imperial power was derived from the pope and that the exercise of it was subject to the papal approbation. Clement V. adopted the same attitude towards Albrecht's successor Henry VII.<sup>5</sup>

During the struggle between Ludwig and Frederick in Germany John strove to use his assumed power as the superior of the empire in the interest of his temporal sovereignty and of King Robert of Naples, whom he appointed his imperial vicar, against the Ghibelline or imperial party in Italy. Neither Ludwig nor Frederick was in a position effectively to defend their imperial interests beyond the Alps during the years of civil war in Germany. But Ludwig's final triumph in 1322 brought at last the opportunity of asserting his imperial rights in Germany and Italy, and started afresh the conflict between the papacy and the empire which, though in itself of little interest, is especially memorable for the far-reaching debate on the relation of the civil and ecclesiastical powers which it evoked.

#### THE EMPEROR LUDWIG *VERSUS* THE POPE

It was, in fact, a repetition of the struggle between Boniface and Philip. Only, in this case, the pope had, from political reasons, the support of the French monarch as well as of the King of Naples, whose interest it was to weaken the empire. In this matter John XXII. played the part of the political tool of the French king, as well as the vindicator of the papal claims. But for French support, he would hardly have presumed not only to revive, but to outdo the arrogant claims of a Boniface against the civil power, as represented by Ludwig, in the series of fulminations which he now directed against him. He

<sup>5</sup> Raynaldus, xxiv. 5 f.; "Clementinæ Constitutiones," Lib. II., tit. xi. 151-52. Nos tam ex superioritate quam ad imperium non est dubium nos habere, quam ex potestate in qua vacante imperio imperatori succedimus, ed. by Perrinus, 1572. Müller, i. 39; Riezler, 8; Mollat, 200 f. For the bull of Boniface VIII., "Patris Eterni," directed to Albrecht (30th April 1303), see "Registres de Boniface VIII.," III., No. 5349.

denied his right to exercise the function of King of the Romans and take upon himself the government of the empire, which belonged to the pope during a vacancy, without the papal sanction; called on him to lay down his office within three months, under pain of the papal ban, till he should receive such sanction; forbade his subjects to recognise him as king and emperor under pain of excommunication and interdict, and declared their allegiance null and void (8th October 1323).<sup>6</sup> In a couple of counter declarations,<sup>7</sup> Ludwig maintained his right to the crown on the ground of his election and the successful issue of the contest with his rival, denounced his antagonist in turn as a tyrant, a usurper, and a heretic, and appealed from the pope to a General Council. Whereupon, in March 1324, the angry pope proclaimed him excommunicate, demanded that he should publicly renounce his assumed function as king, within three months, and appear personally or by deputy to answer for his misdeeds, and renewed the threat of excommunication against his adherents, lay and cleric, who should persist in their obedience to him. Finally in July of the same year he deposed him and debarred all Christians from yielding him aid or obedience.<sup>8</sup>

Despite these papal thunders, Ludwig, in response to the appeal of the Ghibelline party in Italy, determined to cross the Alps and vindicate his imperial function. In May 1327 he was crowned King of Lombardy at Milan by two Italian bishops. In the following January 1328 he received the imperial crown itself from Sciarra Colonna by authority of the Roman people, who, in their resentment at the truancy of the Avignon popes, instituted a popular government, reasserted the old claim that the right to dispose of the imperial power was invested in the Roman senate and people, requested the emperor to depose the pope by imperial proclamation on the

<sup>6</sup> Bull "Attendentes quod," Martène and Durand, "Thesaurus Anecd.," ii. 644; Raynaldus, xxiv. 216 f.; Müller, i. 60 f.; Riezler, 17 f.

<sup>7</sup> For the first declaration drawn up at Nürnberg (Dec. 1323) see Gewold, "Defensio Ludovici IV. Imperatoris," 68 f.; the second, issued from Sachsenhausen, is given by Baluze, "Vitæ," ii. 478 f.; Müller, i. 67 f., 75; Riezler, 20 f. The charge of heresy contained in the document seems to have been inserted by Franciscan refugees unknown to Ludwig. Riezler, 25. Against this supposition Müller, i. 93 f. For the views of recent writers on the question, see Gebhardt, "Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte," 7th ed., by R. Holtzmann, i. 464 f. (1930).

<sup>8</sup> Raynaldus, xxiv. 248 f. and 253 f.

ground of heresy and other offences against the Church and the empire (April 1328), and elected in his place a Franciscan monk under the title of Nicolas V. (12th May).<sup>9</sup> Ludwig had outdone even Philip IV. in his defiance of papal authority. In accepting the imperial crown at the hands of the people he ignored the undoubted prerogative of the pope to crown the emperor. In recognising the right of the people to depose the pope and elect another, he had virtually acknowledged its supreme authority in the Church as well as the State. To his age in general his action appeared not only revolutionary, but anarchic.<sup>10</sup> As in the case of Philip the explanation of his daring is to be sought in the forceful character of the men who were the real actors in this strange drama. He was, in truth, only attempting to put in force the political and ecclesiastical theories which had been fermenting and finding expression in the minds of the anti-papal publicists since the conflict between Philip and Boniface. Marsiglio of Padua, John of Jandun, Ubertino di Casale, who directed his policy in accordance with their theories, were the real inspirers<sup>11</sup> of the drama, for which their teaching and the Roman hostility to the Avignon popes had prepared the way. The Roman revolution ere long proved, however, to be mere melodrama. Though not lacking in courage, Ludwig was by no means equal to the grandiose enterprise into which the theorists in his train had hurried him. To carry it to a successful issue brains and money were requisite as well as theories, and he had neither the brains nor the material resources to conquer Italy. No sooner had he left Rome in August 1328 than the people transferred their allegiance to the pope, and subsequently retracted their assumed powers. His departure for Germany at the end of the following year (December 1329) and the submission of the anti-pope to John at Avignon some months later (August 1330) conclusively proved that he had perpetrated a fiasco instead of a revolution, and only added to the discredit and impotence of the imperial power in Italy.

<sup>9</sup> For a vivid account of Ludwig's proceedings in Italy, see Gregorovius, vi., Pt. I., 129 f. See also Müller, i. 174 f.

<sup>10</sup> See Villani, x. 54, on the impression produced by his audacious procedure.

<sup>11</sup> See Riezler, 49, and Müller, i. 189. Lindner, "Deutsche Geschichte," i. 379, whilst admitting the influence of Marsiglio, contends that Ludwig's action was more actuated by mediæval ideas (Otto I.) than by the theories of Marsiglio.

## FORMAL PAPAL TRIUMPH

Nor did Ludwig prove in Germany an effective champion of the rights of his crown against the papacy. He was fain again and again to make humiliating overtures for peace, without result, to John XXII., Benedict XII., and Clement VI. In the face of the papal arrogance, the electoral princes, assembled at Rense, and the Diet at Frankfurt in 1338, asserted, indeed, in no uncertain terms the independence of the national crown and the indefeasible rights of the emperor. By their counsel and common consent Ludwig declared that the imperial dignity and power are derived from God alone; that anyone elected emperor or king by the electors or a majority of them becomes, in virtue of his election, sovereign ruler of the empire, and ought to be obeyed by all his subjects; that he does not stand in need of the approbation or sanction of the pope or anyone else; and that whoever shall gainsay this decree or act in defiance of it shall be guilty of high treason.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately for himself, Ludwig, by his maladroit rule, evoked a revulsion of feeling in Germany. He alienated the princes by his efforts to aggrandise his Bavarian duchy. He scandalised the religious feeling of his subjects by annulling the marriage of the heiress of Tyrol with a son of John of Bohemia, in virtue of his imperial authority, and marrying her to his own son, the Margrave of Brandenburg, in order to get possession of her territory. Of this revulsion Pope Clement VI., to whom he had vainly renewed the abject offers of submission made to his predecessors (September 1343), took advantage to bring about the election of a rival king and emperor in Charles of Moravia, son of John of Bohemia, by a majority of the electors in July 1346. As the price of the papal recognition, Charles vied with even the abject Ludwig, whom Clement now excommunicated, in frustrating the imperial dignity at the feet of the pope, promising not to enter Italy without the papal sanction, or Rome before the day of his coronation, and to leave the city on the same day.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The Law, *Licet juris*, of the Diet at Frankfurt; Henderson, "Select Documents," 437 f.; cf. Müller, ii. 77 f., 292 f.

<sup>13</sup> See Raynaldus, xxv. 380 f.; Theiner, "Codex Diplomaticus," II., No. 156; Gregorovius, vi., Pt. I., 280 f.; Müller, ii. 215 f.; cf. 175 f.

Ludwig's death in the following year put an end to the contention and left the formal triumph to the pope. Real triumph it was not, for the Avignon popes, who had thus arrogantly browbeaten an emperor, who was but the shadow of his great predecessors, were themselves, as the dependents of France, but the shadows of a Gregory and an Innocent. Both pope and emperor, in fact, were fighting for ideas which were only the echoes of former realities. "The Holy Roman Empire of the German nation" had become practically an empty name as far as the imperial power in Italy was concerned. In Germany itself the emperor could not appeal with the same effect as Philip IV. of France or Edward I. of England to the national spirit. The appeal had not the strength of a homogeneous state behind it such as France and England were becoming. The empire was a weak confederation of petty states with an imperial figurehead. "The nations around Germany," says Haller, "had consolidated themselves into single states; the German had no national state. The imperial constitution was not sufficient to make one. It made the empire powerless abroad, and dissipated its internal energies in feud and disorder."<sup>14</sup> The papacy in the conflict with Philip of France had really lost the battle for supremacy against the civil power, and in continuing it against a Ludwig, it was but waging a sham fight. The real powers in Germany were the princes, and in the Golden Bull by which Charles IV. legally recognised the sovereign rights and functions of the electors, the claim of the pope to approve an emperor elected by them was ignored.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, if the quarrel had ended in a formal triumph of the papacy as against Ludwig, it had started or revived ideas which were destined to outlive the quarrel itself and ultimately work startling results in Church and State. In the scholastic debate between the champions of pope and emperor that kept pace with the actual quarrel, seeds were cast upon the waters to germinate after many days in the achievement of the Reformers in the sixteenth century.

<sup>14</sup> "Epochs of German History," 110, Eng. trans. of 2nd German ed. (1930).

<sup>15</sup> See bull in Henderson, 220 f.; Summary of it in Gebhardt, "Handbuch," i. 482 f.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LITERARY ATTACK ON THE PAPACY

#### RENEWED CONTROVERSY

THE literary attack on the papacy, which the conflict between Ludwig and John XXII. evoked, was the revival of that which the long struggle between pope and emperor had aroused in the schools in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the former century the leading exponent on the side of the pope was John of Salisbury ;<sup>1</sup> in the latter Thomas Aquinas.<sup>2</sup> The renewal of the controversy in the early fourteenth was inspired by the struggle between Boniface VIII. and Philip IV. On the side of the pope wrote Ægidius Colonna, usually styled Ægidius Romanus, Archbishop of Bourges, James of Viterbo, Augustinus Triumphus. Ægidius maintains the absolute and all-embracing power of the pope, from whom princes derive theirs, and to whom they are subordinate in the government of their lands. The pope is not even bound by canon or civil law in relation to matters temporal, though generally he should conform to the law in the exercise of his power.<sup>3</sup> He even goes the length of deriving the right of property (*dominium*, lordship) from the pope, whose power extends over the person and the goods of all the faithful, and theoretically maintains, as Wiclif was later to do, that the unworthy possessor of anything loses his right to it on account of sin. For James of

<sup>1</sup> "Polycraticus" (1159), ed. by Webb (1909). For an examination of it see Webb, "John of Salisbury," 22 f.; R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, "History of Mediæval Political Theory," iv. 330 f.

<sup>2</sup> "De Regimine Principum," "Opera," xxvii. There is dispute over the exact position of Aquinas on the relation of pope and emperor. Bellarmine holds that he ascribed to the pope only an indirect power over the State. He certainly asserts the superiority of the pope over princes, who owe to him the same submission as to Christ, "De Reg. Principum," i. 14. In the continuation, probably by Tholommeo of Lucca, the position is insistently maintained. See Rivière, "Problème," 50.

<sup>3</sup> "De Ecclesiastica Potestate," ed. by Boffito and Oxilia (1908), and Scholz (1929). An examination of its contents by M'Ilwain, "Growth of Political Thought in the West," 248 f., and by Rivière, "Problème," 191 f.

Viterbo the Church is a universal State (*regnum*) divinely instituted, the perfection of all rule, and therefore superior to every other. As the successor of Peter and vicar of Christ, the pope is not only the highest priest. He is king of kings, above all kings.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, for Augustinus Triumphus the pope, as Peter's successor, is the supreme temporal as well as spiritual ruler, the superior of all kings and princes, who are "his organs and instruments in obeying his commands in all things and in administering the temporal power at his order." From him also the prelates derive their jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup>

The demonstration of these contentions is largely unreal. It is based on misinterpreted texts of Scripture, uncritical history, and theological prepossession. The elaborate reasoning, which spins out theories on such a false foundation, is accordingly unconvincing as well as tiresome.

On the other side, the most notable contributions are those of the theologian John of Paris, and the Crown jurist and publicist Pièrre Dubois, both of them Frenchmen. According to the former, while the spiritual power is higher in dignity than the temporal, the temporal is derived not from it, but equally with it, immediately from God. He rejects uncompromisingly the papal claim to temporal power and superiority over princes. Christ claimed no such power and conferred none on Peter and his successors. The only power He gave to them was spiritual, while He expressly recognised the independence of the civil power, which, equally with that of the pope, derives from God. He brushes aside the flimsy arguments based on the two swords, the sun and the moon, etc., as mere allegorical fancies. If the pope contravenes the civil law, the secular power may, in the last resort, depose him, and *vice versa*. Neither pope nor prince, he contends, in contradiction of Ægidius, has dominion, lordship over the property of individuals to whom it belongs by right of their labour. Both have only the judicial right to determine the law relative to ecclesiastical and secular property respectively. Moreover, the right to decide in matters of faith belongs, not

<sup>4</sup> "De Regimine Christiano," ed. by Perugi (1914). Better ed. by Arguillièrre (1926).

<sup>5</sup> "Tractatus Brevis de Duplici Potestate Prelatorum et Laicorum" (probably 1308); Scholz, "Die Publizistik zur Zeit Philip des Schönen und Bonifaz VIII." (1903), 486 f.

to the pope, but to a General Council. He ought to govern the Church in co-operation with a representative council—an anticipation of the conciliar contention of the next century, which Gerson and other leaders of the conciliar movement were to apply. Equally decided his rejection of the imperial claim to universal monarchy. With Aristotle he is the champion of the principle of independent states and of the historical independence of the French monarchy in particular.<sup>6</sup>

For Dubois the independence of the temporal power in France is a cardinal principle. He would make the king the guardian of religion within his realm, thus anticipating the later Reformation principle of the religious function of the civil power. He would secularise the temporalities of the Church, though he would pay the clergy annual pensions and allow them to marry—another anticipation of the later Reformation. He would thereby put an end to simony and other abuses rampant in the Church, which the pope in General Council is to reform. The temporal jurisdiction of the pope, involving him in frequent wars, is detrimental to his spiritual function, which is his true vocation. He would, therefore, transfer the temporal power, which he exercises in the states of the Church and claims over the vassal kingdoms of the apostolic see, to the King of France. He would locate the papacy in France and surround the pope with a preponderance of French cardinals. While he admits that he is superior in the spiritual sphere, he in reality makes him the dependent of the French king and the Church subordinate to the State. He would, further, suppress the military orders and turn the monasteries into schools on quite modern lines. He even anticipates the idea of the League of Nations in the council of princes and prelates, which the pope is to summon to establish international peace and take measures to secure its permanence. His lively imagination contemplates, in addition, the Federation of Europe under the hegemony of the French king.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Tractatus de Potestate Regia et Papali"; Goldast, "Monarchia," ii. 108 f. For an examination of it, see Rivière, 281 f.; M'Ilwain, 263 f.; Carlyle, v. 422 f.

<sup>7</sup> "De Recuperatione Terræ Sanctæ" (1307-08), ed. by Langlois (1891). Examination of contents by Berlière, 342 f.; Renan, "Hist. Litt. de la France," 471 f. (1873); Eileen Power, "Social and Political Ideas of the Middle Ages," ed. by Hearnshaw, 139 f. (1923); Powicke, "Pierre Dubois," in "Historical Essays," ed. by Tout and Tait, 169 f. (1902).

## DANTE

The "De Monarchia" of Dante was inspired by the Italian expedition of Henry VII. to vindicate the imperial power in Italy.<sup>8</sup> He is the champion, not of the national state, but of the imperial *versus* the papal power. His work is invested with a special interest as the polemic, not of a theologian or a jurist, but of the greatest literary genius of the Middle Ages. In it the conception of a universal monarchy finds its literary apotheosis at a time when the empire had far overpassed the meridian of its splendour, and actual historical development was exploding the imperial as well as the papal conception of a universal supreme authority. As Viscount Bryce remarks, in reference to the decaying imperial power, the book "is an epitaph instead of a prophecy."<sup>9</sup>

Humanity, he argues in the first book,<sup>10</sup> is ordained by God to attain a certain end, which consists in its welfare and happiness. An essential condition of its attainment is universal peace. For this purpose government is absolutely necessary, not only in the case of the individual, the family, the city, the kingdom, but of the whole of humanity. A universal monarchy or empire, to which these must be subject, can alone assure the welfare of humanity as a whole. Only in being welded into a corporate unity under a universal ruler can mankind become most like to God, who is one, and fulfil His intention. Only so can the world be best ordered and justice be paramount, the universal monarch having no interest but the welfare of all. Moreover, only in such a monarchy is the human race most free and fully enjoys liberty, the greatest gift bestowed by God, since in a universal monarchy the monarch is the servant of all and the law is administered for the good of all. In such a monarchy the citizens do not exist for the good of the ruler, as in the case of such perverted forms of government as democracies, oligarchies, tyrannies, but the ruler exists for the good of the citizens. The universal monarchy, which secures

<sup>8</sup> Wegele, "Dante's Liben und Werke," 346 (2nd ed.); Riezler, "Die Literarischen Widersacher der Päpste," 169. For a discussion of its date, see Foligno in "Dante, Essays In Commemoration," 143 (1921). The most probable approximate date is 1313.

<sup>9</sup> "The Holy Roman Empire," 254 (8th ed., 1886).

<sup>10</sup> "De Monarchia," ed. by Reade (1916). Eng. trans. by Church (1879) and by Wicksteed in "Temple Classics."

justice, unity, and concord is, therefore, indispensable for the welfare of mankind. For the lack of it, the ancient world was torn by division and wars till the advent of Christ, who chose to be born under the universal rule of Augustus, when universal peace prevailed.

To this end the Roman people was destined by God. To the demonstration of this contention he devotes the second book. For this reason the Romans acquired the right of domination over the ancient world, in accordance with the will of God. This domination was not a usurpation. It was the right and due of the noblest of all peoples in the ancient world, who had been predestined by God for universal supremacy, as the history of its "miraculous" achievements shows. Aiming at the good of the state, the Romans, in subjecting the ancient world, gave it law, peace, and liberty, and thus ensured the benefits of universal rule to all. Their empire manifestly rested, therefore, on right and expressed the judgment of God. Force, being the decision of the divine will, is equivalent to right. Christ, in willing to be born under the Roman Cæsar and judged by his representative, recognised and sanctioned his right to supreme jurisdiction over mankind. Even His death for man's sin would have had no validity unless His judge was invested with this universal jurisdiction.

In view of the evils accruing from the contention and rivalry of warring peoples in both the ancient and mediæval world, and onwards throughout the modern world, there is something to be said in favour of his principle of a supreme universal authority to maintain and enforce the unity and general interest of mankind. Dante's ideal is a noble one, and our own age has been reverting to it in the attempt to work out a scheme and a method to secure the reign of justice, concord, peace in a world distracted and torn by the discordance of national interests and ambitions. With the help of Aristotle's "Politics" and "Ethics" he strove to find a plausible basis for the idea of a universal state as exemplified by the Roman Empire and perpetuated by its mediæval successor. He presses Aristotle's political and ethical teaching into an apology and a panegyric of both. In so doing he is guilty of no little sophistry and special pleading. His reading of Roman history is all too partial in the attempt to prove that might is right and

is necessarily the expression of the divine will. Moreover, in view of the rise of independent nations alongside the mediæval empire, his insistence on the feasibility and the prescriptive right of the universal monarchy is strikingly impractical and visionary. The world was moving away from the mediæval political ideal, which experience had proved to be an impossible dream, and which the sophisms of the idealist might render plausible, but could not vitalise.

More forcible is the attempt in the third book, in controverting the papal claim to superiority over the empire, to assert and vindicate the right of the secular power in its mediæval form to independence of the ecclesiastical, as embodied in the mediæval papacy. In this book his appeal to history is far more forcible. The State is not a mere appendage of the Church, dependent on the pope for its authority. It is both a divine and an independent institution, and the denial of its independence is due to the casuistry of the canonists, or, as he calls them, the Decretalists.<sup>11</sup> Against these he pits the authority of the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the ancient Councils, and refuses to admit that of later tradition as represented by them. He assigns to Scripture the "fundamental" authority. "Before even the Church were the Old and New Testaments—'the eternal mandate,' as saith the prophet,"<sup>12</sup> etc. He controverts the irrational exegesis with which the canonists have wrested the Scriptures in support of the papal power, though his method is rather that of the scholastic disputant than of the modern biblical critic. He shows, for instance, that the mediæval notion that the two lights in the first chapter of Genesis—the sun and the moon, the latter of which is dependent on the former—represent the Church and the State, is utterly untenable. This, he points out, is a bad example of the allegorising tendency, which Augustine denounced, to read into Scripture a meaning which it was not intended to convey. He denies with equal force the other arguments drawn from Scripture to prove that the pope, as

<sup>11</sup> He did not know that the so-called Decretals of Isidore of Seville were forgeries. Whilst assuming their genuineness, he refuses to admit the authority of these or any other Decretals, compared with the supreme authority of the Scriptures.

<sup>12</sup> III. 3. Ante quidem Ecclesiam sunt Vetus et novum Testamentum, quod "in æternum mandatum est," ut ait Propheta, etc.

God's vicar, is superior to the emperor—such as the argument from the deposition of Saul by Samuel, the committal of the keys and the binding and loosing power to Peter, the two swords mentioned by Luke (xxii. 3-8).<sup>13</sup> The power of the keys refers only to Peter's spiritual office, and has nothing to do with the laws and decrees of the empire. Nor can the two swords be rationally interpreted from the context as referring to Church and State. He accepts, indeed, as historical the legend of the Donation by Constantine to Pope Sylvester of the dominion of the West. But he denies Constantine's right to diminish or alienate the imperial power, since this would be to act contrary to the office committed to him, of which he was not the proprietor, but the trustee. Whilst admitting that Charlemagne received the imperial crown from the pope, he rebuts the inference, which the canonists draw from his coronation by Leo III., that the imperial is, therefore, derived from the papal power. "The usurpation of a right does not make a right." Moreover, by the constitution of its founder, the Church, as a spiritual kingdom, could not exercise temporal power. Nor can the empire derive its power from the Church, since it existed before the Church, and Christ recognised its authority. Nor, further, is the concern of earthly matters conferred on the priesthood in either the Old or the New Testament. The Church has not, therefore, that to give which the pope claims.<sup>14</sup> The imperial authority, in conclusion, is derived immediately from God alone. At the same time the papal power is equally recognised as divine, and Cæsar will, therefore, be reverent to Peter, and in certain matters be subject to him.<sup>15</sup>

#### MARSIGLIO OF PADUA

His successors Marsiglio of Padua, John of Jandun, and William of Occam, who continued the debate, went far further in their denial of the papal claims and their limitation of the papal power. Marsiglio was probably born about 1290.<sup>16</sup> He

<sup>13</sup> Lib. III. 6, 8, 9.

<sup>14</sup> III. 10, 11, 13, 14.

<sup>15</sup> III. 16.

<sup>16</sup> See Haller, "Zur Lebensgeschichte M. v. P.," "Z.K.G." (1929); Brampton (*English Historical Review*, 1922) dates his birth 1280; Previté-Orton between 1275 and 1280, Introduction to his ed. of the "Defensor Pacis," 9 (1928); Riezler gives the year 1270, "Literarische Wiedersacher," 30.

appears to have studied at Padua and taken the degree of Master of Arts; to have taught at Paris, where he was chosen Rector at the end of 1312, and held this quarterly office for the first quarter of 1313; pursued at the same time the study of medicine, which he interrupted to enter the service of the leaders of the Ghibelline or imperial party in Italy, Cangrande of Verona, and Mat. Visconti of Milan. He reverted to the study of medicine for a couple of years; obtained from John XXII. the "expectancy" of a prebend in the cathedral of Padua; again, for a time, tried his hand in the sphere of Italian politics, and ultimately about 1319 returned to Paris to resume his academic activity in the Faculty of Arts, to practise as a physician, and take up the study of theology.<sup>17</sup>

It was during his later sojourn at Paris that the controversy over the relation of the ecclesiastical and the temporal power again became acute in the conflict between Pope John XXII. and Ludwig IV. This conflict was the immediate inspiration of the "Defensor Pacis," the bulky polemic which he wrote in collaboration<sup>18</sup> with John of Jandun and finished in June 1324, and which he addressed to Ludwig. The boldness of its argumentation on the imperial side made it too risky for its authors to remain in Paris and in 1325 or 1326 they betook themselves to Ludwig's court at Nürnberg and placed their pens and their brains at his disposal in pursuance of his cause. Along with the Ghibelline party in Italy, they were the inspirers

<sup>17</sup> I have followed Haller in this brief summary of his early career, which is very obscure. He differs considerably from his predecessors.

<sup>18</sup> A certain collaboration is admitted by recent writers on Marsiglio. They only differ as to its extent. Emerton reduces it to small dimensions, "Harvard Theological Studies," 19 (1920). Orton concludes that he was the main author. N. Valois, on the other hand, contends strongly for collaboration on a large scale, "Hist. Littéraire de France," xxxiii. 523 f. (1906). So does Haller. Miss Tooley seeks to prove that John of Jandun wrote the first book, and Marsiglio the other two, "Transactions of the Royal Hist. Society," 85 f. (1926). She is followed by M'Ilwain, "Growth of Political Thought," 297 f. There is some force in this contention. It is based on the view that John of Jandun, as a student of Aristotle, wrote the more philosophical part (Bk. I.) and Marsiglio, as a publicist, the more practical part (Bks. II. and III.). I am doubtful of this neat division. For the most recent exposition of the contents, see Previtè-Orton, "Proceedings of the British Academy," 1936. Whether he was influenced in addition by Occam, as Riezler maintains, is also disputed. Sullivan rejects this influence, *American Historical Review*, April to July 1897, 426. Orton minimises it, *Introd.*, 26. Emerton concludes that there is but slight evidence of actual collaboration between them "Harvard Theological Studies" (1920), 16. Haller denies it. Marsiglio later (1342) wrote a work on the same subject entitled "Defensor Minor," ed. by Brampton (1922).

and directors of the imperial policy which attempted in so startling a fashion to translate their theories into practice during the dramatic expedition to Rome.<sup>19</sup> It is not surprising that the pope condemned them and their doctrines as heretical and inhibited the faithful from aiding or consorting with them in any way (October 1327).<sup>20</sup>

For Marsiglio, as for Aristotle, from whom he borrows, the State is a natural organism, which developed with the development of human society and embraces the material and moral life of man.<sup>21</sup> It may assume various forms, but it involves law, which is necessary to the maintenance of right.<sup>22</sup> And who is the source of law? Who invests it with its authoritative, binding power? The people, he answers with Aristotle—the people in the sense of the universality of the citizens, or the more numerous and estimable portion of them decreeing by their choice and will, openly expressed<sup>23</sup> in the general assembly of the people, what is to be done or left undone in civil matters, under a certain penalty. The people, as the legislating power, is thus the sovereign power in the State, from whom the administrator of the law or prince derives his authority,<sup>24</sup> and in this distinction between the legislator, *i.e.*, the constituent body, as the source of law, and the administrator of the law, we have the unequivocal expression of the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. Accordingly, the administrator or prince, who may consist of one person or several, must act in strict conformity with the law; and is not at liberty to substitute his own arbitrary will for law. From this it follows that he is responsible to the legislator, and must be called to account for maladministration, though this is to be done judiciously, in order that the security of the State may not suffer thereby.<sup>25</sup> The prince may assume and exercise his office in virtue of hereditary succession, or of election by the people, though he prefers an elective to a hereditary monarchy,

<sup>19</sup> Riezler, 49 f.

<sup>20</sup> "Bullarium Romanum," ix. 167 f.; Raynaldus, xxiv. 322 f.

<sup>21</sup> I. 3 and 4. "Vivere et bene Vivere" (Orton's ed.).

<sup>22</sup> I. 11.

<sup>23</sup> I. 12. *Valentiorum partem civium* is usually translated "the majority of the citizens," but in the emended text of Privè-Orton the quality (*qualitas*) as well as the number of the citizens is to be taken into account. I have therefore translated the phrase as above.

<sup>24</sup> I. 15.

<sup>25</sup> I. 18, not for instance, for every trifling misdemeanour.

on the ground that perfection of character is essential to good government and election is more likely to ensure this than hereditary succession.<sup>26</sup> To him, as empowered by the legislator, belongs the duty of administering the laws and he alone has coercive jurisdiction. A divided authority would lead to the ruin of the State, and, therefore, though the administration of the laws may be the work of many, there can only be one supreme jurisdiction.<sup>27</sup> The unity of the State demands the unity of the administrative power, since its division (as in the feudal state) necessarily tends to anarchy. It rules out especially the temporal power of the Church, the exemption of the clergy from civil jurisdiction. While insisting on this unity, he does not share Dante's conception of one universal State, but believes in the independence and rights of nation-States, as they were developing in his time.<sup>28</sup>

This being so, what of the claim of the spiritual power to supremacy over the temporal? This claim, which is the cause of the division and conflict that endanger and have long endangered the peace of States, arises from the false conception of the priestly office, and especially from the striving of the popes to possess themselves of the supreme jurisdiction, not only over the Church, but over the civil power, on the ground partly of the Donation of Constantine, but especially of the *plenitudo potestatis*, the fullness of power granted by Christ to Peter. Christ, so reason the popes, possessed the fullest power and jurisdiction over kings, princes, and all communities, and they, as His representatives or vicars, are invested with the same fullness of authority.<sup>29</sup> Against this assumption he insists that neither the Bishop of Rome nor any other bishop or ecclesiastical functionary has any coactive jurisdiction in things temporal,<sup>30</sup> and he seeks to prove his contention in the opening chapters of Book II. by a critical examination of Scripture and by the testimony of the Fathers. From Christ the priesthood only received the commission to preach and dispense the sacraments.<sup>31</sup> As Son of God He had, indeed, the power to confer on the Church temporal jurisdiction over the kingdoms of the earth. But the only power which He gave to

<sup>26</sup> I. 16.<sup>27</sup> I. 17.<sup>28</sup> I. 17, ii. 28.<sup>29</sup> I. 19.<sup>30</sup> I. 19.<sup>31</sup> II. 6.

His disciples was spiritual,<sup>32</sup> and the papal claim is, therefore, not in accord with His institution. The power of the keys granted to Peter has reference merely to the sacrament of penance, and involves only the right to declare absolution, not the right to forgive sins.<sup>33</sup> Nor has the priest the right of excommunication, which in the New Testament (Matt. xviii.) belongs to the Christian community itself.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, no priest may claim, in virtue of his sacerdotal character, exemption from the jurisdiction of the civil courts in case of the transgression of the law of the land, since such exemption tends to the subversion both of the law and the State. Whoever enjoys the advantages of the State must be subject to the authority of its laws.<sup>35</sup> Nor may the priest use force in the service of religion. He can compel no one to believe. He can only use persuasion and exhortation. The punishment of offences of this kind is reserved for the world to come and the application of force in the service of the Church is entirely contrary to the teaching of Christ and the apostles.<sup>36</sup> Christ alone is judge and He exercises His function not here, but hereafter. Even the temporal power can only take cognisance of and punish heresy as far as it is an offence against the civil law; though he has his doubts about its right to coerce the mind or conscience of the heretic.<sup>37</sup> The priest may not, further, possess property, but is bound by the law of evangelical poverty,<sup>38</sup> as the Franciscans, of whom Marsiglio is the ardent champion, contended. They are entitled only to a bare subsistence from the funds given to the Church; and the surplus may be used by the State for other useful purposes.

Thereafter follows a critical review of the hierarchy and the papacy in order to show the essential equality of the priesthood and the lack of Scriptural evidence for the papal power. He anticipates in a remarkable degree the critical-historical spirit of the Reformation and the Renascence. He takes history as his guide to test papal and ecclesiastical claims and assumptions, though he is not sufficiently critical from the modern point of view. The New Testament and the Fathers, but especially the former, constitute for him the supreme authority in these

<sup>32</sup> II. 4.

<sup>33</sup> II. 6.

<sup>34</sup> II. 6.

<sup>35</sup> II. 8.

<sup>36</sup> II. 9.

<sup>37</sup> II. 11-14.

<sup>38</sup> II. 5, 10.

as in other ecclesiastical questions. The priest and the bishop do not, he contends, differ in essential dignity, but only in accidentals. In the primitive church presbyter and bishop were identical.<sup>39</sup> At a later time a distinction arose from reasons of expediency and the name bishop was limited to those elected to superintend the other clergy, who had greatly increased in number. All bishops are, however, of equal dignity and authority, are equally successors of the apostles. Nor was there any distinction of dignity or power among the apostles themselves. Peter, as Bishop of Antioch, had no superiority over the other apostles in their various spheres of labour, and it was only at a later time (from Constantine <sup>40</sup>) that the Bishop of Rome acquired such superiority. It cannot, in fact, be shown from Scripture that Peter was ever at Rome, and the legend that takes him there he considers to be devoid of foundation, though he believes that he ultimately found his way thither. Paul, not Peter, is the first historical Roman bishop (?). Nor can the pope or any other bishop claim powers which neither Peter nor the other apostles exercised.<sup>41</sup>

To whom, now, falls the right of electing and appointing bishops and priests? To the Christian community, or its accredited representatives, the Church being, as he had previously noted, the universality of the faithful, and not the hierarchy.<sup>42</sup> As in the State, so in the Church, the supreme power resides in its members, *i.e.*, the people, and the power of election or deprivation of both bishops and priests belongs exclusively to it, or the executive which it may authorise to act for it. Nor do the temporalities belong to the Church, but to their founders—whether kings or private persons—who have given them for the maintenance of the clergy. Nor, further, are these temporalities immune from taxation.<sup>43</sup>

In matters of faith as well as polity, the standard authority is, for Marsiglio, the New Testament as interpreted, in case of dubious texts, by a General Council <sup>44</sup> in accordance with the literal, not the allegorical meaning, which he entirely rejects. Its authority is superior to that of the Fathers or the Old Testament which it has superseded. Papal decrees are not thus binding,

<sup>39</sup> II. 15-16.<sup>40</sup> II. 18.<sup>41</sup> II. 16.<sup>42</sup> II. 2. *Universitas fidelium, credentium et invocantium nomen Christi.*<sup>43</sup> II. 17.<sup>44</sup> II. 19.

since the pope is not infallible. How, for instance, can the bull of a Boniface VIII. be regarded as infallible, which declared certain propositions as necessary to eternal salvation for all, but which Clement V., in turn, declared were not applicable to the King of France? <sup>45</sup> And have not popes been accused of heresy? Pope Liberius, for instance. Only a General Council, as representing the whole body of Christians, can authoritatively define what is to be believed. Of this Council, which represents the body of believers, laymen as well as clerics ought to be members. The calling of the Council, further, belongs to the legislative body, or whom this body may authorise, and it also has the right to nominate its members, to supervise its deliberations, and put them in execution. Without the authority of such a Council, no bishop or priest may place a prince or people under excommunication.<sup>46</sup> It is superior to the pope, who can only derive his authority from it, and on this condition he is ready to admit his jurisdiction as the general head of the Church, though he would limit it to such functions as the intimation to the legislator of the need for the calling of a Council, its presidency, the submission of the measures to be discussed, their publication, and the punishment of their transgression with ecclesiastical censures.<sup>47</sup> How the popes gradually arrogated to themselves powers and functions of a far larger range until they finished by claiming the superiority over emperor and kings, he attempts to explain by a review of history past and present.<sup>48</sup> The result has been the misgovernment of the Church, the moral degeneracy of the clergy, and the detriment, dispeace, and misery of the empire. In the course of this review he uses as strong language as Luther later did in denunciation of the papal claims and the evil consequences for the nations and especially the empire of the papal régime.

Marsiglio thus anticipates in a remarkable degree the modern spirit in his plea for freedom of belief and toleration, in which he goes beyond even the later reformers, in his appeal from ecclesiastical tradition to the New Testament, in his spiritual apprehension of the Church, in his conception of the sovereignty of the people, in the vindication of its rights in Church as well as State, in the application of the historic method

<sup>45</sup> II. 20.<sup>46</sup> II. 20.<sup>47</sup> II. 22.<sup>48</sup> II. 23-26.

(albeit imperfectly) to the discussion of claims professing to have a historic basis. He is less trammelled by the mediæval spirit than Dante, and though the champion of the imperial against the papal power, he has outlived the conception of a universal State, and fully recognises the sovereign rights of every association to which the term State may be applied, whether empire, nation, or city State. He is the intellectual prophet of a new age, the daring free-thinker in politics, secular and ecclesiastical. He is "a creative system-maker," as Previtè-Orton appropriately terms him.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, he does not rise entirely above the limitations of his age. In particular, he fails to grasp the large conception of the rights of the individual as against the State as well as the Church. He tends to emphasise the sovereignty of the State at the expense of individual liberty and the autonomy of the Church, which he identifies with the State and subjects to its control. Nor is he entirely original. He borrowed from Aristotle his theory of the State as the embodiment of the general will, and his mind is influenced by the civic life of the Italian republics, of one of which he was a citizen, and by the controversies of the time. What is his own is the striking ability to evolve from such elements a theory of Church and State so remarkable in important respects as an anticipation of modern developments in both.

#### WILLIAM OF OCCAM

William of Ockham or Occam appears to have been a native of the Surrey village of this name, where he was born towards the end of the thirteenth century. He studied theology at Oxford, became a member of the Franciscan order, and took the degree of B.D. with a lengthy thesis on the "Sentences" of Lombard. The assumption of Riezler<sup>50</sup> and others that he was a pupil of Duns Scotus is disproved by the fact that Scotus had left Oxford before he became a student there. Nor does there seem to be any real ground for the additional assumption that he continued his studies and taught at the University of Paris before he was summoned in 1524 to Avignon as suspect

<sup>49</sup> "History of Europe" (1198-1378), 210 (1937).

<sup>50</sup> Page 70.

of heresy.<sup>51</sup> At Avignon he was closely associated with Cesena and Bonagrata, the leaders of the Spiritual Franciscans, whose cause he adopted, and was excommunicated along with them by Pope John XXII. (June 1328). A few days before the promulgation of the sentence he made his escape, with them, from Avignon to Italy, and sought the protection of the Emperor Ludwig, whose cause he espoused against the pope. According to tradition, he accosted the emperor with the words, "Defend me with the sword and I will defend you with the pen." In defiance of the papal excommunication he maintained for the next twenty years, from his retreat at the Franciscan house at Munich, the cause of both the emperor and his order against the pope in a series of controversial works, which earned him from posterity the title of Doctor Invincibilis. According to tradition he was reconciled to the Church shortly before his death in 1349 or 1350,<sup>52</sup> though it is doubtful whether the reconciliation actually took place.

As a publicist his method is much more scholastic than that of Marsiglio, and though he was the staunch adherent of the Emperor Ludwig against the papalists, he adopts in his writings the tone of one who is only weighing the arguments for and against and has no decided opinions of his own. Nevertheless, there is little doubt, as Riezler<sup>53</sup> has shown, on which side in current controversial questions his predilection lies. Like Marsiglio he was the pioneer of a new age in his appeal to Scripture as against tradition, in his conception of the Church as the community of believers, in his antagonism to papal infallibility and plenary power, in his assertion of the fallibility

<sup>51</sup> Sullivan maintains that "there is no record to show that he taught at Paris," *American Historical Review*, April to July 1897, p. 416. Brampton in his ed. of Ockham's "De Imperatorum et Pontificum Potestate" (1927), and Moody, "The Logic of William of Ockham," 19 (1935), also ignore his supposed Paris sojourn. If Sullivan's contention is correct, his association with Marsiglio and his influence on his work are unwarranted assumptions.

<sup>52</sup> Clement VI., in June 1348, empowered the General of the Order to absolve him on certain conditions, Müller, "Der Kampf Ludwig's des Baiern mit der römischen Curie," ii. 252; Riezler, 126, who gives the date as 1349; "Bullarium," ix. 199.

<sup>53</sup> 244. His chief works are the "Opus Nonaginta Dierum" (the "Work of Ninety Days"), so named from the duration of its composition; the "Octo Quaestiones super Potestate ac Dignitate Papali," written about 1339, and the "Dialogus," completed in 1343. They are in Goldast, "Monarchia Sancti Romani Imperii," ii. Another of his works hitherto unpublished has recently been edited by Brampton, "De Imperatorum et Pontificum Potestate" (1927), written in 1346 or early in 1347.

of even a General Council, and of the supreme authority of Scripture. It is certain that his teaching exercised, indirectly, if not directly, an influence on the thought of Luther and other evangelical reformers.

He derives the papal power from the Donation of Constantine, which, like Dante and Marsiglio, he accepts as historical. What the pope received from the emperor (temporal sovereignty over the West) was not the recognition of an old right, but the present of a new one,<sup>54</sup> which did not, however, convey supremacy over the temporal power as represented by the emperor. In crowning the emperor he does not confer on him temporal jurisdiction, since he has already received it by the choice of the electors.<sup>55</sup> The coronation is merely a religious ceremony.<sup>56</sup> He is ready to recognise the papal primacy over the Church, which Peter received from Christ, and which, as the successor of Peter, the pope embodies. But its exercise is limited to spiritual things and may not infringe the rights of others—of the emperor, princes, or other laymen and clerics.<sup>57</sup> It may not be extended so as to expose the faithful to a tyranny which is greater than that prevailing under the ancient law, for which Christ substituted the law of freedom.<sup>58</sup> Its exercise is further conditioned by the common good, and if the common good renders it expedient, the Church may modify its constitution in accordance with the necessity of the times. Whilst the papal primacy, in itself, is a useful institution, it is not essential that the Church should be ruled by a single ruler, and if it becomes an abuse, it may be discarded. As the earth is divided into many states, the Church may similarly be ruled by a number of popes. It would thereby, indeed, be more effectively and righteously governed. As a matter of fact, it was, he might have added, so governed in the period of the ecclesiastical patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome. Christ is the real head, in whom the Church is united.<sup>59</sup> Nor does it belong to the pope to decide what is to be believed and what not, for this would be to make Christian faith dependent on the papal will.<sup>60</sup> That the popes have fallen into heresy and therefore are not

<sup>54</sup> "Quæstio," i. 10.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 9.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 8, 9, and v., vi.

<sup>57</sup> "Dialogus," Pt. III., Lib. I. 17.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. III., Lib. I. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. III., Lib. II. 30.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. III., Lib. II. 8.

infallible, is proved by an appeal to history.<sup>61</sup> Even a General Council may err, and neither the Church itself, nor its clergy, nor even the majority of its members may lay claim to infallibility.<sup>62</sup> In this he goes beyond even Marsiglio, and anticipates the individualist standpoint of the later reformers.

A General Council is, however, superior to the pope, though in ordinary circumstances it belongs to him to convene it. But in the case of a heretical pope, the right belongs to princes, or to the Church itself.<sup>63</sup> The Church, like every autonomous body or community, has the right to assemble itself, or by its representatives. Of this assembly, duly elected, laymen, he holds with Marsiglio, as well as clerics may be members. Nay, even women may act as representatives, since in matters of faith there is no distinction between man and woman.<sup>64</sup> Whilst the real supremacy in the Church thus resides in an elected representative assembly, the ultimate authority in matters of belief resides in the Scriptures, since the Bible and its authors, the universal Church and the apostles, alone are infallible.<sup>65</sup> This attribute he denies both to the papal decrees and the writings of the Fathers.

<sup>61</sup> "Dialogus," Pt. I., Lib. V. 2 and 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. I., Lib. V. 25 f.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. I., Lib. III. 84 f.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. I., vi. 85.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt. III., Lib. III. 4.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT AND THE PAPACY

#### ANTI-PAPAL AND ANTI-CLERICAL MOVEMENT

ALREADY at the beginning of the fourteenth century the spirit of revolt in England against the abuses of the papal régime at Avignon found expression in the English Parliament. Edward I., indeed, by countenancing the papal exactions from the English Church, paid for the compliance of Clement V. in suspending, in 1306, Archbishop Winchelsey, whose relations with the king had been more or less strained<sup>1</sup> since the publication of the bull "Clericis Laicos."<sup>2</sup> But the Parliament which met at Carlisle in the last year of his reign (1307) was less accommodating, and not only strongly protested against provisions and other abuses, but prohibited the exactions of the papal agents.<sup>3</sup> In the beginning of the reign of Edward II. it renewed its protest in a strongly worded epistle to the pope (Parliament at Stamford, August 1309) against provisions, annates or first fruits, Peter's pence, and other oppressive expedients,<sup>4</sup> which robbed rich and poor alike and brought religion into discredit. The reign of the second Edward presents, indeed, a melancholy picture of corruption, rapacity, and demoralisation in the Church as well as the State. The bishoprics were largely occupied by intriguing hirelings, who paid for their nomination by lavish bribes at Avignon. The corruption rampant at the papal court and the consequent misgovernment and degradation of the Church by the creatures whom the pope "provided" to benefices great and small,

<sup>1</sup> For the feud between the archbishop and the king see Capes, "English Church in the Fourteenth Century," c. ii. (1900).

<sup>2</sup> See Stubbs, "Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I. and II.," i., Introduction, 106 f.

<sup>3</sup> See Stubbs, i. 109 f.; Capes, 41 f.; Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," i. 382 f.

<sup>4</sup> "Annales Londinienses," Stubbs, "Chronicles," i. 161 f. See also Waldo Smith, "Episcopal Appointments in the Reign of Edward II." (1938).

or to whom he granted dispensations to hold pluralities produced an anti-papal and anti-clerical movement in England, which ever and anon appears throughout the fourteenth century in anti-papal or anti-clerical legislation and culminated in the second half of it in the attack of Wiclif, the rise of the Lollards, and the peasants' revolt.

This anti-papal feeling already finds strong expression in the chronicle of the reign of Edward II. ascribed to a monk of Malmesbury. "Gold," reflects he bitterly, "is the lord that effects all business in the papal curia. That court loves suits, litigation, quarrels, because these cannot be settled without money. . . . This detestible cupidity has excited the censure of the whole world. . . . Lord Jesus," he exclaims in his scathing indictment of the corrupt papal régime as it affected the English Church, "either take away the pope from our midst, or diminish the power which he presumes to exercise over the people, since he who abuses the power conferred on him merits to lose his privilege. What shall I say of the clerics who in these days hie to the papal curia and, pouring out much money, buy, as in a venal market-place, dignities and prebends? If we say that simony is committed, the pope himself cannot be excused, because simony is obligatory on this side and that."<sup>5</sup>

Equally apparent is the anti-clerical spirit which revolted against the demoralisation, the wealth, and oppressive privileges of the higher clergy and found expression in attacks by the populace on the rich abbeys of Bury St Edmunds and Abingdon in 1327.<sup>6</sup>

With the outbreak of the long war with France in the early years of the reign of Edward III. (1338), political antagonism intensified the anti-papal feeling. Not only were many of the aliens whom the pope "provided" to English benefices Frenchmen, the popes themselves were Frenchmen and partisans of the French kings. On political as well as practical and moral grounds the outcry against provisions and reservations broke out afresh. In the Parliament of 1343, the

<sup>5</sup> "Vita Edwardi Secundi, Auctore Malmesberienſe." Stubbs, "Chronicles," ii. 197 f. The whole passage is bitterly hostile, but the numerous provisions and dispensations in the papal registers of the period go far to substantiate his denunciation of the scandalous traffic in benefices. See "Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers," ii.; "Papal Letters," 1305-42.

<sup>6</sup> See "Annales Paulini," Stubbs, i. 332 f.

Commons complained to the king that English money is distrained into the pockets of a host of foreign priests, who mostly do no work in return and are besides the king's enemies. Hence the insistent demand for the abolition of provisions and reservations. At their request, in which the Lords united, Edward had the records of the Carlisle parliament examined, when it was found that, at its request, his grandfather had prohibited these nefarious practices. Whereupon both monarch and parliament undertook to write to Clement VI. and insist on immediate remedy.<sup>7</sup> The letter of the parliament is most explicit on the detriment accruing to both religion and the realm from these abuses, and insists on their abolition. "Which errors, abuses, and scandals, most holy Father, we cannot and will not longer suffer or endure."<sup>8</sup> In a separate epistle Edward not only added his condemnation, but reminded the pope that the apostolic see had confirmed the right of free election to the English Church granted by his ancestors.<sup>9</sup> Without waiting for a reply, he prohibited by his own authority the papal proctors from receiving the revenues of two benefices on behalf of the pope's nominees, placed them in custody, and finally commanded them to leave the kingdom.<sup>10</sup> He next issued a proclamation forbidding the execution of the papal provisions to benefices in favour of aliens,<sup>11</sup> and ordered the mayors of London and other ports to arrest the bearers of papal bulls arriving from abroad. In spite of the protest of Clement VI., he published a second proclamation against provisions, "said apostolic letters notwithstanding."<sup>12</sup> No papal bull or letter should henceforth have any authority to dispose of the revenues of English curés on pain of severe punishment.<sup>13</sup> He maintained this resolute attitude in the presence of two envoys whom Clement sent to insist on his traditional rights over the English Church.

<sup>7</sup> "Rotuli Parliamentorum," ii. 144 f.

<sup>8</sup> See the letter in Murimuth, "Continuatio Chronicarum," 138 f., ed. by Thompson, Rolls Series 93.

<sup>9</sup> "Fœdera," ii. 1233; cf. 1231; Murimuth, 143 f.; Hemingburgh, ii.

403.

<sup>10</sup> Murimuth, 142 f. and 150.

<sup>11</sup> "Fœdera," ii. 1230

<sup>12</sup> Murimuth, 153. For the numerous missives directed by Clement to the king and others against "the novelties attempted against God and the holy Roman Church," see "Calendar of Papal Registers," iii. 2 f., especially 9.

<sup>13</sup> Murimuth, 153 f.; cf. "Fœdera," iii. 2 (30th Jan. 1344).

He was, however, by no means inflexible in his opposition to the pope when it suited his interest to give way. His ecclesiastical policy was largely shaped by personal or political considerations. When it was a question of getting his own nominee pushed into a good benefice, he was ready enough to surrender the rights of chapters and enlist the influence of the pope on his side, as in the case of the filling of the sees of Durham and Ely. In this sordid traffic in sacred things king and pope shared on occasion, and in this unsatisfactory state matters remained in the meantime, to the tribulation of the patriotic Adam of Murimuth who thus reflects on these crying abuses. "From these facts," he concludes a review of the exactions of Clement VI. and his immediate predecessors, "it may be inferred to what a degree the Roman see strives to filch the wealth of the kingdom of England, whether directly or through its cardinals and other creatures of the curia, in whose possession are the finer benefices of the land, which benefices it would be difficult to enumerate." To such an extent is this so that it is probable that the amount annually drawn by the apostolic see and by foreign provisers from the realm of England exceeds the yearly revenue of the king himself (?). From this source even the enemies of the king are, it is believed, maintained. Wherefore one might ironically apply to the king and the kingdom of England the text in the Epistle to the Corinthians, "Ye suffer wise men gladly, seeing that ye yourselves are fools." Thus among the creatures of the apostolic see it has become a proverb that the English are good asses, supporting every intolerable burden placed on their backs. Against these things no remedy can be offered by the prelates, since they have almost all owed their promotion to the apostolic see, and dare not utter a word which might offend the pope. The king even, and the nobles, if they have ordained and enacted remedies against these abuses, themselves, nevertheless, in shameless fashion, by letters and prayers in behalf of their unworthy favourites, act contrary to them and show themselves lukewarm in regard to every effective proposal.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Continuatio Chronicarum," 175 f. Murimuth was a doctor of civil law and was three times sent to Avignon on ecclesiastical business (1312-19). He was a canon of St Paul's and precentor of Exeter Cathedral, which he exchanged for the rectory of Wraysbury. He had thus an intimate knowledge of the papal court and of English ecclesiastical conditions. Though

## ANTI-PAPAL LEGISLATION

Ultimately, however, the Parliament went beyond mere remonstrance and in 1351 enacted the Statute of Provisors (after the model of the measure of 1307), which declared illegal the papal practice of bestowing benefices on aliens and reserving the first fruits of them to himself, and vindicated the rights of patrons and presentees against this noxious practice.<sup>15</sup> In 1353 followed the Statute of Præmunire,<sup>16</sup> which was directed against the practice of appeals to the papal court and declared forfeiture and outlawry against those who carried suits furth the realm, in defiance of the jurisdictions of the royal courts.

These statutes proved largely futile owing to the complicity of the king and others, and in 1365 the Parliament is found prohibiting anew the abuse of provisions and appeals, under severe penalties, on the plea of the dignity of the Crown, the interest of religion, and the weal of the realm.<sup>17</sup> Still with small effect, apparently, for in 1372 and 1373 the Commons returned to the charge,<sup>18</sup> and an enquiry into the abuse of pluralities made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1366, at the direction of the reforming Urban V., lent renewed force to their denunciations. Archbishop Langham found that a considerable number of the clergy of his province were in possession of as many as twenty benefices, and in some cases even more, in virtue of these provisions. The abuse was as obnoxious to the clergy as to the Commons, and their opposition was aggravated by the demand for an extraordinary contribution to the papal exchequer. In a synod assembled at St Paul's in 1374 they loudly complained of "the intolerable yoke" of these exactions, the Bishop of Hereford declaring that neither he nor his diocese would contribute a penny to the king until this grievance was redressed. They protested with equal

he evidently exaggerates the amount of the annual revenue derived by the pope and the curia from England, his testimony as to the abuses he deplors appears on the whole to be based on knowledge, and not mere hearsay. On the question of papal provisions and royal patronage in detail, as affecting the English Church, see Ann Deeley's article in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1928.

<sup>15</sup> "Statutes," i. 316.

<sup>16</sup> "Corruption of Præmonere," "Statutes," i. 329.

<sup>17</sup> "Rot. Par.," ii. 283 f.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 319 f.

resolution against the papal interference in the elections to English sees.<sup>19</sup>

In deference to the general outcry, Edward sent an embassy to demand the redress of these grievances.<sup>20</sup> In response Pope Gregory XI. was fain to send representatives to Bruges to confer on the subject with those of the king, among whom was John Wiclif<sup>21</sup> (Conference of Bruges, July 1374 to September 1375). The conference ended in a compromise, Gregory undertaking to confirm appointments made by the king and annul the counter-provisions made by himself and his predecessor, and to cite no Englishman personally for trial in the papal courts for a period of three years. On his side Edward agreed to abstain from conferring benefices in virtue of the writ "Quare impedit," by which he had absorbed a large amount of patronage.<sup>22</sup>

With this makeshift Parliament was by no means content, and in the following year, 1376, the discontent found vent in another scathing arraignment of the papal régime. The property in possession of the Church, urged the Commons, which exceeded a third of the whole land of the realm, should be devoted, as originally intended, to the maintenance of divine worship and works of charity. Instead of being applied to such high and useful ends, this property was largely used to pamper a foreign and non-resident clergy, under the protection of the pope, who, to serve his own interests, ignored the right of free election and distrained from the English Church, in the form of papal dues, an annual sum five times greater than the revenue of the king himself (?) The pope took care, too, to make the country pay dearly for his bulls. Many of his nominees, who buy benefices in "the sinful city of Avignon," never set foot in the country, and thus do more harm to religion than all the Jews and Saracens in the world. One cardinal, for instance, is Dean of York, another Dean of Salisbury, another Dean of Norwich, another Archdeacon of Canterbury, and so on, and

<sup>19</sup> Wilkins, "Concilia," iii. 97.

<sup>20</sup> Walsingham, i. 316.

<sup>21</sup> "Fœdera," iii. 1002 (May 1374).

<sup>22</sup> See the papal bull, 1st Sept. 1375, in "Fœdera," iii. 1037; Walsingham, i. 317. The demand that the pope should abstain from interference with the right of free election was ignored. According to Walsingham, it was left out of the treaty. For the papal correspondence with the king on this subject see "Calendar of Papal Registers," "Papal Letters," iv. 109, 123, 127, 134.

these aliens not only rob the Church and the State of 20,000 marks annually for doing not a stroke of work, but are the king's enemies into the bargain. The papal collector lives like a prince, or a duke in London, and transmits not only vast sums, but the secrets of State to Avignon for the benefit of its enemies. The pope and his cardinals are not pastors but shearers of the sheep, and the patrons, taking a leaf from the pope's book, openly sell their patronage to unworthy suiters.<sup>23</sup> This arraignment was not based on mere bias, for it was made by a parliament which, though hostile to a grasping foreign hierarchy, was friendly to the clergy and professed anxiety for the interests of religion, education, and morality. The remedies suggested are the familiar ones of the Statute of Provisors, proclamations against papal officials, etc., and it is evident that if the Good Parliament had had its way the papal exactions and usurpations would have been swept away long before the days of the English Reformation. Despite its reforming mood, however, these abuses remained to keep alive the friction between the nation and the pope throughout the remainder of the century, and to form the subject of renewed Statutes of Provisors (1390) and Præmunire (1393) in the reign of Richard II.<sup>24</sup>

The anti-papal feeling, on political grounds, was intensified by the papal claim to the overlordship of the English crown, in virtue of the homage of King John to the pope, which Urban V. rashly revived. In the session of 1366 Edward informed his parliament that the pope was about to raise a process against him for the recovery of the arrears of the annual tribute of 1,000 marks which John had agreed to pay in recognition of their vassalage.<sup>25</sup> The bare mention of vassalage was sufficient to stir the national spirit into an explicit denial of any such claim. Neither King John, nor any other had the right to subject the crown and kingdom of England to a foreign jurisdiction, without the assent of the barons and in violation of his coronation oath. Should the pope insist on such a preposterous claim, the Lords and

<sup>23</sup> "Rot. Par.," ii. 337 f., and see my "Edward The Third," 586 (1900).

<sup>24</sup> On these statutes, see Waugh, "The Great Statute of Præmunire," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1922. Also Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," i. 443 f.

<sup>25</sup> "Calendar of Papal Registers," iv. 16.

Commons would resist it with all their might. Even Peter's pence should not be paid till His Holiness learned what was due to an English king and the English people.<sup>26</sup> Eight years later the question gave rise to an attack on the temporal power of the pope. In 1374 Edward convened a council of the lords spiritual and temporal at Westminster to debate the question whether he was liable to pay tallage to the pope in aid of his war with the Florentines. At this council several members of the mendicant orders were present by royal invitation. Archbishop Wittelsey opined in favour of the pope's superiority in temporal things. The bishops concurred and one of the friars confirmed their opinion that the pope possessed both supreme temporal and spiritual power by a reference to the text "Ecce duo gladii hic" ("Behold here are two swords"). Whereupon a Franciscan friar retorted by quoting the text, "Put up thy sword into its sheath," as proof that the pope did not possess the sword of temporal power, and entered into an argument to prove from Scripture and the Fathers that Christ neither possessed temporal power nor conferred it on His disciples. In conclusion he reminded his hearers that the claim of Boniface VIII. had been rejected by both France and England. A member of the Augustinian order supported this contention, and maintained that, while to Peter was given the keys, to Paul was given the sword. "You, my lord prince," said he, addressing the Black Prince, who was present on behalf of his father, "were wont to be Paul who beareth the sword, but because you have demitted the sword, Peter will not recognise Paul. Wield the sword," concluded he, "and Peter will soon enough know who Paul is." "There was good counsel enough in England without the friars," testily returned the archbishop. "It is your fatuousness that has obliged us to summon them," retorted the prince; "had we listened to your counsel we should have lost the kingdom." On the morrow, Wittelsey, on being again asked for his opinion, replied that he did not know what to answer. "Speak, you ass," rudely burst out the prince; "it is your duty to enlighten us." This was sufficient to unloose the archbishop's tongue, and he submissively answered that the pope could not claim temporal dominion. The bishops followed in subservient

<sup>26</sup> "Rot. Par." ii. 290; Barnes, "History of Edward III.," 670.

chorus. "Where are your two swords now?" maliciously asked the prince of the brother, who had ventured a doubtful exegesis the previous day in support of the archbishop. "My lord," was the reply, "I am better informed to-day than I was yesterday." The lords followed with the unanimous declaration that as King John had done homage to the pope without assent of the barons, the demand for a papal subsidy could not be entertained.<sup>27</sup>

#### ANTI-CLERICAL MEASURES

The anti-clerical as well as the anti-papal feeling found marked expression on various occasions throughout the reign of Edward III. We note it, for instance, in the growing antagonism to the appropriation by clerical dignitaries of the great offices of State. Of this antagonism Edward himself gave a signal example in 1340 when, in his irritation at the lack of adequate supplies for the war with France, he abruptly dismissed Robert Stratford, Bishop of Chichester, from the office of Chancellor, and the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield from that of Treasurer, and put laymen in their places. He strove in a very arbitrary fashion to ruin Archbishop John Stratford, President of the Council, and till lately Chancellor.<sup>28</sup> His action was but the passing expression of personal resentment at the ill success of the war, which he wrongly attributed to the remissness of his ministers, and shortly afterwards he returned to the old practice of entrusting the highest State offices to churchmen. The antagonism to clerical politicians and placemen was, however, steadily growing, and thirty years later found a strenuous champion in the parliament itself. During the session of 1371 the Lords and Commons united in the demand that all offices of State—Chancellor, Treasurer, Clerk of Privy Council, Barons of Exchequer, Controller, etc.—should henceforth be filled by laymen. Clerical ministers, they urged, were not amenable to the civil law and could not be called to account for maladministration. The argument was a very strong one, and though Edward, who resented the

<sup>27</sup> "Eulogium," iii. 337 f. (the only authority).

<sup>28</sup> See my "History of Edward III.," 168 f., for an account of these proceedings.

demand as an encroachment of his prerogative, curtly replied that he would act in this matter as seemed best to himself, with the advice of his council,<sup>29</sup> he subsequently complied and substituted laymen for Wykeham, the Chancellor, and the Bishop of Exeter, the Treasurer.<sup>30</sup>

The anti-clerical feeling is equally obvious in various other demands voiced by Parliament throughout the reign. It appears, for instance, in a petition presented by the Commons in 1344 that no petition of the clergy detrimental to the interests of the other two estates should be granted.<sup>31</sup> Two years later the Commons are found petitioning that the lands acquired by the Church since 1291 in contravention of the Statute of Mortmain ("De Religiosis") should be taxed for national purposes.<sup>32</sup> In 1371 during a conference between the Lords and Commons relative to a supply demanded by the king, an attack was made on the overgrown wealth of the Church. The clergy, they insisted, should be compelled to contribute to the revenue in proportion to their wealth, in spite of privilege. One speaker likened them to an owl which protected itself from the hawk by donning the feathers presented by the other birds. On the approach of the hawk, the other birds concerned for their own safety demanded back their gifts, and on the refusal of the owl, helped themselves by force. Moral: When the country is in danger, the State is justified in laying hands on Church property for the common good.<sup>33</sup> Parliament did not venture on so drastic a measure, but it reiterated the demand that all clerical estates obtained in contravention of the Statute of Mortmain should bear their full share of taxation. In the following session (1372) it added the demand for stringent measures against the rampant clerical immorality and the extortions of the ecclesiastical courts in testamentary causes.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "Rot. Par.," ii. 304.

<sup>30</sup> "Fœdera," iii. 911 (March 1371).

<sup>31</sup> "Rot. Par.," ii. 149 f.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 163; cf. 130.

<sup>33</sup> This speech has been preserved by Wiclif, who says that he himself heard it, and Dr Shirley ("Fasciculi Zizaniorum," Pref., xxi.) considers that it was delivered on this occasion. Dr Stubbs inclines to agree with him, "Const. Hist.," ii. 420; also Workman, "John Wyclif," i. 210 (1926).

<sup>34</sup> "Rot. Par.," ii. 312-14. I have taken a considerable part of this chapter from my "History of Edward III." (1900).

## CHAPTER VIII

### WICLIF AS A REFORMER (I)

#### EARLY LIFE

JOHN WICLIF was born, probably towards the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, at Wycliffe, the manor in the North Riding of Yorkshire, of which his father was the proprietor, and to which, on his father's death in 1353, he succeeded.<sup>1</sup> Of this district John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, became overlord in 1342—a significant fact in view of the later relation between him and the reformer. Little is known of his student career at Oxford. He appears to have taken his Master's degree before 1360, when he was elected Master of Baliol College, and to have resigned this office in the following year, when he was presented by the college to the rectory of Fillingham in the diocese of Lincoln. A year later the university is found petitioning Urban V. to "provide" him with another living, and the pope granted him a prebend in the collegiate church of Westbury, near Bristol. He was thus at this period a pluralist, and had no scruple about benefiting from the abuse of provisions, which he was subsequently to denounce so unsparingly. He was, moreover, a non-resident priest, for in 1363 he obtained a dispensation for five years from residence at Fillingham from the Bishop of Lincoln, which was renewed for two years in 1368, in order to pursue his studies in theology at Oxford. He appears to have absented himself from his prebend at Westbury without the necessary dispensation, and was in consequence called to

<sup>1</sup> Buddensieg mentions thirty forms of the name, "Wiclif und Seine Zeit," 92 f. (1885). The year of his birth is usually given as 1324 on the assumption that he was sixty at the time of his death in 1384. Lechler places it several years earlier, "John Wiclif," i. 126 f. (1878, revised ed. by Green, 1904). Workman places it several years later, "John Wyclif," i. 21 (1926). His birthplace is given by Creighton ("Hist. Essays," 176 (1902)) and others as Hipswell.

account by the Bishop of Worcester in 1366. It is uncertain whether he is to be identified with the John Wiclif, who was Warden of Canterbury Hall between 1365 and 1367 or 1369, which Archbishop Islip had founded at Oxford in order to replenish the ranks of the clergy decimated by the Black Death. There appears to have been another John Wiclif, on whom the archbishop conferred the living of Mayfield, and Rashdall infers, without sufficient warrant, that it was he, and not the reformer, whom he appointed as Warden.<sup>2</sup> In 1368 he exchanged the living of Fillingham for that of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire, which he resigned six years later (1374) on being presented by Edward III. to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. Two years previously he had taken the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

During the various stages of his career as a student in arts and divinity, he had lectured in both faculties in accordance with the regulations of the mediæval university, and his reputation as a scholar and a teacher had steadily increased. His later works prove his mastery of the scholastic philosophy and theology. He was a disciple of the Realist school of Duns Scotus, like himself an Oxford doctor at the beginning of the century. He became the foremost doctor of his time in a university, which in the interval between him and Scotus "was the scene of an immense intellectual activity."<sup>3</sup> "In philosophy," says Knighton, "he was reputed second to none; in scholastic studies incomparable."<sup>4</sup> This encomium is not so imposing as it sounds. The scholastic philosophy after Duns and Occam had entered on the period of its decline, and in his discussion of the conventional problems he contributed little to the hackneyed argumentation between Realist and Nominalist. "The great Realist and Nominalist debate lingered on for a century more; but all the life had been taken out of it; all real, fresh, intellectual activity was beginning to

<sup>2</sup> Art. "Wycliffe," "Dict. of Nat. Biog"; "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," iii. 211 f., ed. by Powicke and Emden (1936). Workman decides for identification, i. 185 f. He is followed by Manning, "Camb. Med. Hist.," vii. 487 (1932). This seems the more probable inference. The documents relative to Westbury are given by Twemlow, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1900, p. 529 f.

<sup>3</sup> Rashdall, "Universities," iii. 267.

<sup>4</sup> "Chronicon," ii. 151; cf. "Eulogium," iii. 345, where he is called "the flower of Oxford" ("Dictus flox Oxoniæ").

divert itself into other channels.”<sup>5</sup> “Wyclif, judged as a schoolman,” writes Dr Workman, “does little more than gyrate on a well-beaten path, often concealing with a cloud of dust and digressions that he is but moving in a circle. His philosophic works contain little that can claim to be strictly original with the partial exception of his political doctrine of dominion.”<sup>6</sup> His fame rests not on his undoubted proficiency in the conventional learning, but on his teaching and work as a reformer. He ere long applied his mind to the burning politico-ecclesiastical questions of the time. In so doing he was apparently influenced, indirectly, if not directly, by the teaching of Marsiglio and Occam as well as that of Fitzralph, who was consecrated to Armagh two years earlier and championed the secular clergy against the mendicant orders. To Bradwardine, who became Archbishop of Canterbury for a brief period in 1349, and was the ardent exponent of the teaching of St Augustine, may be traced the fundamental importance which the doctrine of predestination occupies in his teaching.<sup>7</sup> Both had been distinguished Oxford teachers, and if he had not actually been their pupil, it is certain that he owed much to their works. In this way the years of study and teaching spent at Oxford were also years of preparation for the active part which he was to play as a practical reformer.

#### EARLY REFORM ACTIVITY

There is some doubt as to the date of his appearance in this capacity. One of his earliest productions is a short treatise in reference to the question of the annual tribute payable by the English king to the pope, in which he professes to give a

<sup>5</sup> Rashdall, “Universities,” iii. 271.

<sup>6</sup> “John Wyclif,” i. 143.

<sup>7</sup> In the bull of 1377, condemning Wiclif’s teaching, Gregory XI. charges him with holding the heretical doctrines of Marsiglio. Workman maintains that “in reality Wyclif never seems to have heard of Marsiglio,” i. 133. “Such influence,” he adds, “at Oxford as Marsiglio exerted must have been indirect through William of Ockham.” The association of Occam with Marsiglio is, however, very questionable. Bradwardine’s chief work is entitled “De Causa Dei contra Pelagium” (ed. by H. Savile, 1618), in which he controverts the Pelagian tendency of the late scholastic theologians (Scotus and Occam) and champions the Augustinian teaching. Wiclif often refers to him in his works as the “doctor profundus”; and also to Fitzralph. See, in detail, Laun, “Bradwardin, der Schüler Augustin’s und Lehrer Wiclif’s,” “Z.K.G.,” 1928, p. 333 f.

report of the speeches of a number of lords against the papal demand in parliament. Lechler<sup>8</sup> is of opinion that this report refers to the proceedings of the parliament of 1366 which dealt with the claim of Urban V. to the arrears of the annual tribute payable by the English king to the pope. Loserth,<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, argues forcibly that the tract refers to the council of lords temporal and spiritual, which discussed this subject in 1374, and places its composition subsequent to it. In it at all events Wiclif appears as a champion of the opposition to the papal claim and of a policy of practical reform. In this year, too, he emerges into publicity as a member of a commission sent to Bruges to negotiate with the papal commissioners regarding the abuse of provisions and other contentious matters. The commission effected no real reform of these or other ecclesiastical abuses, and the result was merely a deal between the king and the pope for their respective benefit. Wiclif himself seems to have obtained the royal confirmation of his prebend at Westbury, and he had in the previous year been granted a "provision" by Pope Gregory XI. to another prebend at Lincoln. But the pope had failed to implement his grant and had conferred the prebend on an alien,<sup>10</sup> and Wiclif appears to have resented his treatment, which did not tend to enhance his respect for the exercise of the papal power. At all events, whilst still disposed apparently to take personal advantage of an abuse which, as a member of the Bruges Commission, he condemned, he henceforth stands out as the decided advocate of a practical reformation of the Church. To this cause he now resolved to devote his life.<sup>11</sup> Lechler<sup>12</sup> discerns his influence in the measures by which the Good Parliament in 1376 sought to reform the Church as well as the State. The supposition is not much more than a conjecture. The concrete evidence of his resolve, of which they were the first fruits,

<sup>8</sup> "John Wiclif," i. 198 f. He is followed by Poole, "Illustrations of the History of Mediæval Thought," 289 f. (1884). The treatise is entitled, "Determinatio quedam magistri Johannis Wycliff de dominio."

<sup>9</sup> *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1896. Workman agrees, "Wyclif," i. 228 f. The speeches are apparently Wiclif's own composition.

<sup>10</sup> "De Civili Dominio," iii. 334; "Calendar of Papal Registers," iv. 193. See also Workman, i. 203 f.; Loserth, *Introd.* to "Opus Evangelicum," iii. 35; Rashdall, art. "Wycliffe," in "Dict. of Nat. Biog."

<sup>11</sup> *Pref.* to "De Dominio Divino."

<sup>12</sup> i. 240 f.

is rather to be sought in the two works on Divine and on Civil Dominion or Lordship.<sup>13</sup>

#### DOCTRINE OF LORDSHIP

From the theological point of view, all lordship, whether in the sense of political authority or of individual property, is held from God, who, as creator, is the lord of man and the world. Being the gift of God, it is conditioned by moral considerations.<sup>14</sup> God can only confer His gifts on the righteous man—the man who is “in grace,” *i.e.*, is purged from sin and has received grace. Only such has a right to possess anything, since God confines His gifts to the righteous, who alone can make a right use of them. Moreover, this right embraces the whole sensible world, which God has created for the use of the righteous. The righteous man may thus be said to be the lord of all things, which are to be held in common by those who are “in grace,” as in the case of Christ and His disciples and the early Church after His ascension. On the other hand, the unrighteous man, the man who is in mortal sin has no right to possess anything. His lordship is invalidated by his sin, since he cannot make a right use of it, and cannot, therefore, properly be said to possess it.

This theological theory of lordship appears, on the surface, to involve a thoroughgoing political and social revolution, to undermine the legal right alike to political authority and individual property. If, on the one hand, the righteous have a right, on moral grounds, to possess all things, the practical result is Communism, the lapse of all legal right to individual possession. If, on the other hand, the unrighteous have no right to lordship, it was open to anyone who was dissatisfied with actual political, social, and ecclesiastical institutions, to demand, on this ground, the overthrow of those institutions. Wiclif's theory is, however, not seriously meant to be applied to the state of things prevailing in the actual world. It is an

<sup>13</sup> “De Dominio Divino,” ed. by Poole (1890); “De Civili Dominio,” *i.*, ed. by Poole (1885); *ii.* to *iv.*, ed. by Loserth (1900-4).

<sup>14</sup> He borrowed his theory from Fitzralph, “De Pauperie Salvatoris,” printed with a summary of Contents by Poole in “De Dominio Divino.” In working it out Wiclif was probably also influenced by the Franciscan distinction between the ownership and the use of property. The feudal principle of lord and vassal also colours the theory.

ideal based on theological premises, not a political and social programme applicable to the present order of things in the State. He recognises the fact of both political authority and individual property in an imperfect world, the laws and ordinances of which are necessary for the preservation of human society. If theoretically the righteous man has a right to all things and the unrighteous man has no right to anything, all are, practically, under obligation to submit to the existing constitution of things. Material felicity is not necessary for man's spiritual good. Moreover, he explicitly disallows the use of force in behalf of a social or political revolution. "God," he is reported to have said later, in his paradoxical fashion, "must in this matter obey the devil." Man's sin has rendered necessary the establishment of law and order in every human community.

In regard to the holding of ecclesiastical property, however, he is not so self-restrained. He is evidently in full sympathy with the agitation against the wealth of the Church,<sup>15</sup> and has no scruple in urging a drastic reform by the State of this abuse. The clergy, he insists, are bound to contribute from this wealth for the benefit of the country. He denies that ecclesiastical endowments have been given for all time, apart from the use made of them. If the clergy misuses these endowments, the State may rightly deprive them, assigning them a bare sufficiency and devoting the rest for the maintenance of the poor and other good objects. The State is entitled to say whether this necessity has arisen. In Wiclif's opinion it *has* arisen, since the wealth of the clergy has impoverished the people as well as demoralised and secularised the Church. The State may not be debarred from undertaking this duty by the threat of excommunication. Excommunication does not apply to temporal matters. The king who refuses to secularise ecclesiastical property thus wrongly used is, in fact, a traitor to God and an enemy of His kingdom. The proposal to disendow the Church for the benefit of the State on the understanding

<sup>15</sup> He was also influenced in writing the 2nd and 3rd books of the "De Civili Dominio," in which the attack on Church property becomes most aggressive, by the personal attacks of his opponents, whom his teaching had provoked. See Loserth, *Introd.*, 11 f. On his theory in greater detail, see R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, "History of Mediæval Political Theory," vi. 51 f. (1936).

that the poor will be the chief beneficiaries is all too ingenuous. In the scramble for the spoil the poor would undoubtedly have come off rather empty-handed, and the rich would only have become richer.

On the same principle he attacks the abuse of the papal power, though he is not yet an opponent of the papacy itself and disclaims any intention of disowning the papal authority. A pope who falls into sin may be punished by the secular power like any other potentate, and it is wicked to deny this and attribute infallibility to him.<sup>16</sup>

It is not surprising that this teaching roused the bitter opposition of the clergy, secular and regular, some of whom described it as "a book from hell."<sup>17</sup> At the instigation of Courtenay, Bishop of London, he was cited by Archbishop Sudbury to appear before Convocation in St Paul's on the 19th February 1377 to answer for his opinions. But for the protection of the Duke of Lancaster, the leader of the anti-clerical party, it would probably have gone hard with the daring theologian. As a politician, the duke was both unscrupulous and self-seeking. He opposed in the interest of his own power the measures by which the Good Parliament of 1376 sought to reform the abuses rampant in Church and State, and after its prorogation succeeded in depriving them of practical effect. But he was, for his own ends, the opponent of the power of the hierarchy and signalled his hostility by the persecution of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, one of the leaders of the Good Parliament, and formerly Treasurer and Chancellor, who was deprived of his temporalities and banished the court. His action was dictated by purely personal and political motives, and the alliance between a reformer of the stamp of Wiclif and an unscrupulous politician of this sort does not look well, though it is improbable that the reformer sympathised with the politician's self-seeking spirit and methods. The fact that he was popular with the citizens of London who were anti-Lancastrian, points, indeed, the other way. Nevertheless, as often happens, they had some ideas in common, and events then, as in later Reformation days, threw

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed summary, see Poole, "History of Mediæval Thought," 296 f.; Workman, i. 259 f. See also Marti, "Economic Causes of the Reformation in England," 99 f. (1929).

<sup>17</sup> Loserth, *Introd.*, 12, *Liber inferni*.

reformers and unscrupulous politicians into the same camp. Wiclif was from conviction the antagonist of a wealthy and secularised hierarchy, and was, moreover, in need of a powerful protector. John of Gaunt was, from motives of self-interest, also the enemy of the hierarchy and was powerful enough to afford this protection. He was all the more ready to do so in view of the fact that the persecutors of Wiclif were his political enemies.

It is thus that we may explain his drastic intervention in his behalf at his appearance before Convocation in the Lady Chapel of the cathedral. In his determination to protect him, the duke not only assigned him four masters of theology as his counsel,<sup>18</sup> but he and the marshal, Lord Henry Percy, with an armed guard, accompanied him to St Paul's on the morning of the trial. On arriving at the door they found the cathedral crowded, but Percy ordered the guards to clear a way to the Lady Chapel, where the bishops, with a large number of magnates, were already convened. The guards began pushing their way inwards, followed by the duke and the marshal. Bishop Courtenay protested against this rough encroachment on the rights of his Church, for the marshal had no jurisdiction within the sacred building. The duke angrily retorted that he would be master there in spite of him. When he had forced his way into the chapel in this provocative fashion, Percy directed Wiclif to be seated. "You have need of a soft seat," added he, "for you have many questions to answer." Courtenay again protested with warmth against such arrogant conduct. It behoved the accused to stand in the presence of his judges. A heated wrangle ensued, in which the duke took part, the bishop answering recrimination with recrimination, until Lancaster, purple with rage, swore that he would know how to tame the pride of every bishop in England. "You trust in your family connections," cried he (Courtenay was a son of the Earl of Devonshire), "but your confidence will avail you nothing. Your relatives will have enough to do to save their own skins." "My trust is in God, and not in my family, or any man," retorted the bishop. "A little more of this,"

<sup>18</sup> "Chronicon Angliæ," 118, ed. by E. M. Thompson (1876). For a more favourable estimate of John of Gaunt, see Armitage-Smith, "John of Gaunt," 160 f. and 408 f. (1904).

muttered the duke wrathfully, "and I'll drag you out of the church by the hair of your head." The rough threat was overheard by some of the congregation and angry voices were raised in denunciation of this outrage on their bishop. The uproar became so threatening that Lancaster was forced to retire, carrying Wiclif, who had not uttered a word during this unseemly wrangle, with him. For the present the proceedings against him collapsed, in no creditable fashion certainly.<sup>19</sup>

Wiclif's opponents now had recourse to the pope, Gregory XI., to whom they forwarded fifty conclusions drawn from his works. In response the pope issued a number of bulls against him (May 1377). That to the University of Oxford deplors its slackness in allowing error to take root in its midst, and directs it to arrest and hand him over to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. Another directs these prelates to enquire into his teaching and if the nineteen propositions ascribed to him, which accompanied the bulls, were found to be actually held by him, to commit him to prison pending further instructions from the pope.<sup>20</sup> These propositions had reference to his views on the rights of property in general, the secularisation of ecclesiastical property in particular, the limits of the papal power, and the right of excommunication.<sup>21</sup> In a second bull to the archbishop and the bishop the pope directs them, in case they are unable to arrest Wiclif, to cite him to appear before him at Rome within three months. The summons to Rome was an attempt to override the jurisdiction of the English ecclesiastical courts, which had hitherto taken sole cognisance of heresy, and transfer it to the pope. In a third he urges them to convince the king that his teaching

<sup>19</sup> See "Chronicon Angliæ" and my "History of Edward III.," 599 f.

<sup>20</sup> Bulls in "Chronicon Angliæ," 173 f.; Walsingham, i. 345 f. That to the University is in "Bullarium," ix. 208 f. In a letter to the king the pope warns him that Wiclif is endeavouring "to overthrow the status of the whole Church" by teaching the opinions of Marsiglio of Padua and John of Jandun "of cursed memory," and urges him to lend his protection to the archbishop and the bishop in their proceedings against him.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew, "Wiclif's English Works," *Introd.*, 11 (1880). They are given in "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 245 f., where, however, there are only eighteen. The pope, however, refers to them as nineteen in number, *ibid.*, 481. The "Fasciculi" is a collection of documents made by Patryngton and Walden at the end of the fourteenth and the early part of the fifteenth century, ed. by Shirley (1858). Later criticism has considerably reduced the English Works ascribed by Matthew to Wiclif, and also those in Arnold's "Select English Works" (1869), see Workman, i. 329 f.; Winn, "Wyclif, Select English Writings," *Introd.*, 29 f. (1929).

was subversive not only of the faith, but of all polity and government. But Wiclif was too powerful to be thus summarily crushed by the papal fiat and Archbishop Sudbury and Courtenay were not prepared to comply with the papal citation. His teaching had gained him many adherents in London and the university manfully espoused his cause despite the papal bull, and declared the propositions to be true. The political situation was by no means favourable to the papal inquisition. The new government of Richard II., who succeeded Edward III. in June 1377, was bitterly hostile to the papal exactions, and referred to him the question whether they could legitimately put a stop to the flow of the treasure of the kingdom to the papal court. Wiclif unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative and adduced a number of cogent reasons in support of his answer. He even took advantage of the opportunity to urge the confiscation of the misused endowments of the Church and their redistribution for the glory of God. Though on this point the king and his council enjoined silence,<sup>22</sup> and were not prepared to put his theory in practice, they were evidently determined to stand between him and his persecutors. When, therefore, in response to the summons of the archbishop and the Bishop of London, he appeared before them at Lambeth early in 1378, he explained, without materially retracting, his doctrines,<sup>23</sup> and in deference to the representations of the Princess of Wales, the mother of Richard II., in his behalf and the unmistakable sympathy of the London populace, who forced their way into the palace at Lambeth, his judges allowed him to escape with an admonition to refrain from such teaching "on account of the scandal which it excited among the laity" against the clergy.<sup>24</sup>

He seems to have paid no heed to this admonition and under the protection of John of Gaunt continued his reforming activity. Six months after his trial he was again consulted by the king and parliament on the question of the privilege of sanctuary. Two knights, who held a Spanish hostage pending the payment of a ransom, refused to deliver him at the demand of the Government and were imprisoned in the Tower for their

<sup>22</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 258 f.

<sup>23</sup> See his defence in Walsingham, i. 357 f.; "Chronicon Angliæ," 184 f.

<sup>24</sup> See Walsingham, and "Chronicon Angliæ" for these incidents.

contumacy. They managed to escape and took refuge in Westminster Abbey. The abbey was invaded by a troop of soldiers who seized one and killed the other.<sup>25</sup> This outrage was certainly a scandal of the first magnitude, and Wiclif's defence of it tended to accentuate his antagonism to the ecclesiastical authorities, who excommunicated the unscrupulous instigators and perpetrators of the violent deed, though they excepted the king, his mother, and the Duke of Lancaster, who was absent in France at the time.<sup>26</sup> In the document relative to this affair he nevertheless argues that such a privilege cannot be allowed to defeat the ends of justice by shielding traitors from the consequences of their crime, and there is no little force in his reasoning, and in his disclaimer of any intention on the part of the Duke of Lancaster to diminish the prerogative of the abbey.<sup>27</sup>

#### THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

The great schism which took its rise in this year (1378) had a momentous effect on Wiclif's development as a reformer. It ultimately led him to challenge the whole papal and doctrinal system of the Mediæval Church. He had begun by enunciating certain theories which were, potentially at least, destructive of this system and were in part actuated by the striving to remedy certain ecclesiastical abuses. He ended by attacking actual institutions and doctrines, though he only gradually reached his distinctive position as an aggressive evangelical reformer. At the basis of this development we may place the conviction of the supreme authority of Scripture, which more or less finds expression in all his works<sup>28</sup> and particularly in the treatise "De Veritate Sacræ Scripturæ,"<sup>29</sup> written in the year in which the schism began. His thesis, stated in his own words, is that "Holy Scripture is the highest authority for every Christian and the standard of faith and all human perfection."<sup>30</sup> He seeks to vindicate it from the depreciation of those "per-

<sup>25</sup> See "Chronicon Angliæ," 206 f.

<sup>26</sup> See Oman, "Political History of England," iv. 14. He thinks that the Duke had nothing to do with the matter. Likewise, Workman, i. 317.

<sup>27</sup> The tract presented to parliament has been incorporated in chs. viii. to xi. of the "De Ecclesia." See Loserth, *Introd.*, 9-13.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, "De Civili Dominio," i. c. xliv.

<sup>29</sup> Ed. with *Introd.* by Buddensieg (1905-07).

<sup>30</sup> Buddensieg, *Introd.*, 25.

verse theologians" who place it on a level with tradition, *i.e.*, the decrees of popes and councils, and pervert its meaning by interpreting it not in the literal, but in a mystic or allegoric sense. With these he contrasts Nicolas de Lyra, who, "though a modern, was yet a deep and thoughtful interpreter of the Bible according to the letter," and from whom he evidently learned not a little. In opposition to them, he strives to restore the Bible, simply understood, to its place as the supreme authority, though he himself is not free from the dominant method of interpretation. In the Scriptures, he insists, all truth is contained, and everything is true that is contained in the Scriptures.<sup>31</sup> If anything in them appears to be false, the error is not in them, but in him that falsely understands them. As absolute truth, they are the standard of the faith and the mirror in which we can distinguish all error and heresy. Their authority is much higher than that of any other production, whether in the sphere of doctrine or life. In a single word of Peter there is more sound doctrine than in all the papal bulls and decretals. The Bible is the only law that should rule the Church, the State, and the Christian life, though its rule has, alas, been displaced for many centuries by that of the decretals. It is of equal authority in all its parts, is wrong in none, contradictory in none. This unique and supreme position is due to the fact that it is divinely inspired. Its authority does not depend on the Church, or even on the prophets and the apostles, but on the fact that it is the Word of the Lord, who spoke through them. It contains the doctrine of salvation through Christ, to whom from beginning to end it testifies, and it is in this fact that its unique inspiration as well as its authority for man lies. It is perfectly sufficient and needs not the complement of tradition or of such accessories as fasting, prayer to the saints, celibacy, purgatory, the mass, which are not necessary to salvation. It alone is the *Magna Charta*, the fundamental law of the Church.<sup>32</sup>

Knowledge of it alone is essential to salvation. Not to know it is not to know Christ. Every Christian ought, therefore, to read it, and in order to be able to do so should have it in a language which he can understand. Its teaching is comprehensible by all who receive it in faith and humility,

<sup>31</sup> 21 f., 47 f.

<sup>32</sup> "Carta Sanctæ Matris Ecclesiæ," i. 370.

seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and by assiduously studying it attain a thorough knowledge of the train of thought. Obscure passages are to be explained by those which are unmistakably clear. The Bible is to be interpreted by the Bible, though no external means, such as knowledge of grammar, comparison of texts, is to be neglected. So used, it will not be found to be obscure or ambiguous, and he bitterly complains of the tendency of the ecclesiastical authorities to ignore it and discourage the study of it in the religious life of the people. For him "the preaching of the Word of God is a holier act than the consecration of the sacrament, and therefore much more should the people receive this Word than a single person receive the body of Christ."<sup>33</sup> It is the best remedy for the ills that have long affected the religious and social life.<sup>34</sup>

Wiclif thus explicitly enunciates the later Reformation principle of the supreme authority of Scripture in matters of faith, and seeks to make it the source and motive power of the religious life. In virtue of its unique character as God's Word, it contains all that is necessary for salvation; it is to displace the whole accretion of tradition from the Fathers downwards, and men are to seek in it alone the infallible revelation of God's will. To this end they are reverently to try to discover its exact meaning by pious meditation, by critical examination of the texts, by comparison of the different parts, with the aid of grammatical knowledge and in reliance on the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But they are not at liberty to question its absolute accuracy and infallibility in all respects. Wiclif starts with the conviction that it is above criticism and must on no account be treated as, in any sense, a human production. He approaches it from the dogmatic rather than the historical point of view. Prophets and apostles are the infallible instruments of a divine revelation and even as to matters of fact error is inadmissible. He starts with the current mediæval dogma of verbal inspiration and views the Bible in the light of this dogma, and thus replaces tradition by an infallible book. In this respect he cannot be said to have anticipated the freer attitude of Luther, if he is near to that of Calvin. At the same

<sup>33</sup> II. 156.

<sup>34</sup> For a fuller survey the reader is referred to Buddensieg's *Introd.*, and the chapter in Lechler, ii. 14 f.

time, he lays marked stress on its supreme religious value and importance and rightly recalls his age to it as the grand source and inspiration of the moral and religious life and the test of the developed institutional Christianity which professed to be derived from it.

#### TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

His overmastering sense of its importance for the religious life impelled him to set on foot its translation into the common tongue. At his instigation Nicolas de Hereford, an Oxford doctor of Divinity, with the assistance of other scholars, translated the Old and New Testaments before being summoned to appear at an ecclesiastical council at London in 1382.<sup>35</sup> Wiclif himself appears to have contributed little or nothing to this version, though he translated a large part of the Gospels in the lengthy passages on which he based his numerous English sermons. At his instigation, too, the work of Hereford was revised by John Purvey, another Oxford doctor and an ardent disciple, who acted as his secretary during the last years of his life at Lutterworth, and appears to have finished this revision about 1395. In a "General Prologue" he tells us that he devoted much preliminary labour to collecting and comparing old Latin Bibles in order to obtain as correct a text as possible. In translating he made use of the old Biblical glossators and commentators, especially Nicolas of Lyra, the "Catena Aurea" of Aquinas, and the old grammarians and doctors in the effort to give the exact meaning of difficult words and passages. His aim was "to translate as clearly as he could to (in accordance with) the sense," while striving to turn the Latin into idiomatic ("open") Middle English. To this end he also made use of the help of "many good fellows and cunning at the correction of the translating."<sup>36</sup> The result was a considerable improvement on the version of Hereford, which it seems to have largely superseded, though it is not to be regarded as an independent translation.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> He had translated as far as Baruch, iii. 20, when his work was thus interrupted and the remainder was translated by one of his collaborators, see Winn, "Wiclif, Select English Writings," 7 f.

<sup>36</sup> Winn, 26 f.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew, "Authorship of the Wycliffite Bible," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1895. A very large proportion of the existing MSS. are copies of this revision.

Translations of parts of the Bible, especially of the Psalms, into Old English and Anglo-Saxon, existed long before Wiclif's time, and the whole of it had been translated into Norman French. Wiclif approvingly refers to this French translation, which the English lords had in their possession. The knowledge of Norman French was, however, confined to the upper classes and even among them it was declining, and he pleads for a translation into the common tongue (Middle English) in order that God's law might be better known.<sup>38</sup> There was, therefore, no such translation of the whole Bible in existence at the time when he wrote, and it is thus evident that through Hereford and his collaborators he was the first to provide one. This merit has recently been denied him by Cardinal Gasquet, who has endeavoured to make out that the versions ascribed to Wiclif and Purvey were not made by them, but were produced under the sanction of the Church. Wiclif himself, he argues, never claims that he had translated the Bible and there is no real proof that either he or Purvey ever did so. But Wiclif repeatedly advocates the reading of the Bible in the common tongue, and the continuator of the chronicler Knighton positively says, under the year 1382, that he translated the Scriptures into English (evidently referring to Hereford's version), and accuses him of vulgarising the Gospel, which Christ gave only to the clergy and doctors of the Church, by making it accessible to laymen and women, and thus casting pearls before swine.<sup>39</sup> That Purvey revised it admits of no reasonable doubt, and Purvey, though he does not mention Wiclif's name, speaks of the "English Bible (*i.e.*, Hereford's version) late translated." There are other early testimonies to the same effect. Sir Thomas More, indeed, writing in the early part of the sixteenth century, asserts that long before Wiclif's day the Bible had been translated into English, and that he himself had seen copies of this translation. But the translation in

<sup>38</sup> "English Works of Wiclif," 429; Winn, 19 f. Dr Anna Paues thinks that parts of the New Testament were translated into Middle English in the south of England, and that in the north the Psalms and the whole of the New Testament had been translated "in all likelihood" before the issue of the Wiclif Bible. These were made for the benefit of the clergy, but the Church did not encourage or even allow the reading of the Bible in the vernacular by the laity of the middle or lower classes. "A Fourteenth Century Biblical Version," *Introd.*, 26 f. (1904).

<sup>39</sup> "Chronicon," ii. 151 f., ed. by Lumby (1895).

question appears to have been that of Purvey, which More mistook for an old authorised version. Dr Gasquet has failed to prove his case.<sup>40</sup>

The Bible being the supreme test of the truth and validity of ecclesiastical institutions and doctrines, the application of this test, under the influence especially of the Great Schism, led Wiclif into a position of increasing antagonism to both. This increasing antagonism appears in the succession of treatises and tracts, in Latin and English, which from 1378 onwards he poured forth and which reflect his distinctive reforming ideas on the Church, the papacy, the hierarchy, the monks, especially the mendicant orders, the current ecclesiastical usages, transubstantiation, etc.

#### CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

In the "De Ecclesia," written in 1378-79,<sup>41</sup> he accepts the traditional threefold division of the one Catholic Church which consists of those in heaven—the Church triumphant, those on earth—the Church militant, and those asleep in purgatory.<sup>42</sup> The Church in the narrower sense which, he holds with Augustine, who, next to the Scriptures, is his great authority, has existed from the beginning of the world,<sup>43</sup> comprises only those whom God has from eternity predestined to salvation—the *predestinati*.<sup>44</sup> Outside of it there is no salvation and those whose fate God merely foreknows (the *presciti*)<sup>45</sup> do not belong to it and have no part in this salvation.<sup>46</sup> Predestination alone and no human choice or mere locality makes one a member of it, and no one can be sure that he belongs to it, since

<sup>40</sup> See the articles in *The Church Quarterly Review*, 1900-01, and Matthew's article in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1895; Kenyon, "Our Bible and the Ancient MSS.," Gasquet, "Old English Bible"; Lechler, i. 324 f.; Workman, ii.; Margaret Deanesley, "The Lollard Bible," 249 f. (1920). "The reasons for believing that any biblical version, or part of it, substantially preceded the Wycliffite are small." *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>41</sup> Loserth, *Introd.*, 24 f.

<sup>42</sup> "De Ecclesia," 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 182, 390, 438.

<sup>44</sup> *Congregacione omnium predestinatorum*, 2; *Ecclesia est solum numerus predestinatorum*, 5; cf. "De Civili Dominio," i. c. xliii., *universitas predestinatorum*. In this chapter he anticipates a good deal of what he says more at large in the "De Ecclesia."

<sup>45</sup> He does not use the term *reprobate*, as Calvin and other Reformers were later to do.

<sup>46</sup> "De Ecclesia," 3, 4, 12, etc.

predestination is an act of the absolute divine will.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to the Church in this narrower sense stands the actual Church, which consists of all professing Christians (*convocatio fidelium*)—the Church in the mixed sense, as it actually exists in the world. To be “in the Church” in this wider sense is not necessarily to be “of the Church” in the narrower sense of the predestined.<sup>48</sup> There is nothing novel in this distinction which is taken from Augustine, and was familiar enough to the schoolmen. What is distinctive is the special stress laid on predestination as the sole and effective basis of the Church and the explicit differentiation of it from the actual Church. What constitutes the Church is the eternal will of God, who has elected those who compose it throughout the ages and whose salvation depends on the divine decree so completely that no one can be sure that he is one of those thus predestined. Membership of the actual Church is thus no criterion of membership of the true Church as the body of the predestined, and salvation is not essentially dependent on such a connection. The conception thus tends to undermine the mediæval idea of the actual Church<sup>49</sup> as the indispensable means of salvation, and replaces it by the community of God’s elect of all the ages, whose salvation depends on the divine will alone.

Of the Catholic Church in the threefold sense of the Church triumphant, the Church militant, and the Church asleep, Christ, not the pope, is Head. The pope is at most the chief pastor or head of the Church over which he rules—the Roman Church or even the Church militant. If he is predestinate and follows the commands of Christ, he is to be obeyed as far as he expresses these commands. But he would rather not apply the term head even of the militant Church to him, since none even of the apostles assumed this title and no one can by election make another the head or even a member of the Church, membership depending on predestination, not on human election. Moreover, no pope can know that he is

<sup>47</sup> “De Ecclesia,” 84.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.; cf. 408 f.

<sup>49</sup> In distinguishing between the actual Church and the Church in the narrower sense of the predestined, he does not use the terms visible and invisible Church, as the reformers were later to do, but he means the same thing.

a predestinate member of the Church, and should not assert that subjection to him is necessary to salvation. Every Christian can have grace from God without believing that anyone is pope. The early Christians were not subject to any, and Paul teaches that it matters not through whom faith is received—whether through Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. To be of the Church the Christian has only to believe that he is predestined, and he is bound to test the pope's commands by the Scriptures before obeying them.<sup>50</sup> Nor does the Church consist merely of the pope, the cardinals, the hierarchy, as is generally believed.<sup>51</sup> "When men speak of the Church they understand thereby prelates and priests, monks and canons and friars, and all that have crowns (the tonsure) though they live never so disreputably against God's law, and do not reckon laymen to be of holy Church, though they live never so truly in accordance with God's law and die in perfect charity. Nevertheless all those that shall be saved and blessed in heaven are members of holy Church and no more."<sup>52</sup> Office or orders do not make one even a member of it. Least of all are the prelates members of it, whose lives are so unworthy of Christ's, though the ministry of such may be valid, since God may use the wicked for good ends.<sup>53</sup> The pope and the cardinals are the chief in dignity if they follow Christ and may in a sense represent the Church. Otherwise they are a nest of heretics and the congregation of Satan.<sup>54</sup> But the predestined alone, not the clergy, not even the whole body of professing Christians, essentially constitute the Church.<sup>55</sup>

His ideal is the primitive Church<sup>56</sup> with which the actual Church contrasts in many respects so unfavourably. He devotes a large part of his treatise to show that its privileges, its immunities, its inordinate wealth have no warrant in Scripture and that it is the right and duty of the civil power on national, religious, and moral grounds to deprive it of these and bring it back to evangelical simplicity. The civil power is, in fact, supreme in the State and ought to use its authority

<sup>50</sup> See many passages in the first six chapters of the "De Ecclesia."

<sup>51</sup> "De Ecclesia," 86, 92.

<sup>52</sup> Arnold, "Select English Works of Wyclif," iii. 447.

<sup>53</sup> "De Ecclesia," 76, 85, 441-42.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 92, 96, 186.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 112, 408 f.

<sup>56</sup> See, for instance, *ibid.*, 197.

over the clergy to reform the rampant abuses and corruptions in the Church.<sup>57</sup> In this exercise of his authority the king should not be hindered by specious arguments on behalf of the independence of the papal and ecclesiastical power. If, for instance, a fourth part of the realm is in possession of the clergy and the king has no power over it, he would not really be king, since a fourth part of the kingdom would belong to the pope.<sup>58</sup> Apart, therefore, from the religious aspect of the question, he is amply entitled, on practical grounds, to deal drastically with the abuses of a corrupt secularised Church. Priesthood has nothing to do with worldly rule, except to be subject to it. In his exaltation of the rights of the civil power at the expense of the ecclesiastical, wrongly used, he is as uncompromising as Marsiglio, from whom he seems to borrow, and he anticipates in this respect in a remarkable degree the later English Reformation.

So, too, in regard to certain usages, which he sharply criticises, if he does not altogether condemn. Relic worship, for instance, pilgrimages, the canonisation and cult of the saints, bogus miracles, indulgences. Neither canonisation, nor miracles are a proof of sanctity.<sup>59</sup> Such miracles are a delusion of the devil.<sup>60</sup> The multitude of rites is an infringement of Christian liberty and the cause of many errors. Indulgences cannot avail for those in purgatory, since the power of the keys extends only to the militant Church.<sup>61</sup> God alone can give indulgence to sinners.<sup>62</sup> The idea of the supererogatory merits of Christ and the saints, which places an inexhaustible treasure at the disposal of the pope and the bishops for this purpose, is an invention.<sup>63</sup> To pardon sin for money implies that God sells righteousness.<sup>64</sup> Even God cannot remit sin without satisfaction, and the pope certainly has not this power. He does not, however, go the length of demanding the complete abolition of such usages. But he would trenchantly reform their abuse and condemns the tendency to exaggerate their religious value.

<sup>57</sup> The supreme authority of the State over the Church is specially treated in the "De Officio Regis," written shortly after the "De Ecclesia," *i.e.*, 1379.

<sup>58</sup> "De Ecclesia," 338 f.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 44 f.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 465.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 522.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 549.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 551.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 561.

He evidently lays little stress on them compared with the practice of the primitive Church.<sup>65</sup>

Wiclif was driven by the ecclesiastical opposition to his reforming views to substitute for the actual Church the idea of the Church as something specifically spiritual. Only in this way could he invalidate the hostile exercise of its authority and provide an apologetic for his reforming movement. Hence his recourse to the dogma of absolute predestination, which makes salvation dependent not on membership of the actual Church, but on the arbitrary exercise of the will of God. Predestination is, indeed, a New Testament doctrine. It is expounded by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, for instance. But Paul practically limits it by his universalism, his emphasis on the unlimited love of God which makes an assured salvation possible for all believers. In emphasising the arbitrary character of the divine predestination in the Spirit of a Duns Scotus, whom in this respect he follows, Wiclif ignores this feature of the New Testament doctrine. Moreover, in substituting for the concrete Church the abstract Church of his theological speculation, he seems to overlook the New Testament conception of the Church as the concrete body of believers organised in a visible community by a common faith, fellowship, and service and gradually developing a ministry consisting of office-bearers invested with distinctive functions. He does not, indeed, entirely ignore this feature of the early historic Church. He would, in fact, in practice restore it by bringing back the actual Church to its more primitive model. But, in theory at least, his conception of the Church, as consisting solely of the predestinate, who are known to God alone, minimises by its extreme individualism the communal, social-religious side of the Church as an institution for the nurture of Christian life, mutual service, and fellowship. Moreover, the dogma of absolute predestination is highly questionable from the moral as well as the social-religious point of view, inasmuch as it tends to weaken the sense of moral responsibility, to foster moral paralysis and religious fatalism. He would, too, grant to the State a questionable right of interference with the

<sup>65</sup> For a fuller account of his conception of the Church, see Moser, "Evolution of the Theory and Doctrine of the Church in England, as Exemplified by Ockham, Wyclif, and Cranmer," Edinburgh University Ph.D. Thesis (1927).

spiritual autonomy of the Church, though only for what he deems an imperative necessity and for its spiritual benefit. At the same time he does not carry his theory all the length of its implications. Practically he would be content with a reformation rather than a revolution of the actual Church. He is, for instance, so far prepared to recognise a worthy pope as its head and an exemplary priesthood as its accredited ministry. Nor, whilst pointing out its errors and corruptions, does he intend to alienate the people from it. If it will reform itself and allow the State to take a hand in this reformation, he is prepared to make the best of its historic organisation.

#### ON THE PAPACY

In the "De Potestate Papæ," which was written shortly after the "De Ecclesia" (1379 or beginning of 1380), and in which he treats more particularly of the papal power than in the previous work, he appears as the enemy as well as the critic of the historical and actual papacy. Whilst recognising the principle of a papacy in a spiritual and evangelical sense, in contrast to the imperial or Cæsarean papacy, he is far more uncompromisingly hostile to its errors and abuses. Peter, he admits, following Fitzralph, possessed a primacy among the apostles. But his successors are not necessarily the bishops of Rome. Peter possessed the primacy, as St Bernard, to whom he specially appeals, pointed out, through his resemblance to Christ in his life and teaching. His position was due to his Christian character, his spiritual qualities, and so must it be in the case of his successors. This grace only God can give. No mere form of institution or election can confer it. The power of the keys was given to him as representing the priesthood and confers no privilege on the Roman bishop. Though first of the apostles, he had no jurisdiction over them or over the whole Church militant. Neither has the pope, except by ecclesiastical institution. In the early period the Church was governed by a General Council of priests and knew nothing of a sovereign pontiff. The pope and any other vicar of Christ (for he seems to assume that the bishops are also Christ's vicars) ought, like the apostles, to live as He did without possessions and worldly interests. Pope John XXII. rejected

the doctrine of evangelical poverty which Nicolas III. proclaimed, and how can we believe these popes when one contradicts the other? Riches and worldly power are a hindrance to the religious life, and therefore the pope and the clergy should only be glad to be rid of them. They ought to be satisfied with a modest subsistence, for evangelical poverty does not mean absolute penury, but the right and moderate use of possessions. But is not temporal power necessary to the pope and the bishops and the abbots as befitting their exalted position? Certainly not. The pope should have nothing to do with things temporal. He should renounce his worldly power and pomp, which are not in accordance with his priestly character, and should devote himself to his pastoral duty and to preaching the Gospel. The papal decrees have not the authority of the Bible, and no one is bound to accept them. Nor need Christians take sides when two popes claim the primacy, as in the case of the present schism. It is sufficient to believe that Christ is the head of the Church. Popes have often contradicted one another as well as the Bible, and are no more to be believed than any doctor of the Church. If they depart from the narrow way of Christ, they are Antichrists. That the historical papacy is anti-Christian he seeks to prove by comparing the popes with Christ. Christ is the truth. The popes juggle with truth and their lives, writings, and words prove them liars. Christ lived in poverty. The popes claim worldly rule and riches. Christ gave us His law as the sole authority. The popes fabricate new laws which have no foundation in Scripture. Christ chose poor and simple men for His disciples. The popes choose the most distinguished and cunning to help them to dominate the world. Christ commissioned His disciples to preach the Gospel. The popes reside in a luxurious palace like a second Chosroes, do not preach the Gospel, and maintain a swarm of arrogant and pampered officials. Christ taught His disciples to suffer persecution. The popes teach theirs to fight for worldly dominion and foment and abet the unchristian wars of quarrelling potentates. Christ forbade His disciples to use the sword. The popes hire mercenary soldiers with the offerings of the poor to fight for them. Christ refrained from calling down fire on the Samaritans who refused Him sustenance. The popes curse

those who refuse to obey their tyrannical behests. Christ declined the office of judge. The popes are ever grasping at jurisdiction over others. Christ concealed His deity under the cover of His humanity. The popes claim to be demigods, or even God on earth, and thus fulfil the prophecy of the man of sin. Christ forbade His disciples to make money by means of their office. The popes lay hands on all the fattest benefices and sell them to their creatures.<sup>66</sup> They support these subterfuges by sophistical pretexts.

This contrast does not, however, apply to any pope personally unless in so far as it fits his case. If the pope truly follows Christ then he is indeed Christ's vicar.<sup>67</sup> If not, he is Antichrist and the faithful should not follow him. The present position of the papacy when two popes are contending for the primacy certainly wears the mask of Antichrist. Let both wait for the decision of the Church and meanwhile serve it as true priests. In this sense he is ready to obey either, and only in this sense can they have authority. But neither has any right to force obedience to himself or to extort money from the nations, and he inclines to believe that both are Antichrists.

The historical or imperial (Cæsarean) papacy began with the secularisation of the Church in the time of Constantine, and it would be better for the Church if it returned to the state of things prevalent before its secularisation, when it was governed by a council. He has evidently advanced beyond the more moderate standpoint of the "De Ecclesia" in which he referred approvingly to Urban VI., whilst denouncing his predecessor Gregory XI.,<sup>68</sup> though he is still willing to profess obedience to Urban in so far as he walks in God's way, and would recognise his rival also in the same case. The English Church should plainly refuse to recognise either of them. The college of cardinals, whom he scathingly denounces, is too corrupt to choose a rightful pope, and the papal government is ruinous to all the states subject to it. The ordinary priesthood, which fully possesses all sacerdotal powers, suffices. Happy schism that teaches so many Catholic truths !

<sup>66</sup> "De Potestate," 120 f.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>68</sup> See "De Ecclesia," 37, 353, 355, 366.

## CHAPTER IX

### WICLIF AS A REFORMER (2)

#### PRACTICAL REFORM

THE foregoing treatises were of the nature of academic disquisitions and were fitted to enlighten only the cultured class. Wiclif was, however, not merely a reformer of the academic type. His bent was intensely practical and he sought to leaven the Church and society with his reforming ideas as well as to win disciples in the schools. Convinced of the error and corruption of the current ecclesiastical religion, he conceived the plan of instructing the people in Biblical Christianity in a fashion suitable to their capacity. Hence his expedient of training and sending out preachers—"simple or poor priests,"<sup>1</sup> as he calls them—to evangelise the masses. He himself was a fervent preacher in Latin and English, as well as a learned scholastic teacher, and a large number of his sermons in both tongues has survived.<sup>2</sup> Like Grosstete, a notable reforming ecclesiastic of the previous century, he attached the greatest importance to preaching, and emphasises it as, next to rectitude of life, the chief duty of the priest. Far more precious is the preaching of the Gospel than the administration of the sacraments. Christ effected more by the preaching of His apostles than by all His miracles.<sup>3</sup> He condemns the trivial and unedifying sermons of the time—the serving up of fables, or entertaining stories, or dialectic subtleties, or mere rhetoric in place of the Gospel. Thus to preach is to offer the people a meal without bread. From such preachers they can learn

<sup>1</sup> *Simplices or pauperes sacerdotes.*

<sup>2</sup> For the English sermons, see i. and ii. of "Select English Works," ed. by Arnold; extracts in Winn, "Select English Writings," 142 f.; the "Latin Sermons," ed. by Loserth.

<sup>3</sup> For the relative passages in his works, see Loserth, *Introd.* to "Latin Sermons." See also the "De Officio Pastoralis," chs. xviii. and xxiii., in Matthew, "English Works," 441 f. On the preaching of the period, see Manning, "The People's Faith in the Time of Wyclif," 17 f. (1919).

little, if anything, of the Gospel. "Assuredly," he complains, "it is in these days as when the Saviour said, 'The harvest is plentiful, but of reapers, that is of preachers, there are few.'"

It was to supply this lack that he specially trained a number of his students at Oxford as itinerant preachers. These simple priests were not necessarily, as the description might imply, illiterate men, mere popular evangelists, though their special task was to preach the Gospel to the people in a simple style. A proportion of them were "college bred." A number of his Latin sermons were university discourses preached to the fellows and students at Oxford for the instruction of future preachers in general. Those which he delivered during the last years of his life at Lutterworth, as also a number of his English sermons, to which he appended directions how to continue the subject treated, were intended for the benefit of his poor preachers in particular. They were not laymen, but ordained priests who were distinguished from the ordinary clergy by the fact that they held no benefice, were not licensed by the bishops, and preached at large.<sup>4</sup> But it would appear that there were ultimately laymen among them, who had had no university education and no other training for their vocation as simple Bible evangelists than that which they received from Wiclif at Lutterworth. He laid more stress on the Gospel than on orders, and was more concerned in the spreading of the knowledge of the Gospel than on scrupulously observing ecclesiastical form. For him, as later for John Wesley, the divine call to preach the Gospel is superior to its ecclesiastical imprimatur.<sup>5</sup> Besides these poor preachers others of Wiclif's Oxford associates or adherents—Nicolas de Hereford, John Aston, Philip de Repyndon, John Purvey, etc.—contributed by their writings or preaching to the spread of the movement.

Their institution was, however, not actuated by any desire to set up a rival order to the parish clergy, but to make good

<sup>4</sup> See the tract, "Why Poor Priests have no Benefice," Matthew, 244 f. For their instruction he wrote a number of tracts, in which he condensed his larger works. As an example, see "De Fide Sacramenti," ed. by S. H. Thomson, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1932.

<sup>5</sup> See Loserth, *Introd. to "Latin Sermons,"* i., for relative passages. Workman thinks that there were no laymen among these poor preachers in Wiclif's lifetime, "though no doubt towards the close Wyclif was drifting in that direction," ii. 202. But he certainly advocates and defends lay preaching as if it were being practised in his time. See sermon on the subject, Winn, 32 f.

the neglect of Gospel preaching. They were meant especially to counteract that of the preaching friars—"penny preachers," as they were called, who, it seems, had more interest in extorting the coppers of their hearers than in the salvation of their souls. Their preaching was largely of a practical character, the object being, according to Wiclif, that "God's law, *i.e.*, the Gospel, be well known, taught, maintained, magnified, that the great open sin that reigneth in the divers classes be destroyed, as also the heresy and hypocrisy of Antichrist and his followers, that peace, prosperity, and burning charity be increased in Christendom and especially in the realm of England."<sup>6</sup> It was, in fact, a popular version of his distinctive teaching. Clad in coarse russet, staff in hand, and subsisting on the freewill offerings of the people, whilst refraining from begging, they moved from place to place, preaching sometimes in the churches, often in the open air, inveighing in plain-spoken fashion against the vices of the age, especially the worldliness of the clergy, both secular and regular. The chroniclers, as orthodox churchmen, speak of them in contemptuous terms as opinionated heretics and fanatic opponents of the Church and the clergy. Some of them, it seems, were not very reverent in their treatment of the superstitious usages and emblems of the current cult, and Knighton indignantly relates how William Smith and a companion once took an old image of St Catherine from a chapel and used it as firewood to cook cabbages, with some ironic remarks as to the additional merit which this second martyrdom would confer on her.<sup>7</sup> They were, he adds, utterly opposed to image worship which they denounced as idolatry and were wont, for instance, to speak of St Mary of Lincoln as the witch of Lincoln, and St Mary of Walsingham as the witch of Walsingham. The chroniclers are, however, fain to admit the success of their preaching. They won adherents not only among the people, who were attracted by their homely message and the simplicity of their life, but among the higher classes.<sup>8</sup> Knighton, in fact, gives as one main reason of their success the patronage of a number of the aristocracy, some of whom used their influence

<sup>6</sup> "Of Poor Preaching Priests," Matthew, 276 f.

<sup>7</sup> "Chron.," ii. 182 f.

<sup>8</sup> "Eulogium," iii. 355; Knighton, "Chron.," ii. 181 f.; "Chronicon Angliæ," 341.

to add to the number of their converts to the extent of intimidating their dependents into joining the sect.<sup>9</sup> So numerous were the Wiclifites at Leicester as well as London by the year 1382 that the Bishop of Lincoln was fain to refrain for the time being from taking proceedings against Swynderby for fear of exciting a popular disturbance at the former place, though he subsequently arraigned and condemned him to be burned.<sup>10</sup> Their activity was a serious menace to the friars against whom they directed their most uncompromising attacks and from whom they alienated the people, asserting that they should be allowed neither to beg nor preach, but be made to labour with their hands after the apostolic fashion.<sup>11</sup> So effective were their denunciations that one chronicler notes under the year 1382 that the people refused them alms, would not listen to the sermons of these "penny preachers,"<sup>12</sup> and told them to work and not beg. Their effective activity is further apparent from a missive of the same year in which Courtenay, Sudbury's successor as Archbishop of Canterbury, denounces these "sons of eternal damnation" who, "under a cloak of great sanctity," presume to preach without licence in churches, streets, and other places, and subvert the Church and mislead the faithful by their heresies.<sup>13</sup> Cursed be the whole stiff-necked fraternity of them, wrathfully concludes the chronicler Knighton, and may God destroy them root and branch.<sup>14</sup>

#### WICLIF AND THE SOCIAL UPHEAVAL

Whilst Wiclif was busied in training and sending forth his poor priests to reform religion by the preaching of the Gospel, a reforming movement of another kind took practical shape in the rising of the peasants in 1381. It is specially interesting as an example of the incidence of religious and social reform observable in the history of the origins of the Reformation as well as of the later Reformation itself. The religious move-

<sup>9</sup> "Chron.," ii. 181.

<sup>10</sup> Walsingham, ii. 55; Knighton, ii. 192. For London, see Walsingham, ii. 65 f.

<sup>11</sup> Knighton, ii. 186 f.

<sup>12</sup> Denariorum prædicatores, "Eulogium," iii. 358.

<sup>13</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 275 f. <sup>14</sup> "Chron.," ii. 188 f.

ment set on foot by Wiclif, Hus, Luther respectively was contemporary with a movement for social reform and in the case of the Hussite and Lutheran movements, the impulse which they gave, through the preaching of the more advanced Hussite and Lutheran preachers, to the striving for social reform is unquestionable. In the case of Wiclif the connection is much less patent. There appears, indeed, to have been a certain religious element in the social-revolutionary movement of 1381 in as far as popular preachers like John Ball associated themselves with it. In his popular sermons Ball undoubtedly made use of arguments of a religious as well as a mundane character in inciting the masses to revolt against the dominant social order. Some of the friars, if the chroniclers speak truly,<sup>15</sup> preached to the same effect, and some of Wiclif's poor priests may have included in their harangues in the streets and market-places a popular adaptation of his doctrine of the sin of possessions unworthily used, especially in the case of ecclesiastics.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, Wiclif himself was concerned mainly with theological and ecclesiastical reform, though he did not overlook the national side of the question and urged the trenchant reform of ecclesiastical abuses in the national interest as well as that of religion. His theory of dominion was, indeed, capable of a revolutionary interpretation. But, as we have seen, he expressly guarded himself against such an interpretation, and the protégé of John of Gaunt was not likely to incite to a revolutionary uprising against the higher classes, or to encourage his poor priests to preach a popular adaptation of his doctrine of dominion on behalf of a social revolution. Like Calvin at a later time, he prefers the aristocratic form of government and is not the champion of democracy.<sup>17</sup> In the "De Officio Regis" he inculcates passive obedience to a degree that seems to leave no room for resistance, though, like Calvin, he leaves one loophole for rebellion in certain contingencies. When it would be sin against God to obey a tyrannical king, for instance, he must be resisted. But all offences against man are to be borne with patience. Before the rising, Wiclif was

<sup>15</sup> "Chronicon Angliæ," 312.

<sup>16</sup> Knighton, ii. 191.

<sup>17</sup> See the "De Civili Dominio," and my "History of Modern Liberty," i. 322 f.

the ally of John of Gaunt and the powerful faction which was hostile to the Church on personal and secular, if not religious grounds. To have led a movement in favour of social revolution would have been to forfeit this support and wreck his own efforts for religious reform. He expressly condemns the revolutionary preaching of men like John Ball and others. In doing so he evidently did not sufficiently realise that in theorising and preaching in favour of the forfeiture of ecclesiastical temporalities and making moral character the test of the right of property even in theory, he was playing into the hands of the popular agitator, who might easily absorb the theory without the caveat attached to it. "The devil moveth some men to say that Christian men should not be servants or thralls to heathen lords, since they are false to God and less worthy than Christian men; neither to Christian lords, for they are brethren in kind and Jesus Christ bought Christian men on the cross and made them free. But against this heresy Paul writeth thus in God's law."<sup>18</sup> "Some men that are out of charity," he further complains, "slander poor priests with this error, that servants or tenants may lawfully withhold rents and service from their lords when these are openly wicked in their life. And they fasten these falsehoods upon poor priests in order to make the lords hate them, and not to maintain the truth of God's law, which they (the poor priests) openly teach for the worship of God and profit of the realm and the establishment of the king's power and the destruction of sin. For these poor priests destroy most by the preaching of God's law rebellion of servants against lords and charge servants to be subject, though their lords are tyrants, as St Peter teacheth."<sup>19</sup>

He thus upheld the existing social order and appealed to the teaching of the New Testament against the reform of social abuse by revolutionary methods. He does not seem to have realised how impractical such advice must have appeared to those who were determined to make an end of servitude and vindicate their freedom as a natural and Christian right. The leaders of the anti-servile movement might well retort that in a professedly Christian state servitude was an anomaly and ought to be abolished, however natural it might have appeared to the apostles in the pagan Roman Empire in the apostolic

<sup>18</sup> "Of Servants and Lords," Matthew, 227 f.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

age. On the other hand, he showed practical sympathy with the working class as against the injustice and oppression of bad landlords and masters, both lay and ecclesiastical, and trenchantly rebuked their harsh and selfish treatment of this class. Witness the following denunciation of lords, both ecclesiastical and secular, in their treatment of the peasants. "Injuries and wrongs are done to poor men in many ways. For prelates teach them not truly God's law, neither in word nor example of holy life, and yet they curse forthwith for their tithes and offerings of poor men, when they should rather give them worldly goods than take of them. For prelates waste in pride, gluttony, worldly pleas, and great feasts the treasure of poor men, who are in much pain and wretchedness in body and soul. And yet prelates will not perform sacraments and their spiritual office to their people . . . unless for much money. . . . Also lords many times do wrong to poor men by their extortions and unreasonable ameracements (fines) and unreasonable taxes, and take poor men's goods and pay not for them but with white sticks (tallies which were very often not redeemed) and despise them, menace them, and sometimes beat them when they ask their pay. And thus lords devour poor men's goods in gluttony and waste and pride and they perish for mischief and hunger and thirst and cold, and their children also. And if their rent is not readily paid, their beasts are seized and they are pursued without mercy, though they be never so poor and needy and overcharged with age, feebleness, and loss of cattle, and with many children. And yet lords will not meekly hear a poor man's cause and help him in his right, but suffer holders of assize to destroy him, and rather withhold the hire of poor men for which they have spent their flesh and blood. And so in a manner they eat and drink poor men's flesh and blood and are man-killers. . . . Also strifes, contests, and debates are rife in our land, for lords strive with their tenants to bring them to thralldom more than they should by reason and charity, and they grumble often and curse and swear night and day, and great men of this world debate and maintain debates at lovedays (courts of arbitration), and whoever is stronger will have his will done, be it right or wrong." <sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> "Of Servants and Lords," 233 f.

The typical preacher of social, combined with religious reform was not Wiclif or the generality at least of his poor priests, but John Ball, "the mad priest of Kent," as Froissart contemptuously calls him, whose vehement denunciation of the social wrongs of the age had increased in violence with the persecution that dogged him for twenty years. He anticipated Wiclif in his onslaughts on the wealth and luxury of the higher clergy, and he may have adopted his doctrinal views towards the end of his career. He was, however, in his preaching against the clergy, the precursor, not the disciple of Wiclif. He had been excommunicated for his errors and insubordination long before Wiclif had emerged into prominence. The confession attributed to him<sup>21</sup> that he had been his disciple for two years, that he had learned his teaching from him, and that the insurrection was due to him and his followers, etc., occurs in a work compiled a generation afterwards, and is evidently a fabrication. It was as a practical preacher against social abuses that he acquired popularity and power with the rustic congregations that gathered round him in the fields or on the village greens. He inveighed in the intervals of freedom from prison against class privilege and oppression with a fervour of democratic argument that seems an echo of Wace in the "Roman de Rou," "Good people things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they, whom we call lords, greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all come of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fine bread; we oatcake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men support their pomp. We are called slaves, and if we do not perform our services we are beaten."

<sup>21</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 273 f. Oman forcibly contends that there was no connection between Ball and his followers and Wiclif and his poor priests, "The Great Revolt of 1381," 19 f. (1906).

Froissart and the other chroniclers who report his sermons, are by no means unbiassed authorities, and if John Ball preached a thoroughgoing Communism there is no trace of it in the practical demands which the revolted peasants presented to the Government. All that they asked was the total abolition of serfage and the fixation of a rent of fourpence an acre for the land they tilled in lieu of service. Whilst there was doubtless in the movement a levelling and truculent spirit, which oppression had embittered, it was due in the main to economic and social causes and was a practical, though, in the circumstances, a forlorn attempt to remedy real abuses. Whilst Ball was one of the most zealous of its organisers, as was also another priest, Jack Straw,<sup>22</sup> and a number of the local clerics took part in it, its leaders were chiefly laymen, its causes mostly economic and social. It was a revolt on the part of the masses to secure the amelioration of their lot and bring about the abolition of serfdom. The terrible visitation known as the Black Death in 1348-49 had decimated the nation, and by reducing the number of free labourers created the demand for higher wages for labour on the lord's demesne, or portion of his estate which he reserved for his own use. The propertied classes met this demand by legislation fixing the rate of wages (Statute of Labourers, 1351). This legislation failed, however, to stem the rising tide of discontent, which showed itself during the succeeding thirty years in organised efforts, not only on the part of the labourers to secure better terms for their labour, but on the part of the villeins to free themselves from serfage, which bound them to render certain services to their lords without pay. These services many of the lords were reluctant to commute for a money payment, and the attempt to enforce them aroused widespread unrest and antagonism in the servile class. According to the testimony of a statute passed in 1377 the villeins "affirm themselves to be quite and utterly discharged of all manner of serfage, due as well of their body as of their tenures, and will not suffer any distress or other justice to be made on them; but do menace the ministers of their lords of life and member, and still worse, gather themselves together in great routs, and agree by such confederacy that every one shall aid others to resist their lords with strong

<sup>22</sup> Walsingham, ii. 1.

hand, and much more harm do they in sundry manner, to the great damage of their said lords and evil example to others to begin such riots." <sup>23</sup>

The landowners might enact that the old rate of wages was obligatory for the labourer and might refuse any longer to commute the service of the villein for a money payment or rent. But by withholding their service, or removing themselves elsewhere, or forming themselves into local unions both free labourer and villein could defy the lords of the manor and compel them to accept their terms. They seem to have had the best of it in this economic struggle in virtue of the fact that mere acts of Parliament are not necessarily a match for economic laws. Their position appears to have sensibly improved with the changing economic situation. According to Langland, or, following Skeat, Langley, they had become more conscious of their economic worth, more fastidious in their diet, and accordingly more bumptious. But even in "Piers Plowman" there appear misery and oppression enough to embitter the popular feeling, and it only needed the goad of the poll tax of 1380-81 to precipitate the rising, for which the sermons of Ball and other aggressive preachers had contributed to prepare the way. <sup>24</sup>

Very significant is the attack directed against the abbeys. The monasteries were under obligation to distribute alms to the poor and seem to have duly performed this charitable duty. They were, nevertheless, the special objects of the popular fury. The monastery lands were cultivated by villeins, as in the case of the manor, and the monks as corporate bodies were most tenacious in preserving their rights over the villeins subject to them. They were the palladiums of privilege. Consequently they were specially obnoxious to the social reformers of the time. These monastic corporations were evidently in too many cases devoid in this respect of the sense of Christian brotherhood and Christian justice when their property was concerned. From this point of view they seem to have been

<sup>23</sup> "Statutes of the Realm," 1, Richard II., cap. 6.

<sup>24</sup> On the social-economic situation in detail, see Oman, "The Great Revolt of 1381," 5 f. (1906); Lipson, "Social and Economic History of England, Middle Ages," 77 f. (5th ed., 1929); "Political History of England," iii. by Tout (1905), iv. by Oman (1918); Workman, Wyclif, ii. 221 f.; Trevelyan, "England in the Age of Wycliffe" (1899); Powell, "The Rising of 1381 in East Anglia" (1896).

only a little less selfish and unprogressive than the lay landlords.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, in cases where an ecclesiastical corporation was the superior of a town, as at St Albans and Bury St Edmunds, there was conflict between it and the municipality, which strove to enlarge its powers, to aggravate the friction. These corporations succeeded in maintaining their legal rights over villeins and municipalities alike at the cost of embittering their dependents. Their success laid up for them a grim day of reckoning when the royal power should be arrayed against, instead of for them as in 1381. In other towns there was the friction between the governing class, which monopolised the administration, and the non-privileged mass of the inhabitants to chafe the spirit of revolt.

The movement had been skilfully organised, and by the middle of June 1381, the peasant army from Kent and Essex, under Wat Tyler, which Ball, according to the chroniclers, exhorted in his most truculent vein on Blackheath to strike for natural right and freedom and kill the oppressors of the people without mercy, was in possession of London. After giving effect to this sanguinary exhortation by pillaging the city and executing Archbishop Sudbury, the Chancellor, Hales, the Treasurer, and other representatives of an obnoxious government, it forced the king to grant charters of emancipation and a fixed rent for the land. The capital was, however, delivered from the invasion by Richard's presence of mind in the dramatic scene at Smithfield, which ended in the disarming and dispersal of the rebel host. The revolt in the counties, where other bands of villeins had meanwhile been busy burning the manor rolls and murdering obnoxious landlords, clerical as well as laic, was put down with terrible severity. The charters of emancipation were revoked, and the revolution then ended in failure and tragedy. Nevertheless the social-revolutionary movement was only scotched, not killed. It continued to exist and explode in local struggles between landlords and serfs till well into the fifteenth century, till, in fact, serfdom gradually disappeared in the sixteenth.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Coulton, "The Mediæval Village," 42 (1925). "I judge the monk to have been, on the whole, a slightly better landlord than the layman."

<sup>26</sup> Lipson, "Economic History," 109 f.; Cheyney, "Disappearance of English Serfdom," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1900, 20 f. For the attack on London by the men of Kent and Essex, see in addition to Walsingham, Knighton,

The rising reacted unfavourably on Wiclif's influence with the higher classes by tending to discredit his teaching on dominion, thus recklessly applied. To his honour he had, as we have seen, pointedly rebuked the unchristian and selfish conduct of the lords, and whilst dissociating himself from the violent proceedings of the insurgents, he pleaded for mercy in the hour of their defeat.<sup>27</sup> He condemned the murder of the archbishop. The people had acted illegally and had inflicted excessive punishments, though they were guided by an instinct of justice in revolting against oppression, and the clergy had invited attack by their excessive wealth. They could have forestalled the catastrophe by surrendering it. They had stirred up and supported the war with France which, by necessitating increased taxes, had led to the rising. The lords likewise had their share of the blame and should have redressed the great grievances of their dependents. Their indiscriminate and cruel punishment and the régime of force are both unjust and impolitic. Such expedients will only intensify division and breed new revolt.<sup>28</sup> Unlike some of the later reformers, he did not take the safe side in such a contingency, even though the progress of his work depended to a large extent on the patronage of magnates like the Duke of Lancaster, to whom the insurgents had shown their hostility and whose power was in any case henceforth on the wane. Hitherto he had been the protégé of a strong political party and even of the Government. It was his interest to strive to retain this patronage. He preferred principle to self-interest, and henceforth he stood alone in his reforming mission. The Government and the Church allied themselves against the movement, though the Commons are still found discouraging active measures against Wiclif personally.

#### ATTACK ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION

It was now easier than formerly for his ecclesiastical opponents to strike at his "heresy," and he certainly gave them and other Chroniclers, the "Anonimal Chronicle of St Mary's, York," printed by Trevelyan in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1898, and the trans. of the difficult French text by Oman, App. V. to "The Great Revolt of 1381." Recent ed. by Galbraith.

<sup>27</sup> In the treatise "De Blasphemia," written shortly after the rising, Dziewicki, *Introd.*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> "De Blasphemia," 190 f.

renewed provocation by his denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation—the pillar of mediæval priestly power and sacramental teaching. On his own confession, he had long been a convinced believer in this dogma and had expended his erudition and his philosophical ingenuity in its explanation. He devoutly believed that the priest makes the body of Christ.<sup>29</sup> He ended by doubting and then controverting it as an absurdity and a blasphemy. This conclusion he had reached by the year 1380 when, in Mr Matthew's judgment, his teaching on this subject was first challenged within the university.<sup>30</sup> His change of view was evidently the result of his study of the Scriptures and he announced it in the twelve conclusions, which he published in this year. He elaborated and defended his position in the "De Eucharistia," written before 1382,<sup>31</sup> and other works written during the last years of his life.

The scholastic exposition of the dogma professes to be a rational explanation of a mystery, with the aid of the concepts of the scholastic philosophy. Assuming the real, or bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the problem was to explain how He could be bodily there and the bread and wine remain what they seemed to the senses to be, whilst by the consecration of the priest being transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ. In order to do so, they made use of the philosophical distinction between a substance and its accidents—form, colour, taste, etc.—or between a substance and its subsistence or quantity. According to the Realist Duns Scotus the accidents of a thing are something real apart from its substance. On this supposition the substance of bread is transubstantiated, and yet its accidents remain. According to Aquinas, who was also a Realist, the substance of the bread is transubstantiated, but its subsistence or quantity remains as a basis for its accidents, which thus also really remain. According to the Nominalists (Occam), the accidents of a thing do not really

<sup>29</sup> "De Civili Dominio," i. 260.

<sup>30</sup> *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1890. In the "Fasciculi" the date is given as the summer of 1381, but Mr Matthew forcibly argues that this must be a mistake, as it allows far too little time for the development of the events which it crams into the space of a few weeks. Workman dates his first attack on the dogma in the summer of 1379, "Wyclif," ii. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Loserth, *Introd.* to the "De Eucharistia"; Dziewicki, *Introd.* to "De Apostasia," 6 f.; *cf.* his *Introd.* to the "De Blasphemia," 7 f. H. S. Thomson has printed in "Speculum," iii. 250 (1928), a brief discussion on the question by Wiclif, hitherto unprinted, from a MS. at Prague.

exist apart from the substance to which they belong. They are merely subjective notions. On this supposition, the bread being transubstantiated, what remains is merely an illusion. None of these explanations ultimately satisfied Wiclif. They are, in fact, mere juggling with words and do not make comprehensible how one substance can be changed into another and yet the changed substance remain to the senses exactly what it was before.

In his lectures at Oxford in the year 1380, he is already found attacking the traditional dogma as set forth by the schoolmen, and propounding a theory of his own. This theory he publicly elaborated in "Twelve Conclusions," which gave great offence to his Oxford opponents, consisting chiefly of the regular clergy, especially the friars. They were formally condemned by the chancellor, W. Berton, in a document, which he drew up with the assistance of twelve doctors of theology and canon law, and in which he inhibited him from publicly teaching his errors in the university under penalty of excommunication for refusal. With this document the chancellor proceeded to Wiclif's lecture room. He found him sitting in his chair, "determining" on the question to his students. On the reading of the document, he was for a moment taken aback. But quickly recovering himself, he protested that neither the chancellor nor his fellow-doctors could disprove his conclusions. He aggravated his offence in the chancellor's eyes by appealing not to his ecclesiastical superiors, but to the king. In response John of Gaunt hastened to Oxford and forbade him to treat further of the matter. He firmly refused and his reprisal shows that, whilst willing on occasion to accept the duke's protection, he was not disposed to sacrifice his principles in deference to political expediency. Instead of complying, he published a lengthy confession in defence and amplification of his conclusions (May 1381).<sup>32</sup>

Transubstantiation, he maintains, in these documents, is not a Scriptural dogma. By consecration the bread is not changed into another substance, so that only its accidents remain.<sup>33</sup> To assert this is contrary to fact and the teaching

<sup>32</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 107 f., 115 f.

<sup>33</sup> Repugnat sanctorum sententiis assevere quod sit accidens sine subjecto ni hostia.

of the saints. It remains bread and is not Christ, but the efficacious sign of Him. It is not substantially, essentially, but only effectually (*virtualiter*), spiritually, sacramentally His body. His body is, however, present in it in virtue of Christ's words, "This is my body." "The host," *i.e.*, the consecrated bread, "is only a sacrament, and not a part of Christ. But Christ is hidden insensibly in the sacrament."<sup>34</sup> He thus believes in a real, or bodily presence, whilst refusing to believe that the body of Christ takes the place of the substance of the bread. The bread and body in the Eucharist, it seems, are of the nature of a consubstantiation, not a transubstantiation, though he does not use the later Lutheran term. As in the incarnation two different natures united in Christ and were yet not identical, so in the Eucharist bread and body though combined, are not identical. Moreover, whilst Christ is really, objectively present in the bread, we do not, in partaking of it, which remains in its natural substance, actually partake of His body in a material sense.<sup>35</sup> We apprehend its presence not by the senses, but spiritually by the eye of faith. At the same time, the bread is not a mere sign or symbol of the body, though he speaks of it at times in terms which lead to this conclusion. "This sacrament," he says in the "Trialogus,"<sup>36</sup> for instance, "is the body of Christ in the form of bread." It is not enough that faith should see in the consecrated bread only the sign or figure of the body. It must see in it the body of Christ objectively, it being sacramentally present in a miraculous fashion.

The scholastic reasoning with which he sets forth his distinctive view of the real presence is not easily comprehensible or convincing. He is hampered by the mediæval belief in the bodily presence, to which, in his own fashion, he holds fast. But he is uncompromising in his striving to demolish the current ecclesiastical conception of it, and in denouncing its

<sup>34</sup> "De Eucharistia," 29.

<sup>35</sup> In this he differs from Luther, who held that we actually partake of the body along with the bread.

<sup>36</sup> iv. 249. He also differs from Luther, who maintained that, in virtue of its ubiquity, the glorified body of Christ is present, in holding that the glorified body is in heaven and nowhere else, though it is nevertheless present in the bread by a miracle wrought by Christ himself. This kind of reasoning smacks of the scholastic quibbling of the age, from which he is not free. It is by no means convincing for the modern reader.

evil effects. He discards the assumption that changes by priestly consecration the substance of bread into something absolutely different from it. The stress laid on the spiritual presence tends to eliminate from the Eucharist the materialism and idolatry, which the notion that what the priest has consecrated is no longer bread but a miraculous divine substance, was fitted to nurture. For Wiclif the notion that the priest "makes the body of God" in this sense was henceforth abhorrent. What the priest does is merely to consecrate the host which is not the Lord's body, but only the active sign of its presence.<sup>37</sup> Transubstantiation, he maintains in the "De Eucharistia," is a modern invention, and is contrary to the belief of the primitive Church.<sup>38</sup> It is against both reason and revelation, and he combats the views of Aquinas, Scotus, and other doctors, who worked out this invention. To adore the mere accidents of bread is to be guilty of idolatry. To believe that the consecrated bread actually becomes Christ's body is blasphemy. It is the worst of heresies. "Among all the heresies that have ever sprung up in the Church," he exclaims in the "Trialogus," "I consider that none was ever more cunningly brought in by hypocrites, or cheats the people so manifoldly as this; for it robs the people, causes them to commit idolatry, denies the faith of Scriptures and, in consequence of unbelief, provokes the Truth in many ways to anger."<sup>39</sup>

#### THE BLACKFRIARS SYNOD AND ITS RESULTS

Despite his aggressive attack on this cardinal dogma and the hostile proceedings of the chancellor and the friars against him, the university was still largely Wiclifite. At the end of May 1381 his followers elected Robert Rygge as chancellor in place of Berton. Though Rygge had joined in the condemnation of his teaching on the Eucharist, he was the champion of the seculars against the regulars, whose feud had long disturbed the peace of Oxford, and as chancellor he befriended Wiclif, who had also by this time declared war on the friars and the monks. He allowed free debate in the classrooms and nominated Wiclifite preachers to preach

<sup>37</sup> "De Eucharistia," 16.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>39</sup> *iv.* 248 f.

the university sermons. Hereford and Repyndon, the most distinguished of these, even advocated in their sermons the expulsion of the friars from the university.<sup>40</sup> Contention ran high and the quarrel with the friars was carried by the poor priests over the land, and led to recrimination and even to blows wherever they preached.<sup>41</sup> The friars appealed to John of Gaunt against Hereford,<sup>42</sup> and the duke remaining passive, to Courtenay, now Archbishop of Canterbury. In response, the archbishop, who, as Bishop of London, had taken the lead in the early opposition to Wiclif, convened a synod of bishops and doctors and bachelors of divinity at the Blackfriars convent in May 1382—"the earthquake synod," so called from the fact that a severe earthquake occurred during its sittings.<sup>43</sup> The synod condemned ten conclusions, including three relative to the Eucharist, drawn from Wiclif's works, as heretical, and fourteen as erroneous.<sup>44</sup> Together they embraced the reformer's characteristic teaching, and the preamble condemned in addition the movement organised by him throughout the country. Neither in the articles, nor in the preamble, however, was Wiclif personally mentioned. Nor was he summoned to appear before the synod. He was apparently still too powerful for a frontal attack. His chief Oxford adherents were less fortunate. Hereford, Repyndon, Aston were cited to appear at subsequent sittings in June. Aston professed belief in the real presence in the sense taught by Wiclif and would not admit transubstantiation.<sup>45</sup> He was encouraged in his recalcitrant attitude by the London populace, to whom he had caused a confession of his views on the Eucharist to be distributed,<sup>46</sup> and who burst into the convent and applauded the heretic.<sup>47</sup> He was nevertheless condemned, though he managed to escape in the meantime.<sup>48</sup> Hereford and Repyndon, who had vainly appealed for the protection of

<sup>40</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 296 f.      <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.      <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 292 f.

<sup>43</sup> According to the author of the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum" (p. 272) he was urged by Parliament to take in hand the reform of ecclesiastical abuses in response to a petition presented by Wiclif (Walsingham, ii. 51). The statement is very questionable (see Matthew, "English Works," Introd. 27). Parliament appears to have returned no answer to the petition (Workman, ii. 250 f.).

<sup>44</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 275-82; Gee and Hardy, "Documents Illustrative of the History of the English Church," 108 f.

<sup>45</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 329 f.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 329 f.

<sup>47</sup> Walsingham, ii. 65 f.

<sup>48</sup> Workman, ii. 286.

John of Gaunt, whilst not expressing themselves explicitly on transubstantiation, conceded that the articles were heretical or erroneous. Their answers on transubstantiation were adjudged unsatisfactory, and on failing to appear at a subsequent sitting, they were excommunicated, and, after publishing an appeal to the pope, concealed themselves.<sup>49</sup> Hereford, who had slipped away to Rome in the hope of vindication, was imprisoned by the pope. Rygge the chancellor, who had meanwhile defied the archbishop's mandate to publish the decrees against Wiclif's teaching,<sup>50</sup> quailed when summoned before the Synod and the Privy Council, and complied. Though the university continued to resist, its opposition was ere long crushed by the royal injunction to banish Wiclif's abettors from Oxford and purge the university of heresy (13th July 1382).<sup>51</sup> The process was completed by the archbishop in a convocation held at Oxford in November, before which Aston temporarily and Repyndon finally recanted—the latter subsequently becoming Bishop of Lincoln and a cardinal. Wiclif himself is said by Knighton to have been cited before it and to have followed their example.<sup>52</sup> But the recantation which he gives is merely an assertion in English of his characteristic doctrine of the Eucharist, and we hear nothing of such an appearance before convocation or of any recantation from other sources. Equally unfounded is his statement that he appeared before the synod at Blackfriars and recanted.<sup>53</sup> Both are evidently misstatements, and the fact is that he had before this retired to Lutterworth, where he was left unmolested till his death two years later. He evidently still had powerful supporters. In October the Commons who were anti-clerical, if not heretical, demanded the withdrawal in the province of Canterbury of a royal ordinance ordering the arrest of all Lollards, and issued in the previous June with, apparently, the concurrence of the lords, but without their consent. They protested against the setting up of an inquisition against heretics which might prove dangerous to themselves and unduly augment the power of the hierarchy.<sup>54</sup> Though the king formally assented to their demand, the obnoxious ordinance was not actually withdrawn,

<sup>49</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 381.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 298 f.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 312 f.

<sup>52</sup> ii. 160 f.

<sup>53</sup> ii. 156 f.

<sup>54</sup> "Rot. Par.," iii. 141.

and in December 1384 it was extended to the province of York. In virtue of it some of the bishops, notably the Bishop of Lincoln, carried out an inquisition against heretics, which led to the recantation of some of the Lollard preachers.<sup>55</sup>

#### CLOSING POLEMIC

Though Wiclif retired from Oxford, he did not abate his polemical and practical activity as a reformer. He continued to train missionary preachers, whilst himself refraining from propagandist work outside his own parish. He now laid much less stress on scholarship than on knowledge of the Scriptures as a qualification for this work. He continued also to write voluminously, and the note of antagonism to the papacy and the traditional Church is intensified in these latter-day productions. Among the most important of the systematic works written in these last years are the "Trialogus"—a mature exposition of his theological and philosophical teaching<sup>56</sup>—and the unfinished "Opus Evangelicum,"<sup>57</sup> of which the fundamental idea is the sufficiency of God's law, *i.e.*, the Scriptures, as the test of doctrine and institutions, and in which he continues the attack on the papacy as Antichrist<sup>58</sup> and the secularised and degenerate Christianity which it represents. There is, of course, the tendency, to which every reformer is liable, to dwell on the one side, and this the dark side, of the picture. But the contrast which history presents between primitive and mediæval Christianity goes far to justify Wiclif's criticism that, owing to the domination of the spirit of the world in the Church, the latter is in many respects a travesty of the former. His fundamental position is that true Christianity is the Christianity of Christ and the apostles, that its later mediæval development must be tried by this test, and that, when so tried, it fails to pass the test and appears as a corrupt, hybrid thing. This degenerate development ought to and must be purified if the Christian religion is to be true to itself and realise the will of its founder. At the same time, he

<sup>55</sup> See, for instance, the proceedings of the Bishop of Lincoln, "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 334 f.

<sup>56</sup> Ed. by Lechler (1869).

<sup>57</sup> Ed. by Loserth (1895-96).

<sup>58</sup> Books III. and IV. have also the title "De Antichristo."

is inclined too much to assume, with the Spiritual Franciscans, that poverty and the life of poverty are essentials of Christianity and to make a rather artificial distinction in this respect between the Christianity of a layman and that of a cleric. Nor has he sufficiently grasped the fact that with the expansion of Christianity into a universal religion in a changing world a necessary modification of primitive conditions, for better as well as for worse, was inevitable.

This is the test too which he applies in his Latin and English polemical tracts,<sup>59</sup> most of which belong to this period. In these, in addition to the attack on the papacy and the hierarchy, he extends his indictment to the monks, especially the friars, to whom, in the last years of his life, he shows a bitter antagonism which contrasts with the more friendly tone of his earlier writings.<sup>60</sup> John of Gaunt had brought four doctors of the mendicant orders to defend him on the occasion of the first attack of the Bishop of London. But the friars had turned against him and had led the opposition in the university to his Eucharistic teaching, and Wiclif ended by denouncing them in his bitterest style. "Pilate and Herod," he says, in reference to the common attack on him by the friars and the hierarchy, who before were mutual enemies, "have become friends."<sup>61</sup> In these tracts he sharply distinguishes the true Church—"the sect of Christ"—from the Church of the four sects, as he calls the pope and the secular clergy of all ranks, the monks, the monastic canons, and the friars.<sup>62</sup> What he says of the pope and the hierarchy is only a repetition, in more extreme form at times, of what he had said over and over again in other works.<sup>63</sup> As to the monks, they are a burden to the State, because they deprive it of large sums which might be used for the poor, and render little or no service in return. Their so-called vow of poverty has really become the means of the ruin of the poor. This is a too sweeping judgment, since the monks might at least claim the merit of dispensing charity, of doing something for elementary education

<sup>59</sup> The "Latin Polemical Works," ed. by Buddensieg (1883).

<sup>60</sup> Already in the "De Ecclesia," however, he criticises the friars.

<sup>61</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 284.

<sup>62</sup> See especially the "De Quatuor sectis Novellis," written in 1383.

<sup>63</sup> See especially the "De Divisione Paparum," the "De Christo et suo Adversario Antichristo," the "Cruciata" (referring to the expedition of Bishop Spencer to Flanders in 1383).

by their schools, and of rendering some service to literature as copyists and chroniclers. But these services were not sufficient compensation for their wealth and privileges, and the prevailing feeling was that they were a useless and self-indulgent class, which ease and good living had corrupted.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, Wiclif held strongly that the life of cloistered seclusion was at variance with the freedom and active spirit of the Gospel. The whole monastic system, with its profession of a superior virtue, is a perversion of the Gospel.<sup>65</sup> Most pernicious of all is the sect of the friars. After, if not before they joined the ranks of the opposition, he became their inveterate enemy and attacked them on national, economic, religious, and moral grounds. Their existence is incompatible with the national sovereignty, since they are subject directly only to the pope. They are, therefore, the staunch supporters of the actual papacy and really acknowledge only the pope as their sovereign.<sup>66</sup> There are four thousand of them in England and they cost the country £40,000<sup>67</sup> annually. They set the welfare of their order above that of the country and are capable of doing anything in its interest.<sup>68</sup> There is no warrant for their existence in Scripture, which they pervert. They nurture a false notion of true piety and put papal tradition in the place of the knowledge of Christ. They are identical with the heretics and sects spoken of in the New Testament.<sup>69</sup> They are grossly immoral, live, like the monks, in luxury at the expense of the poor. They are insatiably greedy in spite of their profession of poverty and use religion as a means of robbing rich and poor. He would abolish them root and branch, though he would not use force against them.<sup>70</sup>

The extraordinary fecundity of Wiclif's later polemic production is all the more surprising inasmuch as the last two years of his life were those of an invalid. The strain of his laborious life brought on a stroke of paralysis and a second

<sup>64</sup> See Trevelyan, 156 f.

<sup>65</sup> "De Perfectione Statuum," i. 2.

<sup>66</sup> "De Ordinatione Fratrum," 4.

<sup>67</sup> "De Triplici Vinculo Amoris," 9.

<sup>68</sup> "De Septem Donis," 8.

<sup>69</sup> "De Fundatione Sectarum," 14; "De Ordinatione Fratrum," 2; "De Triplici Vinculo Amoris," 4, 5, 6, etc.

<sup>70</sup> "De Fundatione Sectarum," 6, 7, 8, 15; "De Septem Donis," 6, 7, etc.

shock as he was listening to mass in his church, on the 29th December 1384, resulted in his death on the 31st. It is a marvel that he had been left unmolested by his enemies during the previous two years and allowed to die in peace in his own rectory, though the friars were urging the pope, Urban VI., to cite him to Rome for trial.<sup>71</sup> The most probable explanation is that the archbishop, whilst prosecuting his followers, hesitated to proceed to extremes against their master. The demoralisation of Church life and authority consequent on the schism, in addition to his commanding reputation in the schools and his continued influence among a section of the upper class as well as among the people, probably contributed to his personal immunity from prosecution.

#### ESTIMATE

What manner of man he was we are largely left to conjecture from the work he accomplished. "To the memory of one of the greatest of Englishmen," remarks Shirley, "his country has been singularly and painfully ungrateful. On most of us the dim image looks down, like the portrait of the first of a long line of kings, without personality or expression."<sup>72</sup> The charge of ingratitude has happily been removed since the foundation of the Wyclif Society and the publication of his numerous works. From these we are able to mark his significance in the succession of reformers. Unfortunately the details about himself and his life in his works are very scanty. Unlike those of Luther, whose personality radiates from his writings, they contain little of self-revelation. One of his followers, W. Thorpe, tells us that he was in body spare, frail, emaciated, that he was in conversation "most innocent," and that he was beloved by many of the chief men of the kingdom. He adds that he was reputed by very many the greatest clerk then living.<sup>73</sup> He himself tells us that he was quick of temper.<sup>74</sup> His sympathy with the common man in an age when life was

<sup>71</sup> The pope does not appear to have issued such a citation and in any case Wiclif rebutted his right to do so as an illegal usurpation in a tract, "De Citationibus Frivolis," written in 1383; see Workman, ii. 314 f.

<sup>72</sup> *Introd.* to "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 46.

<sup>73</sup> "Examination of Master William Thorpe," in "English Garner," vi.

<sup>74</sup> "Fasciculi Zizaniorum," 45.

harsh and inequitable reveals the width and depth of his humanity. His writings testify to the alertness, subtlety, and fertility of his mind, if also its limitation within the scholastic system of thought. Intellectually he was *facile princeps* in an age of growing intellectual mediocrity, although it is quite impossible for any modern to read him through without a recurring feeling of tedium and impatience. With the exception of his sermons, which are always readable, he is too subtle, syllogistic, irrelevant, redundant to receive a hearing from any but a laborious specialist. But in this he is not singular among the scholastic theologians, and the tedium of his pages are often relieved by the verve and the power of the independent thinker, the earnest reformer. In spite of his defects as a writer (though the works written in Middle English are linguistically important), we do not read far in most of his numerous writings without realising that here is a man with a message for his age, a man with a very high ideal of the practical religious life, and a just sense of its scandalous decadence. With the abstraction and the erudition of the scholar he combines the striving of the active reformer.<sup>75</sup> The religious reformation which he contemplates is based on the teaching of Christ and the apostles as he understands it. It is a reversion to the Christianity of the New Testament in revulsion from the secularised ecclesiastical Christianity of the Church in its late mediæval form. Some of his reform proposals are, indeed, open to criticism and reveal a rather impractical vein. He would, as we have seen, have spoiled the Church merely, though not intentionally, to enrich the State. In his exaltation of the State he would have sacrificed the Church's spiritual liberty as well as its possessions. Unlike Marsiglio, he maintains the right to repress heretics.<sup>76</sup> He weakened his cause by his association with an unscrupulous politician, which, however, in his need of a protector he could hardly afford to avoid. On the other hand, he is a sturdy individualist and shows a rare courage and force of character

<sup>75</sup> Some recent writers maintain that Wiclif was mainly a reformer of the academic, intellectual type. Miss Deansley, for instance, "The Lollard Bible," 225. As Workman points out, they overlook the practical side of the movement as evinced by the translation of the Bible, which he inspired, the training and evangelistic work of his poor priests, and the support of an active band of adherents at Oxford.

<sup>76</sup> "De Officio Regis," 125.

in asserting his religious individualism against the dominant religious order. In so doing he may rightly be regarded as anticipating some of the ideas of the later Reformation. He maintained the dependence of the believer for salvation on the divine predestination and grace, not on any work or ordinance of man, the supreme authority of Scripture, and the Scripture in the common tongue as the sole source of salvation, the authoritative revelation to which tradition is strictly subordinate. He took the early Church as the model of government and teaching. He held that in the early Church bishop and presbyter were identical and taught the priesthood of the believer.<sup>77</sup> He rejected transubstantiation and disapproved of religious usages such as the worship of the saints as tending to foster superstition and idolatry. He denounced the monastic ideal of perfection and strove to substitute for it that of the active Christian life. He appealed to the secular as against the ecclesiastical power and even subordinated the latter to the former. Whether he held the doctrine of justification by faith alone is debatable. Buddensieg finds it in the "De Veritate Sacræ Scripturæ."<sup>78</sup> Lechler decides for the negative, and more recently Laun.<sup>79</sup> In any case it has not in Wiclif's works the central place which it has in those of Luther, whose spiritual experience differed widely from his.

It is in the enunciation of these ideas and the attempt to apply them in the Church by means of the civil power and the evangelical preaching of his poor priests that his significance lies. In this sense he may be allowed a place as a reformer beside Luther<sup>80</sup> and Calvin, though he had not the religious genius of Luther or the constructive ability of Calvin as a theologian and an ecclesiastical statesman. What was lacking was the humanist influence which would have imparted a larger outlook and a more critical quality to his thinking, and would have emancipated him from the scholastic groove in which his mind worked and from which the sixteenth-century reformers

<sup>77</sup> Buddensieg, "Wicliff," 200 and 207 (1885), disposes of the negative view of Brieger, "Die Reformation," 99 (1913).

<sup>78</sup> *Intro.*, 37 f.

<sup>79</sup> Art. on Bradwardine, *Zeitschrift f. Kirchengeschichte*, 1928, 354.

<sup>80</sup> In his "Assertio Omnium Articulorum," *Werke*, vii., Luther cites with approval Wiclif's determinist teaching. He refers to the Wiclifite articles condemned by the Council of Constance. He had thus an indirect knowledge of his teaching, if he had most probably not read his works.

freed themselves to a greater extent. What was further lacking was the fullness of the time. The time was only in the making, for the Renaissance, with all the creative forces inherent in it, was only starting on its fateful course. This being so, Wiclif was a reformer who failed. But success is not necessarily the test of a movement or a man. A greater test is to fail in order ultimately to succeed, and Wiclif may, in the person of those who took up and carried on his work under more favourable conditions, fairly claim to have achieved this kind of success. Whether like them he should have ceased to be a minister of the Church, which he denounced as unscriptural and anti-Christian, is a debatable question. His opponents did not force him to consider the question as a practical one. Their attempt to silence him at Oxford failed for several years, and when at last it succeeded, they do not seem to have followed it up, and left him to continue his work at Lutterworth. That he himself should have renounced a Church which he considered so corrupt seems to be the logical conclusion. He evidently judged that he had a right to retain his position within it whilst striving to reform it in accordance with the Gospel. Like Luther he did not regard himself as a heretic, and applied this term to the friars and others of his opponents.

## CHAPTER X

### THE LOLLARDS

#### PERSISTENCE OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

THE more steadfast of Wiclif's adherents continued his mission after his death, in spite of repressive measures on the part of some of the bishops, which resulted in some recantations, including that of Hereford (1390), who had escaped from his Roman prison and had returned to England. Even before his death Repyndon had yielded (1382) and as Abbot of Leicester, Bishop of Lincoln, confessor of Henry IV., and ultimately cardinal, joined in the repression of the movement. The number of converts, who appear under the name of Lollards, nevertheless, materially increased during the ten years following his death.<sup>1</sup> King Richard, at the instigation of a powerful party in Parliament, fulminated in vain against them and their teaching in 1388, and appointed a commission to seize their books and arrest and try their owners.<sup>2</sup> Equally fruitless the royal mandates to the local authorities directing their suppression in a number of the counties from this year onward.<sup>3</sup> The movement was strengthened by the social discontent, which smouldered on during Richard's reign and burst into spasmodic local disturbance. Both Aston and Swinderby, who had recanted, regained courage and renewed their preaching in spite of persecution. Purvey and, for a time, Hereford likewise signalled their zeal as leaders of the movement. London, under its forceful Mayor, John Northampton, was largely Lollard in creed or sympathy. Oxford continued, though in a more limited extent, a nursery of Wiclif's teaching, and Leicester, Northampton, Nottingham, Reading, Salisbury, Gloucester, Bristol, and other western towns contained a large

<sup>1</sup> Knighton, "Chronicon," ii. 183, 260; Walsingham, ii. 159, 188, 216.

<sup>2</sup> Knighton, ii. 263 f.

<sup>3</sup> Powell and Trevelyan, "The Peasants' Rising and The Lollards," 41 f. (1899). A valuable collection of documents.

number of adherents. Nor were they confined to the lower classes. A considerable section of the gentry and a number of the nobility, including Lord John Montague, Sir John Oldcastle, who acquired by marriage the title of Lord Cobham, Sir Thomas Latimer, Sir Ludovic Clifford, Sir Richard Stury professed Lollard views, and, from varying motives, championed the Lollard cause.<sup>4</sup> "With many," as Dr Workman points out, "Lollardy was a revolt against the tyranny of clericalism, a desire to obtain more freedom, or a hankering after Wyclif's schemes of disendowment. With others there was the consciousness that all things were not well in Church and State, and that there should be reform. With but few was there a yearning after greater spirituality."<sup>5</sup>

So influential as well as numerous had they become before the end of the fourteenth century that in 1395 Montague, Latimer, and Stury attempted to secure the discussion of their tenets in Parliament in the form of Twelve Conclusions for the reform of the Church, which they affixed to the doors of St Paul's and Westminster Abbey.<sup>6</sup> In this document they denounced the wealthy and worldly hierarchy as anti-Christian, and the mass and the worship of images as idolatrous; condemned clerical celibacy and the conventual life for women as detrimental to morality, the assumption of secular offices by clerics as detrimental to religion; attacked prayers for those in purgatory in return for money, the superstitious ceremonies in the worship of the Church, pilgrimages, confession, absolution; and emphatically denounced war as contrary to the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> The Conclusions do not seem to have called forth any action on the part of Parliament. But they alarmed the bishops, and at their instigation King Richard hurriedly returned from Ireland to threaten the supporters of the Lollards into silence.<sup>8</sup> There was, however, no serious attempt to repress them during the closing years of his reign,

<sup>4</sup> Knighton, ii. 181; Walsingham, ii. 159, 216.

<sup>5</sup> ii. 376.

<sup>6</sup> Walsingham, ii. 216.

<sup>7</sup> See the Conclusions in the original English given by Mr Cronin in the *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, April 1907.

<sup>8</sup> Walsingham, ii. 217. The pope also wrote to the king exhorting him to suppress them (Walsingham, ii. 219), and to the Archbishop of Canterbury to take energetic measures to the same end, "Calendar of Papal Registers," iv. 515 f.

though Archbishop Arundel, the successor of Courtenay, renewed the condemnation of Wiclif's teaching in a provincial synod in 1397.

#### PERSECUTION AND SURVIVAL

With the deposition of Richard in 1399 and the accession of Henry IV., who sought to strengthen his government by a close alliance with the Church, king and bishops united in a determined effort to suppress them. Even Purvey, after a rigorous imprisonment, was fain to recant at St Paul's Cross in March 1401. In the same year Parliament passed the statute *De Heretico Comburendo*, which prohibited unlicensed preaching, enjoined the surrender of heretical books and the arrest and trial of recusants, and enacted that those condemned for heresy in the ecclesiastical courts, who refused to recant or relapsed, should be handed over to the secular power to be burned alive.<sup>9</sup> The statute marks a new departure in the persecution of heretics in England. Hitherto the infliction of the death penalty had been extremely rare.<sup>10</sup> It also signalises a more steadfast spirit among the Lollards than had been manifested by the leading disciples of Wiclif, who had ultimately recanted. Its application now produced a considerable number of martyrdoms in the reigns of Henry IV. and his successors Henry V. and Henry VI. William Sawtree, a priest, had already been tried and burned under the Canon Law a few days before its enactment.<sup>11</sup> The burning of John Badby, a layman, in March 1410 furnishes the first recorded example of its application.<sup>12</sup> William Thorpe, who was tried in 1407, was equally resolute in maintaining his Lollard views, though no record of his actual fate has survived. The Lollard party in Parliament, which was still considerable, unsuccessfully proposed to modify the heresy statute in 1410 as well as to confiscate the revenues of the higher clergy mainly for the benefit of the

<sup>9</sup> "Statutes of the Realm," ii. 125; Walsingham, ii. 247.

<sup>10</sup> Prof. Maitland finds only two previous cases, "Canon Law in the Church of England," 158 f. (1898).

<sup>11</sup> Walsingham, ii. 247.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 282; cf. the longer text of Walsingham for the years 1406-20, ed. by Galbraith from a Bodleian MS. under the title of "The St Albans Chronicle," 51 f. (1937).

king and the upper classes.<sup>13</sup> Archbishop Arundel issued a series of constitutions against them in 1407, and four years later, in spite of the opposition of the chancellor and many of the masters, "purged" the University of Oxford, with the aid of the king and council, of the leaven of Wiclifitism. Additional repressive legislation was passed by Parliament in the reign of Henry V. We hear of more victims in this reign, including Lord Cobham, who tenaciously refused to abjure his Lollard convictions when arraigned by the archbishop and his suffragans at St Paul's, and was accordingly condemned to be handed over as a heretic to the secular power for execution. Escaping from the Tower, he conspired, in his resentment, a rising against the king, who was the staunch enemy of the heretics. The revolt ended in disaster to himself and many of his Lollard followers. It was as a traitor as well as a heretic that he was ultimately caught and executed (1417), though Shakespeare calls him a martyr. In respect of the tenacity of his religious opinions, which drove him into revolt, he may fairly be said to have earned the twofold designation.<sup>14</sup> The persecuting spirit was directed against even the dead Wiclif, whose views were formally condemned by the Council of Constance. In 1428 his remains, at the instigation of Pope Martin V., were exhumed and burned by Bishop Fleming of Lincoln, who was himself, in his earlier career, suspect of Lollardy.

The Cobham rising in 1414 seems to have henceforth discredited the movement in the eyes of the upper classes. It lost its hold on the country gentlemen; it ceased to attract scholars of the type of Hereford and Purvey, and its poor priests were exclusively men of limited education who had no influence with the educated class. Yet these devoted preachers had many followers among the people in the home counties, in the West of England, and in Norfolk and Suffolk. Not only do occasional martyrdoms testify to its existence in the fifteenth century. Its adherents were still so numerous in

<sup>13</sup> Walsingham, ii. 282 f.; *cf.* 265; *cf.* Galbraith, 52 f. The proposal was made in 1414.

<sup>14</sup> A long account of his trial and the Lollard conspiracy is given by Walsingham, ii. 291 f.; *cf.* Galbraith, 116 f. See also Gairdner, "Lollardy and the Reformation," i. 68 f. (1908), and the critical and more dispassionate account of Waugh, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1905, 434 f., 637 f.; Tait, art. in "Dict. of Nat. Biog."

the middle of this century that Bishop Pecock of Chichester deemed it necessary in 1450 to write a book against them—"The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy."<sup>15</sup> He was, however, himself found to be a heretic on account of his rationalistic interpretation of Scripture and his denial of certain clauses of the Apostles' Creed and was compelled to recant, and kept in durance. They have been denounced as socialists and anarchists. Apart from the Cobham conspiracy in Henry V.'s reign, they seem in reality to have been for the most part simple religious dissenters, who, unlike Wiclif himself, carried their dissent the length of forswearing the Church as unscriptural and corrupt in life and doctrine. They were accordingly the objects of persecution before the Lutheran movement began to take a grip of England in the days of W. Tyndale and other English evangelical reformers. Despite their comparative outward insignificance, they undoubtedly remained as an appreciable leaven of dissent and kept alive the revulsion from the secularised ecclesiasticism<sup>16</sup> which Wiclif had started, not only within their own sect, but in wider lay circles which did not formally belong to them.

On the eve of the English Reformation in the early years of the sixteenth century, we have explicit evidence of their activity in the prosecutions for heresy in the latter part of the reign of Henry VII. and the early part of that of Henry VIII. In his orthodox zeal, Fitzjames, Bishop of London, arraigned nearly two score of them during this interval. Though most of them recanted, they had many sympathisers and secret adherents among the people. London juries, on the bishop's own confession, were too addicted to "heretical pravity" to do justice to any cleric who had the reputation of being a persecutor. From Foxe we learn that these Lollard heretics were organised in societies in London and the eastern counties, which held their own religious meetings, and whose zeal was

<sup>15</sup> Ed. by Babington for the Rolls series (1860). A long account of the author and his opinions is given by the editor and by Gairdner, "Lollardy," i. 202 f. See also Capes, "History of the English Church," 207 f.

<sup>16</sup> For the corrupt state of the English Church in the fifteenth century, see the indictment of Gascoigne, Chancellor of Oxford University, in the "Liber Veritatum," selected passages by J. E. T. Rogers (1881). See also Archbishop Bourchier's denunciations of ecclesiastical abuses in his "Commission for Reforming the Clergy" (1455); Gee and Hardy, "Documents," 141 f.

fostered by wandering preachers, some of whom paid for their temerity by their martyrdom. They read the Scriptures in English and some of Wiclif's tracts, and in spite of persecution and numerous abjurations, made not a few proselytes. Very notable is the avidity with which they read this heretical literature. "Some," notes Foxe, "gave five marks, some more, some less for a book. Some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St James or of St Paul in English. In which rarity of books and want of teachers, this one thing I greatly marvel and muse at, to note in the (bishop's) registers and to consider how the word of truth, notwithstanding, did multiply so exceedingly as it did amongst them."<sup>17</sup> Some of them were probably adding to their scanty store of heretical books the early works of Luther, a collection of which, by mandate of Cardinal Wolsey<sup>18</sup> in 1521, was burned at St Paul's Cross in May of this year.<sup>19</sup>

#### LOLLARDISM IN SCOTLAND

From England Lollardism spread into Scotland in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The recurring friction between the papacy and the Scottish kings and Parliament in the latter century was so far favourable to this extension. As in England in the fourteenth century, opposition to the abuse of papal provisions appears as a distinctive feature of the parliamentary history of Scotland in the fifteenth. In the reign of James I. Parliament gave expression to its impatience with the trafficking in Scottish benefices at Rome and in a couple of enactments in 1424 and 1427<sup>20</sup> attempted to put a stop to this traffic. These acts, which, it seems, were due to John Cameron, the king's energetic reforming secretary, who became Bishop of Glasgow in 1426 and chancellor shortly afterwards, gave rise to a feud with Popes Martin V. and Eugenius IV. which

<sup>17</sup> "Acts and Monuments," ii. 31; *cf.* 27.

<sup>18</sup> Wilkins, "Concilia," iii. 690.

<sup>19</sup> Gairdner, "Lollardy," i. 310.

<sup>20</sup> "Acts of Parliament," ii. 15, 16. For details of this traffic in Scottish benefices at Rome between the years 1418-22, see "Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome," ed. by E. R. Lindsay and A. J. Cameron (1934); and from 1418-88, A. J. Cameron, "The Apostolic Camera and Scottish Benefices" (1934).

lasted till the tragic end of the king's reign in 1437.<sup>21</sup> The attack becomes more insistent in the second half of the century in consequence of the material detriment or "skaith" to the nation which this and other abuses entail. The act of 1471, for instance, tells of the "great dampnage and skaith daily done to all the realm by clerks, religious and seculars, quhilk purchase abbeys and other benefices at the court of Rome." Similarly, that of 1483 complains of the "grete skaith and damage that the realme daily sustenis by having of money furth of the realme by prelates and clerks for procuracion and pleas in the court of Rome." The 1496 Act is even more explicit.<sup>22</sup> Parliament evidently regards the question from the economic, not the religious or moral point of view. There is nothing in these Acts to suggest moral or religious susceptibilities on the part of these practical legislators, though this may be implied.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the sharp antagonism to papal abuse reflected in them was fitted to fan the spirit of Lollard dissent which had undoubtedly penetrated into Scotland by the beginning of the fifteenth century, if not earlier,<sup>24</sup> and appears to have been still active towards the end of it.

Some of the Scottish students who resorted to Oxford in the second half of the fourteenth century<sup>25</sup> had probably come under the influence of Wiclif himself, and the number of his adherents in Scotland was increased by the persecution which drove some of the Lollards to seek refuge north of the Border.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, William Thorpe, who, as we have noted, was tried in England in 1407, is said to have preached in the

<sup>21</sup> For the course of it, see "Calendar of Papal Registers," vii. 18 f.; viii. 233 f., 261, 286 f. A detailed account of it in Balfour Melville, "James I.," 174 f., *passim* (1936). See also Hannay, *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, xv.

<sup>22</sup> "Acts of Parliament," ii. 99 (1471); ii. 166 (1483); ii. 237 (1496).

<sup>23</sup> Bishop Dowden appears to have seen in the Acts the expression of a widespread antagonism to the corrupt papal régime on moral as well as economic grounds, "Mediæval Church of Scotland," 194. The Acts do not, however, seem to warrant a positive inference of this kind.

<sup>24</sup> Mention is made of heretics in a series of fourteenth-century statutes of a St Andrews synod (Patrick, "Statutes of the Scottish Church," 75 (1907), trans. of Robertson's "Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ Statuta"), and in an Act of Parliament (i. 593, 1399) the Duke of Rothesay, lieutenant for his father, Robert III., undertakes to suppress heretics.

<sup>25</sup> Safe conducts for Scottish students proceeding to study at Oxford are among the documents contained in the "Rot. Scotiæ," and one document of date 1382 forbids the authorities of the university to molest the Scottish students, in spite of their adherence to the anti-pope. Hay Fleming, "The Reformation in Scotland," 8 (1910).

<sup>26</sup> Fleming, "Reformation," 10.

North of England for twenty years,<sup>27</sup> and it is probable that through his preaching Lollardism had also spread across the Border into Scotland. That their number was not inconsiderable we may infer from the fact that the Duke of Albany, who assumed the government as Regent in 1406, in the absence of the captive James I. in England, is described by Wyntoun as a hater of Lollards and heretics.<sup>28</sup> Certain it is that in the opening years of the century there was in the Scottish Church an "Inquisitor of heretical pravity."<sup>29</sup> The office was held by the redoubtable Laurence of Lindores and was evidently no sinecure. "Laurence," we are informed by Bower,<sup>30</sup> the continuator of Fordun, "never gave rest to heretics and Lollards within the kingdom," and the first-fruit of his persecuting zeal<sup>31</sup> was the burning of James Resby, the first of Scotland's martyrs. Resby is described by Bower as "an English priest of the school of Wiclif," who exerted great influence in Scotland as a popular preacher, and did not hesitate to inveigh against the power of the pope and maintain other Wiclifite heresies in his sermons. For these heresies, to the number of over forty, he was condemned by a synod, over which Laurence presided, and burned at Perth in 1407.<sup>32</sup> We hear of another of these early Scottish Lollards, Quintin Folkherd, who evangelised and suffered persecution in the early fifteenth century, but whose fate is unknown.<sup>33</sup> The zeal of the inquisitor as well as the continued prevalence of heresy is further apparent in the obligation exacted in 1416 of all masters of the University of St Andrews, of which Laurence was the first rector as well as one of the first professors,<sup>34</sup> to defend the Church against the attacks of the Lollards to the utmost of their power, and resist the adherents of this sect.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Gairdner, "Lollardry," i. 58 f.

<sup>28</sup> Wyntoun, "Original Cronykil," iii. 100 (Laing's ed.).

<sup>29</sup> Bower, "Scotichronicon," ii. 442.

<sup>30</sup> ii. 495.

<sup>31</sup> For a painstaking account of the career of Laurence, see Maitland Anderson, "The Beginnings of St Andrews University," in *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, April 1911.

<sup>32</sup> "Scotichronicon," ii. 441 f.

<sup>33</sup> See Workman, "Wyclif," i. 10. He wrote letters to Prague in 1410. Four of his letters are given in "Copiale Prioratus Sanctiandree," 230 f., ed. by Baxter (1930). The "Copiale" is the letter-book of Haldenstone, Prior of St Andrews in the first half of the fifteenth century.

<sup>34</sup> *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, April 1911, 240.

<sup>35</sup> MSS. Records of the University, quoted by McCrie, "Life of Melville," i. 419. In 1415 Gerson, at the Council of Constance, deplors the spread of Lollardism in Scotland, Workman i. 10 f.

There is, too, some ground for believing that another Lollard was tried and burned at Glasgow in 1422, though the statement of Knox, who alone refers to the subject, is somewhat indefinite.<sup>36</sup>

These exemplary measures seem, however, to have been unavailing. In 1424—the first year of the active reign of James I., who during his exile at the English court seems to have imbibed an antipathy to the Lollard sect—the Scottish Parliament is found directing the bishops to seek out and punish heretics and Lollards in their dioceses and guaranteeing the assistance of the secular power in their repression, if need be.<sup>37</sup> Some years later this intolerant statute received practical application in the burning of Paul Craw or Crawar, a follower of John Hus, at St Andrews. Crawar who may have sat at the feet of Hus himself, and may thus be regarded as, indirectly at least, a Lollard, was both an eminent physician and an adept in sacred learning,<sup>38</sup> and, according to Bower and Boece, had been commissioned by his Hussite brethren to evangelise in far distant Scotland. The evangelical fervour which carried him from Prague to St Andrews in 1433 speedily brought him under the notice of the argus-eyed inquisitor of heretical pravity, and his missionary work was cut short by his arrest within the university,<sup>39</sup> on whose members he had evidently begun to make some impression. During his examination before the inquisitor, who, on this occasion, was ably seconded by John Fogo, Abbot of Melrose,<sup>40</sup> he staunchly maintained the doctrines of Wiclif and Hus as to transubstantiation, the

<sup>36</sup> "History of the Reformation," i. 5 f. (Laing's ed.). Knox does not say that this person was actually burned at Glasgow, but that in the Register of Glasgow mention is made of one who suffered in 1422. But this may have been a mistake for 1407, or a later insertion by a copyist. David Buchanan, in his edition of the "History" in 1644, inserted the name of Resby. Knox, however, did not mention Resby's name, and adds that nothing definite was to be learned from the Register about the person in question, Fleming, "Reformation," 15 f. Fleming, who examined the MS. of Knox's "History," concluded that the date was inserted by a later hand.

<sup>37</sup> "Acts," ii. 7.

<sup>38</sup> *Præcellens arte medicinæ, "Scotichronicon,"* ii. 495; in *sacris literis et in allegatione Bibliæ promptus et exercitatus, ibid.* He had studied medicine at Montpellier and had graduated in Arts at Paris in 1415.

<sup>39</sup> Knox, "History," i. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Boece, "*Scotorum Historiæ,*" 365. Boece mistakenly says that Fogo was rewarded with the Abbey of Melrose for his services against the heretic. He was already abbot in 1425.

worship of the saints, auricular confession, etc.,<sup>41</sup> and severely taxed the powers of his accusers by his theological learning and his readiness in adducing proofs from the Bible in support of his arguments. The inquisitor, nevertheless, succeeded, according to Bower, in confuting him to his own satisfaction and handed him over to the secular power to be burned. His sense of his power for mischief even at the stake is evident from the precaution of gagging him by ramming a brass ball into his mouth, to the end, as Knox relates, "that he should nott geve confessionis of his fayth to the people."<sup>42</sup>

As in England, these repeated martyrdoms would seem to have been effective in checking the spread of Lollardism in Scotland. It nevertheless continued to exist throughout the remainder of the century, in furtive, if not in aggressive fashion. Bower, writing about the middle of the century, speaks as if Lollardism was still prevalent in his day. In 1494 we light on convincing evidence of the fact in the citation by Archbishop Blackader of Glasgow of a batch of thirty Lollards from Kyle in Ayrshire before King James IV. and his Council. Moreover, these sectaries included a number of the local gentry, and their social standing leads to the conclusion that the religious movement they represented could not have been quite an insignificant one. From the articles preferred against them, it would appear that they were in complete antagonism to many of the doctrines and practices of the Church of their time. They attacked the worship of saints and relics, prayer to the Virgin, the mass and transubstantiation, the payment of tithes to ecclesiastics, the power of the pope, whom they declared to be Antichrist, purgatory, indulgences, excommunication, and clerical celibacy. They maintained the priesthood of all believers, and the unlawfulness of fighting, oaths, and the defence of the faith by force. They advocated the marriage of priests, denounced the pope and the bishops as murderers, thieves, and robbers, disallowed divorce in view of its abuse by the Church, denied to the secular power the right to judge in things religious (though Knox thinks that this was a calumny of their enemies), and refused to believe as the doctors of the Church had prescribed. Evidently they would be content

<sup>41</sup> Boece, *ibid.* Hus, however, did not deny transubstantiation.

<sup>42</sup> "History," i. 6.

with nothing less than a thoroughgoing reformation of the constitution, doctrine, and practice of the Church, though their contentions were negative rather than constructive. Nevertheless, their spokesman parried the attack of the archbishop so skilfully and exposed the defects of the hierarchy so pointedly that James, who enjoyed his sarcasms at the archbishop's expense, and was besides the personal friend of some of the accused, suppressed the proceedings against them.<sup>43</sup>

James' clemency did not, however, put an end to such inquisitions and before his reign closed in disaster at Flodden in 1513 he again effectively intervened, it would seem, on behalf of the son of one of the Lollard heretics of Kyle, John Campbell of Cessnock, who, along with his wife and chaplain, was tried on a charge of reading the Bible in the vernacular and attacking the superstitions of the Church.<sup>44</sup> Another of these sectaries, Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill, was less fortunate, and was, as we learn from an account of the life of one of his covenanting descendants,<sup>45</sup> forced, with two of his associates, to "flee overseas," that is, to England. About the year 1520, he made a Scottish version of Purvey's revision of Wiclif's New Testament. With this vernacular translation he ventured back to Scotland, and succeeded in evading the inquisitors by living in a vault beneath his house.<sup>46</sup> We have another indication of the influence of Lollardism in Scotland at this period in the case of John Andrew Duncan. Duncan had been taken prisoner at Flodden and won over to Lollardism by Wiclifite relatives in England. Returning to Scotland in 1524 he settled on his family property at Airdrie in Fife, and appears to have kept in touch with St Andrews, where Patrick Hamilton was then residing. We find him, in fact, taking part in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue Hamilton in 1528.<sup>47</sup> Thus the leaven of

<sup>43</sup> Knox, "History," i. 7 f., to whom we are indebted for the articles and the account of the trial, and who derived his account from the Register at Glasgow.

<sup>44</sup> This fact we owe to Alesius, "Responso ad Cochlei Calumnias." See also Hay Fleming, "Reformation," 27 f.

<sup>45</sup> "True Relation of the Life and Sufferings of John Nisbet of Hardhill in the reign of Charles II."

<sup>46</sup> An account of Nisbet is given in "Select Biographies," Wodrow Soc., ii., and Mr Law has dealt with the subject in his interesting Introd. to "The New Testament in Scots," by Murdoch Nisbet, Scottish Text Society (1901).

<sup>47</sup> See *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, April 1904, art. by the late Principal Lindsay.

Lollardism continued to work, furtively at least, in Scotland up to the time when the larger reformation movement, originating in Germany and inaugurated by Patrick Hamilton, had begun to take a grip of the Scottish Church. It is not without significance that in Ayrshire and Fife, where its presence is traceable, the evangelical Reformation found some of its most active supporters.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GREAT SCHISM (1378-1417)

#### ITS ORIGIN

THE so-called Babylonish captivity of the popes was brought to an end in 1376, when Gregory XI., in response to the reiterated demands of the Romans and in the hope of rehabilitating the papal prestige and power in Italy, at last tore himself away from Avignon. He survived his arrival in Rome little more than a year,<sup>1</sup> and by his death in March 1378, and the double election which followed it, the Church was rent for several decades by what is known as the Great Schism. The French cardinals would fain have elected one of their own number as his successor in the hope of a speedy escape from Rome to Avignon. But they were divided into two hostile parties, neither of which could hope for a sufficient majority for its candidate, and had no alternative but to elect a Roman or at least an Italian pope, as the Romans demanded. They accordingly united their suffrages in favour of the Archbishop of Bari, who took the title of Urban VI., and who, though an Italian, they too readily assumed would be amenable to their influence.

Instead of a tool, they speedily discovered that they had given themselves a master, who had no intention of migrating to Avignon, and who insisted on reforming them and the hierarchy in no compromising fashion. A more choleric and impolitic, though conscientious and earnestminded, ecclesiastic they could not have placed in St Peter's chair. The result was immediate friction, which became so acute that a majority of the French cardinals, assembled at Anagni, declared Urban's election null and void, on the ostensible ground that it had been

<sup>1</sup> He left Avignon in September 1376, arrived in Rome in January 1377, and died in March 1378.

brought about by the violence of the Roman populace,<sup>2</sup> and substituted for him Robert of Geneva, who took the title of Clement VII. (July to September 1378). Apart from friction on personal grounds, the secret of the revolt against Urban was his refusal to be the tool of the French domination of the last seventy-five years,<sup>3</sup> and his determination to curb the growing power of the college of cardinals and put an end to the corruption and demoralisation rampant in the curia and the Church. An independent and reforming pope rendered schism inevitable. The fact that Clement VII., who shortly after took up his residence at Avignon, could reckon on the support of the King of France, whose interest it was to maintain the French ascendancy, and of the Queen of Naples, whom the maladroit Urban had estranged, threatened to render it of long duration. The schism was in fact largely a reflex of the political antagonisms of the period, for whilst French influence decided the adherence of Scotland and the Spanish kingdom to the anti-pope, hostility to France ranged England and the greater part of the empire on the side of Urban VI., who was also acknowledged by the northern kingdoms—Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Portugal and the greater part of Italy.<sup>4</sup>

Though Europe was thus generally divided in its allegiance, both popes were not without partisans within the countries embraced by this general division. The schism, in fact, not only sundered Europe into two parties; it bred strife within the various nations. Rival candidates for preferment, for instance, professed allegiance to the pope who was most likely to promote their interests, and in many dioceses two rival bishops claimed the same see, or two rural abbots the same

<sup>2</sup> The demand of the Romans for a Roman, or at least an Italian pope appears to have influenced to some extent the election of Urban; but it is highly probable that, in view of the division of parties, the cardinals had at least contemplated this solution before entering the conclave. The contention of the revolted cardinals that Urban's election was due solely to the violence of the Roman populace is not maintainable. See the exhaustive examination of the evidence by Hefele-Leclercq, "Hist. des Conciles," vi., Pt. II., 968 f. (1915). More recently Jordan contends, rather too positively, that the election was not at all influenced by the attitude of the people, but was free and unconstrained, "Inner History of the Great Schism," 16 f. (1930). See also the judicial account of Flick, "Decline of the Mediæval Church," i. 252 f. (1930).

<sup>3</sup> See Döllinger, "The Church and the Churches," 354 (Eng. trans. by McCabe, 1862).

<sup>4</sup> Martène and Durand, "Thesaurus," ii. 1158; Pastor, i. 133 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vi., Pt. II., 1081 f.

abbey. "Not all within their respective nations adhered to the same pope," remarks Salutati. "For some of the French and the Spaniards recognise Urban; some of the Germans Clement, and the fact is that many place their faith in the pope from whom they might receive most advantage and honour."<sup>5</sup>

This sordid contention aggravated the corruption and demoralisation of the clergy at a time when reform had become clamant, and rendered amelioration within the Church the mere aspiration of a few idealists like Catherine of Siena in Italy, or Gerard Groot in Holland,<sup>6</sup> whilst lending force to the attacks of the more militant reformers of the type of a Wiclif in England. The uncertainty as to which of the popes was the true one was an unspeakable trial to an age which saw in the papacy an essential of the Church. In some it resulted, as the numerous prophecies of the time show, in the conviction that God had forsaken the world, because of the degeneracy of the pope and the hierarchy, and that the reign of Antichrist was at hand. It certainly tended to shake faith in the papal authority, and emphasised even more than in the case of the Avignon popes its dependence on the civil power. It paved the way, too, for the attempt to apply the doctrine of Marsiglio and Occam that a General Council is superior to the pope. A papal schism was indeed no new phenomenon in the history of the Church. Within the century, the Emperor Ludwig had resorted to the expedient of setting up a rival pope in the imperial interest, and other emperors before him had afforded precedents for political tactics of this kind. But these schisms had been only passing episodes which did not seriously affect the Church at large. In this case it was the work of the cardinals themselves, not of the secular power, and it resulted in a cleavage which lasted for nearly forty years. In their abasement of the papal authority, if not in the denial of the papal office itself, the cardinals were in fact unwittingly preparing the way for the great disruption of the sixteenth century. Out of the schism were forged anew ideas of far-reaching constitutional importance, which were destined to survive it, and burst into new life in the matrix of the Reformation.

<sup>5</sup> Martène and Durand, "Thesaurus," ii. 1158.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine died in 1380, Groot in 1384.

## ITS CONTINUANCE

A good proportion of the responsibility for the continuance of the schism must be laid to the charge of Urban himself. He was the last man in the world to heal by wise or conciliatory measures the discord which his election had aroused. He spent the first years of his pontificate in giving rein to his hatred of the Queen of Naples and then in maintaining his quarrel with Charles of Durazzo,<sup>7</sup> her conqueror, whom he had invested with the Neapolitan crown, and who, after keeping him a prisoner at Naples, besieged him at Nocera (1385). From Nocera he succeeded in escaping by sea to Genoa, carrying with him six of his cardinals who had conspired against him and whom he had imprisoned and tortured, and five of whom he put to death. There was in him a strain of barbarism which in his passionate moods took pleasure in inflicting suffering on its victims. His violence drove others of them to renounce their allegiance and propose the summoning of a General Council to remedy his intolerable régime. He was obsessed by the project of asserting his supremacy over Naples and maintaining his temporal authority over the papal states against his rival. He continued for three years to rage about Italy in furtherance of this project—from Genoa to Lucca, from Lucca to Perugia, and from Perugia back to Rome, where he ended his stormy career in October 1389.<sup>8</sup>

The death of Urban afforded the Italian cardinals a chance of recognising Clement VII. and putting an end to the schism. But Clement was hated in Italy as the author of the massacre of Cesena in 1377, and, besides, the Italian aversion to a pope who resided at Avignon in the old dependence on France rendered his recognition impossible. The cardinals, therefore, substituted for Urban another Neapolitan as Boniface IX. Boniface possessed all his predecessor's energy without his violent imprudence. He succeeded, after long struggles and with the aid of Ladislas of Naples, in at least vindicating the temporal sovereignty of the papacy over Rome and the States of the Church, though at the cost of the most scandalous

<sup>7</sup> Nephew of the King of Hungary.

<sup>8</sup> See Gregorovius, vi., Pt. II., 510 f.; Creighton, "History of the Papacy," i. c. i. (ed. 1907); Souchon, "Die Papstwahlen in der Zeit des grossen Schismas" (1898).

exactions and trafficking in benefices for the purpose of providing the sinews of war as well as gratifying his avarice. The death of Clement VII. in September 1394 offered some prospect of extending his authority over the whole Church, especially as hostility to the schism was growing in France and the French king, Charles VI., and the University of Paris exerted themselves to stay the election of a successor. But the cardinals at Avignon, whilst professing their resolution to put an end to the schism, deemed it necessary to vindicate their right of election by choosing the Spaniard, Peter de Luna, who took the title of Benedict XIII., and from whom they had exacted the promise to abdicate, if this step should be necessary for the reunion of the Church. "He would abdicate," he had said, "as easily as he would take off his hat."

Meanwhile the University of Paris had been addressing itself to the task of devising expedients for terminating the scandal of the schism. Its prestige and authority as the greatest theological school of Europe lent the utmost weight to its intervention. In 1394 it referred the question of expedients to its members, who recorded their opinions<sup>9</sup> in favour of one of three alternatives—the abdication of both popes; the submission of their claims to a commission of arbitration, composed of the adherents of both; the summoning of a General Council to decide the issue. These expedients, of which the first had received the majority of votes, the university, in June 1394, submitted to the king, Charles VI.,<sup>10</sup> who forwarded them to Clement VII., to whom the university also wrote. Whilst Clement angrily refused to entertain any of them, the cardinals were of opinion that one must be adopted in order to restore the unity of the Church. Though Benedict, the successor of Clement, who died on the 16th September of this year, had undertaken, before his election, to abdicate, if this step should be deemed necessary in the interest of the Church, he evaded the demand of the king's envoys that he should implement his promise (May to August 1395).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Their written opinions were deposited in a chest placed for this purpose in the church of St Maturin.

<sup>10</sup> Denifle, "Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis," iii. 619 f.; Bulæus, "Hist. Univ. Paris," iv. 686; N. Valois, "La France et le grand schisme d'Occident," ii. 416 f. (1896-1902). The technical terms used were *Cessio*, *Compromissio*, *Decisio*.

<sup>11</sup> Heffele-Leclercq, "Hist. des Conciles," vi., Pt. II., 1168 f.

Ultimately in June 1398 a synod of French prelates and representatives of the university decided by a large majority (247 to 20) in favour of forthwith withdrawing allegiance from both popes who had spurned the renewed demand for their abdication, on the ground that further obedience to them was incompatible with the unity of the Church,<sup>12</sup> which is essential to its life. Hence the royal ordinance of 27th July of this year withdrawing France from its obedience to Benedict.<sup>13</sup> Benedict was deserted by his cardinals and Charles went the length of attempting to enforce his abdication. For seven months (September 1398 to March 1399) the stubborn pope was besieged in his palace by a force under Geoffrey Boucicaut until he was fain to agree to abdicate in case his rival at Rome resigned or died, and thus cleared the way for the election of an undisputed pope.<sup>14</sup> Though Charles withdrew his troops, he kept him a virtual prisoner for the next four years, when he succeeded in escaping from Avignon to the castle of Renard in Provence, the territory of the Duke of Anjou (March 1403). His escape was followed by the renewed recognition of his authority by the cardinals. The ascendancy in the royal council of the Duke of Orleans, who, in his antagonism to his rival for power, the Duke of Burgandy, espoused his side, secured him the restoration of the obedience of Charles and his kingdom (May 1403). In return he undertook once more to abdicate should his rival do likewise, and sent envoys to Rome to propose a conference (June 1404).<sup>15</sup> The reply of Boniface was a flat refusal. "I am pope," said he curtly," and Peter de Luna is anti-pope." "At least," retorted the envoys of Benedict, "our master is not a simoniac."

Boniface's death a couple of days after the interview (October 1404) did not bring the prospect of unity any nearer. The Roman cardinals, ignoring the appeal of Benedict's envoys

<sup>12</sup> For the discussions of the synod, see Mansi, "Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio," xxvi. 839 f.; Bulaeus, iv. 829 f. By a misprint Creighton gives "vi." instead of "iv." "History of Papacy," i. 156; N. Valois, "La France et le grand Schisme," iii. 150 f.

<sup>13</sup> Mansi, xxvi. 910 f. *Fiat ex nunc subtractio papæ totius obedentiæ sine ulteriori summatione vel dilatione quacumque.*

<sup>14</sup> Martène and Durand, "Veterum Scriptorum Amplissima Collectio," vii. 633 f.; Raynaldus, xxvii. 45 f.

<sup>15</sup> See the account of their mission in a letter of Benedict to Charles VI., Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii. 686 f.

to postpone an election, proceeded to give him a successor in one of their own number, who took the title of Innocent VII. Innocent only lived two years, and was succeeded by Gregory XII. (November 1406), who, like Benedict, came under an obligation to resign, if need be, in the interest of unity. Unlike Boniface, however, he professed eagerness for a conference with a view to their mutual abdication,<sup>16</sup> and ultimately a meeting was arranged to take place at Savona. But neither pope was sincere, though each made a show of attempting to get into touch with the other. Gregory was ruled by his nephews, who were determined that he should retain his dignity in their own interest, and the seizure of Rome by Ladislas, King of Naples, gave him a pretext for arresting his journey to meet his rival at Lucca. He was in fact believed to be acting in concert with Ladislas to defeat the project of a conference,<sup>17</sup> and finally renounced his intention to abdicate and created four new cardinals.

Whereupon eight of the old cardinals left him, and retiring to Pisa, published an appeal to all princes to aid them to establish the unity of the Church (May 1408). In a missive to Gregory, they appealed from the pope acting irrationally to the pope better informed, to Jesus Christ as the supreme judge, and to a General Council as the superior authority in the Church.<sup>18</sup> In another missive to the rulers of Christendom they accused Gregory of prolonging the schism by his evasion of his sworn obligation to abdicate, and appealed for their assistance in effecting the unity of the Church (May 1908).<sup>19</sup>

By this time the failure to restore the unity of the Church had aroused widespread distrust in the good faith of both popes. This distrust was amply justified by the sorry, not to say farcical conduct of both in their professed attempts to arrange, or rather evade the proposed conference to this end. Moreover, the murder of the Duke of Orleans in November 1407 deprived Benedict of a powerful supporter in France. Hence the renewed threat, which Charles VI., at the instigation of the university, conveyed to him on the 12th January 1408 to

<sup>16</sup> Raynaldus, xxvii. 157 f. ; Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii. 727 f.

<sup>17</sup> So Dietrich von Nieheim, "De Schismate," 233 f. Leonardo Bruni maintains that Gregory was innocent of complicity, but that his nephews were not, "Leonardi Arretini Epistolarum Libri Octo," i. 43.

<sup>18</sup> Raynaldus, xxvii. 196.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvii. 193 f.

disown both popes unless by the Feast of Ascension the unity of the Church was restored under a single and true pope.<sup>20</sup> To this threat Benedict replied with the counter-threat of excommunication and interdict. Thereupon, on the 21st May, the spokesman of the university, in the presence of the king and an assembly of notables, lay and ecclesiastical, denounced him as a schismatic and a heretic. In conclusion the bull of excommunication, in which Benedict had embodied his threat, was torn in pieces and the papal emissary and some of the pope's supporters thrown into prison.

#### THE COUNCIL OF PISA

Thus encouraged, the cardinals of both popes to the number of fifteen united at Livorno in summoning a General Council to Pisa (29th June).<sup>21</sup> Though Gregory, who had retired to Rimini, and Benedict, who fled to Perpignan in Aragon, strove to thwart them by each summoning an opposition Council, the assembly which met at Pisa in March 1409, might fairly claim to represent the large majority of the Western Church. Besides the large number of clerical dignitaries, who were either present or represented by deputy, it was attended by the ambassadors of Wenzel, king of the Romans and of Bohemia, of the kings of England, France, Portugal, Sicily, Poland, Cyprus; of half a dozen princes of the empire, and of about a dozen of the universities, besides a goodly array of doctors of theology and law.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Castile, Aragon, and Scotland held by Benedict, whilst Ladislas of Naples supported Gregory. The northern nations and Hungary withheld their support; Rupert, Wenzel's rival in Germany, was hostile, and Venice was neutral. It was fortunate in finding a powerful protector in Baldassare Cossa, who had begun his forceful career as a corsair, had distinguished himself by his resourcefulness as the agent of the exactions of Boniface, who had made him a cardinal, and now signalised his political ability by neutralising the hostility of Ladislas to the Council by the League of Florence and Siena.

<sup>20</sup> Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii. 770 f.; Bulaeus, v. 146 f.

<sup>21</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 1161 f.; Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii. 798 f.

<sup>22</sup> See Maimbourg, "Hist. du Grand Schisme d'Occident," ii. 53 f. (1679); Walsingham, "Hist. Anglicana," ii. 280 f.

The expedient of a General Council had been forced upon the Church by the impossibility of ending the schism in any other way. A series of rival popes, who would not give way in deference to the clamant necessity of their abdication, were responsible for the recourse to this expedient. By their obstinacy in placing their personal interests above those of the Church, they had provoked a revolt against the overgrown power of the papacy over it, comparable to that by which the State, in the person of Philip IV., had already vindicated its independence of the pope in things temporal. A quarter of a century earlier it had been urged by the German canonist, Conrad of Gelnhausen, and the German theologian Henry of Langenstein, who had both been professors in the University of Paris. They revived the doctrine of Marsiglio and Occam of the superiority of a General Council to be summoned by the civil power, and sought in it the only adequate solution of an intolerable ecclesiastical situation.<sup>23</sup> It was adopted by the University of Paris in 1394 as one of the alternatives for ending the schism. It was, however, an audacious proposal in these mediæval centuries for the Church to act independently of the pope in virtue of the superior power inherent in it, and the Council felt the necessity of attempting to justify its independent action. Such a justification it found in the theories in which Zabarella, Professor of Canon Law at Padua, the University of Bologna, D'Ailli, Bishop of Cambrai, Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, and others had already enunciated the rights of the Church against the schismatic popes.

#### PLEA FOR THE COUNCIL

According to the University of Bologna, which based its opinion on canon law, a schism of long duration passes into heresy. A pope, who has been elected for the purpose of ending it and sworn to do so, but has, instead, perpetuated it, is to be disowned as a fomenter of schism and a heretic. To continue to recognise such a pope, who, in perpetuating schism is guilty of mortal sin, is to share in his sin. From him pro-

<sup>23</sup> Gelnhausen's tract is given by Martène and Durand, "Thesaurus," ii. 1200 f.; Langenstein's "Concilium Pacis," by Von der Hardt, "Concilium Constantiense," ii. 3 f.

vincial councils may and ought to withdraw their allegiance. Even a true pope who countenances schism forfeits the obedience of the faithful. If the cardinals neglect to summon a General Council for this purpose, provincial councils and princes are entitled to do so. The Bolognese doctors cautiously add that, if they have said anything that deviates from the traditions of the Church, it is to be accounted as unsaid (December 1408 to January 1409).<sup>24</sup> Zabarella, who later became cardinal, was far less accommodating. The cardinals, he insists, as representing the whole Church, have the power to call a Council. As they are invested by the Church with the right to elect the pope, it follows that, in case of schism, the right and duty to put an end to it belong to them by the deposition, if need be, of both schismatic popes and the election of a new one. The assumption that the pope, as supreme judge, can be judged by none is false. The papal supremacy resides not in the person, but in the office of the pope and the cardinals. Nor does he possess absolute power except in as far as he acts in the name of the universal Church, with the co-operation of the cardinals. A Council of the whole Church, from which both pope and cardinals derive their authority, is entitled, even by divine law, as the supreme authority, to decide the issue. Since the cardinals are the only body representative of the whole Church, it is within their competence to convoke the Council for this purpose.<sup>25</sup>

D'Ailli goes beyond the mediæval papal conception of the Church to that of the New Testament. He pits Christ against the pope as the supreme authority. With this authority Christ invested the Church. Its unity consists in unity with Him, not necessarily with the pope. From Him the Church derives the authority to meet in General Council. Did not He say, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It was in His name, not that of Peter or the pope that His people were to assemble. In New Testament times the Church thus assembled in Council "by common consent"<sup>26</sup>—at Jerusalem, for instance, where James, not Peter, presided. The pope, indeed,

<sup>24</sup> Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii. 894 f.

<sup>25</sup> "De Schismate sui Temporis" and other tracts.

<sup>26</sup> Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii. 910.

in the course of time, acquired the right to convene such a Council, and this right he still possesses by canon law. But it does not deprive the Church of its inherent power to assemble in case of necessity, especially in a case in which there is no universally recognised pope. In such a case a Council may be assembled not only by the cardinals, but by those of the faithful powerful enough to co-operate in the restoration of the Church's unity. Moreover, by natural law every corporation possesses the right to take measures to prevent its division and destruction and maintain its unity. In case of refusal to abdicate, this Council is thus by divine and natural law, entitled to depose the schismatic popes and elect a new one, after convincing themselves that he would command the allegiance of the whole Church.<sup>27</sup>

For Gerson the essential unity of the Church consists in unity with Christ, its Head, in whom all are one. In case of schism the Church is empowered by divine and natural law to assemble by its representatives in General Council in order to bring about its unity under a sole and assured vicar of Christ. As the mystic body of Christ, it has no less a right to effect its unity than any other organisation, and no law, canon or civil, can prevent it from assembling for this purpose, even without the pope or any particular body like the college of cardinals. The appeal of the schismatic popes to positive law may not be allowed to prevent the cessation of the schism by the authority of a General Council. Equity (*epieikeia*) must govern the interpretation of the law in order to secure unity and obviate the destruction of the Church. If both popes persist in their refusal to abdicate, the cardinals or a majority of them may, with the common consent of the whole Council, proceed to an election. If it should appear that unity would not be attained by such an election, it would be preferable to await the death of both popes. In any case, the reformation of the Church must go hand in hand with the attempt to end the schism.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> D'Ailli's views are given in Martène and Durand, "Collectio," vii., 909 f., and are summarised by Tschackert, "Peter von Ailli," 148 f. (1877). They were set forth at synods at Aix and Tarascon, January 1409.

<sup>28</sup> "De Unitate Ecclesiastica," "Opera," i. 178 f. (1606); cf. "De Auferibilitate Papæ," "Opera," i. 150 f., in which he elaborates these views.

The insistence on the external unity of the Church under a sole vicar of Christ is characteristically mediæval. These theorists assume the necessity of the mediæval papal headship, in which its unity is embodied, as an essential of the Church. They indeed ascribe the supreme authority over it to a representative assembly, and in the last resort limit the papal power. But they do not go the length of dispensing with the papal office and abolish it as a late usurpation. Whilst limiting, they retain the papal function, which they regard as indispensable to the Church's unity. They are no believers in a purely spiritual unity under the supreme headship of Christ, though they emphasise this headship. They cling to the idea of a visible earthly head as the representative or vicar of Christ, with whose universal jurisdiction, as the embodiment of its unity, the Church cannot dispense. In this respect they do not anticipate the Reformation idea of the Church as the self-governing community of believers directly subject to Christ. Nor do they, with Occam, contemplate the establishment of national Churches under a number of popes or primates, whilst following him and Marsiglio in transferring from the pope to a General Council the supreme authority over the Church universal, and appealing for the co-operation of the civil power in support of this supremacy. They would modify, not revolutionise, the mediæval ecclesiastical constitution in accordance with the exigencies of an intolerable situation. They are hampered in their conception of the Church and its government by the canon law, which they strive to adapt to the crisis. They did not dream of anticipating the drastic remedy of Luther in consigning the papal decretals as well as the papal bull of excommunication to the flames as an anti-Christian tyranny.

On this reasoning the Council proceeded to act in spite of the protest of the deputies of Rupert, the rival of Wenzel as King of the Romans,<sup>29</sup> against the legality of its proceedings. After more than two months' deliberation, it deposed both popes as schismatics and heretics and absolved the faithful from their allegiance (5th June 1409).<sup>30</sup> Thereafter it authorised the

<sup>29</sup> For the counter-election of Rupert, see Browning, "Guelfs and Ghibellines," 183 f. Wenzel was deposed owing to his drunkenness and incapacity by a section of the electors.

<sup>30</sup> The text of the sentence is given in Mansi, "Amplissima Collectio," xxxi, 1146 f., 1226 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. I., 46 f. (1916).

cardinals to proceed to the election of a new pope, and on the 26th June they chose Peter Philargi, Cardinal of Milan, a Greek by birth, who assumed the title of Alexander V., and undertook to summon a new Council in three years for the reform of the abuses rampant in the Church.<sup>31</sup> His accession did not end the schism, however. It merely added a third pope to the distracted Church, for neither Benedict nor Gregory would submit to the sentence of deposition at the hands of what they regarded as an usurper assembly.

The Council was, of course, an extraordinary and revolutionary assembly judged from the standpoint of canon law. It could only justify itself as against canon law on the ground of expediency and the theories which an intolerable situation had evoked. It has been argued that even on the ground of expediency it would have been better to await the death of the two popes, who were both advanced in years, than add another pope to their number. The expedient adopted proved a failure, and having failed, it has been judged accordingly. On the other hand, negotiation had been tried for several decades. Its futility had emphasised the necessity for the Church to assert itself and provide a remedy in virtue of its inherent power. That it possessed this power is amply proved from both Scripture and history, and there was in the circumstances great force in the contention that the *Salus Ecclesiae* was superior to the individual interest of any actual pope, especially in a case in which it was impossible to say which of two rivals was the actual one.

#### SUMMONS OF THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

The death of Alexander in less than a year after his election (May 1410) and the choice of Baldassare Cossa as his successor did not tend to raise the prestige of what the large majority of Christendom deemed the legitimate papacy. Cossa, who took the title of John XXIII., was elected because of the undoubted ability and vigour which had secured him a commanding place in the affairs of Italy and bade fair to rehabilitate the papacy. His reputation has suffered from the animus of

<sup>31</sup> Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. I., 65 f.

Dietrich von Niem, who portrays him in the blackest colours.<sup>32</sup> While modern historians have vindicated him from the charge of gross sexual excess, he was better fitted for the career of soldier, in which he had distinguished himself, than for that of churchman. He had from purely worldly motives ultimately turned to the Church for a career, and had prepared himself by the protracted study of civil and canon law at Bologna. In 1396 Boniface IX. made him his private chamberlain and six years later cardinal and papal legate of Bologna, which he won back and held by his military ability for his patron. For the spiritual side of his office he had, according to Leonardo Bruni, neither qualification nor aptitude. That such a worldling was enthroned in St Peter's chair is a melancholy evidence of the degradation to which the papacy had sunk. He failed to hold his own even in the wretched game of Italian politics against Ladislas, who ultimately, in June 1413, drove him from Rome to Florence and left him no alternative but to seek the help of Sigismund of Hungary, who had succeeded in getting himself recognised as King of the Romans, and was resolved that the General Council, which John had promised, should actually meet and take up the task of reforming the Church. Sigismund succeeded in extorting from the papal ambassadors the demand that the Council should meet at Constance, instead of an Italian city. John, who, foolishly enough for himself, had given them a free hand in the matter, was forced to acquiesce at a meeting with Sigismund at Lodi in December 1413 and summon the Council to meet at Constance in the following November 1414.<sup>33</sup> Sigismund, who was actuated by the ideal of reviving the imperial prestige as well as reforming the Church, was determined that the Council should be no sham, like that which John had convened at Rome before he was driven away by Ladislas, and which, beyond condemning the works of Wiclif and prohibiting their perusal or exposition, had proved a mere farce.<sup>34</sup> It should reform the Church in head and members as well as assure its unity and settle the Hussite heresy.

<sup>32</sup> "De Vita Johannis XXIII." in Hardt, ii. 335 f. It is by a good hater and must be used with caution. For Cossa's early life, see Kitts, "In the Days of the Councils," 140 f. (1908).

<sup>33</sup> For the negotiations, see Finke, "Acta Consilii Constanciensis," i. 169 f. (1896).

<sup>34</sup> For the Roman Council, see *ibid.*, i. 108 f. For the condemnation of Wiclif's works, see Mansi, xxvii. 506 f.

## CHAPTER XII

### JOHN HUS AND THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN BOHEMIA

#### BEGINNINGS OF THE MOVEMENT

THE association of religious and social reform was exemplified on a larger and more tragic scale in Bohemia in the first half of the fifteenth century than it had been in England in the second half of the fourteenth. Of this wider and more convulsive movement, we may truly say that it was the first dramatic attempt, on the grand scale, in modern history to overthrow the old order in Church and State. Its effects, too, continued to be felt even after the overthrow of its extreme champions, the Taborites, till the advent of Luther, over the length and breadth of the empire in semi-religious, semi-social insurrection.

Bohemia had been Christianised mainly by the Eastern Church and only later became subject to the jurisdiction of the pope. For long the connection with Rome was not very close, and it was not till the thirteenth century that the papacy exercised full authority over the Bohemian Church.<sup>1</sup> Communion in both kinds appears to have been usual even up to the fourteenth. Its priests had long resisted celibacy, and on its enforcement, a deplorable degeneracy of clerical morals was the result.<sup>2</sup> The Bohemian Church suffered, too, from the abuses prevalent in the Church at large in the fourteenth century. Nevertheless it produced in the second half of this century a series of earnest preachers—Conrad of Waldhausen, John Milic of Kreamsier, and Matthew of Janov—who laboured to achieve a practical, if not a doctrinal reformation, and who have been described as the forerunners of John Hus. It is, indeed, remarkable that during the period of Wiclif's activity

<sup>1</sup> Lützow, "Life and Times of Hus," 10 f. (1909). In addition to Count Lützow's work in English, there are important "Lives" by Flajshans (1904), and Novotny (1919-21) in the Czech language.

<sup>2</sup> Lützow, 14 f.

in England a reform movement had been initiated by these preachers in Bohemia, which, though of a far more limited scope, shows a close resemblance to the Wiclifite movement on its practical side. Conrad, for instance, inveighed against the vices of the clergy, particularly the friars. Milic exalted the life of poverty, denounced clerical worldliness and immorality, proclaimed the advent of Antichrist, and successfully defended himself at Avignon against a charge of heresy. Matthew of Janov emphasised the importance of Bible reading, laid stress on the necessity of frequent communion, criticised image and relic worship, contrasted the false Christianity of the time with that of Christ, and discarded, like Milic, on the approach of Antichrist. He was arraigned in consequence for heresy and obliged to recant, though he continued, notwithstanding, to write and preach his obnoxious opinions.<sup>3</sup> This reform movement appears to have owed something also to the influence of the Waldensians, Wiclif, and the University of Paris, where Matthew of Janov had been a student and had been confirmed in his apocalyptic teaching by a work of William of St Amour.<sup>4</sup> It was contemporary with the awakening of the Bohemian national spirit, which found a powerful patron in the King-Emperor Charles IV. and a focus in the University of Prague, founded by him in 1348. The national antagonism between Czech and German as well as the antagonism between them on religious grounds was a powerful factor in the movement, which ere long found its most forceful exponent in John Hus, and eventuated in the Hussite War of the first half of the fifteenth century.

#### EARLY CAREER OF HUS

It was from these forerunners that Hus, in the first instance, seems to have derived his reforming spirit. In the early phase of his activity as a teacher and preacher he did not go beyond

<sup>3</sup> He set forth his characteristic views in a work entitled "De Regulis Veteris et novi Testamenti." There is a life of him in Czech by Kybal, see Lützow, 48 f.

<sup>4</sup> On the Waldensian influence, see Thomson's "Prehussite Heresy in Bohemia," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1933. On Wiclifite influence, Odložilik, "Wyclifite Influence upon Central and Eastern Europe," *Slavonic Review*, 1928-29. On that of the University of Paris on Matthew of Janov, Kybal, *Revue Historique*, 1910, and Novotny, *Rev. de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1920. See also Hauck, "Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands," v., Pt. II., 880 f. (1920).

their standpoint. It was only when he came under the influence of Wiclif's theological writings that he outdistanced them and became the leader of a more aggressive attack on the mediæval Church, though he did not fully adopt Wiclif's doctrinal teaching. He was born of peasant parents about the year 1373 at Husinec and studied at the University of Prague, where he took his master's degree in 1396. His career as a student seems to have been respectable rather than brilliant and he never attained the doctor's degree. Distinction in final examinations is, however, not necessarily the measure of ability, and some of his later writings, particularly his commentary on the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard, distinctly raise him above the average theologian of his time.<sup>5</sup> He appears to have distinguished himself as a teacher, if we may judge from the fact that he became Dean of the Faculty of Arts and was Rector of the University in 1402. In this year he was appointed priest of the Bethlehem chapel at Prague and enhanced his rising reputation by his earnestness and eloquence as a preacher in the vernacular. His ministry attracted the higher classes as well as the people, and among his hearers was Queen Sophia, the consort of King Wenzel, who made him her confessor and through whose influence he was appointed court chaplain.<sup>6</sup> During the next five years his sermons contained nothing that savoured of heresy and his soundness in the traditional faith as well as his popularity is shown by the fact that he was appointed by Archbishop Zbinek in 1405 and again in 1407 to preach before the Synod at Prague. In the former year the archbishop nominated him a member of a commission to enquire into the supposed miracle of the blood of Christ, which attracted crowds of pilgrims to Wilsnack in Brandenburg, and which the commission proved to be a gross deception.<sup>7</sup> At this period his prominence was that of a leader of Czech nationalism and a popular practical preacher, who inveighed against the rampant moral declension of the clergy. The national animosity between Czech and German had been

<sup>5</sup> "Super IV. Sententiarum," "Hus Opera Omnia," ii., ed. by Wenzel Flajshans, and Marie Kominkova (1905). Probable date, 1407-08. Flajshans pronounces this elaborate work the best and greatest of his theological writings. While it shows the influence of those of Wiclif (the "Trialogus," etc.), the main influence is that of Lombard himself.

<sup>6</sup> Lützwow, 82.

<sup>7</sup> See his tract, "De Sanguine Christi," ed. by Flajshans (1904).

aggravated by the strife between Wenzel, who was King of the Romans as well as King of Bohemia, and Ruprecht, whom his enemies in Germany had substituted as rival German king, and whose troops had invaded and ravaged Bohemia in 1401. In addition to denouncing the Germans in his sermons, he threw himself into the conflict between the Czech and German "nations" in the university.

#### CONFLICT OVER WICLIF'S WORKS

The struggle between the two parties on national grounds was mixed up with a bitter controversy over the writings of Wiclif, which by the beginning of the fifteenth century were being read and discussed in the university classrooms. The close connection between Bohemia and England in consequence of the marriage of Anne, daughter of Charles IV., to Richard II. doubtless favoured their circulation. It appears to have encouraged Bohemian students to repair to Oxford and from the statement made by Jerome, one of these students, at his trial at Constance,<sup>8</sup> we know that he had not only studied there, but had copied the "Dialogus" and the "Trialogus" of Wiclif and had brought them to Prague, probably in 1401 or 1402. Some of his philosophic works were known there at least a decade earlier, as we learn from the testimony of Hus himself who had studied them.<sup>9</sup> Certain it is that in the year 1403 a battle over Wiclif's teaching was raging between the two parties, which lasted till the withdrawal of the Germans from the university in 1409. The strife was both a racial and a theological one. The Czech masters espoused the side of Wiclif partly because he, like them, was a champion of Realism and their German opponents were Nominalists; partly because, on national grounds, they were prone to support what their German opponents attacked. It was not so much a question of heresy as a question of scholastic and nationalist differences. At the instigation of the cathedral chapter, Walter Harasser, the German rector for the time being, summoned a meeting of the masters, in May 1403, to consider a series of forty-five

<sup>8</sup> Hardt, iv. 635, 651.

<sup>9</sup> Five of Wiclif's philosophic works, copied by Hus in 1398, are now in the Royal Library at Stockholm, whither they were removed by the Swedes in the Thirty Years' War.

articles purporting to be drawn from the works of Wiclif. They consisted of the twenty-four Conclusions condemned by the London Synod in 1382, and twenty-one added by a German master of the name of Hübner.<sup>10</sup> An excited debate ensued. Stanislas of Znaim, Hus, Palec, Nicolas of Leitomischl and other members challenged the accuracy of the articles, and Nicolas accused Hübner of misrepresenting Wiclif's teaching. "Such falsifiers deserve to be burned," burst out Hus. Palec threw one of Wiclif's works on the table with the exclamation, "Let whoever will stand up and speak against this book. I will defend it." These vehement protestations rather overshot the mark. Many of the propositions undoubtedly expressed views held by Wiclif, though, apart from their context, some of them might be misleading. As the result of the debate, a majority, while refraining from declaring them heretical, agreed to the resolution that "no one should teach, preach, or affirm the articles publicly or privately"

The prohibition only intensified the interest in the reformer's writings and increased their circulation. The Wiclifites, as their defenders were termed, became ever more numerous without as well as within the university.<sup>11</sup> In 1406 Archbishop Zbinek, in deference to the command of Pope Innocent VII., threatened proceedings against those who maintained the errors of Wiclif, especially on the subject of the Eucharist.<sup>12</sup> He carried his threat into execution in the summer of 1408 by arraigning several masters, who were accused of teaching or preaching Wiclifite views, and throwing one of them, Nicolas of Welemowitz, into prison. Hus appealed in a letter to the archbishop in their favour,<sup>13</sup> and it would seem from this letter that their offence consisted in their preaching the Gospel in its practical form, and, in particular, denouncing the vices of the clergy. There was evidently nothing essentially heretical in their sermons, and having banished Nicolas and compelled another to abjure, the archbishop is shortly afterwards found declaring that, as the result of this inquisition, he could find no heretic in Bohemia (July 1408).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Palacky, "Documenta Mag. Joannis Hus, Vitam. Doctrinam, Causam in Constantiensi Actam Illustrantia" (1869), 327 f. Very valuable collection.

<sup>11</sup> Loserth, "Wiclif and Hus," 95.

<sup>12</sup> "Documenta," 332, 730.

<sup>13</sup> Workman and Pope, "Letters of Hus," 12 f. (1904).

<sup>14</sup> "Historia et Monumenta Joannis Hus," i. 111 (1715); "Documenta," 392.

## RENEWED CONFLICT

So far, in fact, the Wiclifites do not seem to have regarded themselves as heretics in the doctrinal sense of the term. Whilst valuing the works of the English reformer and defending the right to read and lecture on them, Hus, in particular, appears up to this time to have been a Wiclifite only in the practical sense. Moreover, he implicitly believed in the forged document purporting to be an official testimony of the University of Oxford to Wiclif's orthodoxy, which a couple of Bohemian students brought about this time back to Prague.<sup>15</sup> It was apparently on this occasion that he made the fateful declaration, afterwards quoted against him during his trial at Constance, that he wished his soul might one day be where that of Wiclif was.<sup>16</sup> His Wiclifism, such as it was, had, however, by the end of 1408 strained his relations with the archbishop, and the estrangement between them was aggravated by a divergence of view over the question of the schism. King Wenzel decided to support the Council of Pisa in opposition to his rival Ruprecht, who held by Gregory XII.<sup>17</sup> The Czech party in the University of Prague naturally abetted his action against their German opponents, who as naturally championed the other side. The result was the renewal of the struggle between the two parties in which Hus took the lead on the national side. It was decided in favour of the Czechs by a decree of Wenzel (18th January 1409) which conferred on the Czech "nation" within the university three votes instead of one, and reduced that of the other three "nations," in which the German element predominated, to one.<sup>18</sup> By this device the supremacy within the university

<sup>15</sup> "Documenta," 232, 313. The forgery appears to have been the work of an English Lollard. Kitts, "Pope John XXIII. and Hus," 38 f. (1910). Workman, "John Wyclif," ii. 347 f. Possibly the document may have been passed by a snatch vote in congregation in October 1406 by the Lollard party in the university, and the seal was apparently genuine. But the attachment of the seal is no guarantee of the genuineness of the contents of the document. It was easy enough to obtain this favour from a not too scrupulous official.

<sup>16</sup> "Documenta," 154. On his attitude to Wiclif's teaching at this period, see Hauck, "Studien zu Johann Hus," 27 f. (1916).

<sup>17</sup> "Documenta," 343 f.; cf. 364 f.

<sup>18</sup> "Documenta," 347-48; Höfler, "Hus und der Abzug der Deutschen Professoren und Studenten aus Prag," 225 f. (1864); Rashdall, "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," ii. 212; Schaff (D. S.), "John Huss," 78 (1915); Krofta, "John Hus," "Cambridge Mediæval History," viii. 52 (1936).

was transferred from the Germans to their rivals. Four months later the German masters and students seceded and established a new university at Leipzig.

After their departure Hus was elected rector a second time, and his influence was now at its zenith. He was the hero of the university and the people and could count on the patronage of the king, the queen, and the court. His success had, however, intensified the friction between him and the archbishop, who maintained his allegiance to Gregory XII., and inhibited him and all masters of the university, who supported the cardinals against the pope, from performing their priestly functions within the kingdom.<sup>19</sup> In reply Hus declared his obedience to the Church in all things lawful, whilst proclaiming his neutrality as between the two rival popes, and protested against his suspension without any attempt to investigate the charges made by his enemies against him.<sup>20</sup> He continued to preach in the Bethlehem chapel notwithstanding, and the attitude of the people, who angrily demonstrated before the archiepiscopal palace and attacked some of the parish priests, became so threatening that the archbishop temporarily left Prague and placed the city under an interdict. The Wiclif party appealed to Alexander V., whom the Council of Pisa had elected pope, and who cited Zbinek to appear at the papal court. He countered this stroke by recognising Alexander (September 1409), to whom he complained, through his emissaries, of the prevalence of Wiclifite heresy in Bohemia. In return the pope quashed the citation and empowered him, with the aid of a commission of theologians and doctors of canon law, to institute proceedings against the Wiclifites. In particular he enjoined him to prohibit all preaching except in cathedrals, parish, and monastic churches, to demand the surrender of Wiclif's books, and imprison and deprive of their benefices all who should impede the execution of the papal bull, with the aid of the temporal power if need be (December 1409).<sup>21</sup>

The bull was evidently meant to silence Hus and other outspoken preachers as well as to stamp out Wiclif's teaching.

<sup>19</sup> "Letters," 54 f.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 f.

<sup>21</sup> "Documenta," 200 f., 372 f., 374 f. It did not reach Prague till the 9th March 1410. The prohibition to preach expressly applied even to chapels which possessed by papal authority the right of preaching.

In accordance with its terms, the archbishop appointed an examining commission of four theologians and two doctors of canon law. Hus, who handed over some copies of Wiclif's writings, was evidently still unconscious that they contained anything irreconcilable with the Catholic faith. "If," said he to the archbishop, "you find any error in them, be pleased to point it out, and I shall proclaim it before the whole community."<sup>22</sup> In consequence of the commission's report, Zbinek condemned seventeen of them, including the "Dialogus," the "Trialogus," and the "De Dominio Civili," as heretical, and, going beyond the papal direction, ordered them to be burned, whilst reserving the others for further examination, and summoning those who had refused to give up their copies to do so within six days. He forbade, further, under threat of punishment, anyone to teach or defend the heresies contained in them or to preach in any church except those specified in the papal bull (16th June 1410).<sup>23</sup> Against this fulmination the university emphatically protested, firmly intimated its determination not to comply, and prayed the king to prevent the burning of the books (21st June).<sup>24</sup> In addition Hus and a number of masters appealed, in their own name and that of the whole university, to the pope (25th June). On learning of the death of Alexander, they appealed anew to his successor, John XXIII., on the ground partly that the mandate of the late pope had lapsed with his death, partly of the absurdity of condemning to the flames works dealing with logic, mathematics, and philosophy and containing, not errors, but many noble truths. As well burn the writings of Aristotle, Averroes, and even Origen which the Church, in spite of their errors, permits anyone to possess and read. They further protested against the limitation of the right of preaching and quoted, in disproof of the archbishop's accusation that Bohemia was full of heresy, his declaration two years earlier that he was unable to find a single heretic in his diocese (25th June).<sup>25</sup>

Despite both protest and appeal, despite, too, the request of the king for delay, the archbishop ultimately on the 16th July publicly burned about two hundred copies of Wiclif's works, and two days later excommunicated Hus and his

<sup>22</sup> "Documenta," 280.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 378 f.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 386, 734.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 387 f.

adherents.<sup>26</sup> To us it appears a deplorable exhibition of rancorous obscurantism, though it was by no means exceptional in that unenlightened age. Zbinek was more fitted for the profession of a soldier, which even as archbishop he continued to practice, than a theologian. His knowledge of theology seems to have been very meagre. Simon of Tisnow ascribes his obscurantism to his ignorance, and according to Hus he had not read one of the condemned books.<sup>27</sup> Whilst the members of the commission were more capable of judging, they were drawn from the ranks of the anti-reform party. Some of the books were philosophic discussions on which ample difference of opinion prevailed in the schools, and the examiners, who appear to have professed Nominalism, would be all the readier to detect heresy in the Realism of their author. It was easier to find heresy in some of the theological works, though those on the "Trinity" and the "Incarnation" were speculative, and the more glaringly objectionable ones on the "Church," the "Eucharist," the "Papacy" are not in the list. Even so, Hus and his fellow-Wiclifites were not at this stage concerned to defend what might be found to be heretical, but only their right freely to read and discuss them. To do so, they maintained, was not necessarily to share their author's views. Moreover, the denunciation of rampant ecclesiastical abuses, as in the tract on "Simony," which was as widespread in Bohemia as in other lands, was fitted to evoke their whole-hearted concurrence, if it appeared to a demoralised priesthood as deadly heresy.

The burning and the excommunication together produced an explosion of popular anger and violence. The mob invaded the cathedral and drove the priest from the altar, whilst six men drew their swords in another church and threatened to kill the anti-Wiclifite preacher.<sup>28</sup> It lampooned the archbishop and the clergy and lionised Hus, who, despite excommunication, hurled defiance from his pulpit in the Bethlehem chapel, and whose hearers swore to stand by him.<sup>29</sup> He and several other masters publicly defended certain of Wiclif's works.<sup>30</sup> Wenzel ordered the archbishop to indemnify the owners of the burned

<sup>26</sup> "Documenta," 734, 397 f. <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 189. <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 734. <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

<sup>30</sup> "Documenta," 399 f.; Loserth, "Wiclif and Hus," 121 f., and Appendix VI. (1884). For Hus's defence, see "Monumenta et Historia," i. 131 f.

volumes, punished his refusal with the confiscation of part of his revenues, and along with the queen wrote to the pope in Hus's behalf.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the archbishop took care to present his version of the matter, and Cardinal Colonna, to whom John XXIII. entrusted the question, cited Hus to appear at Bologna and directed the archbishop to proceed against the heretics.<sup>32</sup> Instead of complying, Hus sent proctors to appear, but as they brought no rich presents for the mercenary pope, like the archbishop's emissaries,<sup>33</sup> they were thrown into prison. Equally vain the renewed intervention of the king and queen.<sup>34</sup> The cardinal refused to waive the citation in deference to their representations. In February 1411 he excommunicated him for his non-compliance, in spite of the fact that the University of Bologna, to which the pope had referred the question of Wiclif's writings and with which some doctors of Paris and Oxford were associated, had in the previous November condemned the archbishop's action in burning them.<sup>35</sup> In the following March the sentence was read in the churches of Prague. Convinced of its injustice and strengthened by the support of the court and the people, Hus defied the cardinal, as he had defied the archbishop, and continued to preach. "Both the will of God and the Scriptures," he wrote, "teach that we ought to obey our superiors only in things lawful. I based my case on this principle when I preferred, in the matter of preaching, to obey God rather than the pope and the archbishop and his other satraps, who act contrary to Christ's word."<sup>36</sup>

#### TEMPORARY CONCILIATION

In view of the support of the king, the university, and the people, the archbishop flinched before the opposition which his action had roused, and was disposed to compromise. Wenzel was also desirous of hushing up the quarrel, and Hus,

<sup>31</sup> "Documenta," 735, 409 f.

<sup>32</sup> So at least says Hus, "Documenta," 726.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 401 f.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 422 f.

<sup>35</sup> "Documenta," 426 f. They added, however, that certain articles culled from the "Dialogus," "Trialogus," and the "De Corpore Christi" should not be taught.

<sup>36</sup> "Letters," 50. For these events see also "Monumenta et Historia," i. 109 f., 119.

who did not consider himself a heretic in any essential sense, was equally ready to come to an understanding. An opportunist pope like John XXIII., who was anxious to retain the goodwill of Wenzel, was not likely to stand in the way of any feasible arrangement between the two parties, who ultimately agreed to submit the dispute to the arbitration of the king with the assistance of a number of assessors. The archbishop agreed to revoke his excommunication of Hus and others, to beg the pope to do likewise, and to assure him anew that there was no heresy in Bohemia, whilst the king undertook to restore his property and release the priests whom he had imprisoned (6th July 1411).<sup>37</sup>

To pave the way to a reconciliation with the curia, Hus wrote letters to the pope and the cardinals categorically disclaiming the heresies alleged against him and explaining his attitude in the recent controversies (1st September 1411). The epistle to the pope, in particular, is important as an indication of his religious standpoint at this time. "For these reasons," he continues, after giving a confession of his faith, "I confidently, truthfully, and steadfastly assert that I have been wrongfully defamed to the Apostolic Seat by these heresy hunters. If they have given or are giving information that I have taught the people that in the sacrament the material substance of the bread remains, it is a falsehood. It is a falsehood that I have said that when the host is elevated it is then the body of Christ, but when it is laid down it is not. It is a falsehood that a priest in mortal sin cannot consecrate. It is a falsehood that the lords may withdraw temporal goods from the clergy and that they need not pay tithes. It is a falsehood that indulgences are nothing. It is a falsehood that I have urged an actual attack on the clergy with the sword. It is a falsehood that I have preached or held any error or errors whatsoever or any heresy; or that I have seduced the people in any wise from the way of truth. It is a falsehood that I was the cause of certain German masters being expelled from Prague." They were, he explains, not expelled, but retired of their own accord rather than submit to the ordinance of King Wenzel. It was, further, a falsehood that Bohemia and Moravia were full of heresy. Equally false the contention

<sup>37</sup> "Documenta," 439 f.

that the Bethlehem chapel was not a parish living<sup>38</sup> and was, therefore, included in the papal inhibition of preaching. Its destruction would be highly detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the people and would only intensify the strife. In conclusion, he adduced the plots against his life in Bohemia and outside it as a compelling reason for declining to appear before the pope in person and sending proctors to present his case, and in view of his reconciliation with the archbishop, begged His Holiness to waive further proceedings against him.<sup>39</sup> His denial of the heresies attributed to him is very categorical. In regard to the worst of them, it is certain that he did not at this period or later hold Wiclif's view of the Eucharist. It is not so certain that he did not already share his teaching on the liability of unworthy ecclesiastics to forfeit their temporalities. At all events, within less than a year he is found publicly maintaining the Wiclifite doctrine that mortal sin invalidates the right of possession in the case of both secular lords and prelates. Probably, as Krofta points out, "he was already more affected by Wiclif's heresies than he admitted or perhaps was himself aware."<sup>40</sup>

#### HUS AND JOHN STOKES

Unfortunately, this conciliatory mood did not last long. Recrimination broke out afresh between the archbishop, who hesitated to fulfil his promise, and the king, who became impatient and aggressive. He drafted a letter to the pope in the sense of the agreement, but did not dispatch it.<sup>41</sup> In consequence of the renewed tension, the archbishop left the city with the intention of invoking the intervention of Wenzel's brother, Sigismund, King of Hungary, who had shortly before been elected King of the Romans on the decease of Ruprecht. His intention was frustrated by his death at Pressburg in the end of September. Even before his death the strife over Wiclif had broken out anew at Prague. Its instigator was John Stokes, a Cambridge licentiate of laws, who in September

<sup>38</sup> It had, in fact, been recognised as such in a rescript of Pope Gregory XII. to the archbishop in 1408.

<sup>39</sup> "Letters," 51 f.

<sup>40</sup> "Cambridge Mediæval History," viii. 54, see also Hefele-Leclercq, "Hist. des Conciles," vii., Pt. I., 143.

<sup>41</sup> "Documenta," 441 f.

visited Prague on his way back to England from a mission in behalf of Henry IV. to Sigismund. Stokes declined an invitation of the university to a banquet in his honour and raised the question of Wiclif's works. "Whoever," said he, "reads the books of John Wiclif must in time fall into heresy, no matter how well disposed he may be." In defence of the honour of the university, Hus challenged him to a disputation on the subject. He again declined on the ground that, as ambassador of the English king, he was not at liberty to accept the challenge. In England, he added, Wiclif was regarded as a heretic and his books burned, and this contention he was prepared to maintain against Hus or any other before the University of Paris or the Roman curia. Despite his refusal, Hus proceeded with the disputation. He appealed to the forged testimony of the University of Oxford to Wiclif's orthodoxy. "If," he naïvely reasoned, "Wiclif is a heretic, then Oxford must be full of heretics. John of Gaunt, the father of the English king, must also have been a heretic." He was evidently still under a complete misapprehension as to the position of Wiclif and the Wiclifite movement in England, and this part of his argumentation was of course quite untenable. Time had been when Oxford could be described as Wiclifite, but that time was past. It is, however, very interesting as showing his own attitude towards the teaching of the English heresiarch. He refused to believe or concede that Wiclif was a heretic, though he will not categorically deny it. He hopes that he was not and that he is among the saved. What has attracted him is his reputation among good priests, in the University of Oxford, and among the people, and his works, in which he strives to call men back to Christ and the clergy to the simplicity of the Gospel. He was evidently so deeply impressed by the Christian spirit of his teaching that he could not believe him guilty of heresy, though he would not dogmatise on the point.<sup>42</sup>

#### THE INDULGENCE CONTROVERSY

The disputation was only a passing episode, though it was later remembered against him at Constance, where he was

<sup>42</sup> His disputation is given in "Historia et Monumenta Joannis Hus," i. 135 f. (1715). Extract in "Documenta," 447 f.

again brought face to face with Stokes. Far more fateful was the controversy over the sale of indulgences, which brought him into acute antagonism to the pope, who in September and December 1411 proclaimed a crusade against his enemy, Ladislav of Naples, and offered plenary indulgence to all who should take part in it, or contribute to its cost.<sup>43</sup> The benefit of the indulgence was in the first bull limited to "the truly penitent and confessed," and in the second authorising Wenzel Tiem, Dean of Passau, as the agent of the sale in the dioceses of Salsburg, Magdeburg, and Bohemia, the limitation was repeated. Moreover, Albik, the new archbishop, issued regulations in order to obviate the abuses to which the traffic was liable. But Tiem, who began operations at Prague in May 1412, was, like Tetzal a century later, not overscrupulous in observing the restrictions imposed by the bull and the archbishop's regulations. The chief object was to get as much money as possible, and he and the agents to whom he farmed the traffic appear to have been guilty of scandalous practices in their anxiety to make the traffic profitable to themselves as well as the pope.<sup>44</sup> While Hus on the occasion of the indulgence of 1393 had spent his last coppers in buying one, he now vehemently denounced the papal bull. In an interview with Tiem in the presence of the archbishop, he distinguished between the apostolic mandates and those of the pope and flatly refused to obey the latter if contrary to the former.<sup>45</sup> It was in this spirit that, in spite of the opposition of the members of the theological faculty, including his former friends and fellow-reformers, Stanislas of Znaim and its dean, Palec, who championed the power of the pope to grant the plenary remission of sin and issue indulgences,<sup>46</sup> he discussed the question in a disputation before the university on the 7th June. His arguments are mainly taken, as Loserth has shown, from Wiclif's treatise on the Church and two others of his tractates.<sup>47</sup> It is not in the power of pope or priest, he contended, like Luther one hundred years later, to absolve from the penalty

<sup>43</sup> Bulls in "Historia et Monumenta," i. 212 f.

<sup>44</sup> See Lützwow, 150 f., quoting Tomek, "History of the Town of Prague," iii. 508 f.

<sup>45</sup> "Historia et Monumenta," i. 367.

<sup>46</sup> "Documenta," 448 f.

<sup>47</sup> "Wiclif and Hus," 141 and 236 f. The two others are the "De Absolucionē a Pena et a Culpa" and the "Dialogus."

and guilt of sin, but only to declare that God forgives the truly penitent. The pope may not engage in war like secular princes. The warfare of the Church is spiritual. Its sword is the Word of God. Christians are, therefore, not bound to obey the papal summons to take part in the crusade against Ladislas, who is, moreover, a Christian prince. Nor should they obey the papal mandates when they are contrary to God's Word and the example of Christ and the apostles, as these bulls undoubtedly are. The whole indulgence traffic is, in fact, anti-Christian and the worst form of simony. The pope may err and he certainly errs in arrogating to himself the power of indulging for money from guilt and penalty. This is the act of Antichrist, and to withstand his bulls and his excommunications is a Christian duty.<sup>48</sup>

He was ardently seconded by Jerome, the far-travelled master and fervent champion of Lollardism, who had narrowly escaped trial for heresy both at Paris and Oxford and who discanted on the subject in far less measured terms and consequently became the hero of the students. Stanislas and Palec, on the other hand, argued in favour of absolute obedience to the papal mandate. The students, however, sided with their opponents and organised an irreverent demonstration, which ended in the burning of what purported to be copies of the papal bulls.<sup>49</sup> The result was a complete breach between Hus and these old friends who had staunchly abetted him in the battle over Wiclif's books, but had latterly shown a disposition to draw back. Perhaps their experience of the papal power a couple of years before, when they had gone, as Wenzel's representatives, to the curia and had been imprisoned at Bologna, had made them chary of involving themselves in a quarrel with the pope. Perhaps they found that Hus was going further in his championship of Wiclifism than they were prepared to follow. Whatever the exact cause, they now ranged themselves on the conservative side and led the opposition in a renewed attack on Wiclif's teaching. "Palec," said Hus, "is my friend. Truth is my friend. Of the two it is imperative to honour truth first."<sup>50</sup> At their instigation the

<sup>48</sup> "Historia et Monumenta," i. 215. On the discussion in greater detail, see Schaff, "Huss," 116 f.

<sup>49</sup> "Documenta," 640.

<sup>50</sup> "Historia et Monumenta," i. 330.

theological faculty condemned anew the forty-five articles, to which they added six drawn from Hus's disputation against indulgences (10th July 1412).<sup>51</sup> They won over Wenzel, who decreed the penalty of banishment against those who should presume to teach them.<sup>52</sup> Next day three young men who protested in church against the indulgence traffic were executed by the civic authorities (consisting for the time being of representatives of the German section of the population) in spite of the intercession of Hus.<sup>53</sup> Hus himself refused to be intimidated by such tactics. "Most illustrious prince," wrote he to the King of Poland, "it is because they hear a message like this (his denunciation of their vices) that a simoniac, pomp-loving, luxurious, and unrestrained clergy charge me with defamation of their order and heresy. But shall I keep silence? God forbid! Woe is me if I keep silence. It is better for me to die than not to resist the wickedness which would make me a partner in their crimes and in their hell."<sup>54</sup> In a series of public dissertations he inveighed against the condemnation of the articles. No pope or bishop is entitled to restrict the right of preaching or excommunicate anyone for refusing to obey such an unwarranted inhibition, since no one may act in such matters against his conscience. The oppression of God's Word and its true ministers and the rampant demoralisation of the clergy prove that the reign of Antichrist has come. He not only vindicated the right of untrammelled preaching by God's faithful ministers. He defended the Wiclifite theories that temporal lords may deprive unworthy ecclesiastics of their temporalities, that tithes are to be regarded only as alms, and that no one living in mortal sin can rightly be a secular lord, prelate, or bishop.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile his clerical enemies had denounced Hus and five of his associates to Pope John XXIII. and demanded their summary punishment as notorious heretics.<sup>56</sup> They found ardent abettors in Michael, the Pleader, a former priest of one of the Prague churches, of evil reputation, whom John

<sup>51</sup> "Documenta," 451 f.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 456.

<sup>53</sup> Hus, "De Ecclesia"; "Historia et Monumenta," i. 306; "Documenta," 726, 736.

<sup>54</sup> "Letters," 72 f. (June 1412).

<sup>55</sup> "Historia et Monumenta," i. 139 f.

<sup>56</sup> Letters to the pope, "Documenta," 457 f.

had appointed Procurator de Causis Fidei, as well as in his quondam friends and fellow-reformers, Stanislas and Palec. In response the pope entrusted the case to the Cardinal of St Angelo, who fulminated against him and all who adhered to him the great curse, which deprived him of all assistance from, or intercourse with the faithful. If he should not submit within twenty-three days, he was to be solemnly excommunicated with the usual ritual in all churches, monasteries, and chapels and three stones cast against his dwelling-house as a sign of eternal malediction, whilst every place that gave him shelter was put under an interdict.<sup>57</sup> The pope himself in another bull directed the seizure of Hus, his surrender to the archbishop or the Bishop of Leitomischl, the razing of the Bethlehem chapel, and the excommunication and trial of his adherents in case of their refusal to submit. From this sentence Hus, "following the example of Chrysostom, Robert of Prague, and Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln," appealed to Jesus Christ, the supreme judge "who is neither influenced by gifts nor deceived by false witnesses."<sup>58</sup> In deference to the request of Wenzel, he reluctantly retired from Prague in order to save the people from the consequences of the papal interdict (October 1412).

#### ATTEMPTED COMPROMISE

The interest of the next two years centres in the attempts of Wenzel to bring about a compromise between the two parties and in Hus's literary activity in his retreat at Kozi Hradek, near Usti, whence he paid occasional visits to Prague. In the beginning of January 1413 Wenzel summoned a synod, which met in the following February, to discuss the question. But Hus's opponents of the theological faculty would be satisfied with nothing less than an unqualified submission. The pope, insisted the theologians, as the successor of Peter, is the head; the cardinals, as the successors of the other apostles, the body of the Roman Church. To them belongs the function of defining the content of the faith for the whole Church and purging it from error. In proof of this fundamental principle, which the Bohemian Church, along with the whole of Christendom has hitherto recognised, they appeal to the 18th chapter

<sup>57</sup> "Documenta," 461 f.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 464 f.

of Deuteronomy, the words of Christ to Peter, and the legend, *Domine, quo vadis*. It is, therefore, incumbent on the Bohemian and the universal Church to hold the faith of the Roman Church and render obedience to the pope and the cardinals in all cases in which they do not prohibit what is purely good, or command what is purely evil, in accordance with the precept, "All things whatsoever they (the Pharisees) bid you, these do and observe." It is not permissible to appeal to Scripture as the supreme and only judge in such matters. To conform to the Roman Church, the mother of all Christians, in faith and practice is obligatory on all; to deviate from it is heresy. The forty-five articles of Wiclif and the six additional articles are either heretical, erroneous, or scandalous, and have been rightly condemned by the majority of the members of the university. Accordingly the theologians demand that all doctors and masters shall on oath repudiate these articles, which have brought such discredit on the Bohemian kingdom. They shall, further, profess belief in the seven sacraments, the rites and religious observances of the Roman Church, such as the veneration of relics, indulgences, etc., as essentials of faith under penalty of excommunication and exile. Finally, Master John Hus shall refrain from preaching till he has obtained absolution from the pope and all demonstrations in his favour, particularly the singing of scandalous songs, shall be prohibited and punished by the civil authority.<sup>59</sup>

To this pontifical pronouncement, Hus's friends in the faculty of arts responded with an outspoken negative. They denied point blank that the pope is the head, the cardinals the body of the universal Church. The Church consists of all Christians who worship the one Christ and observe the one rule of truth. All bishops and priests are the successors of the apostles. Christ, not the pope, is the head of the Church, as the Scriptures and the Fathers testify. The deliverances of pope and cardinals are to be received only as far as they conform to Scripture, which is the foundation and standard of the faith. Rome is not necessarily the seat in which the principate of the Church resides. Moreover, many popes have been heretics, and none is infallible. History clearly shows that they may err and have erred, and often enough retracted their own bulls.

<sup>59</sup> "Documenta," 475 f.

The present schism is a glaring example of their fallibility. Moreover, the rampant demoralisation of the clergy, which flourishes nowhere more shockingly than in the Roman curia and which the evangelical preachers have with ample cause exposed, is the real cause of the present dissension. The pope's fulminations against them are no more to be approved and obeyed by the Prague clergy, merely because he has issued them, than those of the devil, merely because Adam and Eve listened to them. On such reasoning we should have to approve of the condemnation of Christ by Pilate on the ground that this action had the approval of the high priests, the elders, and the mob. If the pope and the cardinals live lives contrary to the example of Christ, they are thieves and robbers who have not entered the fold by the door.<sup>60</sup>

On his side Hus, who was not present, sent a communication in his own behalf. His opponents, he demanded, should adhere to the decision of the 6th July 1411. The kingdom of Bohemia, equally with other kingdoms, "should retain its rights and liberties in all approbations, condemnations, and other acts concerning mother Church," in other words, the civil power should have a decisive voice in ecclesiastical affairs. He should, further, be allowed to be present and defend himself against any allegation of heresy, and if no one should appear to make such a charge, those who reported to the pope that Bohemia was full of heresy should either prove their assertion or be punished. Finally, the interdict should be removed.<sup>61</sup> In response to the request of the king, Master Jacobellus demanded a thorough practical reformation of the Church and of society, in accordance with the law of Christ, as an indispensable condition of a lasting peace. The king should eradicate all clerical vices, such as simony, fornication, concubinage. He should deprive the clergy of their superfluity of wealth and their temporal power in order that they might devote themselves to their spiritual office, in accordance with the evangelical ordinances and as an example to the people. He should, further, reform the laity, from the highest to the lowest, by abolishing all customs contrary to Christ's law.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> "Documenta," 495 f.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 491 f. See also his letter to the Synod, "Letters," 115 f.

<sup>62</sup> "Documenta," 493 f.

The secular power must, in fact, play the part of moral censor towards both clergy and laity in order that the law of Christ may be supreme in Church and State. In these demands the puritan spirit of the future Hussite revolution is clearly foreshadowed. As yet, however, the demand was but a pious wish and the debate only aggravated the strife.

Equally futile was a second conference between the two parties in the following April.<sup>63</sup> The theologians insisted that their opponents should subscribe to the declaration that "the pope is the head of the Roman Church of which the college of cardinals is the body, that all its decisions concerning the keys, the sacraments, etc., are true, and that those of the Wiclifites contrary thereto are false and erroneous." To this the Hussites, after a stormy debate, were ultimately prepared to agree with the addition of a reservation in favour of private judgment.<sup>64</sup> Such a reservation the theologians would not grant and the negotiation again broke down.<sup>65</sup> Wenzel, who ascribed its failure to the obstructive tactics of Stanislas of Znaim and Palec, who withdrew from Prague, punished their obstruction by banishing them and two others from Bohemia.<sup>66</sup>

#### LETTERS FROM HIS RETIREMENT

Hus resented their opposition as backsliding and there is no little truth in the charge, though he himself had now gone beyond the standpoint of an earlier time, whilst they had begun to lag behind. "Christ the Lord helping me," he wrote to the Rector of the university, Christian of Prachaticz, after the conference, "I will not accept the judgment of the theological faculty, though I stand before a fire prepared for me. I hope that death will take either me or the two who have deserted the truth to heaven, or to hell before I agree with their views. For I know that both in previous times loyally confessed the truth according to Christ's Gospel; but stricken with terror they turned to flattery of the pope and to lies. Palec calls us

<sup>63</sup> Lützwow mistakenly gives the date as April 1414 (p. 173); it should be 1413.

<sup>64</sup> *Sicut quilibet bonus et fidelis Christianus deberet et tenetur facere—*  
"Such as every good and faithful Christian ought and is bound to do."

<sup>65</sup> "Documenta," 507 f.

<sup>66</sup> Palacky, "Geschichte von Böhmen," iii. 295 (1845).

Wiclifists, as if we were straying from the entire faith of Christendom, and Stanislas calls us infidels, traitors, madmen, and an accursed clergy. But I would pay no heed to this, provided they were not confirming Antichrist in his wickedness. But I hope with God's grace to set myself against them even to the lighting of a fire."<sup>67</sup>

He now branded them as satellites of Antichrist and strenuously controverted their contention that whatever the pope decrees must be implicitly obeyed. The pope is only Christ's vicar in as far as he follows Christ's law. On the other hand, if he does not conform in life and act to the law of Christ, he is to be regarded as Antichrist. This is the supreme test which too many of the popes have failed to pass. "If his life is contrary to Christ, then is he a thief and a robber, climbing up another way, a ravenous wolf, a hypocrite, the chief Antichrist among all Christians." This description applies especially to the present pope, John XXIII., who embodies in his person the prophecy of the abomination standing in the holy place. Other popes have been worthless enough. But John XXIII. is the beast incarnate, the very Behemoth, sitting now in the holy place, "in name the holiest, in reality the worst, the most cruel, the most vengeful, the proudest, the richest in this world's wealth, the most unclean."<sup>68</sup> Even if there is exaggeration in this damning description, which reflects the popular estimate, there was ample enough opprobrium in the past life of Baldassare Cossa to revolt the moral sense of the reformer and evoke the defiant challenge to an infallible authority professing to speak in the name of Christ, yet so alien to His teaching and spirit.

This challenge he was prepared to maintain, in the face of persecution, even unto death. In his letters to his congregation and to Prachaticz, he strives to inspire his adherents with his own resolute spirit. Resistance to the Antichrist at Rome is the keynote of these impassioned, heroic appeals. "I pray that it may please God to give you a perfect understanding that you may recognise the wiles and deceits of Antichrist and his ministers, and not suffer yourselves to be drawn away from God's truth. Many have forsaken it in fear of danger, being

<sup>67</sup> "Documenta," 56; "Letters," 119 f.

<sup>68</sup> "Documenta," 60; "Letters," 130.

in terror of miserable man rather than of Almighty God, who hath the power to kill and make alive, to destroy and to save, and to preserve His faithful ones in divers sore perils, to grant them the eternal life with joy unspeakable in return for a little momentary suffering. . . . Stand, therefore, firmly in the truth. . . . Have confidence, because Christ hath conquered and you too will conquer." <sup>69</sup> "Pray for me also that I too may write and preach in fuller measure against the malice of Antichrist, and that God may put me in the forefront of the battle, if needs be, to defend His truth. For be assured I shrink not from yielding up this poor body to peril or death for the sake of God's truth, though I know that God's Word hath no need of us, nay rather the truth of the Gospel is spreading from day to day. But I desire to live for the sake of those who suffer violence and need the preaching of God's Word, that the malice of Antichrist may be exposed in such wise that the godly can escape it." <sup>70</sup> "Stand firmly in the love of God's Word and cleave to it with earnest desire, listening to those whom the Saviour hath sent . . . and withstand ravening wolves and false prophets. . . . Christ bids the faithful beware of them, and teaches how they can be recognised—to wit by their fruits, which are pride, fornication, greed, simony, contempt of God's Word and persecution of the faithful, backbiting, sycophancy, zeal for the traditions of men, etc." <sup>71</sup> "I will risk my own life, I trust, for the Lord Jesus, if in His mercy I have opportunity. I have no wish to live on in this evil world, if I cannot call myself and others to repentance according to God's good pleasure. This is the burden of my prayer for you also, and I beseech you in Christ Jesus, with all your fellow-members of the university, to be prepared for a battle; for the reconnoitres of Antichrist have already begun, and the fight will soon follow. The Goose (Hus) also must needs flap his wings against the wings of Behemoth." <sup>72</sup> "And if I cannot deliver the truth in spite of all I do, at least I refuse to be the enemy of the truth and will resist to the death all agreement with falsehood. Let the world run its

<sup>69</sup> "Documenta," 37; "Letters," 90 f.

<sup>70</sup> "Documenta," 40; "Letters," 96 f.

<sup>71</sup> "Documenta," 42; "Letters," 99.

<sup>72</sup> "Documenta," 54 f.; "Letters," 118 f.

course, as God permits. It is better to die well than live badly. We must not sin to avoid the punishment of death. To end in grace the present life is to be banished from misery. . . . He that fears death loses the joys of life. Above all else truth is conqueror. He conquers who is slain; for no adversity hurts him if no iniquity hath dominion over him." <sup>73</sup>

He doubted whether he had acted rightly in retiring. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But the hireling fleeth" (John x. 11 f.). The text troubled him until he reassured himself by remembering the advice given by Augustine to Bishop Honoratus in similar circumstances that, if the Gospel can be preached by others in his absence, flight was legitimate. Moreover, his withdrawal seemed the only alternative if he was to obviate the evil effects of the interdict for his followers at Prague.<sup>74</sup> He continued to preach under the protection of John of Austi at Kozi Hradek.<sup>75</sup> "Hitherto," he wrote, "I have preached in towns and market-places, but now I preach among hedges, in villages, castles, fields, woods as well as under the lime tree at Kozi Castle. If I could, I would preach on the seashore and from a boat, as did the Saviour. . . . Jesus went about on foot preaching, not as do the priests to-day in fine carriages. I, too, alas, drive because I could not otherwise reach remote places quickly enough." <sup>76</sup>

These letters reveal the secret of the heroism that was to face the horror of the stake at Constance in unswerving allegiance to what he deemed the truth. They reveal, too, the secret of the religious conviction, the constraining devotion which, after his death, were to carry the reform movement to the issue of the battlefield.

#### THE CHURCH AND ITS GOVERNMENT

The discomfiture of the theologians, followed as it was by the elimination of the German majority in the municipality of Prague, was a victory for Hus, though he did not venture to return and resume his work in the Bethlehem chapel. Like

<sup>73</sup> "Documenta," 56; "Letters," 119 f.

<sup>74</sup> "Documenta," 33; "Letters," 80 f.

<sup>75</sup> "Documenta," 40, 43; "Letters," 96 f., 101.

<sup>76</sup> "Documenta," 728 f.

Luther later at the Wartburg, he continued to further the cause of reform by letters to his friends, and by the works which he circulated from his retirement first at Kozi Hradek and later at Krakowec. The most important of these is the "De Ecclesia," in which he systematises his reforming convictions and which was the main cause of his condemnation by the Council of Constance. Its leading ideas, as set forth in the doctrinal part of the thesis, was, as Loserth<sup>77</sup> has shown, derived from the work of Wiclif on the same subject. In the remaining chapters he applies these ideas in enforcing and vindicating against his opponents the demands of the Reform party in the Bohemian Church. These demands concern specifically the Church and its government and reveal a radical divergence from the traditional, mediæval conception of both, whilst otherwise showing adherence to the doctrines and, with some reservation, to the usages of the mediæval Church. In their support he appeals to the Scriptures as the supreme standard of truth, to the Fathers, particularly to Augustine, to some of the schoolmen, especially St Bernard, to history, of which he also shows a considerable, if not always an accurate or critical knowledge, and to the canon law as embodied in the "Decretum" of Gratian, which, unlike Luther, he did not repudiate, and in which he strives, with more ingenuity at times than objectivity, to find support for his own reforming views. In method he is more direct, less scholastic and redundant than Wiclif. As a Reform manifesto it was more effective than the treatise of the Oxford doctor, and was later to exercise a marked influence on Luther.<sup>78</sup>

As in Wiclif's treatise, the Holy Catholic Church is the universality of the predestinate in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory, from the beginning of the world onwards, who form the mystical body or bride of Christ, of which He is the Head. To this mystical body only the predestined belong. Not so the merely foreknown (*præciti*), i.e., those of whom God foreknows that they are not in a condition of permanent

<sup>77</sup> "Wiclif and Hus," 181 f.

<sup>78</sup> The treatise is given in "Historia et Monumenta," i. 243 f., Eng. trans. by D. S. Schaff (1915). Hus also made some use of other works of Wiclif, particularly the "De Christo et suo Adversario Antichristo." He incorporates whole paragraphs from Wiclif's "De Ecclesia" without acknowledgment. But this was only in accordance with the practice of the age.

grace, who may be in the Church, but are not of it. Further, the Roman Church forms only a part of the Holy Catholic Church, like the Church of Jerusalem, or of Antioch, or Constantinople or other particular regions, though it became the principal part and is to be esteemed such as long as the pope and the cardinals follow Christ.<sup>79</sup> The foundation and head of the Church is Christ. He, not Peter, is the Rock, on which, in response to his confession of Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, He announced that He will build it. In virtue of his confession and his character, Peter was endowed with a certain primacy within it, and the pope, as his vicar, may be entitled to exercise this primacy or procuratorial power in that part of it over which he rules, if he exemplifies Peter's virtues in his life. But Peter was not exclusively the vicar of Christ. The power of the keys, of loosing and binding, which Christ gave to Peter as representing the Church, He also gave to the other apostles, and to the Church itself (Matt. xviii. 18 ; John xx. 23). At the same time the priestly power is purely declaratory. The priest does not remit or retain sin, which is solely the prerogative of God. He only declares the divine remission or retention. Moreover, the power of loosing and binding is conditioned by the penitence or the impenitence of the sinner. It is further conditioned by the truly Christian character of the priesthood. Simoniacs who traffic in benefices, sell the sacraments, live in luxury and self-indulgence, persecute Christ's priests, who preach against these intolerable evils, have usurped and abused this power for their own sordid ends, and may rightly be resisted. Such usurpers are in reality infidels and their acts are invalid.<sup>80</sup>

As the High Priest and Bishop of souls, Christ, not the pope, is the supreme Pontiff, subjection to whom, and not, as in the bull "Unam Sanctam" of Boniface VIII., to the popes, is alone necessary to salvation. Unlike Gregory I., who disclaimed the title of universal bishop, these mediæval popes have arrogated to themselves pompous titles such as that of "Holiness," unworthy of the servants of the supreme Pontiff. As a matter of fact, they have often enough been worthless men like Constantine II. and Gregory VI., or heretics like Liberius. Nay, even an infamous "female" like John VIII. has occupied

<sup>79</sup> chs. i. to vii.<sup>80</sup> chs. ix. to xi. ; cf. ch. v.

the papal chair.<sup>81</sup> The source of the papal power and pomp lies in the donation of the Emperor Constantine, which, with his age, Hus accepts without question, and out of which the papal claim to supremacy over the Church has developed. The pope may not be among the predestinate, and may by his life prove that he is the Antichrist. Only if he follows Christ in His humility, pastures the flock in word and example, labours incessantly in the service of the Church, esteems temporal things as dung may he be regarded as the vicar of Christ. The Church can well dispense with the pope and his cardinals. For hundreds of years after Christ's ascension it was ruled by holy priests and doctors more effectively than under the pope and his cardinals, and he would preferably restore this pristine government, when, on the testimony of Jerome, bishops and presbyters were identical and equally the successors of the apostles. The great test of the true ministry of Christ, in contrast to the ministry of Antichrist, is the life according to Christ's law. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20).<sup>82</sup>

God's law, *i.e.*, the Scriptures, is the standard of truth, and all ecclesiastical judges ought to base their judgments on it. Whilst the pope and the cardinals are to be obeyed as long as they teach and decree in accordance with it, they forfeit the obedience of the faithful if they teach and decree anything contrary to it. Especially do they err in demanding the death penalty, in virtue of Old Testament texts, for those who contradict their judgments. On this principle Christ Himself was condemned and crucified. Those who, like Stanislas and Palec, invoke the Old Testament in order to justify the forcible repression of their opponents by the secular power must perforce justify the crucifixion. They forget that Christians are not under the old law, but under the law of grace. Moreover, they grossly contravene the teaching of Christ. Did not He rebuke the disciples for wishing to call down fire from heaven on the inhospitable Samaritans? "He did not desire either to exercise judgment in civil matters or to condemn the disobedient to death." The only penalty He directed the Church

<sup>81</sup> Hus accepts the legend of the paramour adventuress Agnes who, assuming male attire, got herself made pope. The legend has been disproved by Döllinger.

<sup>82</sup> chs. xii. to xv.

to inflict on a recalcitrant brother was excommunication. Similarly when the Pharisees invoked the death penalty on the woman taken in adultery, did He not refuse to acquiesce? <sup>83</sup> In repudiating the "sanguinary" demand of his opponents, to which he was erelong to fall a victim, Hus rises high above the religious prejudice and perversion of his age. In so doing he contrasts nobly not only with these orthodox zealots, but with Calvin and too many of his fellow-reformers, who more than a century later continued to invoke Old Testament texts in support of the death penalty for heresy. <sup>84</sup>

In the remaining chapters he defends the right of the Reform party to resist the anti-Christian papal régime. It is not its object to seduce the faithful to disobedience, but only to secure the observance of the law of Christ in the government of the Church. Obedience to Christ is the supreme obligation. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29). "He who commands ought only to command things in agreement with the law, and the person obeying ought to the same extent to obey them and never act contrary to the will of Almighty God." <sup>85</sup> He flatly controverts the assumption of his opponents that obedience is to be rendered by inferiors to the apostolic see or seat (*cathedra*) of the Roman Church and to the prelates in all things whatsoever, barring the prohibition of what is purely good and the injunction of what is purely evil. If the apostolic see puts aside the apostolic teaching and teaches in word or works what is contrary to it, it may properly be termed pseudo-apostolic or apostate. To it may justly be applied the words of Christ to the scribes and Pharisees, "Ye have made void the Word of God because of your traditions . . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. xv. 6 f.). Hence, he explains, his strenuous opposition to the bull of Alexander V. prohibiting preaching in the Bethlehem chapel, and those of John XXIII. proclaiming an indulgence in the support of the war against Ladislas. From such examples

<sup>83</sup> ch. xvi.

<sup>84</sup> He admits, by way of exception, that it may be permissible to kill a man lest he infect the Church, but only by the special authority of God (ch. xix.). He has thus not completely emancipated himself from the barbarous mediæval practice of the death penalty for heresy. In the "Responsio ad Scriptum Octo Doctorum" he argues at greater length against the infliction of this penalty, "Historia et Monumenta," i. 393 f.

<sup>85</sup> ch. xvii.

it is clear that the pope may err, and to rebel against such a pope is to obey Christ, the Lord, though he again professes his readiness to obey as long as he observes His law. The lower clergy and the laity, who support the Church by their alms, are entitled to judge, in the light of Scripture, the deeds of their ecclesiastical superiors. Moreover, the administration of justice in the Roman curia is so scandalously corrupt that one may well hesitate to obey, under threat of excommunication for refusal, a citation thither, where he will be required to adore the pope with bended knees as a god. In these contentions he anticipates the later Reformation principle of the right of individual judgment against a fallible ecclesiastical authority and the right of resistance to this authority unworthily used.

The "De Ecclesia" involved nothing less than a revolution, on religious and moral grounds, of the constitution of the mediæval Church. "It attacks," as Dietrich of Niem<sup>86</sup> remarked at the Council of Constance, "the papal plenary power as much as the Koran does the Catholic faith." Its outward fabric might, indeed, be retained on certain conditions. But these conditions involved a radical renewal of the mediæval Church on the basis of the New Testament, and the early Church. The demand for such a renewal was a strong one in view of the rampant abuses which the secularisation of the mediæval Church, under papal auspices, had produced in Bohemia, as in other lands. It was the inevitable outcome of the quickened Christian conscience, as voiced by Hus and the Bohemian reform party. Whether it was as feasible as it was forcible is not so evident. It was, in fact, very unlikely that it would secure the adhesion of the Council of Constance, as Hus too sanguinely assumed. Moreover the application of the Wyclifite doctrines of predestination and dominion to the Church was, as we have already noted in the case of Wiclif himself, too problematic not to provoke criticism and opposition.

It was ominous of future disillusion that Gerson, the reforming chancellor of the University of Paris and dean of the theological faculty, was already raising the cry of heresy on this among other grounds. In a letter to Archbishop Conrad,

<sup>86</sup> Not Cardinal D'Ailli, as has frequently been asserted. The words occur in the tract "De Necessitate Reformationis Ecclesiæ," which appears to have been written by Niem, not by D'Ailli.

the successor of Albik,<sup>87</sup> he urged the repression by the secular arm of the heresy which "had its corrupt origin in the writings of Wiclif."<sup>88</sup> In a second letter he sent him a series of erroneous articles, explicitly or implicitly contained in the "De Ecclesia," and condemned by the theological faculty of Paris. Especially pernicious is the denial that one who is not predestinate, but is merely foreknown or lives in mortal sin belongs to the Church and can exercise power over Christian people. Dominion, whether secular or ecclesiastical, is not founded on predestination, which would afford a most uncertain title, or on moral character, but on civil and ecclesiastical law. It is false, therefore, to maintain that no obedience is due to pope, prelate, or lord, who is merely foreknown or lives in mortal sin, and that ecclesiastics of evil life may and ought to be deprived of tithes and other temporal emoluments. Equally false that those who are of the Church and imitate Christ in their life (the predestinate) may publicly teach and preach, though unauthorised by any prelate, and even if they have been excommunicated. To maintain that the pope is not the universal bishop and head of the Church, or that the Roman Church has no jurisdiction over the Church at large and has derived its primacy from Cæsar, not from Christ, is merely a repetition of the error of Marsiglio of Padua and John of Jandun. That the death penalty may not be inflicted on heretics is Donatist error and is subversive of canon law. Equally dangerous to public order to hold that subjects are empowered by Christ to expose and denounce the vices of their superiors, that the Roman see at the present time is the see of Antichrist, and that anyone excommunicated by the anti-Christian pope may appeal to Christ and spurn such excommunication.<sup>89</sup>

In thus categorically condemning the teaching of the "De Ecclesia," Gerson and the Paris theological faculty may be regarded as expressing the dominant ecclesiastical opinion outside Bohemia, where Hus could count on a rapidly growing

<sup>87</sup> Albik had retired towards the end of 1412 in favour of Conrad of Vechta, bishop of Olmütz, and received in exchange the lucrative provostship of the Vysehrad, with the title of Archbishop of Cæsarea, Wratislaw, "Hus," 193 (1882).

<sup>88</sup> "Documenta," 523 f.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 185 f.; cf. 527 f.

number of adherents. Though the tolerant archbishop, whilst professing, in response to Gerson's first letter, his readiness to extirpate such heresy, appears to have taken no further action against him, it is clear that if he ventured to carry out his desire to defend his views before the forthcoming Council of Constance he ran a serious risk of incurring a heretic's doom.

#### HUS AND WICLIF

The risk was all the more serious inasmuch as he had by this time, as the "De Ecclesia" proves, assimilated the teaching of Wiclif on the Church and a reform of its constitution and life in accordance therewith. It was the study of his writings, coupled with the revulsion from the rampant demoralisation of the Bohemian Church, that led him to his distinctive position as a reformer. He was not, and never had been, his professed disciple in the sense of unreservedly adopting his teaching. He did not adopt his view of the Eucharist and he did not really assimilate his extreme view of predestination.<sup>90</sup> Like Zwingli in his attitude towards Luther, he was anxious to maintain his independence as a reformer. "Whatever of truth Wiclif taught," he said in one of his sermons, "I receive, not because it is the truth of Wiclif, but because it is the truth of Christ."<sup>91</sup> His attitude was that of the open mind. He had, he said, made it a rule from the commencement of his studies, whenever he found a better opinion in any matter, gladly and humbly to give up the old one, assured that, as Themistius said, what we know is very much less than what we do not know.<sup>92</sup> His readiness to learn was stimulated by his sympathy with the master and the movement he had initiated in England. He not only read and copied his works. He corresponded with some of the Lollard leaders, including Lord Cobham and Richard Wyche, and in the letter to Wyche, which has survived, he expresses the indebtedness of himself and of Bohemia to the English Lollards.<sup>93</sup> Certain it is that his docility grew with the years and his writings bear ample testimony to the extent to which he had assimilated Wiclif's

<sup>90</sup> On this point see Hauck, "Studien zu Johann Huss," 5 f. (1916).

<sup>91</sup> "Documenta," 184.

<sup>92</sup> "Historia et Monumenta," i. 131.

<sup>93</sup> "Letters," 34 f.

evangelical views. In so doing he had come to persuade himself that he was not guilty of heresy, in spite of the condemnation of these views by the theologians of Prague and by the skeleton council which John XXIII. had convened at Rome in February 1413.<sup>94</sup> Like Wiclif he held that it was not heresy to bring back the Church to evangelical purity and freedom, and that that only can be deemed heresy which is contrary to God's Word. Moreover, he was sanguine enough to believe that a General Council of the Church, which all the more serious minds of every Christian land held to be in need of a trenchant reformation, would take the same view of the matter and justify him, if not Wiclif, in his demand for a religious reformation in accordance with the law of Christ.

#### JOURNEY TO CONSTANCE

He was, unfortunately, all too sanguine. He forgot that the quarrel had an ecclesiastical as well as a religious side, and that, from the current ecclesiastical standpoint, his views on the Church, on Antichrist, on the supremacy of Christ's law, *i.e.*, the Scriptures, the diminution of the power and wealth of the clergy, etc., were by no means likely to win for him the suffrages of the ecclesiastical assembly which John XXIII. had been compelled to summon to Constance. In this sanguine spirit he confidently obeyed the invitation of Sigismund to appear before it in reliance on his assurance of a full hearing and the promise of a safe-conduct, guaranteeing him the right to proceed to Constance, to remain there, and freely to return.<sup>95</sup> Though a provincial synod convened at Prague at the end of August 1414 refused his demand for a hearing, he obtained a testimonial to his orthodoxy from the inquisitor of heresy and a declaration from the archbishop

<sup>94</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 506 f.

<sup>95</sup> Palacky, "Geschichte von Böhmen," iii. 310 (1845). The safe-conduct is dated 18th October from Spire, "Documenta," 237 f.; "Historia et Monumenta," i. 2. Sigismund had been urged by one of Hus's clerical enemies in Bohemia to get Hus to appear at Constance in the expectation that his appearance before the Council would lead to his condemnation. John XXIII. also wrote to Wenzel in June 1414, exhorting him to take measures against the spread of heresy in Bohemia. See Introd. by Bartos to a number of relative documents in Finke, "Acta Concilii Constanciensis," iv. 493 f.

that he knew of no heresy chargeable against him.<sup>96</sup> So confident was he in the strength of his case, that in a public notice he boldly challenged anyone who wished to prove him a heretic to make good the charge at Constance. "If anyone can lay any heresy to my charge, let him prepare to set out to the Council that he may there in person lay before the pope and the whole Council whatever heresy he has heard me utter. If I shall be convicted of any heresy, I do not refuse to suffer the penalties of a heretic. But I trust God, whom I truly love, that He will not permit the detractors and adversaries of the truth to overcome it."<sup>97</sup> In his conviction that the truth must prevail, he refused to listen to the warnings of the risk he ran in leaving Bohemia. In any case, in view of his appeal to a Council, he could not now afford to evade the issue. Moreover, Sigismund's promise of his personal safety seemed an ample guarantee against the danger of a heretic's doom. He did not even wait for the safe-conduct,<sup>98</sup> which was, however, sent after him, but under the protection of John of Chlum, Wenzel of Duba and Henry of Lacembok, whom Sigismund had commissioned to accompany him, set out on the 11th October 1414. In spite of his Czech nationalism, which, however, he reserved for Bohemia, he had a kindly reception on the way thither, especially at Nürnberg, where the Friends of God were numerous. "I have not met a single enemy as yet,"<sup>99</sup> he wrote from Nürnberg to his friends in Bohemia. "God hath brought me now to Constance, without let or hindrance," he wrote after his arrival, "for though I rode the whole way dressed as a priest, without disguise, and in all the towns called out my name in a loud voice, I met no open enemy."<sup>100</sup> On the 3rd November he rode into Constance, and on the following day the pope emphatically pledged himself to John of Chlum to protect him.<sup>101</sup> On the 5th the safe-conduct arrived.

<sup>96</sup> "Documenta," 239 f.; "Historia et Monumenta," i. 3 f.

<sup>97</sup> "Letters," 142.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>101</sup> "Documenta," 246.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PROSECUTION OF HUS AND JEROME

#### IMPRISONMENT OF HUS

THE pope was disposed to treat him considerately and suspended the excommunication so far as to allow him to move freely about Constance, and even to appear in the churches if he chose. He did not avail himself of the offer, though he ventured to celebrate mass in his lodging—a daring and provocative act in an excommunicated person. Rumours were circulated that he intended to preach publicly and had made an attempt to escape. Both were unfounded. They nevertheless quickened the machinations of his enemies, chief of whom were the Bishop of Leitomischl, Palec and Michael de Causis (the Pleader). As the result of their instigations he was on the 28th November brought before the cardinals at the episcopal palace, and, despite both papal guarantee and imperial safe-conduct, he was retained a prisoner. Some days later he was confined in a loathsome cell of the Blackfriars Monastery, where he fell into a violent fever.<sup>1</sup> John of Chlum reminded the pope of his promise and the imperial safe-conduct, and publicly protested against this breach of faith. The pope professed to be powerless and laid the blame on the cardinals, whilst Sigismund, who arrived at Constance towards the end of December, categorically demanded his release. In reply to his representations, the Council took up and maintained an uncompromising attitude. It held that in matters of faith it was free from State control and was entitled to arrest and proceed against anyone accused of heresy, the imperial safe-conduct notwithstanding.<sup>2</sup> In the face of this uncompromising attitude, Sigismund gave way, though he secured his removal to a more salubrious part of the monastery.<sup>3</sup> He appears to have paid

<sup>1</sup> "Documenta," 248 f.

<sup>2</sup> "Documenta," 99; "Letters," 189.

<sup>3</sup> Hardt, iv. 32.

no heed to the letter of a number of Bohemian and Moravian nobles, who met at Mezeric in the beginning of January 1415 and represented the injustice of imprisoning one who not only held the imperial safe-conduct, but whose case had not been investigated.<sup>4</sup> Unlike his brother Wenzel, he had no sympathy with the national or the religious movement in Bohemia, and he feared to break up the Council and prejudice his own interests by insisting on the observance of his safe-conduct.<sup>5</sup> The fact is that in undertaking to protect a person accused of heresy, he had gone beyond his powers. By canon law no such protection could invalidate the right of the ecclesiastical authorities to arrest and indict anyone so accused and to require the secular authority to carry out their sentence. The papal decrees, which, in the thirteenth century, legalised the mediæval inquisition, and were based on the edicts promulgated for his own ends by the enemy of the papacy, the Emperor Frederick II., for the extirpation of heresy, conferred on the inquisitors the most ample powers and bound the secular authority to aid and abet them in the prosecution of their office.<sup>6</sup> The procedure of the papal inquisition was better understood in Italy and Southern Europe to which its operation was mainly confined than in the northern lands. But even in the case of the ordinary episcopal inquisition the State was bound to uphold and execute the episcopal decisions against heretics. In any case these papal decrees were incorporated into the canon law and were, therefore, held to apply wherever the papal sway extended. As the result of this legislation, heretics had no rights and no safe-conduct in their favour could be of the slightest validity. So absolute was the power of the Church in this matter that it even presumed to override the moral law and act on the principle that no faith was to be kept with heretics, if it tended to frustrate the punishment of what was esteemed the greatest of all crimes. "According to the canons," declared Innocent III., "faith is not to be kept with him who keeps not faith with God."<sup>7</sup> "There is no breaking of faith with him who breaks faith with God," wrote Ferdinand of Aragon to Sigismund.<sup>8</sup> In one of its decrees the Council

<sup>4</sup> "Documenta," 534 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 609 f.

<sup>6</sup> Lea, "History of the Inquisition," i. 320 f. (1887).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 228.

<sup>8</sup> "Documenta," 540.

of Constance gave explicit expression to this principle in vindication of its action in repudiating the safe-conduct. "No faith or promise is, by natural, divine, or human law, to be observed which shall be to the prejudice of the Catholic faith" (23rd September 1415).<sup>9</sup> In granting his unconditional protection to Hus, Sigismund had thus undertaken an obligation which he could not legally implement, and in relying on this protection Hus was liable to be rudely disillusioned. Both apparently acted in ignorance of the powers of the papal inquisition which were little known in remote Bohemia, and had not even in Germany succeeded in obtaining a ready acceptance.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, though Sigismund seems to have acted under a misapprehension of his powers,<sup>11</sup> the fact that Hus had relied on his pledged word would have been sufficient for an honourable man to stand by him and refuse to be a party to his destruction in virtue even of legal right. The moral as well as the legal obligation most certainly called for consideration in a case of this kind on the part of an assembly of Christian men as well as Sigismund himself. He had indeed, at first, the decency to protest. He had not the determination to persist in the face of the danger of breaking up the Council, which would have been very welcome to the pope and his party. To his credit he flatly contradicted in full Council the falsehood, circulated by members of the Council, in order to exonerate him from the charge of breaking his pledge, that Hus was not in possession of the safe-conduct till fifteen days after his arrest.<sup>12</sup> He ultimately secured him

<sup>9</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 791. Hefele unconvincingly contends that this passage formed no part of the decree.

<sup>10</sup> Lea, "History of the Inquisition," i. 360 f.; ii. 346 f.

<sup>11</sup> This seems to be implied in a remark he made to Hus during a sitting of the Council, 7th June 1415, "Documenta," 284. "Some say that it was not in my power to give a safe-conduct to a heretic or one suspect of heresy." Hefele argues that he knew the law, and that he did not mean his safe-conduct to protect Hus from death if he were proved to be a heretic, "Hist. des Conciles," vii., Pt. I., 345 f.; similarly, Hauck, "Kirchengeschichte," v., Pt. II., 1003. Only if he were acquitted would it hold good for his return. There is nothing in the wording to justify this conclusion. There is no mention of any condition. Wylie also thinks that he knew the canon law, but that he wished to challenge the right of the Church as against the State, and was worsted in the attempt, "Council of Constance," 186 f. (1900). Questionable.

<sup>12</sup> "Documenta," 284; Hardt, iv. 209.

a public hearing, to which by canon law he was not entitled. He later professed that Hus's impetuosity in hastening to Constance before his arrival had made it difficult for him to implement his promise to protect him. Had he retarded his journey and gone thither in the imperial train, things might have taken a different turn.<sup>13</sup> Even so, his breach of faith remains a blot on his honour and exposes him to the reproach that he allowed political calculation to override fidelity to his pledged word. By all accounts such fidelity was not necessarily a part of his political creed. "Who knows not how to dissimulate, knows not how to reign," was his motto. "He made more promises than he kept and often deceived," says Æneas Sylvius.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, he aggravated his surrender to expediency, not only in definitely recalling his safe-conduct,<sup>15</sup> but taking an active part in bringing about Hus's condemnation. Hus had no little reason for the reproach that he had been betrayed by his pledged protector, though his own sanguine temperament, his naïve self-confidence, and his lack of a due sense of the extent to which he had committed himself to Wiclif's teaching had also beguiled him.

#### AWAITING A PUBLIC HEARING

Fully six months elapsed before he was allowed to appear before the Council and answer the charges against him. It was unwilling to accede to the demand for a public hearing and would have preferred to adhere to the secret procedure of the Inquisition. It was, besides, too engrossed up to the beginning of April in dealing with the case of the pope himself to find time to dispose of his. Early in December the pope had appointed a commission of three prelates to examine the evidence against him. To these Palec submitted a series of articles drawn from Hus's treatise on the Church, which he complained misrepresented his teaching "by false omissions and additions."<sup>16</sup> Gerson also presented the series<sup>17</sup> which

<sup>13</sup> "Documenta," 612. Letter to Bohemian and Moravian nobles, 21st March 1416.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted by Creighton, "History of the Papacy," ii. 317.

<sup>15</sup> "Documenta," 543, 8th April 1415.

<sup>16</sup> "Letters," 175 f. These with Hus's comments are given in "Documenta," 204 f.

<sup>17</sup> "Documenta," 185 f.

he had sent to the Archbishop of Prague, and on his arrival at Constance, in February 1415, he threw his influence into the scale against him. Accompanied by Palec and Michael de Causis, the commissioners frequently visited him in his cell, adducing the evidence of witnesses against him, but refusing, in accordance with the law, to grant him a proctor to test their evidence and defend him.<sup>18</sup> The commission strove to persuade him to give up his demand for a public hearing before the Council, which desired to adhere to the secret procedure of the Inquisition. To this demand he persistently refused to yield. He had come to Constance to answer before the Council and claimed a public trial as a right, whilst professing his readiness to abide by its decision.<sup>19</sup> Though Sigismund had proved false in the matter of the safe-conduct, he continued to rely on him to see that his claim for a public hearing was granted. He was still under a misapprehension as to his true position. As suspect of heresy, he was in reality, in accordance with the procedure of the Inquisition, legally entitled neither to the benefit of a proctor nor to a public hearing. He was fain to forego the demand for a proctor. The Lord Jesus Christ, he said, would be his advocate.<sup>20</sup> But he refused to give way on the question of a public hearing, and though the Council might legally have withheld the privilege, Sigismund ultimately secured him this concession.

Throughout these months of inquisition he was often in a prostrate condition through illness and anxiety. His jailer at the Dominican Monastery was a humane man and through him he was able to keep in correspondence with John of Chlum and other staunch friends, to whom the letters of this period are addressed. They reveal the precious gold of a soul becoming purer and brighter in the refining process of tribulation, bearing with meekness the animosity of those who had once been his close friends and were now striving by every art to compass his destruction; depressed at times, but never despairing; hoping for the opportunity of vindicating his convictions, but resolved with God's help never to be false to them, though when sorely heckled over his Wiclifite views professing his readiness to refer them to the judgment of the

<sup>18</sup> See their depositions, with Hus's comments in "Documenta," 174 f.

<sup>19</sup> "Letters," 175, 179, 182, 184.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 179 f.

Council; writing replies to the charges brought against him by Gerson as well as Palec and Michael; composing a short treatise on "The Lord's Supper," in proof of his belief in transubstantiation; directing his friends outside as best he could how to counteract the machinations of his accusers; and hoping, in spite of forebodings of his coming fate, for the day when, in the presence of Sigismund and the Council, he would be able to vindicate the truth. These letters supply what is lacking in the case of Wiclif—the self-revelation of a personality capable of inspiring the love and devotion of friends, wanting indeed in worldly wisdom, yet immovable in fidelity to truth and conscience, and meekly accepting the evil as well as the good in his tragic experience as part of the divine discipline. We realise, as we read them, the striking contrast between this simple-minded idealist, to whom conscience is the voice of God, and the crowd of ecclesiastics, to whom orthodoxy alone is truth, canon law the supreme standard of justice, and of secular politicians, to whom personal and political interest is the all-engrossing interest. They should be read *in extenso*, but here are some passages characteristic of the man and the situation. "Dear friends," he writes to the people of Prague in January 1415, "I beseech you, as I sit here in my prison, of which I am not ashamed, seeing that I suffer in hope for God's sake, who visited me in His mercy even with a sore sickness, and hath brought me back again to health, and suffered those to be my persistent foes whom I had treated with much kindness and had sincerely loved—I beseech you, I say, to pray God for me that it may please Him to be with me. For in Him alone I have hope, and in the prayers you offer to Him, that He will cause me to be faithful in His grace even unto death. . . . Let me inform you that my enemies have given an utterly false translation in Latin of those letters which I had left for you on starting on my journey. They are writing so many articles against me that my time in prison is fully occupied in replying to them. I have no counsellor by me but the merciful Lord Jesus, who said to His faithful friends 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist.'" <sup>21</sup> "Gracious lord" (to John of Chlum, January 1415), "please get me a Bible and send it by

<sup>21</sup> "Letters," 172 f.

that trusty man of yours. If your secretary Peter (Mladenovic) hath any ink, I should like to have it, with some pens and a small inkhorn. . . . I beg you to entreat His Majesty, both on my own account and for the sake of God Almighty, who hath so richly endowed him with His gifts, and, further, for the sake of manifesting justice and truth to the glory of God and the welfare of His Church—entreat him, I say, to release me from prison that I may be able to prepare myself for a public hearing. You should know that I have been very ill and have had clysters applied to me; but I am now well again.”<sup>22</sup>

“A harder comforter in time of sickness I have never found in my life than Palec! All the clerks of the pope’s household and all my gaolers treat me with much kindness. The Lord delivered Jonah from the whale’s belly, Daniel from the lion’s den, the three children from the fiery furnace, Susannah from the accusation of false witnesses, and He can deliver me, if expedient, for the glory of His name and for the preaching of His Word. But if a death precious in the Lord’s sight shall fall to me, the Lord’s name be blessed. If I could only see the king once more along with our Bohemian friends, I should be comforted.”<sup>23</sup> (To the same, February 1415.)

“I spent nearly all last night in writing answers to the charges which Palec had drawn up against me. He is definitely working to bring about my condemnation. God have mercy on him and comfort my soul! . . . I am surprised that my lord the king hath forgotten me, and that he never sends a word to me. Perhaps I shall be sentenced before I have speech with him. If this is his honour, it is his own lookout.”<sup>24</sup> (To the same, February 1415.)

“The day before yesterday I was again cross-examined with regard to the forty-five articles. By way of reply I repeated the declaration I gave before. They put the question to me about each article separately, whether I desired to defend it. I replied that I would accept the decision of the Council, as I had before declared. To each of the articles I said, as I had previously done with regard to some of them, ‘This is true if you take it in this sense.’ Whereupon they remarked, ‘Do you wish to defend it?’ My reply was, ‘No,

<sup>22</sup> “Letters,” 174.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 181 f.

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I abide by the decision of the Council.' . . . Michael was standing by holding up the paper and urging the patriarch (one of the commissioners) to make me reply to their questions. Meanwhile some bishops came in. Once more Michael brewed some fresh mischief. God permitted him and Palec to rise up together against me on account of my sins, for Michael pries into my letters and other things, while Palec brings out these old conversations we had together years ago. The patriarch is always insisting before them all that I have plenty of money. So an archbishop said to me in the course of the enquiry, 'You have 70,000 florins.' Michael exclaimed before them all, with a mocking laugh, 'What has become of that doublet full of florins? How much money do the barons in Bohemia hold in trust for you?' Without doubt I was sorely harassed that day. A bishop said, 'You have set up a new law.' Another remarked, 'You have preached all those articles.' I made a right stern reply, God helping me, saying, 'Why do you wrong me in this way?'<sup>25</sup> (To his friends at Constance, February 1415.)

### HUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL

It boded ill for Hus that the Council, on the report of a commission, appointed on the 17th April 1415, to examine the writings of Wiclif,<sup>26</sup> condemned these writings and ordered them to be burned, included in the condemnation the forty-five articles and the 260 errors previously condemned by the University of Oxford, declared their author to have been a notorious heretic, and directed his remains to be exhumed and cast out of the consecrated ground in which they were buried (4th and 13th May).<sup>27</sup> No mention was made of Hus in these decrees. But in the eyes of the Council Hus could only appear as a second edition of Wiclif and the condemnation of the greater heretic virtually involved that of the less. After the flight of John XXIII. on the 20th March 1415, it entrusted the continuation of the investigation of the case against him to a new commission, the previous commission having lapsed in

<sup>25</sup> "Letters," 185 f.

<sup>26</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 611.

<sup>27</sup> Hardt, iv. 142 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 630 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vii, Pt. I., 223 f.

consequence of this event. The commission held numerous interviews with the accused, who was now confined in chains in the castle of Gottlieben, and finally formulated two series of articles against him—one drawn from his work on the Church, and his tracts against Palec and Stanislas, the other from the evidence of Bohemian witnesses.<sup>28</sup> In the face of these articles his summary condemnation by the Council seemed a foregone conclusion. His Bohemian friends at Constance were, however, determined that he should have the benefit of a public trial and during the month of May they repeatedly protested before the Council against his imprisonment and insisted that this benefit should be granted.<sup>29</sup> These protests were materially strengthened by the remonstrances which the nobles of Bohemia and Moravia addressed to Sigismund as the heir to the Bohemian throne, and in which they sought to vindicate him from the aspersions of his enemies and demanded his release and a public hearing.<sup>30</sup> These remonstrances were too weighty for Sigismund to ignore them.

On the morning of the 5th June Hus was brought from Gottlieben to a tower adjoining the Franciscan monastery at Constance, in the refectory of which the Council assembled. The intention was, it seems, merely to meet and condemn him as a heretic and then admit him to hear his condemnation, not to discuss with him the charges against him. The trial was, in fact, to be no more than a formality. At the instigation of his friends, who fortunately discovered the intention, Sigismund sent the Count Palatine and the Burgrave of Nürnberg to demand a preliminary hearing before condemnation, whilst his friends put in authentic copies of the "De Ecclesia" and the tracts against Stanislas and Palec for comparison with the excerpts on which his enemies based their charges. The precaution was certainly not superfluous, for a number at least of these excerpts were neither verbally correct nor in all respects a fair representation of his teaching.<sup>31</sup> The fact that the Council did not take the strictest care in this vital matter does not tend to induce confidence in its judicial integrity, and the record of its proceedings shows at times a lamentable lack of self-restraint and impartiality.

<sup>28</sup> Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. I., 256 f.

<sup>29</sup> "Documenta," 256 f.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 266 f.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

The Council was fain to concede the demand for a preliminary hearing, and Hus was ultimately brought in to hear the articles against him. In the first series he was charged with maintaining the following among other heresies. The Church consists only of the predestinate. Peter was not the principal head of the Church. The vicar of Christ is only truly so if he is a follower of Christ; otherwise he is the vicar of Antichrist. All simoniacal and immoral priests, as unbelievers, have not the right faith concerning the seven sacraments and other usages of the Church, *i.e.*, cannot effectively perform them. The papal dignity was derived from the Roman Cæsar. No Roman pope can be head of any particular (regional) Church unless he is predestinate, and he cannot truly exercise vicarial power unless his life and morals conform to those of Christ and Peter. The cardinals are not the manifest and true successors of the apostles unless they live as the apostles did. No heretic, in addition to ecclesiastical censure, is to be handed over to the secular power to be punished with death. Secular nobles ought to compel priests to observe the law of Christ. Ecclesiastical obedience is a device of the priests, beyond what is warranted by Scripture. Excommunication by the pope is invalid in the case of a person who appeals to Christ, and a priest who lives according to Christ's law may continue to preach notwithstanding. Laymen are not bound to obey ecclesiastical censures, which the clergy devise for their own exaltation and the oppressing of the people. The pope has no right to place a whole people under interdict because of grievances against it. No one is a pope, bishop, or prelate who lives in mortal sin. The condemnation of the forty-five articles of Wiclif is irrational and unjust and the cause alleged is fictitious.<sup>32</sup> In the second series drawn from the evidence of the Bohemian witnesses was one charging him with denying transubstantiation.

Hus acknowledged the authorship of the "De Ecclesia" and the two tracts against Stanislas and Palec, as handed in by his friends, and professed his readiness to amend any errors they might be found to contain. When he attempted to reply to the charges against him, an uproar immediately broke out

<sup>32</sup> "Documenta," 285 f. These articles are printed *in extenso* in the account of the third public hearing on the 8th June.

and he was seen by his friends, who were unable to find room in the hall, striving to make himself heard above the din, "turning now to the left, now to the right, now backward, now forward." In vain he strove to point out misrepresentations and misinterpretations of his teaching in the articles, though it must be admitted that they contained matter at variance with the actual conception and constitution of the Church. "Leave off your sophistries," shouted some of the members "and answer yes or no," whilst some jeered. When he attempted to cite the Fathers in support of his views, he was interrupted by the cry, "This is of no weight. It is not to the point." When he lapsed into silence, they cried out, "Since you are silent, you admit your errors." In this deadlock the sitting was suspended for two days and Hus, whose courage had carried him through the ordeal without faltering, left the assembly with a smile, saying to his friends, "Have no fear for me." On the other hand, the disgraceful conduct of the members, who had so flagrantly belied their capacity to act as impartial judges, convinced him that he had little chance of a fair hearing. "They were all crying out against me like the Jews against Jesus," he wrote to his friends from his cell in the evening; "I feel I have not in the whole company of the clergy a single friend except the Pater [who this was is unknown] and a Polish doctor, with whom I am not acquainted. Pray God for me, for there is much need. Oh that a hearing might be granted me in order to reply to the arguments with which they intend to attack the articles that appear in my little books. I imagine that many who cry me down would be put to silence. His will be done as it is in heaven."<sup>33</sup> "If," he wrote on the following day to John of Chlum, "they would give me pen and paper, I should make reply, I trust, by God's grace as follows, 'I, John Hus, a servant of Christ in hope, refuse to state that any of the articles taken from my book is erroneous, lest I condemn the opinion of the holy doctors, and especially the blessed Augustine. Secondly, I refuse to confess that I asserted, preached, and held the articles with which I have been charged by false witnesses. Thirdly, I refuse to abjure lest I commit perjury.'"<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "Letters," 207 f.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

On the 7th, Sigismund being present, the proceedings were at first conducted in a more orderly fashion. The evidence of witnesses was produced to show that he had preached in the Bethlehem chapel against transubstantiation, affirming that after the consecration of the host the bread remained bread. This he flatly denied and maintained his denial in a dialectic encounter with Cardinal D'Ailli, who was a Nominalist and tried to make out that, as a Realist, he was bound to believe in the remanence of the bread. He controverted the assumption and solemnly affirmed his belief in the orthodox doctrine. One of the English members, in his impatience at this scholastic quibbling, called out, "Why bring in these irrelevant questions which have nothing to do with the faith? His view of the sacrament of the altar is perfectly correct, as he himself has stated it." Another Englishman, his old antagonist John Stokes, asserted, nevertheless, that he had seen a treatise at Prague ascribed to Hus in which "the remanence" of the bread was asserted. "It is not true," retorted Hus point-blank. Cardinal Zabarella next dwelt on the number of the witnesses and the weight of their evidence. "If God and my conscience witness for me that I never preached, or taught, or cherished in my heart what they testify against me, such evidence does me no harm." "We cannot," retorted D'Ailli, "judge according to your conscience, but according to the testimony of capable witnesses. You say that Palec and other doctors are your enemies, though Palec has dealt mildly with your errors in the extracts from your books. You suspect even the chancellor of the University of Paris (Gerson), than whom no more weighty doctor can be found in the whole of Christendom."

Hus's emphatic denial of this charge is amply supported by the testimony of his writings and an impartial examination of his teaching in the "De Corpore Christi," his commentary on the Sentences of Lombard,<sup>35</sup> and other works ought, as the Englishman pointed out, to have disposed of this charge.

<sup>35</sup> "De Corpore Christi," c. i.; "Opera Omnia," i., ed. by Flajshans (1904); "Super IV. Sententiarum," *ibid.*, ii. (1905). "The priest," he says in the latter work, "creates the body of Christ. He creates his own creator," ii. 571. This creation "takes place the instant the words are uttered," 574. Only the accidents of the bread remain, the substance being transmuted into the body of Christ, 576.

Moreover, Flajshans<sup>36</sup> has shown that the utterances ascribed to him by a number of witnesses, whose testimony had been forwarded to the Council, were wrongly interpreted by them. D'Ailli's attempt to make out that he must believe in the remanence of the bread, because he was a Realist, is a rather unworthy device to play his own logic against the evidence of his works and his emphatic denial of this conclusion. Nor should it be forgotten that Gerson himself, on whose judgment the cardinal laid such stress, afterwards expressed doubts about the justice of his condemnation.

The discussion then passed to the accusation that he had preached and defended the errors of Wiclif and had resisted their condemnation. He had, he replied, not too convincingly in the face of the "De Ecclesia," for instance, neither preached nor did he wish to follow the erroneous teaching of Wiclif or any other. He was not his teacher. Nor was he a Bohemian, and if he had taught any errors, let the English see to it. He had resisted his condemnation because his conscience would not allow him to condemn the articles in the terms used, and without sufficient reasons or scriptures given. But had he not said that he wished his soul to be with that of Wiclif? "If, as I hope," he replied, "Wiclif is saved, I would wish my soul to be where *his* is." This rather non-committal answer amused his audience. A still greater burst of derision greeted his declaration, in reference to his appeal from the pope to Christ, that he knew of none juster or more efficacious than an appeal to Christ. Why, he quietly asked, should it be deemed ridiculous to appeal from a less to a greater judge. Who is better able to help the heavy-laden and the oppressed than Christ, who neither deceives nor can be deceived?

His Bohemian opponents then introduced the recent tumults in Bohemia with the object of showing that he had stirred up the people against the clergy, brought about the expulsion of the Germans from the university, had been the instigator of violence and sacrilege, etc. These charges he strenuously rebutted and laid the blame on his opponents. The discussion was very warm and the clamour so great that

<sup>36</sup> In the Introd. to his edition of the "De Corpore Christi." The treatise instanced by Stokes was probably this work, in which transubstantiation is taught.

Hus had to remind the president that this was a judicial assembly and that he ought to be able to make himself heard. "I thought," he said, "that in this Council there would be greater reverence, piety, and discipline." "Whereupon," he tells us in the letter he wrote to his friends that evening, "Sigismund ordered silence and they all began to listen. But the cardinal who presided over the Council (D'Ailli) said, 'You talked more humbly at the castle' (Gottlieben). 'Yes,' said I, 'because no one was shouting at me then, but here every one is crying me down.'" <sup>37</sup>

D'Ailli recalled, in proof of his rebellious spirit, the fact that he had declared when he was arrested that he had come to Constance of his own free will, and that, if he had declined to come, neither the King of Bohemia (Wenzel) nor the King of the Romans (Sigismund) would have been able to compel him. Hus admitted that he had used these words, and added, in support of them, that he had so many powerful protectors among the nobles that he would have been perfectly safe against any attempt to force him to come. "What audacity," called out the cardinal. "He speaks the truth," exclaimed John of Chlum. "I am a poor knight. But I would undertake to keep him safe for a whole year, and there are numerous great lords who could protect him for any length of time in their strong castles against both kings." However true, the assertion, in this form at least, would have been better left unmade in the presence of Sigismund, whom it tended only to prejudice still more against Hus.

Finally, the cardinal advised him to eschew further discussion and subject himself to the correction and instruction of the Council, which would deal mercifully with him. "The doctors declare that the articles from your books are erroneous. You ought to withdraw them and abjure the views charged against you by witnesses." (Among which was the unfounded charge denying transubstantiation!) This advice was repeated by Sigismund, who resented the words of John of Chlum and explained away the safe-conduct which had, he added, enabled him to obtain a public hearing, and emphatically declared that he would be no protector of a pertinacious heretic,

<sup>37</sup> "Letters," 216. Hardt is wrong in assigning this incident to the first sitting, iv. 307.

but would himself light the fire to burn him. "I thank Your Serenity for the safe-conduct which you were graciously pleased to give me," drily replied Hus. "What a clamour, what hootings, hissings, and blasphemy arose against me in that assembly," he wrote in the evening . . . "God knows what temptations I suffered when it was all over."<sup>38</sup>

The sitting of next day (8th June) was directed to the comparison of the articles with the original text of the writers, from which they were drawn. A number of them were not exact summaries of the original passages. But even the original passages contained not a little to show that, in his striving to effect a trenchant reformation of the prevailing abuses, Hus was, in important points, at variance with current ecclesiastical views on the papacy, the Church, the hierarchy, the priestly power, and that in spite of his disclaimer of the charge of being an adherent of Wiclif, his teaching, as far as it went, was largely that of Wiclif. "Of the thirty-nine articles which were submitted to the Council," says Loserth, "almost all, and indeed for the greater part with verbal fidelity, are to be traced back to Wiclif, so that John Stokes was entirely in the right when on this day he made the remark . . . that Hus need not boast of these doctrines as his own property, inasmuch as they belonged demonstrably to Wiclif."<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, it is evident that apart from his adoption of Wiclif's conception of the Church and his doctrine of lordship and their implications, he was, unlike Wiclif, not essentially at variance with the faith of the mediæval Church on its dogmatic side. It is further evident that his "heresies" such as they were, were inspired by the urgent question of a practical reformation. In vain he sought to explain the sense in which he held this or that article, or limit its scope. These explanations only irritated or wearied his listeners. Occasionally he decidedly scored. As when he reminded them, on the question of punishing heretics with death, of the case of Christ Himself, who was delivered to Pilate by the persecuting scribes and Pharisees. Or, when, in reference to the article that a bad pope or prelate was not a true pastor, but a thief and a robber, he asked whether John XXIII., whom the Council had deposed, was a true pope and not rather a thief and a robber? On the other hand,

<sup>38</sup> "Letters," 216.

<sup>39</sup> "Wiclif and Hus," 174.

his lack of worldly wisdom betrayed him into a dangerous utterance in reference to the article that a pope, bishop, or prelate in mortal sin is not a true one. "Even a king in mortal sin," he rashly declared, "is not a true king in the sight of God"; quoting in support of his contention the words of Samuel to Saul. This might be theologically true, but it was not judicious in the circumstances. "Call the king," cried the bishops, Sigismund being at that moment engaged at one of the windows in conversation with the Count Palatine and Frederick of Nürnberg. He was asked to repeat his assertion. "John Hus," said Sigismund, "no one lives without sin." D'Ailli did not let slip the chance of pointing out to Sigismund the latent danger to the royal power involved in such a view. "It is not enough for you," said he, "that you attempt to overthrow the ecclesiastical estate by your writings and teaching; you seek also to overthrow the royal power and deprive kings of their authority." "Why, then, did you depose John XXIII.?" queried Hus.

In conclusion, D'Ailli pointed out that two courses were open to him. He might either throw himself on the grace of the Council, which was prepared to deal kindly with him, or he might ask a further hearing which would be granted him. By adopting the second course, he would, he feared, only involve himself in greater errors, and he counselled him to choose the first. Other speakers urged him to comply. He nevertheless begged for another hearing and offered, if his explanations were not deemed sufficient, to submit to the information of the Council. "So the cunning and pertinacious fellow will only submit to the information, not the correction of the Council," burst forth a chorus of angry voices. Hus protested before God that he had no desire to equivocate and added that he would submit to the information, correction, and decision of the Council. "Master John," said D'Ailli, "sixty doctors commissioned by the Council have already decided that you must recognise the errors in the articles; that you must abjure these articles and swear henceforth not to teach them; that you must publicly revoke and retract them, and that you will in future teach the opposite." "I am willing to obey the Council and to be informed," returned Hus, "but I beseech you not to compel me to abjure against the testimony

of God and my conscience these articles imputed to me by those who have testified against me (denial of transubstantiation, etc.), which I have never held. Those which I have set forth in my works I will humbly withdraw, on being convinced of the opposite. But I cannot abjure what I have never held. To do so is against my conscience and is to be guilty of a lie." His judges would, however, know nothing of conscientious objections. He must simply abjure, conscience notwithstanding, Sigismund remarking that he saw no difficulty in abjuring views even if he had never held them. Ultimately Cardinal Zabarella intimated that a form of abjuration would be submitted to him, and he could at his leisure consider what to do. "You hear, Hus," added Sigismund, "you will either submit and abjure, or the Council will proceed against you according to its rights." There was more clamour and badgering of their hapless victim by Palec and others before he was allowed to retire to his prison in an exhausted condition. As he withdrew, John of Chlum gave him a hearty shake of the hand, and this solitary mark of recognition greatly cheered him. "How delightful," he wrote from his prison, "it was to shake hands with Lord John, who was not ashamed to hold out his hand to a poor abject heretic, a prisoner in irons, and the butt of all men's tongues."<sup>40</sup>

To his dishonour, Sigismund, who remained behind talking to the prelates, was overheard by John of Chlum and Peter Mladenovic urging them to burn him, if he did not recant, and even if he did to forbid him to preach or to return to Bohemia, and to do the same to Jerome of Prague and all others of their sect wherever found. He rightly divined the power he would exercise if, in virtue of his safe-conduct, he were allowed to return to Prague. What he did not realise was that his burning would have a still greater effect in rousing a fateful antagonism both to himself and to the Council in the Bohemian land, of which he was the prospective ruler. Hus had only too good reason to write from his prison, "These words are ever in my heart, Put not your trust in princes, and again, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm. . . . Beloved in God, faithful and loyal knight, my Lord John, the King of Heaven—not of Hungary—grant you

<sup>40</sup> "Letters," 221.

an everlasting reward for your loyalty and the toils you undertake on my behalf." <sup>41</sup>

#### EFFORTS TO EXTORT RECANTATION

Hus now knew that if he would not sacrifice his convictions to the Council, he was a doomed man. But the Council was unwilling to burn him, and Sigismund also would have preferred a recantation, which would have destroyed his influence, and was from the political point of view the more expedient alternative. Hence the efforts during the following weeks of solitary wrestling in his cell to bring him to recant. One of these efforts at least—that of the kindly ecclesiastic whom he calls the Pater—was actuated by genuine sympathy and interest. Even Palec, who several times visited him in his prison and disclaimed any personal enmity, strove to convince him of the reasonableness of abjuring. "How," Hus asked him, "would you act if you knew as a fact that you did not hold the errors ascribed to you? Would you be willing to abjure?" "It is a difficult position," he confessed and burst into tears. With all such proposals he could not bring himself to comply. Recantation of what he did not hold as well as of what he did hold meant for him infidelity to truth, and this he could not be guilty of. He could not, he wrote in reply, sign such a form because, in the first place, he should err from the truth; in the second place, he should be guilty of perjury; in the third place, he should be a stumbling-block to many of God's people to whom he had preached.<sup>42</sup> "Assuredly it is fitting for me rather to die than to flee a momentary penalty to fall into the Lord's hand and afterwards, perchance, into everlasting fire and shame." His final position he stated in a letter to his friends in Constance on the 21st June: "This is my final intention in the name of Jesus Christ. I refuse to confess that the articles, which have been extracted, in their proper sense are erroneous, and I refuse to abjure those which have been

<sup>41</sup> "Letters," 222 f. I have taken the account of Hus's trial mainly from his "Letters," and the "Relatio" of Peter Mladenovic, a close friend, who was present at the proceedings. "Documenta," 273 f. He was the secretary of John of Chlum. More recent edition of it by Novotny, "Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum," vii.

<sup>42</sup> "Letters," 239 and 241.

laid to my charge by false witnesses, because to abjure them is to confess that I held an error or errors; nor will I depart from them and hold the opposite. For God knows I never preached those errors, which they have concocted by withdrawing many truths and introducing falsehoods. If I were convinced that any of my articles were contrary to the truth, I would most gladly amend and revoke them, and teach and preach the opposite; but I think there is none of them contrary to the Gospel of Christ and the teachings of the doctors of the Church, although called 'scandalous' and 'erroneous' by those they displease."<sup>43</sup>

He now, in fact, in his letters to his friends withdrew his profession of willingness to submit to the Council, which had on the 15th June condemned communion in both kinds, of which he approved though he was not the author of this innovation in Bohemia<sup>44</sup> and advised delay in its introduction. At a subsequent sitting it ordered his books to be burned.<sup>45</sup> On his part he called in question the assumption that a Council cannot err and contended that the Council of Constance had erred in accepting false evidence against him, and in first recognising John XXIII. as pope and then condemning him as a monstrous criminal.<sup>46</sup> He rightly animadverted on the moral character of many of its members, who presumed to sit in judgment on the pope and from whose stained hands he could take no judgment. They were guilty of some of the crimes with which they charged the pope. "The Council condemned him (the pope) for heresy because he sold indulgences, bishoprics and benefices, and he was condemned by these very men, many of whom bought these things from him, while others did good trade by selling them over again. John, Bishop of Leitomischl, was there, who twice attempted to buy the see of Prague, but he was outbid by others. . . . There is the Bishop of Constance who buys and the other person who has sold to him; and the pope received money for absolving them! The same thing happens, as I know, in Bohemia and Moravia. Would that the Lord Jesus had said in the Council, 'He that is without the sin of simony, let him condemn Pope John.'"<sup>47</sup> "I would that ye might see this Council,"

<sup>43</sup> "Letters," 246.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 248. The author was his friend Jacobellus.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 243 f.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 256 f.

he wrote to his faithful Bohemians, "which is called the most holy Council and incapable of error; in sooth you would gaze on a scene of foulness; for it is a common proverb among the Swiss (referring to the number of prostitutes attracted to the city) that a generation will not suffice to cleanse Constance from the sins which this Council have committed in that city."<sup>48</sup> He ended by explicitly advancing to the position of Wiclif that neither pope, nor Council, but Scripture is the supreme authority. He refused to regard any article as false merely because the Council decreed it so, "unless it should be proved false by Scripture."<sup>49</sup> The letters written during the four weeks that elapsed before he was brought forth to be sentenced and burned show that he had made up his mind to die for his convictions. The Council, it must be said, did its utmost to break his resolution by its repeated efforts to bring about his recantation. On 1st July a deputation of eight prelates vainly tried to persuade him to give way. On the 5th another, which included D'Ailli, Zabarella, and the Bishops of Salisbury and Bath, went so far as to limit the recantation to the articles which he recognised as his. Even this he could not grant, though at an earlier stage he might have complied. On the same day Sigismund sent another consisting of his friends John of Chlum, Wenzel of Duba, and Lacembok, and four bishops. "Master John," said Chlum, "we are laymen and are unfit to advise you. If you feel yourself guilty of any heresy do not fear to be instructed and recant. But if not, do nothing against your conscience or lie in the sight of God, but stand fast even unto death in that which you recognise as the truth."<sup>50</sup> Hus burst into tears. "If I were convinced," said he, "that I had written or preached anything erroneous against the law and holy mother Church, I would humbly recant it, as God is my witness. But I desire always that they show me better and more probable scriptures than what I have written and taught, and if they will do this I am willing and ready to recant." "Do you wish to be wiser than the whole Council?" asked one of the bishops. "No," replied Hus, "I only wish better and more weighty scriptures." "Behold, what a pertinacious heretic he is," exclaimed the bishops, and dismissed him back to his prison.

<sup>48</sup> "Letters," 263.<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.<sup>50</sup> "Documenta," 316.

## SENTENCE AND EXECUTION

On the morrow (6th July 1415) he was brought early in the morning to the cathedral and placed on a platform in the midst of the assembly to listen to a sermon on heresy, in which the preacher pronounced a eulogy on Sigismund as the vindicator of the faith, and to hear the indictment read out. He repeatedly attempted to protest, but was ordered to hold his peace. Sentence was thereafter pronounced, ordering his books to be burned and himself to be degraded and handed over to the civil power for punishment. "Lord Jesus," prayed the condemned man, "forgive my enemies who have produced false witnesses and devised false articles against me." He was then clad in priestly robes, and degraded with the usual ceremony by seven bishops. A paper crown with a pictorial device of demons tearing his soul, and the words, "This is a heresiarch," was placed on his head, his soul being committed to the devil and his body to the secular power. Then Sigismund ordered Duke Louis of Bavaria to conduct him to the stake. As he left the cathedral, his eye lighted on the burning pile of his books in the graveyard. He smiled and passed on surrounded by an armed guard, 1,000 strong, and followed by a large crowd, to the place of execution in a meadow outside the city, repeating the *miserere* and other prayers with a joyful countenance. At the stake Duke Louis exhorted him for the last time to recant. On his refusal the pile was lighted, while he invoked in a loud voice the mercy of Christ until his voice died away in the encircling flames. His lips continued for a little to move in prayer and then ceased in death. Mladenovic adds some gruesome details about the finding by the executioners, amid the embers, of the charred head and heart and their final incineration. In conclusion, his ashes were placed in a barrow and thrown into the Rhine.<sup>51</sup>

For the modern reader the main interest in the trial lies in Hus's plea on behalf of conscience in the pursuit and vindication of what he deemed the truth, and in his protest against the death penalty for heresy. His fundamental claim is the indefeasible right of the individual conscience in matters religious against that of corporate authority, based on canon

<sup>51</sup> For the final proceedings against him and his death, see the "Relatio" of Mladenovic in "Documenta," 316; cf. Hardt, iv. 389 f.

law, to override it. Apart from the question of heresy, this is the great issue between him and the tribunal that arraigned and condemned him to death. The height of his offence lay in this plea and the rebellion which it implied against established ecclesiastical authority. Hardly less offensive was his contention that the State had no right to abet the Church in the compulsion of conscience by the infliction of the death penalty for heresy, though he was fain inconsistently to admit, that, after instruction, an obstinate heretic might be subjected to corporal punishment. In the face of the teaching of Christ and the early Church, the Council's attitude to his plea and protest, if in accordance with mediæval legalism, can only be described as a perversion of Christianity. Here at least, as in some other respects, Hus had by far the best of the argument.

On the other hand, apart from the evident bias against the accused, his trial was conducted in accordance with the ecclesiastical law and practice of the time. In conceding, in virtue of expediency, a public hearing and in its repeated endeavours, for the same reason, to save him from a heretic's doom, the Council, in fact, showed a consideration unusual in such trials. Moreover, its function as a judicial assembly was not to debate the question of toleration, but to apply the law in accordance with the method of the Inquisition in the trial of heretics. It may be said, too, that the intolerant spirit of the age rendered it very difficult to act otherwise. Erudite Roman Catholic historians like Hefele,<sup>52</sup> and intemperate ones like Salembier<sup>53</sup> adduce the law and practice of the Church against heretics as a sufficient justification of Hus's condemnation and execution. At the same time, in its conflict with the pope the Council did not hesitate to override canon law and make it square with policy. Its action in judging and deposing the pope and asserting its supreme authority was certainly revolutionary enough. It might well, therefore, have gone a step farther and freed itself from the restrictions of canon law in dealing with the case of Hus. Unfortunately its revolutionary action on the constitutional issue tended to compromise its reputation as an orthodox assembly in the eyes of the strict

<sup>52</sup> "Hist. des Concilii," vii., Pt. I., 334 f.

<sup>53</sup> "Le Grand Schisme de l'Occident," 342 f. (5th ed., 1921). So likewise the Protestant Hauck, "Kirchengeschichte," v., Pt. II.

adherents of tradition. It was, therefore, all the more disposed, on this account, to secure the condemnation of Hus and thus vindicate its orthodoxy against its critics. For this reason alone, as M. Leclercq points out, it could not afford, even if it had desired, to ignore the canon law in the case of the heretic. "It sacrificed Hus to a calculation. It hoped to benefit in its reputation for orthodoxy in the measure in which it proceeded with severity against the heretic, for many contemporaries contested the purity of the motives of the Fathers of the Council."<sup>54</sup> The case against him seems thus to have been prejudiced by policy as well as law. Moreover, the animus directed, from various motives, against him in the course of the proceedings ill befitted a judicial assembly, and appears to have raised doubts within the Council itself on the justice of his cruel doom.

Some of Hus's opinions might, indeed, appear questionable in practice. The reform of the Church and society "in accordance with the law of Christ," might lead, in the case of the unbalanced and fanatic type of reformer, to religious and social revolution. The theory of lordship, the doctrine that mortal sin invalidates the exercise of the papal or prelatial power, or the administration of the sacraments by an immoral priest, or the right of an immoral king to rule might lend themselves to dangerous inference and application. But the Church had hitherto permitted considerable latitude of speculation, and these views were, besides, an inevitable reaction from the crying abuses in ecclesiastical government and practice. In the case of Hus, they were actuated by a passionate desire to effect a practical reformation of these evils in accordance with the spirit and teaching of Christ and the early Church. The reformer had no intention or desire to disrupt the Church, even if he had carried his opposition the length of defying an unreformed papacy and hierarchy. Apart from such theories, he appears not to have materially diverged in doctrine, piety, and practice from the Catholic standpoint, and would have been content to remain a reformer within the Church. Moreover, in conditioning obedience to the pope and priesthood, he was only acting on the lines of the Council itself, which not only professed the urgent need of a reformation, but went

<sup>54</sup> "Hist. des Conciles," vii., Pt. I., 330 f.

the length of limiting the papal power and even deposing the actual pope. It might well, therefore, while condemning such theories, have been satisfied with admonishing the reformer rather than forcing him into a formal submission against his conscience under penalty of death.

From the Christian standpoint at all events, the execution of the reformer for his conscientious adherence to his convictions, if legally justifiable, was none the less a deplorable travesty of Christianity. Adapting the words of Madame Roland in her apostrophe of Liberty, we may exclaim, O Christianity, how many crimes have been committed in thy name! Or, still more appropriately, How often has Christ been crucified afresh by His misguided followers! Happily there are not lacking moderate Roman Catholic writers like Dom H. Leclercq who join with the non-Romanist opponents of persecution in deploring and condemning the action of the Council as a tragic perversion of the Christian spirit. "It shocks and saddens the faithful and their adversaries alike when they see the Church, the heiress of the divine mildness of Jesus, delivering its opponents to a frightful death. . . . Without doubt Hus persisted in his error and thereby exposed himself to death. But the Council, let us not forget, was sovereign; it was free to deliver over the guilty one to death or suspend the sentence, and it is because it did not allow mercy to prevail, and abandoned the unhappy victim to his fate, that posterity has nurtured a grievance ever renewed."<sup>55</sup>

#### MARTYRDOM OF JEROME

A like fate befell his associate, Jerome of Prague, in the following May 1416. Unlike Hus, Jerome travelled far in

<sup>55</sup> "Hist. des Conciles," vii., Pt. I., 330 f. Hauck gives a very unfavourable view of Hus's character. For him he often appears as an egoist and dissembler ("Studien," 49 f.). He questions his veracity as to facts and motives, and criticises severely his profession of fidelity to truth. It may be that in some episodes of his career, he had recourse to the arts of the diplomatist. But in the face of the fact that he preferred to die for his convictions rather than forswear them, even when it was made easy for him to abjure, Hauck's depreciation of his character seems to be biased as well as unsympathetic.

The theory that his martyrdom was an act of nationalist vengeance on the part of the Germans, in their resentment at his anti-German nationalism, is mistaken. The heresy hunt was largely the work of the Czech opponents of his teaching, who were staunchly supported by the English and French "nations" in the Council.

search of knowledge, and was influenced by the incipient humanist movement. Starting in 1398 from Prague, where he began his studies, he made the round of the more famous schools—Oxford, Paris, Cologne, Heidelberg. He continued to wander over Central Europe after his studies were finished. He was never able to settle long anywhere, and is said to have visited Jerusalem. He was more learned than Hus, but more impetuous, less steadfast, less single-minded. He has been not inaptly termed “the Ulrich von Hutten of the earlier reformation.”<sup>56</sup> Like him, he was not an ecclesiastic, but a humanist with strong anti-clerical convictions, derived from the study of the writings of Wiclif, of whom he was an avowed disciple. He was gifted with a ready eloquence and a forcible Latin style, which roused the admiration of Poggio, who was present at his trial at Constance and wrote a very appreciative account of his defence. Wherever he wandered he excited the antagonism of the clergy by his aggressive criticism, his outspoken Wiclifism. He passed from one escapade to another as the free-lance of reform. He just managed to escape arrest at Paris at the outset of his wandering career and was actually arrested on his second visit to Oxford in 1407.<sup>57</sup> He actively seconded Hus in the Wiclif and nationalist controversies in 1408-09, and again, not too judiciously, in that over the indulgence traffic. He was the hero of the students whether as a lecturer or as a mob leader. We next find him at the court of Sigismund in Hungary, when he was again placed under arrest for a short time, and at Vienna, whence he was fain to take to flight to escape the inquisition of the Bishop of Passau, and where he was excommunicated. After his anti-indulgence crusade at Prague he is found in Poland at the court of King Vladislav, setting Cracow by the ears over Wiclif, and scandalising the Bishop of Wilna by declaring that the Greek orthodox Ruthenians were good Christians. From these northern parts he turned up at Constance against the advice of Hus, who perhaps feared the effect of his presence there,<sup>58</sup> and at anyrate knew from bitter experience the risk such a man ran in venturing near the Council. He hovered at Constance and in its neighbourhood for a few days and then fled towards Bohemia, but

<sup>56</sup> Workman, “Dawn of the Reformation,” ii. 165.

<sup>57</sup> “Documenta,” 336 f.

<sup>58</sup> “Letters,” 182.

was arrested near the frontier (24th April 1415), brought back, and thrown into a dungeon. On the 11th September 1415 he agreed to recant and declare his approval of the condemnation of both Wiclif and Hus.<sup>59</sup> His motive, on his own confession, was his fear of a heretic's doom.

The Council evidently wished to make use of his recantation in the attempt to allay the rising indignation and antagonism which the death of Hus had aroused in Bohemia. To this end it appears further to have inspired the sorry letter which he wrote to one of the Bohemian nobles, and in which he explained the reasons that had led him of his own free will (*sic*) to renounce the errors of Hus.<sup>60</sup> As a political manœuvre the letter and the recantation alike failed to assuage the defiant spirit of the Bohemian nobles. They failed too to earn Jerome his liberty, as Zabarella and D'Ailli advised. He was kept for seven months longer in his dungeon, and the zealots insisted on a more thorough investigation. As the result of their report, he was brought anew before the Council on the 23rd May 1416. He had made up his mind to withdraw his recantation and splendidly redeemed his former weakness by his courage and his brilliance in defence. He was far more aggressive and telling in his dialectic than Hus, and certainly gave a great deal better than he got. Poggio, who tells the story of his trial and death, was formally orthodox, and as an easy-going humanist could not understand why anyone should persist in risking his life for his theological convictions. But he was profoundly impressed by the dialectic ability, the eloquence, the ready wit, the learning, and the manly courage of the accused, and if he had been his judge would certainly have acquitted him. He declined to answer the charges against him singly and demanded the right to state first his side of the question. On the refusal of his demand, he charged the Council with prejudicing his case. He had, he said, been kept for 340 days in a foul dungeon, lacking all means of preparing his defence, whilst it had been lending a ready ear to his opponents and detractors. Its members had already come to the conclusion that he was a heretic, an enemy of the faith and the clergy, and with this

<sup>59</sup> "Documenta," 597. The formal recantation was made before the Council on the 24th September, Hardt, iv. 499 f.

<sup>60</sup> "Documenta," 598 f.

prejudice in their minds they would not give him a chance of stating his own case. Let them not presume on their own infallibility and beware of committing injustice. The Council, nevertheless, adhered to the demand that he should first answer singly the charges against him. The recital of the articles, with the testimony of the witnesses, then began. Poggio was astonished at the forcefulness of his replies and was fain to admit that, if he spoke the truth, there was not a shadow of a case against him. He not only excelled in serious argument. He overwhelmed his opponents with his sarcasms or raised the laugh against them by his witticisms. When he was asked whether he believed that the bread remains after consecration in the Eucharist, "It certainly remains bread at the baker's," was the retort. When one of his adversaries appealed to his conscience, he was told that this was the surest way to deceive. Another he roundly called an ass, in the controversial manner of the age. To an excited Dominican he shouted, "Hold your tongue, you hypocrite!" On resuming three days later (26th May), he was at length allowed, despite much opposition, to speak for himself. He began by reminding his hearers of the celebrated victims of false testimony in ancient times from Joseph and Socrates to Boëthius. Stephen and the apostles had, he pointed out, been falsely condemned to death as fomenters of sedition, as enemies of the gods, and as malefactors. He too was the victim of the malevolence and envy of his enemies. He had willingly come to Constance for the purpose of clearing himself from the charges against him. Let them remember the custom of learned men of old—to discuss freely, not to ruin the faith, but in order to discover the truth. Had not Jerome and Augustine disputed with each other without any suspicion of heresy? His speech, says Poggio, "moved the minds of all and bent them to mercy." The members sat awaiting the expected recantation. Instead of this came the declaration that he was guilty of no error and had nothing to retract, except his former retraction. John Hus, he boldly asserted, was a good man, just and holy, and unworthy of death, and he himself was prepared with steadfast courage to undergo the same death. Great was the grief of Poggio and others near him, "for they were eager to save so excellent a man." He nevertheless persisted, "seeming anxious for

death." Hus, he continued, had maintained nothing against the Church of God. He had only opposed the abuses of the clergy—the pride, arrogance, and pomp of the prelates. The patrimony of the Church ought first to be used for the benefit of the poor and strangers, then for buildings. To that good man (Hus) it seemed unworthy to spend it on harlots, feasting, horses and dogs, finery and other things not in keeping with the religion of Christ.

Little wonder that this plain-speaking was interrupted by the protests of his hearers. His readiness in retort and his determination to have his say compelled them to hear him to the end. Instead of passing sentence forthwith they allowed him several days' grace, and Zabarella and others laboured to bring him "to the right way." This time there was no thought of equivocating, and on the 30th May, at a final sitting in the cathedral, he was condemned to the fire. On the same day he followed Hus to the stake.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See the letter of Poggio to Leonardo Bruni in "Documenta," 624 f.; and for the whole proceedings against him, Hardt, iv. 140 f., 485 f., 634 f., 748 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 842 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, "Hist. des Conciles," vii., Pt. I., 357 f., 396 f.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE REVOLUTIONARY SEQUEL IN BOHEMIA

#### DEFIANCE OF THE HUSSITES

ON the 26th July 1415 the Council notified the Bohemian nobles of the condemnation and execution of Hus, and required them to stamp out his pestiferous heresy.<sup>1</sup> It commissioned his arch-enemy, the Bishop of Leitomischl, to carry out the work of repression.<sup>2</sup> The reply of the nobles, 452 in number, on the 2nd September, was a spirited protest against his shameful death, which they ascribed to the malignity of his enemies. They shared to the full his conviction that he was no heretic. He was a good and upright man and Catholic who for many years had taught the Gospel in his sermons and writings, in accordance with the Scriptures and the teaching of the Fathers, to the edification of the Church and the salvation of the people. The same might be said of Jerome, who, they feared, had probably by this time shared his fate. Evidently they differed widely from the Council and its canonists in their view of heresy. For them Hus was the victim of the malignity of his enemies, who had slandered both him and their native land. While professing adhesion to the Catholic Church and appealing for justice to a future pope, they were determined to maintain the law of Christ and its devoted preachers even unto the effusion of their blood, all human statutes to the contrary notwithstanding.<sup>3</sup> They thus not only vindicated Hus, they refused to submit to the decree even of a Council which claimed to represent Christendom, if it violated the sense of justice and humanity. Moreover, they bound themselves by a solemn pact to further the preaching of the Gospel, to protect its

<sup>1</sup> "Documenta," 568 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 574 f., 31st August 1415.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 580 f. The original document is in the Library of Edinburgh University. For an account of how the Library came into possession, see Cuthbertson, "The Protest Against the Burning of John Huss," "The Library," 1913.

preachers from unjust excommunications, while recognising the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities—the University of Prague to be arbiter in case of disputes—to send representatives to the pope to be elected to seek the vindication of the kingdom of Bohemia from the false aspersions heaped upon it, and to recognise his jurisdiction as far as it was not repugnant to the law of God. They further appointed a committee of three to organise the defence of the country against attack.<sup>4</sup>

In the protest and the pact we may see a prelude of the later Reformation. Here is a declaration, not of a solitary reformer like Wiclif or Hus, but of a body who might claim to represent a whole nation, and are determined not to submit to ecclesiastical authority tyrannically exercised. Only a small section of the nobility formed a counter-league on the side of the Council. The protesters, on the other hand, treated its citation to appear at its bar with defiant contempt, and disregarded another communication exhorting them to aid the Bishop of Leitomischl in the repression of the heretics.<sup>5</sup> They went the length of constituting the theological faculty of the University of Prague their authority on matters of doctrine and adopting the four articles which it formulated for their guidance (August 1417).<sup>6</sup> These articles<sup>7</sup> stipulated the free preaching of the Word of God throughout Bohemia; communion in both kinds; the deprivation of the clergy of their secular power and inordinate wealth as detrimental to their spiritual office and to the civil authority, in accordance with the Gospel and apostolic practice; and the suppression of gross sins in clergy and laity alike. Equally recalcitrant was their attitude towards Sigismund, who endeavoured to dissuade them from an opposition which could only involve Bohemia in war and ruin.<sup>8</sup> On the death in August 1419 of his brother Wenzel, who had remained for the most part quiescent in the gathering strife, they refused to accept Sigismund, whom they regarded as Hus's betrayer, as king, without explicit guarantees of reform as embodied in the four articles. Sigismund, who relied on the adherents of the

<sup>4</sup> "Documenta," 590 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 615 f., 27th March 1416.

<sup>6</sup> The date of the articles is usually given as 1420. Lützwow thinks that August 1417 is the much more probable date, "Hus," 343.

<sup>7</sup> The articles are given by Denis, "Huss et la Guerre des Hussites," 493 f. (1878).

<sup>8</sup> "Documenta," 609 f., 21st March 1416; 659 f., 4th September 1417.

Council among the Bohemians and the German part of the population, refused to deviate from the traditional Church as represented at Constance, or to conciliate the Bohemian national spirit at the expense of the German element. His refusal plunged the country into the first of the modern religious wars.

#### CALIXTINES AND TABORITES

In this war, which began with Zizka's seizure of Prague in November 1419 and lasted for fifteen years, the advanced reformers, who rallied around Zizka and were known as Taborites, took the leading part. The more moderate section, known as Calixtines<sup>9</sup> and Utraquists, who co-operated with them, would have been content with the four articles. They had no desire to break away from the traditional Church. They made no serious attack on its doctrine, government, ritual. While they demanded the cup for the laity, they did not expressly include in their demands Hus's dogma of conditional obedience to the pope or insist on the democratic conception of the Church as the community of predestined believers. They were aristocratic, not democratic, and the reformation which they championed was, in this respect, more moderate than that of the reformer they professed to follow.

Very different was the spirit of the more advanced section, though it contained shades of religious opinion. The Taborites not only outran Hus, they anticipated Luther and Calvin in their demand for a radical reformation of doctrine and usage, and the extremists among them outdistanced the later reformers in their revolutionary principles and practice. For the Taborites the Bible is the sole norm of doctrine and usage and only that which is expressly taught in the Scriptures is permissible. They rejected transubstantiation and adopted Wiclif's doctrine of the Eucharist.<sup>10</sup> They rejected, too, the sacraments of penance and extreme unction, disbelieved in purgatory and in masses and prayers for the dead, denounced the intercession and worship of the saints, smashed images and relics and sacked

<sup>9</sup> From *Calix*, the "cup," in reference to the demand for the cup as well as the bread in communion. Utraquists from *sub utraque specie*, "under both kinds."

<sup>10</sup> Loserth, *Introd. to Wiclif's "De Eucharistia,"* 44 f.

monasteries and even churches. They refused obedience to established ecclesiastical authority, demanded the abolition of the ceremonies, customs, and rites of the Church and the observance of ecclesiastical festivals and fasts, and condemned the taking of oaths.<sup>11</sup> They were puritans of the strictest type and observed a Spartan simplicity in worship and life. Life for the multitudes that thronged to Mount Tabor was a continual conventicle, with endless preaching, praying, singing of psalms and hymns, frequent communion in both kinds. Their moral code was severe, and counted even the amusements of the children among sins.

Nor did their revolutionary zeal exhaust itself in the uncompromising attack on the traditional Church. They aimed at the same time at revolutionising the State. They sought to carry Wiclif's doctrine of lordship to its practical issue. That doctrine had evidently made a deep impression on the Bohemian people, and it bulks very largely both in the controversy that led to the condemnation of Hus, and in the revolution which his condemnation conjured. Gerson denounced it at Constance, and Hus defended it by quoting a text from the prophet Hosea. "Of all the errors of Hus," we find Gerson writing to the Archbishop of Prague, "that proposition is the most pernicious, that a man who is from eternity reprobate, or who is living in deadly sin, ought to have no dominion, jurisdiction, or authority over other Christian men."<sup>12</sup> It may be traced among the extravagances of the fanatic preachers on Mount Tabor, and on the lips of these fiery preachers it became a trumpet call to social and political revolution. Wiclif might protest that it should not be held to justify the forcible redress of grievances, and rebut the charge of fomenting sedition and revolution. It was open to his Taborite followers to accept the doctrine and ignore the caveat against its revolutionary application. Bohemia was ripe for social revolution as well as religious reform, and though Hus was no prophet of social revolution, his death was the signal for an upheaval in which racial, religious, and social elements intermingled with startling

<sup>11</sup> Their distinctive tenets are discernible in the twenty-three articles against them drawn up by the university and clergy of Prague, September 1418, "Documenta," 677 f.

<sup>12</sup> "Documenta," 528.

results. The national antagonism between Slav and German, the widespread reaction from a worldly Church, the covetousness of the nobles, who saw their opportunity to lay hands on the Church lands, the restiveness of the peasantry against the oppression of their lords—all these elements contributed to the revolt which Hus initiated, but which he did not live to control. "Religious in its origin, its aim, its character," says M. Denis, "the Hussite revolution touched the whole life of the people. It grew out of all the passions that then agitated Bohemia, and absorbed in its flood all the particular currents of the time. To the idea of a religious regeneration was added, in the first place, the rancours of race, then political interests. If the nobles saw their opportunity of increasing their domains at the expense of the lands of the Church, and extend their privileges, the peasants, irritated by oppressions, so much the more odious that they were a violation of the charters and the laws, hailed in the re-establishment of the Gospel the return of a régime of liberty and equality."<sup>13</sup>

The cautious English reformer might discourse on the sinfulness of using force to rid the world of a dominion founded, not in grace, but in unrighteous usurpation. To the bellicose Zizka, the born military leader, and his peasant army, whose zeal was inflamed by the fiery preachers on Mount Tabor, the kingdom of God could not be established on earth by merely preaching and praying against injustice. Is not the Church corrupt by reason of its overgrown wealth and the immorality of the clergy? Are not the masses of God's people, in whom the Church consists, the victims of a social order that militates against the divine law as well as against all equity? Is it not sin against God to suffer these things to exist, a duty to God to make an end of the reign of Antichrist in the Church and the world? The knell of Antichrist in Church and State has sounded, the cup of his iniquity is full to overflowing with the abuses, the wrongs of centuries. The last days of the apocalyptic vision have come; the reign of Christ, the Christian theocracy, in the view of extremists like Martin Loquis, the fieriest of the fiery preachers of retribution, shall replace the régime of the usurper and the oppressor.

<sup>13</sup> "Hist. Générale," iii. 678.

In this theocracy, in which the oppressed masses see the fulfilment of the visions of the men of God of old, there is no room for king, noble, or wealthy clerical dignitary, for any title—even an academic degree—for any inequality of class or property; there shall be no taxes, no feudal dues, no privileges, no law but that of God. Nay, sin itself shall ultimately vanish; Christ Himself will descend; the dead shall rise, and a paradisaic state of innocence and bliss shall prevail. Zizka was too shrewd a leader to share in these vagaries, but he was shrewd enough to tolerate them, and allowed Martin Loquis and the wilder pulpiteers to nurture the military fervour of his followers, which his military skill made invincible on many a bloody battlefield. He only stopped short at the practical anticipation of this chiliastic phantasmagoria, and summarily exterminated the Adamites, who were, however, not a Hussite sect,<sup>14</sup> and taught that men should return to the state of nature pure and simple, eschewed the wearing of clothes, and practised, according to their enemies, community of wives.

#### THE HUSSITE WAR

In spite of this medley of radically divergent notions, Calixtine and Taborite united (though with frequent intervals of friction and civil war) under the heroic personality of Zizka, and after his death in 1424, under "the great" Procopius, in militant opposition to the traditional Church and its patron, the Emperor-King Sigismund. Even if they had been minded to bow to the irenic teaching of Wiclif and Hus, the attitude of emperor, council, and pope left them no alternative but to fight or be exterminated. Let God arise, therefore, and let His enemies be scattered. In this appeal to the sword they were only answering the challenge of the enemy. The Council had burned Hus, and fulminated a decree of extermination against his adherents.<sup>15</sup> Pope Martin V. had denounced confiscation and death against them in the outrageous bull in which he, with its approbation, gave expression to its corporate

<sup>14</sup> See Lützw, "Hus," 360.

<sup>15</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 1196 f.

and brutal intolerance (February 1418).<sup>16</sup> For centuries the popes had adopted this barbarous policy of preserving the unity of the Church by brutal methods, of maintaining their régime by the stake and the dungeon. And if the sword might be used by divine command to preserve the Church, might it not be used by divine command to reform it? Thus the hosts of a Zizka took up their terrible threshing flails to smite the armies of Antichrist and his secular abettor, the false Sigismund. And terrible enough was their exemplification of this doctrine of force in the service of reform—religious, social, political—by which the reign of Christ on earth should be established. The record of their exploits is a record of battles and sieges, of marchings and invasions, of bloodshed and brutality, of rapine, cruelty, and desolation, in which the heroic, the religious mingle with the excesses of the fanatic, the savage. It was the first clash on the grand scale of the warring tendencies of tradition and emancipation in these modern times, and it was not to be the last, though the champions of emancipation ultimately had the worst of the encounter. For years Zizka's tactics and the fervour of his rustic hosts made the popular armies invincible. Time and again these peasant levies, with their omnipotent flails, drove the armies of Sigismund and his allies into panic-stricken rout. Even after Zizka's death the imperial and papal crusaders were beaten again and again, and would have been permanently worsted but for the inevitable breach in the ranks of the sectaries, which ended in war between the moderates and extremists, and in the overthrow of the Taborites at Lipan, where Procopius died a hero's death in May 1434. For fifteen terrible years, however, the cause of the common man had seemed a winning cause, and feudalism, as well as traditional orthodoxy, trembled for its supremacy, not only in Bohemia, but in every land where its power prevailed. The victory put an end to the régime of the men of God who had gone forth from Mount Tabor to establish the new earth and the new heaven. It paved the way for a compromise on the basis of the Compactates of Basle, which conceded to the Calixtines the four articles in a modified form.<sup>17</sup> Happily

<sup>16</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 1204 f. ; Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. I., 507 f.

<sup>17</sup> For these, see Denis, "Huss," 495 f.

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the remnant of the defeated sectaries, chastened by the experience of war and defeat, survived to become the Bohemian Brethren (the *Unitas Fratrum*), and to preserve, in spite of persecution, the simpler creed and worship which had shed their crudest excesses in these terrible years of revolutionary fanaticism.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> I have taken part of the content of this chapter from my "History of Modern Liberty," i. (1906), revised. For a recent more detailed account, see Krofta, "Cambridge Mediaeval History," viii. 65 f.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE UNITY AND REFORM OF THE CHURCH

#### NECESSITY OF REFORM

IN addition to condemning heresy, the Council addressed itself to the task of ending the schism and reforming the Church "in head and members." The demand for reform appears, with increasing insistence, in the numerous tracts written in the early years of the fifteenth century. For these reforming publicists the root of the general declension of the Church lies in the overgrown power of the papacy and its oppressive and corrupt exercise in the papal curia. For them the remedy lies in a reformation of its constitution, which shall limit the papal power, and restore the rights of the hierarchy in its government. Its government must be decentralised. The reform movement is, in this respect, a hierarchical movement. It is an attempt to substitute for the papal absolutism a limited monarchy, controlled by the ecclesiastical hierarchy as embodying the inherent powers of the Church. These reformers would apply to the mediæval Church the constitutional development which was evolving in the mediæval State. To go further and reform the constitution solely in accordance with the Scriptures and the institutions of the early Church is heresy, for which the Council anathematised Wiclif and burned Hus and Jerome. An indispensable preliminary is the restoration of the unity of the Church by ending the schism, to which they attribute its deplorable degeneration, though they overlook the fact that this degeneration is discernible long before its outbreak. It would, indeed, be more correct to say that the schism only aggravated the evils which the Avignon papacy intensified, but did not originate. With the restoration of unity a reformed papacy and hierarchy shall co-operate in the clamant reformation "in head and members."

This double reformation was advocated by Dietrich von Niem, Clémanges, and many other reforming publicists shortly

before or during the session of the Council. Among the most important of these tracts is "The Methods of Uniting and Reforming the Church (1416)"<sup>1</sup> which may be regarded as representing the more advanced German reform party and had great influence in moulding opinion in the interval between Pisa and Constance. It has been attributed by Finke, though not without strong opposition, to Niem, who had been for many years an official of the Roman curia, and whose experience under half a dozen popes had made him the convinced enemy of the working of the papal system. In his hostility the author goes beyond the Gallican writers on the schism. He would not only put an end to it by means of a General Council. He would drastically diminish the papal power. He distinguishes between the universal or Catholic Church and the "particular" Roman Church. The universal Church consists of all the faithful, on whom devolves the duty of caring for its welfare equally with the hierarchy and the princes. It cannot err and in it resides the supreme authority which is greater than that of the Roman Church. Its sole head is Christ, whereas the pope is head only of the Roman Church, which is liable to err. The pope may be deprived of his office if the interest of the Church demands his deprivation. The papal power originated in fraud and cunning and has been the cause of many evils. It is absurd to predicate infallibility of a sinful man merely because he has been elected pope and to say that he cannot be judged by any. This is contrary to reason and Scripture. What manner of men many of these

<sup>1</sup> "De Modis Uniendi ac Reformandi Ecclesiam," Hardt, i., Pt. V., 68 f., who wrongly ascribed it to Gerson. Finke ("Forschungen und Quellen," 132 f. (1889)), following Lenz, ascribes it to Niem. Schwab ("Gerson," 481) ascribes it to Andreas of Randuf, and is followed by Hübler ("Die Constanzer Reformation," 383 f. (1867)). Haller controverts Niem's authorship ("Papsttum und Kirchenreform," 514 f.) To Niem is also attributed the tract, "De Necessitate Reformationis," wrongly ascribed to D'Ailli, Hardt, i., Pt. VII. Printed by Finke under the title, "Avisamenta edita in Concilio Constansiensis" (1414), "Acta Concilii Constansiensis," iv. 584 f. (1928). Undoubted works of Niem are "Nemus Unionis" (1407-08), "De Schismate" (1410), "Historia de Vita Johannis, xxiii." (1415-16). The title "Acta" in Finke's collection of documents does not mean the enactments of the Council, but the letters, diaries, pamphlets, etc., relative to the Council. It is a valuable collection in 4 vols. (1896-1928) of such materials, with improved texts, compared with those contained in the collections of Hardt and others. For the full text of the enactments mentioned or given in these documents, such as Filastre's Journal, Finke refers the reader to Hardt and Mansi. In achieving this valuable work, Finke had the valuable co-operation of Hollnsteiner and Heimpel.

popes have been, the actions recorded of them sufficiently show. The Church may, in fact, do without the pope and recognition of his authority is not necessary to salvation. Christ Himself owned subjection to the civil power, which is independent of the ecclesiastical. The emperor, the princes and the bishops are not only entitled, but bound to put an end to the schism by the enforced abdication of two of the popes or even of all three in the interest of the Church universal. To them belongs the right to convoke a General Council, and to the Council, as representing the universal Church, the right to judge them, to depose and elect a pope as it sees fit. It has plenary legislative powers, can make new laws and abolish old ones as the general interest requires. Papal laws are only valid as long as they are not detrimental to the common good. In his zeal for the common interest he would go the length not only of abrogating all law, but every private interest that conflicts with it. He would not hesitate to employ any means to this end—"cunning, fraud, arms, violence, force, promises, gifts, bribes, imprisonment, death."<sup>2</sup> Private interest, law, right must give way to the common weal.<sup>3</sup> He thus anticipates Machiavelli in his application of the unscrupulous methods of Italian statecraft in the attempt to achieve the unity and reformation of the Church. The popes have encroached on the rights of the bishops, and it is the duty of the Council to restore to them the rights which they have usurped and to reform the whole clerical order from the pope and the cardinals downwards. The question of reform, which the Council of Pisa had postponed, is, in fact, as imperative as the question of unity. The demoralisation of the Church, already so patent under the régime of the Avignon popes, had been aggravated under those of the schism. For Niem no half measures, no mere tincturing will suffice.

Niem may be taken as an exponent, albeit a very advanced one, of the German reforming standpoint.<sup>4</sup> Let us next cite

<sup>2</sup> c. vii.

<sup>3</sup> c. v.

<sup>4</sup> Another representative of the German reform party, the monk, Dietrich Vrie, is equally scathing in his denunciation of the rampant degeneration of the papacy and the Church, "*Hist. Concilii Constantiensis*," dedicated to Sigismund, 1418. Hardt, i., Pt. I. A third is Gobelin Person, like Niem, a curial official, and author of the "*Cosmodromion*," or "*Course of the World*," in *Six Ages*, ed. by Jansen (1900). In the Sixth Age he treats of the ecclesiastical conditions of his own time.

Nicolas de Clémanges, a representative of the French reforming ecclesiastic, a former rector of the University of Paris and afterwards secretary to Benedict XIII.

According to Clémanges, corruption, immorality were rampant in the curia, among the prelates and the clergy of all ranks, among the monks and the nuns. The clergy high and low have lost the sense of spiritual things in the grovelling pursuit of their worldly interests. The popes and the cardinals exploit the Church and the faithful by a variety of oppressive expedients. They ignore freedom of election and enrich themselves by means of reservations and expectancies, tenths, and first fruits, etc. Their collectors desolate the nations. They multiply appeals to the curia, which is no better than a den of robbers. And as in the curia, so throughout the Church. Prelates and clergy are bent only on getting money, and to get money the bishops do not hesitate to sanction the immorality of their priests, who for the most part are scarcely able to read, are mere hirelings, hate work, and seek in the Church the means of living a useless and abandoned life. The monasteries and convents are sinks of corruption; the mendicant orders are equally immoral and corrupt in their lives.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Clémanges admits that there were good men in the Church, they formed a small minority,<sup>6</sup> and this trenchant indictment could hardly have been penned by a distinguished churchman unless the demoralisation of the Church had been widespread. At the same time, allowance must be made for the tendency in effusions of this kind to indiscriminate generalisation and exaggeration. The rhetorical style of the "De Ruina" is hardly that of the judicial mind. His laudation of the age preceding the schism betrays a lack of knowledge as well as judgment. It would, on the contrary, be easy to quote from similar effusions in the fourteenth and preceding centuries.

<sup>5</sup> "De Corrupto Ecclesiæ Statu," more correctly, "De Ruina Ecclesiæ," "Opera," ed. by Lydius; also in Hardt, i., Pt. III., 1 f. For extracts from writers on the corruption of the Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see "Speculum Ecclesiæ Pontificiæ," which gives Clémanges, "De Corrupto Statu." There has been considerable discussion on the question of the authorship of this scathing indictment. The authorship of Clémanges is maintained by Trithem ("Catalogus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum" (1494), and Schwab against Müntz, and the probability is in favour of the affirmative. He also treats of the abuses in the Church and the necessity of their reformation in his "Epistolæ," Hardt, i., Pt. II.

<sup>6</sup> c. xxxix.

The pessimistic strain of the ecclesiastical tract for the times is a recurring feature of this literary type, which is common to these mediæval centuries. The type is schematic, conventional in tone and content. The widespread consciousness and criticism of existing evils seem to show that things were hardly so hopelessly bad as they are painted. Even so, the general and insistent demand for reform is sufficient proof of the urgent necessity of it. A Council representative of Christendom would not have met to effect a reformation in head and members unless there had been a clamant need for it.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE DEPOSITION OF JOHN XXIII.

The first question that engrossed the attention of the Council was the constitutional one. The progressive party led by the French cardinals D'Ailli and Filastre, Gerson, and Hallam, Bishop of Salisbury, the leader of the English representatives, who were supported by Sigismund and the Germans, ultimately favoured the abdication of John XXIII. as well as the other two popes. To forestall this possibility, John had brought a large following of Italian prelates, whom he augmented by numerous new nominations. These, along with the cardinals, formed the curial party, whose vote would be sufficient to override that of the prelates of the other nations. His policy was to secure the submission, by force if necessary, of the two anti-popes, to take measures for the suppression of heresy, and, after legislating a few reforms, dissolve the Council. To counteract this device, D'Ailli proposed and the Council agreed that doctors of theology and law, and even kings and princes or their representatives, as well as bishops and abbots, should have the right to vote.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Other notable reform tracts are the "De Squaloribus Curiae Romanæ," attributed to Mathias of Cracow, Bishop of Worms, 1405-10, and the "Speculum Aureum" (1404), attributed to Engelstat, a theologian of Prague. Both in Brown, "Fasciculus Rerum Expetendarum," ii. (1690). For a criticism of them, see Haller, "Papsttum und Kirchenreform," 158 f. Haller rejects Engelstat's authorship of the "Speculum Aureum" and attributes it to an unknown canonist, *ibid.*, 500 f. As representative of England (though not limited to the Anglican Church) we have the "Petitiones Quoad Reformationem Ecclesiae" of Richard Ulverston (1408), Hardt, i., Pt. XXVII.

<sup>8</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 560 f.; Hardt, ii. 224 f.; Finke, "Acta," ii. 19, 210 f. (1923).

Moreover, on the suggestion of Hallam, it was further informally agreed that the final vote of the Council convened in general session, on any measure which had been discussed by each nation separately and accepted by the nations conjointly, should be by nations and not by individual members (7th February 1415).<sup>9</sup> The French, German, and English nations at length agreed, in opposition to the Italian, to demand John's abdication, and this course he solemnly swore, to the great joy of the Council, to adopt, if the other two popes would do likewise (2nd March).<sup>10</sup> But he demurred to the further proposal to appoint proctors to resign in his behalf at a conference to be held with Benedict at Nice, and with the connivance of Frederick, Duke of Austria, determined to evade his promise by slipping out of Constance by night in disguise and fleeing to Schaffhausen (21st March). He subsequently continued his flight to Laufenburg, Freiburg, and other towns.<sup>11</sup> "By the grace of God," he wrote laconically from Schaffhausen to Sigismund, "we are free and enjoying the salubrious air here at Schaffhausen, whither we have come all unknown to the Duke of Austria [?], not with the intention of departing from our promise to abdicate for the sake of the peace of the Church, but that we may carry it out in freedom and safety."<sup>12</sup> To the King of France and the University of Paris he justified his flight on the ground of the high-handed and uncanonical attitude of the Council. He ordered the cardinals to repair to Schaffhausen within six days under pain of excommunication.<sup>13</sup>

Under Sigismund's energetic leadership, the Council quickly rallied to his consternation. It had lost confidence in the sincerity of the fugitive and in the profession of his

<sup>9</sup> Hardt, ii., Pt. VIII., 230 f. The nations, for voting purposes, were the Italian, English, French, German, and subsequently the Spanish after the withdrawal of their allegiance from Benedict XIII. Members of other nationalities were assigned to one or other of these. The College of Cardinals was on the 25th May 1415 also recognised as a separate body with the right to vote by its representative, Hardt, iv. 236.

<sup>10</sup> Hardt, iv. 45 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 568 f.; Finke, "Acta," ii. 21, 215.

<sup>11</sup> See Finke, "Acta," iii. 37 f. (1926); Kitts, "Pope John XXIII.," 314, 320 f. (1910). Finke thinks it most probable that he fled in the night of the 20th to 21st March, and questions the story that he slipped away disguised as a groom during a tournament which was being held on the 20th. See also Peter, "Die Informationen Papst Johans XXIII, und dessen Flucht von Konstanz" (1926).

<sup>12</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 777.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvii. 578 f.

readiness to fulfil his promise, which he sent it. It eagerly welcomed the proposal which Gerson, in a sermon on the 23rd, laid before it to assert its superiority over the pope and limit the papal power as the only guarantee of the unity and reformation of the Church. Three days later (26th March) at a sitting from which all the cardinals, except D'Ailli, who presided, and Zabarella, absented themselves, it unanimously asserted in a series of decrees, to which the nations had previously agreed, its right to continue in session in spite of the flight of the pope. The Council, it declared, which has been legitimately convened, has not been dissolved by the departure of the pope. It remains in its integrity and authority, any ordinance, present or future, to the contrary notwithstanding. It ought not to be dissolved until it has put an end to the Schism and achieved the reformation of the Church in head and members. It cannot be transferred to another place and none of its members may depart without its consent.<sup>14</sup> Whereupon Zabarella, who had read these decrees, protested on behalf of himself and D'Ailli, that they must retain their obedience to the pope as long as he maintained his intention of abdicating for the sake of the peace of the Church. If not, they would adhere to the Council. In the meantime it should defer further action.<sup>15</sup>

Instead of complying, the English, French, and German nations set about discussing a number of articles bearing on the situation. In these they unequivocally asserted the supreme authority of the Council. "This holy Synod, legitimately convened in the Holy Spirit, constituting a General Council, and representing the militant Catholic Church, has power immediately from Christ; which everyone of whatever status or dignity, even the papal, is held to obey in those things which pertain to the faith, the extirpation of the said schism, and the general reformation of the Church in head and members."<sup>16</sup> They further declared that all, including the pope, who should refuse to obey its decrees, and those of any other General Council legitimately convened, liable to punishment, that the pope's flight was reprehensible, scandalous, subversive

<sup>14</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 579 f. ; Hardt, iv. 72.

<sup>15</sup> Hardt, iv. 73 f.

<sup>16</sup> Hardt, iv. 81 f. The contention that the phrase "ad fidem" was not in the original MS. is groundless.

of the authority of the Council, and savouring of heresy, and that he as well as all its members had enjoyed full liberty at Constance.<sup>17</sup> These four articles were too extreme for the cardinals, to whom Sigismund communicated them. They were prepared to accept the first with the omission of the phrase "the general reformation of the Church in head and members." They refused to agree to the other three and insisted on substituting for them two, which debarred the pope from withdrawing the curial officials from Constance without the Council's consent and thus virtually dissolving it, and declared all acts on his part against them and the Council null and void. To this modification, in spite of Sigismund's efforts to effect an accommodation, the nations in turn refused their consent (29th March).<sup>18</sup> When, therefore, at the full session of the Council on the following day, at which all the cardinals then at Constance, with two exceptions, were present, Zabarella read the articles as modified by them, the omission of the phrase relative to the reformation of the Church in head and members produced an uproar, which ended in the adjournment of the session to the 6th April.<sup>19</sup> The stormy episode only intensified its distrust of the reactionary cardinals as well as of the pope, who the day before had continued his flight from Schaffhausen down the Rhine to Laufenburg, leaving behind him a public protestation that his promise of abdication had been extorted by force and fear and was, therefore, void.<sup>20</sup> To the Council, on the 4th April he still professed his intention to abide by it.<sup>21</sup>

In consequence, in its session on the 6th April, it not only reaffirmed its supreme authority as set forth in the first article read at the previous session, including the omitted phrase "reformation in head and members." It restored the second and fourth as previously passed by the nations decreeing the pope and all others who should refuse to obey its decrees liable to punishment, and declaring that he and all its members had enjoyed full liberty at Constance. It further incorporated the two presented by the cardinals at the previous session debarring the pope from dissolving it and nullifying all acts against it on his part.<sup>22</sup> This far-reaching assertion of its powers does not

<sup>17</sup> Hardt, iv. 81 f.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 82 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 584.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 86 f.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 98 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 590 f.

<sup>20</sup> So, Niem, Hardt, iv. 84.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 102.

appear to have secured the support of the cardinals who renewed their protest in favour of delay.<sup>23</sup> It has been adversely criticised by Roman Catholic writers,<sup>24</sup> who argue that, as it was passed in the absence of the pope and in the face of the opposition of the cardinals, it cannot have the validity of a dogmatic deliverance binding on the whole Church, though they admit that the Council so regarded it. Moreover, they contest the claim of the Council to represent the Catholic Church, inasmuch as it did not include the adherents of Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII. On the other hand, the fact that the cardinals eventually joined in deposing the pope and, in co-operation with the Council's representatives, electing a new one, and that the Church acquiesced in both these decisions tends to weaken this criticism. In so doing they virtually recognised the absolute supremacy of the Council in this particular matter at all events, and in agreeing to the first act, even without the claim to reform the Church in head and members, they did accept the general principle, thus enunciated, of the supreme authority of the Council.

Meanwhile the opposition of the cardinals greatly intensified the friction between them and the Council. On the 17th April it went the length of debating a proposal, ascribed to Niem, to exclude them from its deliberations on the ground that, as the Council had met for the purpose of reforming the Church in head and members, they could not be judges in their own cause. In defence the cardinals on the following day appealed to canon law. According to canon law the Roman Church is the head of the Church universal. To deny this is heresy. It derives its authority not from human, but divine tradition, the pope being the successor of Peter, the vicar of Christ. He and the cardinals form the principal part of a General Council, over which the pope ought to preside and whose decisions he ought to convey. They as well as a General Council represent the universal Church. In case of the pope's absence, the Roman Church is present in the person of the cardinals. Its authority is so great that without it or its representatives nothing can be decreed. To it pertains the

<sup>23</sup> Hardt, iv. 101; Mansi, xxvii. 596.

<sup>24</sup> Pastor, "History of the Popes," i. 198 f. (Eng. trans., 1899); Salembier, "Le Grand Schisme," 313 f. (5th ed., 1921); Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. 1., 210 f.; N. Valois, "La Crise Religieuse du XV<sup>e</sup>. Siècle," i. 5 f. (1899).

right to reform the Church, and the Council ought to concur with it in this work.<sup>25</sup> The theologians to whom the Council remitted this document were certainly at a disadvantage in the attempt to refute it on the basis of the canon law. Their criticism is, therefore, not convincing. They would have made out a much stronger case by appealing, like Hus, to Scripture and history to prove that the developed papal power had no warrant in either. More forcible, too, if they had retorted that the claims, which the canon law had legislated and which were to a large extent based on forged documents and legendary matter, were of very questionable validity from the historical point of view. But to have argued from Scripture and the institutions of the early Church would have justified Hus, whom the Council was ere long to send to the stake, and documentary criticism was only in embryo. Hence the weakness of their replies from the canonical point of view. At the same time there is no small force in their contention that the Roman Church is only a part of the Church universal, and that old laws are not necessarily applicable to present conditions and ought to be modified accordingly.

At its session on the 17th April the Council renewed its demand for the abdication of the pope according to a prescribed formula and commissioned Cardinals Zabarella and Filastre, along with several representatives of the nations, to negotiate his acceptance. He must nominate proctors to carry it into effect and return to Constance or choose one of several places for this purpose within two days after receipt of this ultimatum. Should he agree to do so the Council will waive further proceedings against him.<sup>26</sup> The commission tracked the fugitive to Breisach and Freiburg, where they communicated the ultimatum (26th April). By this time no alternative remained but to comply and undertake to abdicate according to the formula.<sup>27</sup> Duke Frederick had been rendered impotent by the vigorous measures of Sigismund, who incited the Swiss to invade his territory and forced him to sue, through the medium of Louis of Bavaria, for pardon. As part of the price he offered to surrender the hapless pope, whom the Council now summoned to appear at its bar within nine days to answer for his

<sup>25</sup> Hardt, ii. 285 f.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 113 f.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 402, iv. 134 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 621.

misdeeds.<sup>28</sup> On the 14th May it proceeded to suspend him and appoint a commission to examine the charges against him.<sup>29</sup> Three days later he was brought by the Council's envoy, Frederick of Nürnberg, a prisoner to the castle of Radolfszell, near Constance. He was now a broken man, and rather than face the accumulating charges against him, abjectly submitted himself to its will. These charges were at first seventy-two in number and their reduction to fifty-four suggests exaggeration as well as the implacable malignity of his numerous enemies. He embodies every sin that their fertile imagination can conceive. In short he is "a vessel of all sins"—*vas omnium peccatorum*.<sup>30</sup> "He would have sold God if anyone wished to buy," said one witness.<sup>31</sup> With every allowance for exaggeration, John's refusal to face the Council tends to show that the charges of immorality and maladministration were substantially founded and justified the Council in deposing him. Moreover, nearly all the witnesses, including a number of cardinals and bishops, had been associated with him as members or officials of the curia, and may be assumed to have had a more or less intimate knowledge of his character and his conduct as pope. With substantial reason, therefore, the Council, in deposing him, declared that his flight had done grievous injury to the Church, that as pope he had been guilty of simony and maladministration, and that his private life both before and after his election had scandalised the whole of Christendom.<sup>32</sup> Thus dethroned, he was transferred as a prisoner first to the castle of Heidelberg and subsequently to Mannheim. In 1419 he bought his freedom, was made Cardinal-Bishop of Frascati, and died soon after at Florence. After his deposition, Gregory XII. submitted, and, with the title of Cardinal of Porto, obtained a rank next to that of the new pope. Though Benedict remained obdurate in spite of the efforts of Sigismund and Ferdinand of Aragon, at a conference at Perpignan,<sup>33</sup> to bring

<sup>28</sup> Hardt, iv. 143 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 623 f.

<sup>29</sup> Hardt, iv. 166 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 640 f.

<sup>30</sup> Hardt, iv. 197. He gives the number of charges as seventy; Finke, seventy-one, "Acta," iii. 157 f. (1926); Mansi, xxvii. 662, who is not so accurate as Hardt.

<sup>31</sup> Finke, "Acta," iii. 20. Finke gives a judicial account of the witnesses and their testimony in his *Introd.*

<sup>32</sup> Hardt, iv. 281; Mansi, xxvii. 715 f.

<sup>33</sup> For these negotiations, see Finke, "Acta," iii. 454 f.

him to abdicate, and the withdrawal of their allegiance by Scotland and the Spanish kingdoms, he was ultimately deposed anew (July 1417).<sup>34</sup>

#### REFORMATION OF THE CHURCH AND ELECTION OF MARTIN V.

Besides trying Hus and Jerome for heresy and discussing the opinions of Jean Petit on the right of tyrannicide,<sup>35</sup> the Council had been debating the question of the reformation of the Church in head and members. In July 1415 it appointed a commission<sup>36</sup> to consider and report on the subject, meanwhile discussing various reform proposals, directly brought before it. Nearly fifteen months elapsed before the commission presented (8th October 1416) a variety of conclusions relative to the holding of general councils, the papal office, the reform of the curia, and of the more glaring abuses from which the Church suffered.<sup>37</sup> Instead of dealing with this elaborate document, the Council merely referred it to a second commission<sup>38</sup> for further consideration and revision.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile the cardinals and the curial party had been urging the immediate election of a new pope. The cardinals, as we have seen, were apprehensive lest the reform of abuses should curtail their privileges and their revenues. The new pope would be likely to prevent reforms being detrimental to their interests as well as his own. Besides, there was some force in their plea that, as the Council had met, in the first place, to

<sup>34</sup> Benedict had retired to the fortress of Peniscola, and, in spite of desertion and deposition, maintained his title to the last. He died in 1424. See Döllinger, "History of the Church," iv. 177, (Eng. trans.)

<sup>35</sup> Jean Petit was a doctor of the University of Paris, who had defended the murder of the Duke of Orleans on the ground that anyone is justified in killing a traitor, in order to whitewash the Duke of Burgundy (see my "Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy," 68 (1902)), the head of the opposing faction, who had instigated his assassination. This dangerous doctrine was brought before the Council by Gerson.

<sup>36</sup> Hübler, "Die Constanzer Reformation," 8 f. (1867). It consisted of eight members of each of the four nations, with three cardinals.

<sup>37</sup> Hardt, i. 583 f.; Mansi, xxviii. 264 f. In its final form the report contained forty-four articles. Finke's critical discussion of the deliberations of the commission and the working out of these articles has largely superseded that of Hübler.

<sup>38</sup> It seems to have consisted of five members of each nation, including the Spanish, Hübler, 26 f.

<sup>39</sup> Its report is given in Hardt, i. 650 f.

heal the Schism, it should complete this part of its programme before proceeding with the rest of it. In this policy they were supported not only by the Italians and the Spaniards, but by the French, who were aggrieved by the alliance which Sigismund in the course of a lengthy mission (14th July to 15th January 1417) to France, Spain, and England, had concluded with Henry V., the enemy of France. Moreover, the representatives of the University of Paris were not keen to abolish such abuses as papal provisions, from which its members derived substantial financial benefit. On the other hand, the German and English prelates, who feared that the immediate election of a pope would forestall an adequate reformation of abuses, supported Sigismund in insisting on the priority of a reformation in head and members. In the prolonged tug-of-war<sup>40</sup> that followed over this question, he was deserted by the English prelates, whose leader, Hallam, died in September 1417, and was fain to give way. In return the curial party agreed to join in decreeing a few preliminary reforms, on which there was general agreement. Accordingly on the 9th October 1417 five decrees were passed enacting the frequent assembling of General Councils,<sup>41</sup> empowering a Council to meet at any time in cases of Schism, requiring a newly elected pope to make a prescribed profession of faith to the electors, forbidding him arbitrarily to translate prelates, to seize the property of deceased clerics (*spolia*), to demand procurations on the occasion of visitations. Sigismund, nevertheless, insisted on extorting from the curial party a definite guarantee binding the new pope to co-operate in the reformation of the Church. To this the cardinals objected that they could not legally bind a pope before his election. In this fresh deadlock the English suggested a recourse to the arbitration of the Bishop of Winchester, Henry Beaufort, uncle of Henry V., who had arrived at Ulm on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and seems, in reality, to have been commissioned by the English king to attempt an accommodation. Hence his opportune presence in the neighbourhood of the Council.<sup>42</sup> This suggestion was accepted by both parties, and the bishop solved the problem by deciding that the Council

<sup>40</sup> For documents relative to it, see Finke, "Acta," iii. 613 f.

<sup>41</sup> Decree *Frequens*, Hardt, iv. 1432 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 1159 f.

<sup>42</sup> Creighton, "History of the Papacy," ii. 95 f.

should agree to the immediate election of a pope and at the same time pass a decree that the pope, after his election and before its dissolution, should co-operate with it or the deputies of the nations in reforming the papal office and the curia. It specified eighteen abuses on which the nations were agreed and which were to be so reformed. Another decree added six deputies from each nation to the cardinals for the purpose of electing the new pope (30th October 1517).<sup>43</sup> As the result of their deliberations, the Church received an undisputed ruler once more, on St Martin's Day, the 11th November 1417, in the person of Cardinal Colonna,<sup>44</sup> who assumed the title of Martin V., amid the acclamations of Western Christendom.

The Council had now sat for three years. Its members were weary of their protracted labours and were anxious to be relieved of their tedious residence at Constance. Both ardour and interest had been damped by the long debate. Six more months were spent in further debate before its proceedings came to a close. Only seven out of the eighteen specified reforms were embodied by the Council in statutes; others were conceded in special concordats, to which the Council likewise consented, between the pope and the various "nations" (21st March 1418).<sup>45</sup> A month later (22nd April), to the great relief of its members, Martin V. dissolved it and fixed Pavia as the seat of its successor after the lapse of five years.

During these three and a half years it had succeeded in ending the Schism; it had failed to effect a reformation in head and members, as the more progressive party had hoped and planned. For this failure the antagonism of the curial party, to which D'Ailli ultimately went over and which finally gained the upper hand, and the dissensions of the various nations, on national as well as ecclesiastical grounds, were largely responsible. At the same time, considering the difficulties in the way of such a far-reaching reformation, it had made what was perhaps, in the circumstances, the nearest possible approach to it. The decrees of 21st March bound the pope to annul all exemptions and incorporations of benefices

<sup>43</sup> Hardt, iv. 1449 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 1164 f.

<sup>44</sup> Finke, "Acta," ii. 157 f.; iv. 200 f. (1928).

<sup>45</sup> Hardt, iv. 1533 f.; Mansi, xxvii. 1177 f.; Finke, "Acta," 624 f.

granted during the Schism ; to disallow the holding of benefices by a single individual in virtue of their union for this purpose ; to refrain from exacting the revenues of benefices during vacancies ; to prohibit simony ; to annul and discontinue dispensations to hold benefices without performing the duties attached to them ; not to impose tenths or tithes except in cases of pressing necessity ; to compel all ecclesiastics to wear suitable dress and live becoming lives. Moreover, the Council in its decrees of the 6th April 1415 had asserted its supreme authority<sup>46</sup> and had vindicated its right to depose the pope in virtue of its inherent power. In the decrees of the 9th October 1417, it had bound the pope to summon periodical councils, asserted its right to convoke itself in case of schism, and otherwise limited the papal power. In the concordats<sup>47</sup> concluded by the pope with the various nations, the number of the cardinals was limited to twenty-four. Only men of suitable character and qualifications, equitably drawn from the various nations, were eligible, and an attempt was made to limit the abuse of annates, indulgences, etc. Given the loyal co-operation of all concerned in carrying out the various general reform decrees and those included in these special agreements, this legislation would have gone a considerable way in checking the demoralisation of the Church and the curia. Unfortunately they proved largely reforms on paper and left ample scope for the Council of Basle to renew the task which that of Constance had assayed with all too meagre effect.

<sup>46</sup> The contention of Hübler, "Constanzer Reformation," 278 f. who is followed by Valois and others, that the decree of 6th April 1415 declaring the supreme authority of the Council, was not included among those finally ratified by Martin V., is not convincing. On the other side, see the detailed discussion of Creighton, i. App. 15.

<sup>47</sup> For the concordats, see Hübler, 166 f. ; Hardt, i. 1055 f., iv. 1566 f. ; Mansi, xxvii. 117 f. These concordats which, except in the case of England, were limited to a number of years, were practically valueless. England preferred to rely on its own anti-papal legislation of the fourteenth century ; France, meanwhile, likewise on the ordinances in defence of the Liberties of the Gallican Church (enacted 1406-07 and March to April 1418 (Maimbourg, "Hist. du Grand Schisme d'Occident," ii. 402 f., 1679)), which seem to have been based on the English legislation of the fourteenth century (Haller, "Papsttum," 465 f.). At the same time the principle of the concordat, as revived later, by tending to limit the papal power over national churches was of prospective, if not present importance.

## CHAPTER XVI

### RENEWED CONFLICT WITH THE PAPACY (1431-49)

#### MARTIN V. AND REFORM

IN the opening years of his reign Martin V. was too busy with the task of recovering the papal states to do anything for the cause of reform. He was, indeed, fain to summon the promised Council to Pavia in April 1423—subsequently, owing to the plague, transferred to Siena. But neither he nor the cardinals attended, though he was represented by several legates, who presided over it. It passed several decrees against the Hussites and Wiclifites and other heretics, against the anti-pope, Benedict XIII., and in favour of negotiating a union with the Greek Church.<sup>1</sup> It spent several months in vainly discussing the question of a reformation of the Church, which the pope and his legates plainly wished to shelve. It stoutly maintained the doctrine of the superiority of Council over pope, which Martin detested. He, therefore, took advantage of the paucity of its members and the increasing friction with his representatives as a pretext for dissolving it at the beginning of March 1424, and forbidding its members to continue their deliberations. The only tangible result of its farcical session was a resolution, which the pope confirmed, to convene another General Council at Basle in 1431, in accordance with the decree of that of Constance. Equally meagre the reform decrees, which he promulgated in the following year, 1425, enjoining the cardinals to live and dress in seemly fashion, archbishops and bishops to reside within their jurisdictions, to eschew concubinage and other malpractices, to hold provincial synods once every three years, reducing the number of curial officials, and limiting the papal right to reserve benefices.<sup>2</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> Mansi, xxvii. 1060 f.

<sup>2</sup> Döllinger, "Beiträge und Materialien zur Geschichte der xv. und xvi. Jahrh.," ii. 335 f. (1863); Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. I., 645 f.

reforms do not seem to have had any practical effect.<sup>3</sup> He himself was guilty of perpetuating the grave abuse of nepotism, which had disgraced the rule of so many of his predecessors, and lavished honours and wealth on the members of the Colonna family.

He was more distinguished as a diplomatist than as a reformer in his striving to recover for the papacy the power and prestige which it had lost in France and England. In his negotiations with Charles VII. he succeeded, in spite of the opposition of the Parliament of Paris, in bringing about the repeal of the anti-papal legislation by which Charles VI. had sought to safeguard the liberties of the Gallican Church in the matter of appeals, annates, and freedom of elections to ecclesiastical offices. Whilst he failed to extort from the English Parliament the repeal of the statutes of Provisors and Præmunire, he made his power felt over the English Church by his imperious treatment of Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, whom he compelled to make this demand in vain, and superseded as legate by Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, whom he had made a cardinal. His pontificate of thirteen years, which ended with his death in February 1431, thus witnessed the emergence of the papal prestige from its long eclipse.

#### THE COUNCIL OF BASLE AND EUGENIUS IV.

The conciliar party was determined that Martin V. should not evade the unwelcome obligation to summon the General Council due to meet at Basle in 1431, and wrung from him a bull (1st February 1431) commissioning Cardinal Cesarini as his legate to open and preside over it.<sup>4</sup> His sudden death three weeks later was followed by the election of Eugenius IV., whom the cardinals bound on oath to reform the curia and the Church in accordance with the decree of the Council of Constance. Irreproachable in his personal life and punctiliously pious, Eugenius was narrow, obstinate, and lacking in vision. Hence the renewal of the conflict between pope and Council, which lasted throughout his pontificate of sixteen years. Cesarini, who had been sent by Martin to Germany to further

<sup>3</sup> Pastor, i. 240.

<sup>4</sup> Mansi, xxix. 11 f.

the crusade against the Hussites, deputed John of Ragusa and John of Palomar to constitute the Council on the 23rd July.<sup>5</sup> The attendance was at first, and even after the legate's arrival in September,<sup>6</sup> very meagre. Its first important act under his presidency was to invite deputies of the Hussites, who had crushingly defeated the crusading army at Taus on the 15th August, to Basle (15th October).<sup>7</sup> Unlike Eugenius, Cesarini was a broadminded statesman as well as a man of the highest character, who saw the necessity of abandoning the policy of force and assaying negotiation with the dreaded heretics. Only so could the Bohemian schism and its dire effects for the Church be averted. The pope, on the other hand, was mainly concerned with the question of effecting a union with the Greek Church, which the Greek emperor for political reasons (the progress of the Turkish conquest) professed to favour. The insignificance of the Basle Council in its early stage and the insecurity of the region consequent on the outbreak of war between Frederick of Austria and the Duke of Burgundy seemed to presage little result from its continuance. Eugenius accordingly, in a bull of the 12th November, empowered Cesarini, if he deemed it opportune, to dissolve it, and intimate his resolve to convene another, within eighteen months, at Bologna, where the proposed negotiation with the Greeks could more conveniently take place. At the same time he empowered his nuncio, the Bishop of Parenzo, to dissolve the Council forthwith in a second bull of the same date, in case the legate should decline to do so.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile the report of the Council's resolve to confer with the Hussites reached Rome. To the angry pope it appeared an audacious aspersion on the Council of Constance, which had condemned the heretics, and that of Siena, which had renewed the condemnation. For him the only remedy for heresy was the extirpation of the heretics. Moreover, to adopt such an expedient, without his approval, seemed an unwarrantable infringement of the papal authority. Hence the

<sup>5</sup> Haller, "Concilium Basiliense," ii. 9 f. (1897). A recent and very valuable collection of documents, now extending to 8 vols.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 13 f.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 16; "Monumenta Conciliorum Generalium Sæculi XV.," i. 135 (Akademie Scientiarum, Vienna, 1873).

<sup>8</sup> Mansi, xxix. 561 f.; "Monumenta Conciliorum Generalium Sæculi XV.," ii. 67.

bull, read in full consistory on the 18th December, and addressed, not to the legate, but to all the faithful, which categorically dissolved the Council, summoned a new one to Bologna, promised a third to meet at Avignon in ten years, and ordered all prelates to attend both on pain of excommunication.<sup>9</sup> On his arrival at Basle towards the end of December with the two bulls of 12th November, the Bishop of Parenzo handed to the legate the first of them. But he withheld the second, and falsely professed his zeal for the continuance of the Council. He shortly after secretly withdrew to Strasburg, leaving the embarrassing duty of communicating the bull of the 18th December to a subordinate, John Ceparelli of Prato. When on the 13th January 1432 Ceparelli attempted to read it, the assembled fathers angrily interrupted him and left the meeting.<sup>10</sup> Whereupon Cesarini sent an impassioned protest to the pope. If the Hussites, he wrote, cannot be reduced to submission by force, it is only by means of the Council that a reconciliation with them can be achieved. To dissolve it without giving them an opportunity to attend is virtually to confess defeat and encourage them in their heresy and in their contention that it cannot be refuted. Moreover, the deplorable degeneration of the clergy urgently demands reformation, and the evasion of it by the curia will necessarily appear a mocking of God and man. A Council is, further, absolutely necessary to establish peace among the warring nations, especially between France and England, and the abandonment of this effort will similarly appear a cynical dereliction from an imperative obligation. It is a case of the salvation of a multitude of souls, which is the paramount consideration. The dissolution of the Council under the pretext of transferring it to Bologna will be regarded as merely a manœuvre to hoodwink the reformers, as in the case of that of Siena. The pope need have no fear of the Council if he shows a genuine desire to further the cause of reform. On the other hand, the news of its dissolution has infuriated its members, who are resolved to suffer to the utmost rather than abandon their post. If he persists in his resolution, schism will inevitably result. The reports regarding the

<sup>9</sup> Mansi, xxix. 564 f. On the same day he wrote a peremptory mandate to Cesarini to dissolve the Council and leave Basle, Haller, i. 246 f.

<sup>10</sup> Haller, "Concilium Basiltense," ii. 22, 572 f.; Valois, "La Crise Religieuse du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle," i. 132 f. (1909).

Council which have misled him are false. To abandon the cause of reform for the problematic prospect of a union with the Greeks would simply be to deliver over the whole of Germany to the Hussite heresy. An arbitrary dissolution is contrary to the decree of Constance, which does not confer on the pope alone the right to decide the place of meeting of a future Council. Better informed, let him withdraw the bull of dissolution, or at least defer it until the Council has had time to achieve the negotiation with the Hussites and the reformation of the German clergy (13th January 1432).<sup>11</sup>

Encouraged by the active support of Sigismund, then sojourning in North Italy, Duke William III. of Bavaria, whom he had nominated its protector, the Dukes of Savoy and Milan,<sup>12</sup> the Council, under the leadership of the Bishop of Constance, who temporarily replaced Cesarini as president, reasserted on the 15th February the doctrine of the supremacy of a General Council and the punishment of all, of whatever status, who should refuse obedience. It decreed anew that it could not be dissolved or transferred without its consent, debarred the pope from attempting to prevent anyone from attending it or compel the withdrawal of its members, and ordered that none should withdraw without reasonable cause shown.<sup>13</sup> Further emboldened by the support of a synod of the French clergy at Bourges and of the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, it followed up these decrees on the 29th April by requiring the pope publicly to revoke the bull of dissolution and to appear, along with the cardinals, at Basle within three months. If his health should not permit him to travel, he should send deputies to the Council. Otherwise it will take measures for dealing with the necessities of the Church "in accordance with divine and human right." Should the cardinals fail to appear within the stated period, they shall be deemed contumacious and render themselves liable to excommunication.<sup>14</sup> The Council thus reproduces the hardihood and independence of Constance, and this at a time when

<sup>11</sup> Letter in "Fasciculus Rerum Expendarum," fol. 27 f. (1535); Mansi, xxix. 279 f.

<sup>12</sup> Haller, ii. 25 f.

<sup>13</sup> Mansi, xxix. 21 f.; Haller, ii. 34 f.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix. 23 f.; "Monumenta Conciliorum," ii. 180 f.; Haller, ii. 102 f.

there was no schism to be healed, though its resolute spirit threatened to eventuate in a new one.

Instead of complying, Eugenius deputed the Archbishop of Tarento and three other prelates (9th July 1432)<sup>15</sup> to explain why he had deemed it necessary to dissolve the Council. In his address on the 23rd August the archbishop adduced the plenary power of the pope in refutation of the claim to supreme authority. By canon law, which he quotes profusely, the papal power is unlimited. The government of the Church is an absolute monarchy. Others have only the subordinate function of "solicitude."<sup>16</sup> Whatever the pope wills has the force of law, and princes and all the faithful are bound to obey him. In addition, the high character of the present pope deserves the utmost reverence and submission. He has been amply justified in dissolving the Council on the ground of the meagreness of the attendance at Basle, the invitation to the Hussites without his consent, the unwillingness of the Greeks to repair thither, and the ill-health which prevented him from being present. Without his presence or his assent, the Council is merely a conventicle (*conciliabulum*). To cite him to appear before it is the height of presumption. No Council may judge the pope, except in case of heresy. Though he has no desire to ignore the decree *Frequens* passed at Constance, he retains the right to dispense with all such decrees. He is as eager as the Council for a reformation of the Church and is prepared to convene at once a Council for this purpose at Bologna or any other town in the papal States, and preside over it himself. At the same time, if it persists in negotiating with the Hussites and reforming the German Church, he is willing to sanction its continuance for this limited purpose.<sup>17</sup>

To this partial concession the Council responded with an emphatic negative. In an elaborate reply on the 3rd September it reiterated the supremacy of a General Council in matters of faith, the extirpation of schism, and the general reformation of the Church as decreed at Constance. To it, all, including the pope, owe obedience in such matters. The pope is, indeed, head of the Church, the vicar of Christ, the possessor of the power of the keys conferred on Peter. But he is only its head

<sup>15</sup> Mansi, xxx. 128 f.

<sup>16</sup> Vocati alii in partem sollicitudinis.

<sup>17</sup> Mansi, xxix. 482 f.; Haller, ii. 201 f.

in a ministerial sense (*caput ministeriale*). He is not greater than the whole Church. The Holy Catholic Church is the guardian and guarantor of the faith. It alone cannot err in the things necessary to salvation, though popes may err and have erred. From it even the Scriptures derive their authority, as St Augustine confessed. To deny its supremacy and its inerrancy is heresy. And what holds of the Catholic Church is applicable to a General Council, in which, as its representative, inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, are embodied both its authority and its inerrancy. If it were liable to error, the whole Catholic faith would be uncertain (*vacillaret*). Its superior authority is in accordance with the testimony of the ancient Councils, the Fathers, Gregory the Great, and Thomas Aquinas. It is indisputable, and in the face of this fact, the pretexts for dissolving it, which are controverted in detail, are of no weight. "We must obey God rather than men."<sup>18</sup> Three days later (6th September) a motion to declare the pope and the cardinals contumacious was only departed from in the meantime at the instance of the papal nuncios, who pleaded for delay.<sup>19</sup>

Its determined attitude, its increasing membership, and the adhesion of a number of the cardinals<sup>20</sup> at length convinced Eugenius that he must abandon the project of convening a Council in Italy in the face of the opposition of that of Basle. In a new bull of the 14th February 1433 he undertook to send thither his legates to preside over what he evidently meant to be a new Council, and to summon the prelates of the whole Church to attend it. Meanwhile those already assembled at Basle might continue their efforts to suppress the Hussite heresy and secure the peace of Christendom, notwithstanding the bull of dissolution.<sup>21</sup> But this new concession did not recognise the existing Council from the beginning of its session as a valid assembly or revoke the bull of dissolution. The Fathers of Basle were by no means satisfied with this evasion, and the

<sup>18</sup> Mansi, xxix. 239 f.; "Monumenta Conciliorum," ii. 234 f.; Haller, ii. 206 f.

<sup>19</sup> Mansi, xxix. 39 f.; Haller, ii. 211 f.

<sup>20</sup> Including Cardinal Capranica, whose nomination by Martin V. Eugenius had arbitrarily refused to recognise, and who, accompanied by his secretary, Æneas Sylvius, the future Pope Pius II., repaired to Basle and laid his case before the Council, Haller, i. 118 f., 247 f.

<sup>21</sup> Mansi, xxix. 569 f.

papal nuncios sent one of their number back to Rome to communicate their dissatisfaction.<sup>22</sup> Pending the arrival of the papal legates, they determined, on the 27th April, to vindicate their powers and rights in a series of decrees which should leave no room for such evasion, and safeguard the Council from papal infringement. They reiterated the decree of Constance directing the regular convention of a General Council and debarred the pope from impeding its meeting under penalty of suspension after four months and, in case of his persistence, deprivation. In particular, the present Council cannot be dissolved without the consent of two-thirds of its members, and before its dissolution it shall prescribe the holding of another within ten years. On the expiry of this period everyone entitled to attend shall assemble even without a particular citation. Before entering the conclave to elect a future pope, each cardinal shall swear that, if elected, he will observe these enactments.<sup>23</sup>

On the arrival of the legates in June the Council refused to recognise their right to preside over it along with Cesarini, and threatened to suspend the pope if he should not withdraw the bull of dissolution and acknowledge its authority from the beginning, within sixty days (13th July).<sup>24</sup> At the instigation of Sigismund, whom he crowned emperor at Rome on the 31st May, Eugenius once more ceded and expressed his willingness to recognise the Council from the commencement, on condition that it abrogated all that had been done against the papal authority.<sup>25</sup> Even then the Fathers were not satisfied. He must not only express his willingness<sup>26</sup> to recognise the Council. He must formally "decree and declare"<sup>27</sup> his recognition. It was only in deference to the plea of Sigismund's ambassadors that they agreed on the 11th September to prolong the respite from suspension pending the emperor's arrival at Basle, which he reached on the 11th October. Even in his presence they insisted, in the course of the debates of the next two months, on the pope's explicit and formal recognition of the Council as the representative of the Church's supreme

<sup>22</sup> Mansi, xxix. 270.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix. 52 f.; Haller, ii. 394 f.

<sup>24</sup> Mansi, xxix. 56 f.; "Monumenta Conciliorum," ii. 398; Haller, ii. 448.

<sup>25</sup> Mansi, xxix. 574 f.

<sup>26</sup> *Volumus et contentamur.*

<sup>27</sup> *Decernimus et declaramus.*

authority, whilst agreeing, in their anxiety to avoid a new schism, to further prolong the respite. By this time the position of Eugenius had become desperate. Exposed to the attacks of the Duke of Milan and other enemies in Italy; driven out of Rome by his rebellious subjects and forced to flee to Florence; faced by the unbending antagonism of a Council which had the backing of nearly the whole of Catholic Christendom, he was fain finally to give way and explicitly and unconditionally recognise its lawfulness from the beginning, and revoke all bulls to the contrary (15th December 1433).<sup>28</sup> As presidents, in addition to Cesarini, he commissioned four cardinals—Albergati, Foix, Orsini, and Foschi.

Throughout this lengthy conflict Eugenius had striven to assert his sovereign authority and had been worsted. These conciliar reformers had won in their claim that the Catholic Church is greater than the pope, and that a General Council as its representative is invested with the supreme legislative power. Following Marsiglio and Occam, Wiclif and Hus, they went beyond the mediæval papacy and the canon law and appealed to history—to the ancient Church and the Fathers in vindication of this claim. They denied the infallibility of the pope and transferred it to a representative Council. In this they differed from Occam, Wiclif, and Hus as well as from Luther and the later reformers, who questioned the dogma that a General Council cannot err and placed the Scriptures, as the supreme inerrant authority, above a General Council. This authority is inherent in the Word of God, and is not derived from the Church, as the conciliar reformers maintained. They aimed at establishing, by means of this expedient, a limited ecclesiastical monarchy, in which the pope is but the executive, “the ministerial head” of the sovereign legislative body. So far they bade fair to succeed in effecting a constitutional revolution. The pope had only saved himself from deprivation by a timely retreat. Whether the retreat was to prove merely a temporary one depended on the capacity of the Council to work harmoniously the new principle of government, which it had so far successfully vindicated. Its organisation was certainly an improvement on that of Constance. It reverted to the system of voting by heads in order to avoid

<sup>28</sup> Mansi, xxix. 78 f.; Haller, i. 322 f.; cf. 76 f.

the friction which the method of deliberating and voting by nations had caused at Constance. At Cesarini's instigation it had appointed a committee of twelve to nominate four committees or "deputations" dealing respectively with faith, peace, reformation, and general business. Their members were drawn indiscriminately from the various nations. Membership was open to the lower as well as the higher clergy, and as the lower clergy formed a large majority of the Council, this arrangement gave them a preponderating influence on its proceedings. Each committee was reconstituted every four months with mostly new members in order to check the spirit of friction. Discussion was to be open, with liberty to members to consult with any members of the Council on any matter under discussion. The approval of three out of the four committees assembled in general congregation was necessary before any measure passed by a single committee could be presented to the Council in general session for discussion and ratification or, in case of serious objection, recommitted to the committees.<sup>29</sup> It was a masterpiece of organisation. If loyally worked by the various grades of the hierarchy, it would have ensured the permanence of the far-reaching constitutional reform which the Council had ultimately forced the pope to recognise.

#### THE BOHEMIAN QUESTION

In inviting deputies of the Bohemians to Basle (October 1431), the Council struck a very different note from those of Constance and Siena in dealing with the Hussite heresy. The Hussites had proved their invincibility on the battlefield and earned the right to negotiate with the Council on equal terms. There was now no question of dictating to the heretic, and Cesarini, who probably penned the invitation, not only guaranteed their safety, but conceded the free discussion in a Christian spirit of the points at issue as embodied in the Four Articles of Prague relative to communion in both kinds, the repression of open sin, the free preaching of the Word, the temporal possessions and power of the clergy. Let the Bohemians forget the past in the belief that God has permitted

<sup>29</sup> Mansi, xxix. 377 f. ; Haller, ii. 41, 45 (February 1432), and *passim*.

this dissension in order to show the evils arising from it.<sup>30</sup> With the additional stipulation that they should be allowed to appeal to the Scriptures and the ancient Councils and Fathers, they accepted these conditions at a conference with representatives of the Council at Eger in June 1432, and agreed to send a deputation, which arrived at Basle on the 4th January 1433.

The opening addresses of Cesarini, who presided with unflinching tact and patience, and John of Rokyzana, the leader of the Utraquists, on the 10th of January reveal the difference of standpoint between the two parties, while both show anxiety to reach an understanding. Cesarini exhorted the Bohemians to return to the Church, which alone is exempt from error and in which alone is salvation to be found. In reply Rokyzana expressed their readiness to discuss the four articles in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, the Fathers, and the early Church, and emphasised the striking contrast which the early Church presented to the actual Church.<sup>31</sup> Long and verbose was the argumentation on both sides during the next three months, individual orators continuing their speeches for days on end. On the 16th Rokyzana led off with a three days' argument on behalf of communion in both kinds, based on the words of institution, the practice of the early Church, the testimony of the early Councils and Fathers.<sup>32</sup> Nicolas of Pilgram occupied another two days in the attempt to prove, amid frequent interruption, the obligation to suppress vice by civil penalties.<sup>33</sup> Ulrich of Znaim also required two days to enforce the free preaching of the Gospel,<sup>34</sup> and Peter Payne, an expatriated English Lollard, three to show, with the aid of Wiclif, that superfluous worldly possessions and worldly power are not permissible to the clergy, and that they may be deprived of them by the secular authority.<sup>35</sup> On the side of the Council, the verbosity of John of Ragusa only exhausted itself on the seventh day of his oration on communion in both

<sup>30</sup> Mansi, xxix. 233 f.; "Monumenta Conciliorum," i. 135; ii. 38; Haller, i. 63; ii. 16.

<sup>31</sup> Mansi, xxix. 492 f.; xxx. 262 f.; Haller, ii. 310 f.

<sup>32</sup> Mansi, xxx. 269 f.; Haller, ii. 315 f.

<sup>33</sup> "Monumenta Conciliorum," i. 294; Haller, ii. 319 f.; Palacky, "Geschichte von Böhmen," iii. 80 f.

<sup>34</sup> Mansi, xxx. 306 f.; Haller, ii. 322.

<sup>35</sup> Mansi, xxx. 260; Haller, ii. 324 f. On Payne's career, see Embden, "An Oxford Hall in Mediæval Times," 133 f. (1927).

kinds, which he countered with the plea that it was not necessary and was contrary to the law of the Church, whose authority is supreme.<sup>36</sup> The three other orators of the Council spent eleven days in refuting the remaining articles, and then Rokyzana spoke for five days in reply to Ragusa, finishing on the 10th March. Since the other orators on both sides likewise claimed the privilege of a reply, it was plain that this method of conference would only prolong the spate of oratory *ad infinitum*. Hence the resolution to refer the matter to a joint committee. In this committee Cesarini proposed that the Bohemians should incorporate themselves as members of the Council and leave it to decide the issue. They refused on the ground that they would be outvoted in the Council. "You say," exclaimed Peter Payne, "be incorporated, return, be united with us. We say, return with us to the primitive Church; be united with us in the Gospel." Nor would they consent to incorporation even if communion in both kinds were granted beforehand, as Nicolas of Cusa suggested. A remit to a smaller committee was equally futile. The Bohemians emphatically declined to be regarded as schismatics or heretics. They took up the attitude, as Luther later did, that not they, but their opponents had departed in faith and practice from the ancient Church. "We are not heretics," protested Procopius in reply to John of Ragusa. "You say that we ought to return to the Church. I answer that we have not departed from it, but hope to bring others back to it—you among the rest," he added amid a roar of laughter. Further oratory before the Council did not tend to bring the controversy, which was aggravated by Cesarini's ill-advised attempt to go beyond the four articles and rake up anew Wiclif's<sup>37</sup> teaching, to a feasible conclusion. There was nothing for it but to send a deputation from the Council to continue the discussion with the Bohemian Diet at Prague in the following June.<sup>38</sup> With this meagre result the Bohemians were fain to depart on the 14th April. Nevertheless the conference is important, if only as showing the remarkable advance, within twenty years, in the free discussion of theological opinion, on the intolerant spirit and method of the Council of Constance. Though

<sup>36</sup> Mansi, xxix. 699 f.; Haller, ii. 331 f.

<sup>37</sup> Haller, ii. 335 f.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 383 f.

there had been stormy scenes at times, there had also been apologies on both sides for intemperate language, and both parted in a forbearing and even friendly spirit.<sup>39</sup>

The negotiation with the Diet merely resulted in the resolution to send another deputation to Basle, where further discussion ended in the dispatch of a second embassy to the Diet,<sup>40</sup> which accepted a modified form of the articles as the basis of further discussion with the Council. To this conservative modification the Council, after protracted negotiation with Prague, gave its imprimatur in the Compacts of Basle with the Calixtine or Utraquist section of the Bohemian reform party, which, on certain conditions guaranteeing their national rights, agreed to recognise Sigismund as King of Bohemia (July to August 1436).<sup>41</sup> The Council thus had the best of the negotiation. Its success was facilitated by the dissension between the Utraquists and the Taborites, which arrayed them against each other in internecine strife and resulted in the defeat of the latter and the death of Procopius at Lipan in May 1434. At the same time the moderate party in Bohemia, in extorting the recognition of communion in both kinds even in a restricted form had, to this extent at least, temporarily<sup>42</sup> succeeded in vindicating the principle of toleration within the Church in place of the mediæval principle of suppressing heresy by force. It was a notable achievement in the light of the martyrdom of Hus and Jerome but twenty years before, when the only alternative to submission was the death of the heretic. To this achievement the tenacity of the Hussites in the vindication of the right of resistance to religious tyranny had also contributed.

#### RUPTURE WITH THE POPE

In the attempt to achieve a general reformation of the Church, the Council inhibited the unwarrantable exercise of the papal power in the matter of elections to vacant sees and abbeys, provisions, and reservations<sup>43</sup> except in the States of the Roman Church. It encroached on the administrative function

<sup>39</sup> Haller, ii. 384 f.

<sup>41</sup> Creighton, ii. 286 f.

<sup>42</sup> The Compacts were revoked by Pius II. in 1462.

<sup>43</sup> Mansi, xxix. 53 f. ; Haller, ii. 446 f. (July 1433).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 459 f., 473 f.

of the papal curia by instituting its own judges of appeals and other causes, and thus struck at the centralisation which drained the wealth of the Church Romewards.<sup>44</sup> It established diocesan and provincial synods for the repression of heresy, the reform of the clergy, higher and lower, secular and regular, and the stricter maintenance of discipline.<sup>45</sup> Sigismund suggested, through the Bishop of Lübeck, that a more efficacious means of remedying the rampant clerical immorality would be to sanction the marriage of the clergy. Instead of following this sagacious advice, it prohibited concubinage under pain of deprivation, and debarred the bishops from conniving at this practice in return for a money fine. It limited the use of excommunication and interdict.<sup>46</sup> It dealt a further blow at the papal power by abolishing annates and all other papal dues on admission to benefices, on which the papal revenue largely depended, declaring it simoniacal to exact or grant them, and rendering the pope, in case of contravention, liable to be judged by a General Council.<sup>47</sup> It made the election of a pope conditional on his swearing to convene General Councils and his observing the decrees of that of Basle.<sup>48</sup> It limited the number of cardinals to twenty-six, twenty-four of whom were to be doctors of law or theology, at least thirty years of age, and none to be the relative of a pope or cardinal.<sup>49</sup> It renewed the decrees relative to elections by chapters and reservations,<sup>50</sup> and finally restricted appeals to Rome, and forbade expectancies and particular reservations.<sup>51</sup>

This aggressive legislation brought the Council once more into conflict with Eugenius, and the conflict was complicated by dissension over the question of union with the Greek Church. The question had already occupied the passing attention of the Council of Constance, and it formed part of the programme of that of Basle, which invited the Greeks to a conference. The progress of the Turkish arms, and the consequent danger to Christendom, had aroused in the Greek

<sup>44</sup> Haller, ii. 346, 349 (February 1433); *cf.* 271, 296.

<sup>45</sup> Mansi, xxix. 74 f.; Haller, ii. 450 f., 527 (November 1433).

<sup>46</sup> Mansi, xxix. 101 f., 103 (January 1435); Haller, iii. 294.

<sup>47</sup> Mansi, xxix. 104; Haller, iii. 404 f., 412; i. 91 (June 1435).

<sup>48</sup> Mansi, xxix. 110 f. (March 1436).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix. 116 f. (March 1436).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix. 120 (March 1436).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix. 159 f. (Jan. 1438).

emperor and the Greek patriarch a desire for closer relations with the Western Church, from political, if not ecclesiastical motives. There was, therefore, a ready response to the invitation, and Greek deputies came to Basle in July 1434. While both sides were eager to negotiate, the initial difficulty was to fix a place where the negotiation should take place. The Greeks would have preferred that the proposed conference on union should take place at Constantinople, the Council at Basle. Eventually both parties agreed that, subject to the consent of the pope, it should be held at one of certain specified towns in Italy, or at Vienna, or Ofen, or some town in Savoy, and that the expenses of the Greek representatives should be borne by the Western Church (September 1434).<sup>52</sup> Eugenius, who had himself been negotiating with the Greek emperor on the subject, was fain to assent, and a second Greek embassy, which had been sent by the emperor to the pope, came to Basle on April 1435,<sup>53</sup> and reaffirmed the arrangement made by the first.<sup>54</sup> Whereupon the Council dispatched an embassy headed by John of Ragusa to obtain the imperial ratification. Meanwhile it decided to issue, on its own authority, an indulgence in order to raise the necessary funds for the union conference, and entered into negotiations with the specified towns with a view to fixing definitely the place of its meeting. In its distrust of the pope, who saw in its transference to an Italian city the chance of regaining his lost prestige and influence, it ultimately voted for Avignon, although it was not included among the towns in the agreement with the Greeks (December 1436).<sup>55</sup>

The discussion of this question revealed a cleavage of opinion, of which Eugenius, who resented the anti-papal legislation of the Council, was quick to take advantage. A conservative minority, led by the Archbishop of Tarento, and supported by Cesarini, was now arrayed against a democratic majority under the leadership of Cardinal D'Allemand, Archbishop of Arles, and known also as the Cardinal of Arles, John of Segovia, and the Archbishop of Palermo. Their antagonism culminated in the tumultuous session of 7th May

<sup>52</sup> Mansi, xxix. 92 f.; Haller, iii. 198.

<sup>53</sup> Haller, iii. 363.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 396.

<sup>55</sup> Mansi, xxxia. 229 f.; Haller, iv. 348 f.; "Monumenta Conciliorum," ii. 921.

1437, when the minority voted separately for Florence, or other Italian city as the place of meeting with the Greeks, while the majority again decreed in favour of Avignon.<sup>56</sup> The struggle was more than a mere fight over the meeting-place of the proposed conference. By this time it had become a fight between two systems of government for which the two parties now stood—papal absolutism and representative government in ecclesiastical affairs. Unfortunately Cesarini, under the influence of the papal envoy Traversari, proved false to the liberal policy which he had hitherto guided with no little skill, and went over to the reaction engineered by the envoy.<sup>57</sup> Is it too much to say that, in so doing, he contributed to prepare not only the temporary schism, but the permanent disruption of the future? Cesarini might be a clever organiser. He had not learned to anticipate.

These contradictory decrees gave Eugenius the opportunity of challenging anew the Council's authority. He had already, in an encyclical to the rulers in June 1436, denounced its rebellious spirit and arbitrary acts, its democratic and irregular constitution, which allowed the lower clergy and even laymen, as well as prelates, to deliberate and vote, and summoned the rulers to withdraw their ambassadors and the prelates of their respective countries.<sup>58</sup> He promptly sanctioned the decree of the minority (20th May 1437), and on the 18th September decreed the transference of the Council to Ferrara for the purpose of negotiating the union with the Greeks. The majority retorted by annulling the decree of the minority, citing the pope to appear at Basle to answer for his conduct within sixty days, and, on his non-appearance, declaring him contumacious and threatening him with suspension<sup>59</sup> within four months. In spite of the remonstrances of Cesarini, who now retired from Basle, it accordingly suspended him on the 24th January 1438 and summoned the rulers of Europe to withdraw their obedience.<sup>60</sup> Of these the kings of England, Portugal, and Castile disowned the Council's action. The

<sup>56</sup> Mansi, xxix. 137 f.

<sup>57</sup> "Traversarii Epistolæ," ii.; Haller, i. 133 f.

<sup>58</sup> Raynaldus, xxviii. 195 f.; Döllinger, "History of the Church," iv. 193 f.; Creighton, ii. 274 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. II., 928.

<sup>59</sup> Mansi, xxix. 137 f.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix. 165 f.; "Concilium Basiliense," v. 141 f., ed. by Beckmann, Wackernagel, and Coggiola (1904).

French king, Charles VII., who had used his influence in support of Avignon in the hope of bringing about the return of the papacy thither in the interest of France,<sup>61</sup> attempted to induce the pope to depart from his hostile attitude, and, as the result of the deliberations of an assembly of the Gallican clergy at Bourges, recognised, with some modification, the acts relative to the reformation of the Church in an edict entitled the Pragmatic Sanction (July 1438).<sup>62</sup> The edict became the charter of what was known as "the liberties of the Gallican Church." It asserted the supreme authority of a General Council, restored the ancient right of election to ecclesiastical dignities, denied the papal claim to reservations, forbade appeals to Rome, except in major causes, abolished annates (subject to the partial payment thereof during the lifetime of Eugenius), and enacted various provisions bearing on worship and discipline. The German princes, though maintaining a neutral attitude, followed the example of the French king and recognised a number of the reforming decrees of the Council as binding on the German Church (Diet of Mainz, March 1439). Both France and Germany thus took advantage of the doctrine of the superiority of a General Council to invest with the sanction of the State a number of rights and reforms, which materially circumscribed the papal power as far as their respective countries were concerned, whilst not going the length of disowning the pope himself.

Thus encouraged, the Council proceeded to the extreme step of deposition, in spite of the opposition of a moderate section which hesitated to go this length. After long and stormy discussion, it declared the propositions that a General Council is superior to the pope and that the pope cannot, by his mere fiat, transfer, adjourn or dissolve it, to be articles of faith, and anyone denying them a heretic.<sup>63</sup> By his treatment of the Council he was thus guilty of heresy and was accordingly, on the 25th June 1439, declared deposed as a pertinacious heretic

<sup>61</sup> Haller, "Concilium Basiliense," i. 148.

<sup>62</sup> It is known as the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, "Ordonnances des Rois de France," xiii. 267 f., and see my "Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy," 81; in detail, Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. II., 1055 f.; Haller, "Hist. Zeitschrift" (1909).

<sup>63</sup> Mansi, xxix. 178 f. (16th May 1439); "Concilium Basiliense," vi. 425 f. (ed. by Beckmann, 1926).

and obstinate rebel against the Council.<sup>64</sup> Some months later it elected as his successor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, who had withdrawn into religious retirement at Ripaille, and who, as Felix V., received the tiara from Cardinal D'Allemand at Basle in July 1440. It thus ended by inaugurating a new schism which was, however, far from causing the same ecclesiastical cleavage in the nations as the previous one.

Whilst the Fathers of Basle had been engaged in forging decrees of suspension and deposition against him, Eugenius had been unconcernedly holding his own Council with the Greeks at Ferrara and Florence, and succeeded in negotiating their union with the Western Church under his own supremacy (July 1439). Though the Greek Church disowned the agreement of its deputies, the transaction greatly augmented the papal prestige in the West. The papal figurehead of the Basle Council made a poor appearance in comparison with his rival, whom most of the powers, including France, but excepting Germany, which continued to maintain neutrality as between Eugenius and the Council, recognised as the legitimate pope. Some of the German electors were, indeed, inclined to espouse the side of Felix from political motives. But Frederick III., whom they had elected king in 1440, in succession to Albrecht II. (1438-39), the immediate successor of Sigismund, who died in 1437, chose, for the same reason, to side with Eugenius. Ultimately in February 1447, as the result of long negotiation, in which Æneas Sylvius, the future Pius II., at this time Frederick's secretary, played a notable part, Germany returned to its allegiance on certain conditions. These bound the pope, *inter alia*, to recognise the decrees of the Council of Constance, especially that enacting the frequent assembling of Councils, and provisionally the reforming decrees of the Council of Basle, which the German princes had sanctioned in 1439, till such time as his legate or a new Council should negotiate a final decision. In a secret protest Eugenius added that, in these concessions "he did not intend to derogate from the doctrine of the Fathers, or the authority and

<sup>64</sup> Mansi, xxix. 179 f. ; "Concilium Basiliense," vi. 523 f. The number of members present at this session was thirty-nine prelates and about 300 of the lower clergy, Creighton, iii. 17. According to Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. II., 1069, there were only twenty prelates present.

privileges of the Apostolic See." <sup>65</sup> A few days later he died. His successor, Nicolas V., completed the reunion of the Church by negotiating the submission of the impotent Felix V. and the equally impotent Council of Basle, which had withdrawn to Lausanne. The Council, on being assured that Nicolas recognised that a General Council holds its authority immediately from Christ and that all Christians are bound to accept its decisions in matters of faith, the extirpation of schism, and the reform of the Church, formally elected him pope and dissolved itself (April 1449). <sup>66</sup> In the previous year he had succeeded in finally arranging the Concordat of Vienna with Frederick III., with the assent of the German electors and princes, in which the Council of Basle and its decrees were ignored, and which recognised the papal right of reservations and provisions, the confirmation of elections, taxation in the form of annates and other papal dues. <sup>67</sup> The pope had decidedly the best of the bargain, though he was fain to buy the adhesion of the German princes by enhancing their power over the Church within their territories. The German Church reaped little or no advantage from the transaction. The German reform party was worsted. But in strengthening the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the princes, the pope was unwittingly paving the way for its revival, under princely auspices, within three-quarters of a century, with fateful effects to the papal power in Germany.

#### FAILURE OF THE CONCILIAR MOVEMENT

For the present the conciliar movement, which had threatened to revolutionise the constitution of the Church, was discredited by failure. These Councils had proved to be largely but debating societies as far as practical legislation was concerned. They had debated and enacted a large number of decrees, but few of them were of lasting effect. The movement was premature, and the Councils produced no men or set of men of sufficient statesmanship to transform ideas into

<sup>65</sup> Raynaldus, xxviii. 477; see also Creighton, iii. 86 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. II., 1122 f.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, xxviii. 517 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. II., 1137 f.

<sup>67</sup> Hefele-Leclercq, vii., Pt. II., 1131 f.; Creighton, iii. 106 f.; Waugh, "History of Europe, 1378-1494," 318 f.

practice. The task was, indeed, wellnigh an impossible one in the circumstances. The conciliar party might claim in successive Councils to represent the Church. But the Church was composed of many and conflicting nations, whose rulers had their own interests and policies to serve, and this diversity of interest and policy made itself felt in divergent and conflicting tendencies within the Council. The war between England and France, the divisions in Germany and Italy, for instance, clogged its debates and hampered its measures. Ecclesiastical contentions were more or less controlled by political considerations, according as this or that ruler had more to gain from the pope or the Council. Moreover, these Councils were representative assemblies of nations as well as of the Church, and national prejudices or feeling, besides the common concern for Christendom, inevitably influenced the views and acts of their members. The Council of Constance was especially dogged by this difficulty in virtue of the system of deliberating and voting by nations. The Council of Basle strove to obviate it by substituting committees, irrespective of nationality, for the purpose of deliberation, and voting by heads for voting by nations. But it was harassed and hampered by the development of party spirit in the antagonism of the aristocratic section of the prelates to the democratic section of the lower clergy. The conciliar movement had been from the beginning essentially an aristocratic movement in spite of the specious democratic phraseology of its champions. It represented a movement of the higher ranks of the hierarchy against the papal absolutism, and when, by the inclusion of the lower clergy at Basle, the revolt threatened to develop into a revolution, the aristocratic element largely sought refuge in a papal reaction. Hence the ultimate failure of the movement either effectively to reform the Church or limit the papacy. The Council of Constance succeeded, indeed, in putting an end to the Great Schism. The Council of Basle arrested the growth of the Bohemian schism. But neither succeeded in enforcing the doctrine of the superiority of the Council over the pope, and both proved helpless to deliver the Church from the accumulated abuses of centuries. Their decrees largely remained as the mere monuments of their theories.

Moreover, whilst there was a consensus of opinion among the Fathers of Basle as to the necessity of reform, it was a reform at somebody else's expense. Many of the members of the Council were unwilling to begin the work by reforming themselves. "Reform was constantly talked of at Basle," remarks Pastor, "but very little was done to carry it out. Truly pious and priestly minded men were wanting. The very Fathers who spoke most constantly of the simplicity of the apostolic Church were seen hunting and hawking fully accoutred and attended by a long train of lay retainers, or feasting at sumptuous banquets."<sup>68</sup>

The failure of the conciliar policy of a reformation in head and members was fraught with future disaster to both the papacy and the Church. Reformation on an adequate scale was shelved with the dissolution of the Council of Basle, and the shelving of it under the unreformed papal régime of the next sixty years resulted in a far more formidable and fateful crisis in the history of both. The unreformed papacy had won in the conflict with the conciliar movement. But in defeating this movement and continuing the old oppressive system of government, it was courting its own ultimate defeat. Cesarini had warned Eugenius in 1432 that if the Church was not reformed in head and members revolt from the papacy in Germany was inevitable. The warning, long unheeded under his successors, at last found its fulfillment in the revolt led by Luther and his fellow-reformers, abetted by the State, not only in Germany, but in a large part of Catholic Europe. The ultimate outcome of the failure of Constance and Basle was to be the substitution of independent national or territorial Churches, in alliance with the State, for the papal, mediæval Church in a large part of Western Christendom. To this development the papacy unwittingly contributed. It had to pay for the defeat of the aggressive reform party in the Church by concessions to the civil power in relation to the national or territorial Churches. In thus augmenting the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the civil power, it was preparing the way for the widespread suppression, under the auspices of this power, of the papal jurisdiction, which the Reformation ultimately effected in Germany and elsewhere.

<sup>68</sup> "History of the Popes," i. 357. The pope, on the other hand, exerted himself to reform the monastic communities in the States of the Church.

## THE CHURCH AS SOVEREIGN COMMUNITY

Futile though the conciliar movement ultimately proved as an essay in reform, its importance is not to be measured solely by its practical failure. The ideas and aspirations which it championed by no means shared in its collapse. The movement took its rise in the University of Paris, which retained the impress of the teaching of Marsiglio and John of Jandun and was also influenced by that of Occam. It sought to apply to the Church the theory of the sovereignty of the community or people, as distinct from its ruler, which they had elaborated in the struggle between the Emperor Ludwig and the pope.<sup>69</sup> The monarchic constitution of the Church should, in fact, be modified, by means of this theory, after the model of the constitution of the mediæval State with its parliament of the three estates, co-operating with and in some respects controlling the ruler in legislation and government. Under the new ecclesiastical constitution the General Council should play the part in the Church which the mediæval estates played in the State. As in the case of the State, the theorists had sought to provide a theoretic basis and justification of the constitution in the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people or community, so the leaders of the conciliar movement—Gerson, D'Ailli, Zabarella, Gregory of Heimburg, Cusanus, and others—had recourse to this doctrine in justification of their attempt to give a similar constitution to the Church. This procedure was all the more necessary inasmuch as the doctrine of the absolute papal monarchy had become an integral part of later canon law and had been successfully exemplified in the mediæval papacy, which had hitherto been untouched by the development of constitutionalism in the State. Marsiglio and Occam had already shown the way, and the conciliar writers only followed in their footsteps in transferring the absolute sovereignty over the Church from the pope to a General Council, as representing the sovereign ecclesiastical community. They maintained, indeed, the papal monarchy, but they ascribed the ultimate sovereignty to the Church itself, and to the Council, as its representative, the right to co-operate in its government

<sup>69</sup> Occam as well as Marsiglio emphasises the community as the source of authority, see A. J. Carlyle, "Mediæval Political Theory," vi. 44 f. (1936).

and even control the pope. "Notwithstanding apparent variations," says Gierke, "we see in the works of all these writers a full sovereignty of the Council as the representative of the whole community. In the last resort all other ecclesiastical powers appeared as mere delegations from the sovereign assembly; an assembly whose resolutions were unconditionally binding on the other organs of the Church; an assembly which, in case of collision, was the sole representative of the Church and indeed stood above the pope. The law of God which set bounds to every power, was, it is true, a limit, though it was the only generally recognised limit of the Council's omnipotence."<sup>70</sup> Other arguments drawn from Scripture, history, and natural right were adduced to justify the conciliar position. But the basal one was this doctrine of sovereignty transferred from the political to the ecclesiastical State, the Church being conceived as a "polity" or State association, which was entrusted with the mission of realising the ideal of a perfect political constitution.<sup>71</sup>

This doctrine was forcibly argued by Nicolas of Cues, or Cusanus in the "De Concordantia Catholica," which he wrote in 1433 in defence of the Council of Basle, though he subsequently went over to the papal party. In the Church, as in the State, all power, he maintained, was based on consent. God is, indeed, the author of the ecclesiastical sovereignty. But its actual coercive force is derived, as in the case of the temporal power, from the consent of the people, which conveys the sovereignty by means of election. All degrees of ecclesiastical jurisdiction are based on this common consent and conferred by election, and, therefore, a General Council, which is the highest of these, as representing the whole body of the Church, is superior to the pope, can assemble of its own accord, can act, if need be, without him, and is entitled to legislate authoritatively in virtue of its being the representative of the sovereign body. Even the pope holds his office in virtue of election, and though God authorises and sanctions it, his actual power is based on this common consent and is limited by it. Though, like the king, higher than any one of the people, he is the

<sup>70</sup> "Political Theories," 54.

<sup>71</sup> Gierke, *ibid.*, 49. See also Figgis, "Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius," Lect. II. (1907).

servant of the whole and can only exercise the power that has been committed to him by the people.<sup>72</sup>

Neither Cusanus nor the other conciliar leaders, with the exception of Cardinal D'Allemand and his democratic associates, were, however, prepared, in practice, to go the whole length of their theory of popular sovereignty. They did not, like Marsiglio and Occam, consistently champion the right of the laity to a voice in the government of the Church. The movement they represented was a hierarchic and aristocratic one, and though the lower clergy and, it would seem, even laymen succeeded in asserting their right to deliberate and vote in the Council of Basle, it was only at the cost of estranging the episcopal party and finally wrecking the conciliar movement. Nevertheless, the theory, though only partially applied, was significant of the far-reaching reaction against the papal absolutism, which, even in this partial form, would have profoundly transformed the constitution of the Church. Though it was defeated at Basle and provoked, on the part of papal champions like John of Torquemada,<sup>73</sup> the assertion of the counter theory of an absolute papal monarchy, it was destined to play a great part in future ecclesiastical as well as political constitutional development.

<sup>72</sup> The "Concordantia Catholica" in the "Opera" of Cusanus, ii. His views are well summarised by Gierke, "Political Theories," 54 f., and by Jacob in "Social and Political Ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation," ed. by Hearnshaw (1925), 32 f. See also Düx, "Nicolaus von Cusa," ii. 252 f.

<sup>73</sup> Torquemada's work, "De Summa Potestate Pontificis et Generalis Concilii," is given in vol. xxx. of Mansi. For those of Gregory of Heimburg on the other side against Æneas Sylvius and against Cusanus, who had turned papalist, see Goldast, ii. 1591 f.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE UNREFORMED PAPACY (1447-1517)

#### NICOLAS V.

THE restored papacy was fortunate in its first representative, Nicolas V., the successor of Eugenius (1447-55). A votary of the new culture and a patron of the humanists, he strove to raise its prestige by identifying it with the literary Renaissance of which Petrarch in the fourteenth century was the herald and which by the middle of the fifteenth was powerfully transforming the intellectual life of Italy. His ideal was to enhance the sway of the papacy by adapting it to the aspirations of a new age, of which Rome should be the focus and the pope the moulder. The papacy had, indeed, already felt the influence of this new intellectual life, and from the beginning of the fifteenth century the popes took advantage of the services of distinguished humanists like Leonardo Bruni, Poggio, Vergerio as apostolic secretaries. Innocent VII. anticipated Nicolas V. as the active patron of the new learning.<sup>1</sup> But his pontificate of two years was too short to leave more than a passing trace of his enlightened interest in the humanist movement.

Of that of Nicolas, on the other hand, it was the distinctive mark. "Full of confidence in the vitality and force of the Christian idea," says Pastor, "this highly cultured pontiff ventured to place himself at the head of the Renaissance both in art and literature; and it is in this that the real importance of his pontificate consists."<sup>2</sup> He was more a humanist than an ecclesiastic, though from the ecclesiastical side his rule was memorable for the collapse of the conciliar movement, to which his moderation greatly contributed. "The Roman

<sup>1</sup> Pastor, i. 165 f.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 164. On his humanist culture and patronage of the movement in detail, see Vespasiano, "Virorum illustrium . . . Vitæ" (ed. by Barbera, 1863), and Guiraud, "L'Église Romaine et les Origines de la Renaissance," 171 f., 217 f. (4th ed., 1909).

pontiffs," said he to Æneas Sylvius, "have too greatly extended their authority and left the other bishops no jurisdiction. It is a just judgment that the Council of Basle has in turn shortened too much the hands of the Holy See. We intend to strengthen the bishops, and hope to maintain our own power most surely by not usurping that of others."<sup>3</sup> Nicolas, in truth, devoted his energy chiefly to the realisation of his artistic and literary tastes in the patronage of the new culture and the embellishment of Rome in its spirit. He began the rebuilding of St Peter's,<sup>4</sup> rebuilt in part the Vatican palace and the Vatican library, and added to it many literary treasures. He restored a number of churches, gave scope to the genius of architects like Leo Battista Alberti, and painters like Fra Angelico, and bestowed a liberal patronage on a number of collectors, editors, and translators of Greek and Latin MSS., including, besides Poggio, George of Trebizond, Filelfo, even the heterodox Valla.

In the pursuit of his literary and artistic tastes, he did not altogether lose sight of the question of reform which had threatened the disruption of the Church under his predecessor. He sent legates to the various nations to strengthen the papal hold on their allegiance, revive ecclesiastical discipline, and proclaim the benefits of the indulgence on the occasion of the Jubilee of 1450. One of these, Cardinal Cusanus, effected some improvement of the life of the German Church by means of provincial synods at Salzburg, Magdeburg, and Mainz, and the systematic visitation of the religious houses.<sup>5</sup> Such individual attempts had, however, little effect as a substitute for the concerted effort of the Church itself which had failed so signally at Constance and Basle. Moreover, the pope had work enough to do in maintaining his position at Rome against the Porcaro conspiracy and in providing for the defence of Christendom against the Turk to concern himself systematically with the work of reform. The menace to Christian civilisation from the advance of the Turk into Europe, which had been emphasised by the Turkish victories of Varna (November 1444) and Kossovo (1448) over the Hungarians, was startlingly

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Creighton, iii. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Pastor, ii. 178, says that he only had the plan drawn up, but died before actually commencing the work. Creighton says he actually began the rebuilding, iii. 161; so also Guiraud, 209 f.

<sup>5</sup> See Düx, "Nicolaus von Cusa," ii. 1-105; Pastor, ii. 104 f.

brought home to the European nations by the fall of Constantinople in May 1453. Mahomet II. wrested the ancient capital of the eastern empire from Constantine Palæologus, the last of the eastern emperors, and the fall of Constantinople was felt to be a terrible reverse to the Christian Church as well as a political calamity of the first magnitude. Nicolas had delayed too long in sending a small fleet to the assistance of the Greek emperor, owing to the dissension between the pope and the Greeks over the question of the union, which they had refused to implement, and the Turks had burst into the city two days before its arrival in the Ægean. The Venetian fleet also came too late to avert the disaster to Christendom, and the subsequent attempt of Nicolas to organise a crusade for the reconquest of the eastern bulwark of Christendom was rendered futile by the antagonism or apathy of the western nations. The idea of a Christian commonwealth, with the papacy as its motive power in morals and religion, and even politics, had been exploded by the growth of antagonistic nations alongside the empire and by the antagonism of both to the papacy. The unity of the Church even had been seriously threatened. It had disappeared from the nations. The imperial unity of the Middle Ages had long ceased to afford a common bond for political action and the mediæval Church, after the disintegrating effects of the Babylonish captivity and the Great Schism, no longer wielded the commanding influence of the period of the first crusades. Hunyadi and the Hungarian army were left by the emperor, Venice, Genoa, and Naples—the powers most nearly concerned—to defend Europe and the Cross against Asia and the Crescent.

### CALIXTUS III.

Nicolas' successor, the aged Spanish cardinal who bore the sinister name of Borgia, and assumed the title of Calixtus III., was a learned legist, who had acquired great experience of ecclesiastical and political affairs as secretary to King Alfonso of Naples, but had none of Nicolas' enthusiasm for the new culture. Under his short pontificate of three years (1455-58) the humanists, with the exception of Valla, who somehow managed to gain his special favour,<sup>6</sup> accordingly lost influence

<sup>6</sup> Pastor, ii. 333.

and office. On the other hand, Calixtus took up with unflagging ardour his project of a crusade for the recovery of Constantinople, and his ardour was heightened by his Spanish nationality, which had been infused with the crusading spirit in the long struggle with the Moors. His absorbing passion as pope was, therefore, the destruction of the Turkish power in Europe, and to this end he dispatched legates to the chief Christian nations and preachers of the crusade and tithe collectors to countries so distant as Scandinavia, Scotland, and Ireland.<sup>7</sup> The legates diplomatized and the preachers preached in vain. Calixtus succeeded in building a small fleet and sending it into Turkish waters, where it won a victory over a Turkish fleet at Mitylene (August 1457). But Germany and the western nations did not respond to his fervid appeals. "The pope calls for help," exclaimed Æneas Sylvius; "but no one listens to him."<sup>8</sup> Once more Hunyadi was left alone to vindicate the Christian cause by the great victory of Belgrade (July 1456) which forced Mahomet to retreat and checked the Turkish advance westwards for the time being, whilst the heroic Skanderbeg struggled, with the assistance of the pope and the King of Naples, to preserve the independence of Albania, and signalised his generalship by the crushing defeat of a Turkish army at Tomorniza (July 1457).

Whilst Calixtus thus energetically distinguished his pontificate by his ardent pursuit of a policy fitted to serve the general interest of Europe against the oriental invader, he showed, on the other hand, a most reprehensible tendency to use his office for the aggrandisement of his relatives. It was to his scandalous nepotism that the family of Borgia owed the beginning of its future sinister eminence in Italy. He raised two of his nephews—one of them the vicious Rodrigo, the future Alexander VI.—to the cardinalate, and loaded them with benefices and high offices. He created another Duke of Spoleto and made him Prefect of Rome and gonfalonier of the Church, and this trio of worthless favourites pursued the policy of trafficking in sacred things, which was to make the papacy of the second half of the fifteenth century the instrument of the egotism and ambition of most of the holders of the papal office.

<sup>7</sup> Pastor, ii. 352.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 386.

## PIUS II.

Calixtus's successor, Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1458-64), was fitted to continue the work of Nicolas V. in respect of sympathy with the new learning as well as the crusade against the Turks. As a youth he had been a pupil of Filelfo at Florence, after studying law, with little zeal or interest, at the University of Siena, and thus contracted his humanist sympathies. But he preferred the life of the man of affairs to that of the scholar, and disappointed the humanists, who were looking for a new Maecenas in Calixtus's successor. In the pursuit of his ambition to play a rôle in the active world, he had passed as secretary from one employer to another, both ecclesiastical and secular. He visited many lands in the course of his secretarial career, including Scotland, of which he has left a most interesting description. He took an active part in the Council of Basle, and became secretary to the anti-pope Felix V., and ultimately to Frederick III. of Germany, who crowned him poet at Frankfurt in 1442. He was bent on rising in the world, and was not overscrupulous in moulding his principles to suit the circumstances. Success was the measure of his conduct, and in view of the growing discredit of the Council of Basle and its anti-pope, he transferred his allegiance to Eugenius IV. in 1443, and thenceforth took a leading part in the long negotiations between the pope and Frederick and the German princes over the ecclesiastical question. His life hitherto had been one of levity and licence as well as hard work. His travels might be mapped out by the illegitimate children he left behind him, one of them being born in Scotland. In spite of the profligacy of his past life, he at last turned his thoughts to the priesthood with a view to his further advancement. Nicolas V. made him Bishop of Trieste, and he amply earned the rank of cardinal, which Calixtus conferred on him, by his great services as a negotiator in Germany, Bohemia, and Italy in the interest of the Church. On the death of Calixtus, his ambition reached its goal in his election as his successor.<sup>9</sup> He had made a business of religion

<sup>9</sup> On his career see the monograph of W. Boulting, "Pope Pius II., Æneas Sylvius" (1908). The author adopts an indulgent and apologetic attitude in contrast to Voigt, "Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius II." (1856).

and it had brought him, the worldling and the opportunist, at last to the papal chair.

As Pope Pius II. he occupied the papal throne for six years, and like his two predecessors devoted himself to the task of uniting Europe in a crusade against the Turk. For this work his large experience of political and ecclesiastical affairs and his tried ability as a diplomatist admirably fitted him, though his precarious health, the result of his earlier excesses, added not a little to its difficulty. For this purpose he convoked a congress of the powers at Mantua in 1459. The few envoys who attended discussed with him an aggressive scheme against the Turks, which looked very formidable on paper, but which the powers, torn by their own antagonisms, failed, as before, to translate into action. Moreover, the nations were becoming restive under the financial drain which the crusade project intensified. This restiveness found forcible expression in the renewed appeal to a General Council made by Gregory of Heimburg during the quarrel between Sigismund of Austria and Cardinal Cusanus, who was striving to reform his bishopric of Brixen and whom Pius supported. To this appeal Pius retorted with the bull "Execrabilis,"<sup>10</sup> in which he prohibited such appeals under penalty of excommunication (January 1460). Heimburg and Sigismund maintained their independent attitude notwithstanding, and Heimburg dealt him in addition some pungent strokes on the score of his past life.<sup>11</sup> The project of a crusade was further hampered by friction with Louis XI. of France, who had agreed to abolish the Pragmatic Sanction, but who felt aggrieved at the pope's opposition to the French claim to the Neapolitan throne and practically revoked all that he had conceded, and with King George Podiebrad of Bohemia over the compacts.

Meanwhile Mahomet had been making progress in the extension of his conquests in the south-east, and Pius made a last great effort to unite Europe under the banner of the Cross. The attempt failed miserably and, in alliance with Hungary

<sup>10</sup> Mansi, xxxii. 259; Mirbt, "Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums," 169 f. (1901); Rocquain, "La Cour de Rome," iii. 355 f. Pastor says it was directed against the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, which rested on the conciliar theory of the superiority of the Council over the pope, iii. 120 f. Pius evidently had in view the trouble in Germany as well.

<sup>11</sup> Some of the documents are given in Goldast, ii.

and Venice, he set out himself to the holy war. The journey to Ancona under the beating rays of the July sun exhausted his greatly impaired strength and at Ancona he died in August 1464. He was no doubt sincere in his policy as pope, but he lacked the moral greatness to impress Europe with his sincerity. He had long been an opportunist, and when he really sought to play the part of the inspirer of a great scheme, Europe refused to forget his former opportunism. Besides, Europe was so divided and degenerate that even the zeal of a Peter the Hermit and a Gregory VII. would have failed to revive in it enthusiasm for an ideal. The age when the papacy both represented and inspired the ideal was past. Like his predecessor, he was a nepotist and did not overlook the aggrandisement of his family on his own elevation.

#### PAUL II.

He had martyred himself for the crusade against the Turk. But he had neglected the reform of the Church, and before appointing a successor, the cardinals sought to bind him to summon a General Council for this purpose within three years, as well as to continue the crusade, and added a number of stipulations tending to limit the papal power by that of the sacred college. The Venetian Cardinal Barbo, on whom their choice fell and who took the title of Paul II. (1464-71), was not disposed to observe the compact. After his election he insisted on its modification, and nothing came of the projected reform council. The pope, it appeared, could not be bound by any ecclesiastical body, whether college or council. He was superior even to his own sworn obligations and claimed to act as an absolute potentate, whom no solemn stipulation could bind. His office, as divinely appointed and conferred, was above every human limit.

Unlike his three predecessors, Paul did not seriously concern himself with the crusade against the Turks. From this time, in fact, the crusade project, though constantly appearing in diplomatic documents, becomes more and more a pretext for raising money, which the popes appropriated for their own use. "The two most respectable among the popes of the fifteenth century, Nicolas V. and Pius II.," says Burckhardt, "died in the deepest grief at the progress of the Turks, the

latter indeed amid the preparations for a crusade which he was hoping to lead in person; their successors embezzled the contributions sent for this purpose from all parts of Christendom and degraded the indulgences granted in return for them into a private commercial speculation."<sup>12</sup>

Paul preferred the special interest of the papacy to the general interest of Europe, and devoted himself to the extirpation of the Bohemian heresy. To this end he strove to unite the emperor and the kings of Hungary and Poland in a crusade against King George of Bohemia, the champion of the Utraquists. At his instigation Mathias of Hungary plunged into a war with the Bohemian king both in his own interest and that of the papacy. In thus fomenting the spirit of antagonism between the nations in that part of Europe most exposed to the Turkish peril, the egotistic pope showed a melancholy disregard alike of the general interest and the defence of Christianity. "Paul II.," says Creighton, "cast to the winds all thought of the real interests of Europe that he might secure the interests of the Church. To reduce Bohemia to obedience to the papacy, he did not scruple to plunge into warfare—which could only end in mutual destruction—the two most capable rulers in Europe, whose territories were the natural bulwarks against the advance of the Turk."<sup>13</sup>

His private life was exemplary, though he was all too fond of display in the belief of thereby enhancing the papal prestige. He succeeded in regaining the possessions which the Church had lost under his predecessors, and establishing order and security in Rome. He desired to reform abuses in the curia and the Church, but lacked the persistence to realise his good intentions. Among these reforms was the abolition of the College of Abbreviators, whose office it was to draw up the papal bulls and other official documents, which roused the wrath of Platina and the humanists, of whom the college was largely composed. He further aggrieved them by suppressing the Roman Academy as an irreligious association, whose members, under the leadership of Pomponius Laetus, gave eccentric expression to their enthusiasm for antiquity by substituting

<sup>12</sup> "Civilisation of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy," i. 130 (Eng. trans., 1878).

<sup>13</sup> iv, 23 f.

fancy classic for Christian names and playing at reviving old pagan ceremonies. On the other hand, if he refused to pay for the flatteries of the humanists or tolerate their extravagances, he was a liberal patron of architecture and an enthusiastic art collector, and left as the chief monument of his artistic taste the massive Palazzo di Venezia in Rome. His memory has suffered from the detraction of Platina, his humanist critic. Of his rule as pope it may be said that his intentions were better than his achievements. "His only luxury," says Creighton, "was his magnificence; in his private life he was simple and even abstemious. He lacked the force necessary to give decisive effect to his good intentions. . . . Later times dated from him the decline of the papacy."<sup>14</sup> To increase its outward magnificence was no adequate remedy for the decay of its inward vitality.

#### SIXTUS IV.

Sixtus IV. (1471-84), who was a peasant's son, owed his election to bribery, and with him, though a learned theologian and general of the Franciscan order, the secular spirit took complete possession of the papacy. He cared neither for reform, nor for the crusade, but threw himself into Italian politics in the spirit of the corrupt Italian statecraft of the time, and gave his strength to the task of augmenting his power as a temporal sovereign. Characteristic of his worldly policy was the unblushing nepotism which, while it conferred high ecclesiastical rank and office on his worthless relatives, secured him fitting instruments of his statecraft. Two of his nephews he made cardinals and enriched with many benefices; on several others he lavished lands and honours, and under their régime the papal court excelled all others in its magnificence, extravagance, and luxury. Their aggrandisement and that of the papacy as a political power was Sixtus's chief solicitude. To attain their ends, one of the nephews, Girolamo Riario, the worthy prototype of Cæsar Borgia, did not shrink from plotting the assassination of Lorenzo di Medici, the virtual ruler of Florence, who stood in the way of their aggrandising plans, and his brother Giuliano. Of this plot Giuliano fell a victim in the Cathedral of Florence, where the assassins stabbed him to death during mass (April

<sup>14</sup> iv. 63.

1478), and Lorenzo barely escaped sharing his fate. The pope was privy to the plot, and though he sought to persuade the conspirators to be satisfied with the overthrow of the Medici, he took no adequate means to prevent the murder.

The dastardly attempt against the Medici was followed by a war between Florence and the pope, during which the Turk invaded Italy itself and seized Otranto (July 1480). This calamity led to a peace between the belligerents, who turned their arms against the invaders and forced them to withdraw. This withdrawal brought the pope and his nephew, Girolamo, the opportunity of renewing their aggressive policy at the expense of the Duke of Ferrara and of Venice, and plunging Italy once more into war, which occupied the remaining four years of his pontificate.

Sixtus was a purely political pope who confined his energy to the secular interests of the papacy as an Italian power. The significance of his rule lies in the fact that he impressed on the papacy the secular character which it was to retain for fully fifty years. "The sphere of the pope's political activity," says Creighton, "was narrowed to Italy only, and Sixtus inaugurated a period of secularisation of the papacy, which continued till the shock of the Reformation startled it again into spiritual activity. Under Sixtus the papacy became an Italian power, which pursued its own political career with force and dexterity. What Sixtus began, Alexander VI. continued and Julius II. brought to a successful issue. The papal States were won, but Italy fell under foreign domination, and the papacy lost its hold on Northern Europe almost as soon as the work was accomplished."<sup>15</sup>

With the secular spirit was paired a deplorable declension of morality in the papal court. Sixtus might not be the infamous profligate depicted by Infessura, whose charges of abominable sensuality seem to rest on hearsay, and who, as an adherent of the Colonna faction, was his bitter enemy.<sup>16</sup> But as an unblushing nepotist, as the active champion of a secular policy, in the pursuit of which the low arts of Italian statecraft were fair expedients, as the accomplice of a vicious adventurer like his nephew Girolamo, as the patron of an oppressive and corrupt court, he cannot escape the charge of

<sup>15</sup> *iv.* 116-17.

<sup>16</sup> *Pastor*, *iv.* 416-18.

setting decorum and morality at defiance both as pope and as ruler of the States of the Church. The assertion of the political power of the papacy was made at the cost of the depression of its religious and moral influence, and if its reassociation with the new culture, of which Sixtus was the ardent patron, enhanced its splendour, it did not compensate for the travesty of Christianity which his rule presents. He belied the tolerant humanism, which he combined with his professional orthodoxy, by confirming and extending the Spanish Inquisition under Torquemada.

#### INNOCENT VIII.

The history of the pontificate of Innocent VIII. (1484-92), who owed his election to bribery, is petty as well as unedifying. Sixtus was at least a forceful man, though an unworthy pope. Innocent was both an unworthy pope and a weak man. As a young man he became the father of what seems to have been an illegitimate family, which as an ecclesiastical dignitary he openly avowed, and whose advancement he furthered as pope. While in worldliness he was the equal of Sixtus, he had none of his energy. He failed in the attempt to compel Ferrante of Naples to pay the annual tribute to the pope as suzerain, and only proved his incompetence to maintain the papacy as a force in the game of Italian politics. His incompetence disposed him to a pacific policy as ruler, and the epitaph on his tomb described him as "the constant guardian of Italian peace." This rather rare virtue honourably distinguishes him among the contentious rulers of his age in Italy and elsewhere. It is unfortunately his only distinction. Under his régime as head of the Church lawlessness, corruption, gross materialism flourished unchecked at Rome. It was not without reason that Lorenzo di Medici, who knew the world and was no fastidious judge, called the Rome of Innocent "a sink of all iniquities." The pope signalised his zeal by a bull against witchcraft in Germany, which multiplied the victims of this miserable delusion, and strove to suppress Waldensian and other heretics. He did nothing to probe the festering sore of moral corruption in the cardinalate, the curia, the city. The papal court had sunk to the low moral ebb which it had reached under some of

the Avignon popes. Here is a glimpse of it as described by a Roman Catholic historian. "These greedy officials," says Pastor, in reference to the scandalous sale of offices by which the pope strove to increase his revenue, "whose only aim was to get as much as possible for themselves out of the churches with which they had to do, were naturally detested in all countries, and were the most determined opponents of reform. The corruptibility of all officials increased to an alarming extent, carrying with it general insecurity and disorder in Rome, since any criminal, who had money, could secure immunity from punishment. The conduct of some members of the pope's immediate circle even gave great scandal. Franchetto Cibo was mean and avaricious and led a disorderly life, which was doubly unbecoming in the son of a pope. He paraded the streets at night with Girolamo Tuttavilla, forced his way into the houses of the citizens for evil purposes, and was often driven out with shame. In one night Franchetto lost 14,000 ducats to Cardinal Riario and complained to the pope that he had been cheated. Cardinal de la Balue also lost 8,000 to the same cardinal in a single evening. . . . All the more worldly cardinals were deeply affected with the corruption which prevailed in Italy amongst the upper classes in the age of the Renaissance. Surrounded in their splendid palaces with all the most refined luxury of a highly developed civilisation, these cardinals lived the lives of secular princes, and seemed to regard their ecclesiastical garb simply as one of the adornments of their rank. They hunted, gambled, gave sumptuous banquets, joined in all the rollicking merriment of the carnival tide, and allowed themselves the utmost licence in morals."<sup>17</sup>

The efforts of the feeble pope to repress the general disorder were unavailing, while he himself aggravated the rampant corruption by the multiplication and sale of offices to mercenary buyers. "Vainly," says Gregorovius, "he issued edicts against the assassins and robbers. Each morning revealed the horrors of the night, bodies of men who had been stabbed lying in the streets. Pilgrims and even ambassadors were robbed outside the gates of the city. The judges were either powerless or corrupt. The pope's family unblushingly sold justice.

<sup>17</sup> iv. 353 f., 362.

The Vice-Chancellor, asked why the malefactors were not punished, answered with a smile in the presence of the historian Infessura, 'God will not the death of a sinner, but that he should *pay* and live.' Criminals were released when they could pay a sum of money to the papal curia. Murderers without difficulty obtained a safe-conduct from the pope, which allowed them to roam the city with armed men in order to defend themselves against vengeance. . . . Everyone mocked at justice, and everyone had recourse to the aid of armed men. . . . Innocent himself created new offices for the sake of money, and surpassed even Sixtus IV. in these financial speculations. He sold the customs duties to Romans, of whom no one demanded an account; extortions and embezzlements corrupted the administration of the State; even false bulls were issued in numbers by impostors. The curia became more and more the laboratory of shameless corruption, a bank of money-changers and usurers, a market for the sale of offices and dignities throughout the entire world. We do it no injustice in asserting that through it the morality of Rome and Italy and even of the entire age was corrupted."<sup>18</sup>

## ALEXANDER VI.

It was one of the most worldly of these cardinals, Rodrigo di Borgia, that succeeded him as Alexander VI. (1492-1503), in virtue of the most unblushing bribery of his fellow-electors. Alexander had by various mistresses a numerous illegitimate progeny, including the notorious Cæsar Borgia. The nepotism which he practised in common with previous popes was aggravated by his sensuality, which shared in the nocturnal orgies of which the Vatican was the scene,<sup>19</sup> and it is significant of the lax morality of the age that the elevation of such a man to the papal throne caused no scandal in Italy. He was undoubtedly able, if profligate, had made himself popular as cardinal, and his notorious breaches of the law of celibacy were no great blemish to a lax and cynical age, which had grown accustomed to the most glaring antithesis between religious

<sup>18</sup> "Rome in the Middle Ages," vii., Pt. I., 298, 319. Based on the Diaries of Infessura (Muratori, iii., Pt. II.) and of Burchard, papal master of ceremonies under Innocent and Alexander VI. (ed. by Thuasne, 1883-85). See also Creighton, iv. 145 f., 178 f.

<sup>19</sup> See Creighton, v. 57.

profession and practice. In this respect Alexander was no worse than some of his former fellow-cardinals, whose lives disgraced their vows and their vocation. Whilst he reinvigorated the papacy by his activity in maintaining its political interests, his pontificate holds the record for moral declension within our period of the papal history. Even discounting the charges, such as that of incest, which the gossip of a low-toned society circulated and which appear to be inventions, his life as ruler and as pope is black enough and all attempts at white-washing it have proved hopeless.<sup>20</sup>

His pontificate formed a crisis in the destiny of Italy. The division into a number of antagonistic petty States, which pursued their own interest with no thought for a common fatherland, at last brought a terrible castigation. Popes, princes, and republics had warred in this pursuit, oblivious of the fact of the growing power of France and Spain, which had both been consolidated into strong kingdoms, and were both by the end of the century free to devote themselves to schemes of expansion at the cost of the warring Italian states. France had expelled the English invader, checked the growth of Burgundy, and absorbed Brittany, the last of the great, semi-independent provinces. Spain had witnessed the union of the crowns of Aragon and Castile by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and driven out the Moors. Both were eager to spoil Italy and the expedition of Charles VIII. to Naples in 1494-5 was the beginning of a long rivalry between them for its possession. Charles' advance provoked a combination of Spain, the Emperor Maximilian, Milan, and Venice which forced him to retreat. But his policy was resumed by his

<sup>20</sup> See Pastor, vi. 138; Mathew, "Rodrigo Borgia, Pope Alexander VI." 380 f. (1912); Creighton, v. 51 f.; Hefele, viii., Pt. 1., 235. "Even though we must beware of accepting without examination all the tales told of Alexander by his contemporaries, . . . still so much against him has been clearly proved that we are forced to reject the modern attempts at white-washing him as an unworthy tampering with truth," Pastor, vi. 138. "He scandalised the faithful and aroused the contempt of unbelievers," says Hefele, who pronounces his private life "really criminal." Creighton, who strives to be fair, concludes that his pontificate marked the highest point of the prevalent corruption of the age in Italy, and that in him the papacy stood forth in all the strength of its emancipation from morality. Mr Vaughan, who treats of Alexander as a ruler and a politician, very indulgently concludes "that the Borgias were no worse from a moral point of view than their contemporaries," "Studies in the Italian Renaissance," 66 (1930). See also Portogliotti, "The Borgias," trans. by Miall (1928).

successor, Louis XII., who took possession of Milan in 1499, and in the following year agreed to partition Naples with Ferdinand of Spain (Treaty of Granada, 1500). The carrying out of this unscrupulous bargain led to a quarrel over the spoil and a war in which the French were worsted. But it was the beginning of the end of Italian independence all the same.

In the midst of this sinister situation, the pope pursued no higher policy than that of securing in the scramble for aggrandisement a secular principality for his son, Cæsar, whom he allowed to resign his cardinalate in 1498, married to a French princess, and, with the aid of the French king, launched on his career as the conqueror of the Romagna. In the pursuit of this end every expedient of an immoral statecraft and a brutal militarism was a legitimate part of the game, and it is as the patron and the associate of this unscrupulous adventurer, during the later years of his pontificate, that Alexander has compromised so irreparably his vocation and his reputation as pope. In a fit of remorse after the assassination of his son, the Duke of Gandia in 1497, he professed a resolution to reform his life as well as the Church and appointed a commission of cardinals to draft a reform scheme. But the scheme remained but a draft, and the promised self-reform was equally fruitless, while, as will appear in the following chapter, he contributed to bring about the tragic failure of Savonarola's reform mission in Florence. On the other hand, he displayed an official zeal for the maintenance of "purity of doctrine." He was especially anxious, it seems, as a bull relative to the censorship of books shows, to prevent anything being printed that was likely to cause scandal to the faith, and he was very energetic in repressing the Waldensians and other heretics, who, he gravely regrets, lead very immoral lives!<sup>21</sup> Alexander as moralist would be a decided hit on the comic stage.

## JULIUS II.

Though Julius II.<sup>22</sup> (1503-13) had as Cardinal della Rovere been for a time the determined antagonist of Alexander VI., he continued his secular policy, and entered with all the force

<sup>21</sup> See Pastor, vi. 154 f.

<sup>22</sup> Pius III. was the immediate successor of Alexander, but survived his elevation only a few weeks.

of his intense, impetuous nature into the gamble of contemporary politics. He was the ablest and the most forceful of a band of unscrupulous politicians—Ferdinand of Spain, Louis XII. of France, Henry VII. of England, and Maximilian of Germany—who made for the time being the political history of Europe. Under his energetic auspices the papacy took a leading position in politics and war, for the new pope could, on occasion, assume the rôle of general as well as diplomatist. His constant pre-occupation in politics and war certainly did not tend to rescue the spiritual side of his office from its long eclipse. In the history of the time his personality made itself powerfully felt as the moulder of international politics in the service of the secular interests of the papacy, and to Europe the papacy appeared almost exclusively as one of the powers of this world. In this part it appeared, however, to the utmost advantage, for the pope was a match in statecraft for any of his unscrupulous fellow-potentates.

Otherwise, he redeemed it from the scandal of the Borgia régime, for, though he favoured his children and relatives, he did not make their advancement the pivot of his policy. He laboured for the glory of the Church as he understood it, *i.e.*, for the assertion and vindication of its interests as embodied in the temporal rather than the spiritual side of his office. In the interest of his temporal power he schemed to unite the emperor and the kings of France and Spain against Venice, which had secured possession of the Romagna on the fall of Cæsar Borgia, and at length succeeded in negotiating the League of Cambrai (1508-09). It was a diplomatic success gained at the expense of good faith and entirely in the spirit of the Machiavellian statecraft of the age, and it shows the pope in the rôle of the genius of the Machiavellian type. But the conquest of Venice, which was the result, meant the aggrandisement of the allies as well as the pope, and the astute and unscrupulous Julius, having brought Venice to its knees, set about negotiating a new combination at the expense of France, which threatened to become too powerful in Northern Italy. Hence the Holy League (1511) which combined Venice,<sup>23</sup> the kings of Spain and England, and ultimately

<sup>23</sup> The treaty as between Julius and Ferdinand and Venice is in "Codex Diplomaticus Domini Temporalis S. Sedis," 518 f. It provides for the accession to the League of Henry VIII. and Maximilian.

Maximilian against Louis and resulted in the expulsion of the French from Italy. These successes were highly creditable to his diplomatic skill, but it is significant of the worldly character of the papacy that such successes in war and statecraft, involving perfidy as well as bloodshed, were esteemed the great achievements of the head of the Church. It was brilliant, but it was not Christian, and it was tending to prepare the way for the coming revolt from the papacy as a travesty of Christianity. The revolt seemed to have already broken out when Louis XII., in his antagonism to the militant pope, summoned a reform council to Pisa (September 1511). But his action was directed by political motives, and the Council, though supported from similar motives by some of the cardinals and going the length, after its transference to Milan,<sup>24</sup> of suspending the pope, ended in aimless discussion. Julius met this manœuvre by another and summoned a council of his own to Rome (The Fifth Lateran Council). It condemned the rival assembly of Pisa and Milan, and had got the length of publishing a decree against simony, which the pope, in his need of money to carry out his schemes, so lavishly practised, when his death intervened in the beginning of 1513. While Pastor apologetically gives him the credit of attempting to reform abuses in individual cases, he is fain to admit that his immersion in politics "drove the larger question of reform into the background."<sup>25</sup> It was speedily to prove a fatal dereliction from what, all too patently, should have been the chief concern of the vicar of Christ.

It is impossible to deny his pontificate greatness of a kind. He has been called the greatest pope since Innocent III.<sup>26</sup> He had made the papacy a controlling power in contemporary politics by the force of his militant personality. He had the temperament and the ability to play a great part, and he sought to add lustre to his achievements as pope by his patronage of the genius of Bramante, Michael Angelo, and Raphael, whose magnificent creations in architecture, sculpture, painting are

<sup>24</sup> Subsequently removed to Lyons.

<sup>25</sup> vi. 444.

<sup>26</sup> Burchhardt, "Civilisation of the Renaissance," i. 111 (3rd ed.). For a recent sketch of his pontificate, see Rodocanachi, "Le Pontificat de Jules II." (1928).

a reflex of his own vaulting mind. It was he that completed the demolition of the venerable basilica of St Peter's, begun by Nicolas V., to make way for the grand pile that Bramante conceived and began; he that discovered and inspired the powers of Michael Angelo and Raphael in the decoration of the Sistine Chapel and the Stanza della Signatura<sup>27</sup> and other apartments in the Vatican. Had he devoted his power of initiation in politics and war to the task that clamantly demanded its achievement, and for the neglect of which no other activity could atone—the regeneration of the Church—he might have saved the papacy from the disaster which his success in statecraft and war only rendered the more certain. What was certain was that a secular papacy, however brilliant, could not indefinitely risk the experiment of ignoring the moral and spiritual nature of man by identifying the Church with the political schemes or the personal character and policy of an individual, who, as high priest of Christendom, preferred to serve God by the expedients of those who served the devil. No amount of ecclesiastical apologetic could get over the fact that, if serious-minded men were to believe any longer in God, they could no longer believe in such a pope as His representative on earth. It is significant that Erasmus, in his stinging satire "Julius Exclusus," represents St Peter as refusing to admit the bellicose pope to heaven.

It may be said that there was no alternative for the pope as a temporal ruler but to intrigue, dissemble, and fight like the other unscrupulous secular rulers of the age, and that without his temporal power, he and the Church would have been trampled on by these potentates. The fact that a Julius could descend in his statecraft to the level of his contemporary sovereigns and sacrifice religion to politics shows, at anyrate, that there was something radically wrong in a system that combined in a man fitted to be a soldier and a politician the offices of temporal sovereign and high priest of Christendom. The sooner he was deprived of his secular office the better from the moral and religious point of view. It is only as a moral and spiritual force that the Church has any right to power or can really be powerful. Even among his Italian

<sup>27</sup> The room where the pope signed documents.

contemporaries there were some, like Vittori<sup>28</sup> and Guicciardini, who had already come to this conclusion.

## LEO X.

Giovanni de' Medici, who became Julius' successor, with the title of Leo X., had none of his force of character and intensity. "Since God has given us the papacy," he is said to have remarked to his brother, "let us enjoy it." If the saying was invented for him it was well invented. Himself highly cultured, he was the profuse patron of art, learning, and literature. While conventionally religious,<sup>29</sup> he was easygoing, worldly minded, extravagant, addicted to pleasure and splendour. As a Medici he was an adept in the political manœuvring which had raised his family to the domination of Florence, and as pope he took his due share of this kind of activity in the interest of his family as well as the papacy. In his family egotism he resembled Alexander rather than Julius, though he was personally more decorous. He was altogether unfitted to grapple with the crisis which, as events speedily proved, at last presented the alternative of a thorough reform, or a disruption of the Church. "He was incapable of comprehending," judges Pastor, "that nothing short of a radical reformation in the head and members of the Church could arrest the movement which had been in preparation for so long. Thus at this, the most severe crisis which had met her in her 1,500 years of history, the right ruler was wanting to the Church. Instead of the Medici pope, the Church needed a Gregory VII."<sup>30</sup> He allowed the Lateran Council to continue its deliberations during the first four years of his pontificate, but though it passed some reform decrees, it took no adequate steps for their practical application and left the Church in no better condition than it found it. "The Council," says Hefele, "could only pass decrees. What was lacking was their observance."<sup>31</sup> In sanctioning the abolition of the

<sup>28</sup> "Sommaro della Storia d'Italia," ed. by Reumont in "Archivio Storico Italiano."

<sup>29</sup> The charge of atheism is an unfounded libel. See Vaughan, "The Medici Popes," 280 f. (1908).

<sup>30</sup> vii. 7.

<sup>31</sup> viii., Pt. I., 545. See also Creighton, v. 268 f.

Pragmatic Sanction which, though abrogated by Louis XI., had been practically renewed, and the abolition of which Leo arranged with Francis I. at Bologna, it gave, in fact, the finishing stroke to the chief memento of the reforming activity of its predecessor at Basle. By this arrangement the liberties of the Gallican Church were sacrificed to the respective interests of the king and the pope in the concordat which gave to the king the right of nominating to bishoprics and thus enhanced the royal power over the French Church, and, whilst abolishing reservations and restricting appeals and provisions, recognised the papal right to annates and the papal superiority to a General Council.

The Lateran Council was dissolved in March 1517. Before its dissolution pope and council united in reaffirming the papal absolutism and condemning the Councils of Constance and Basle in the bull "Pastor Aeternus," with quotations from the "Unam Sanctam" of Boniface VIII. In the face of the spirit of revolt seething in Germany, if not in Italy, it was to prove but an academic deliverance. Some months later Luther was nailing his theses against the abuse of indulgences to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg, and a reformer of a dynamic genius had at last appeared in Germany, which was nursing its wrath against the evils of the papal régime.<sup>32</sup> "With the dawn of the new century," says Pastor, "the cry for reform sounded louder and louder from both sides of the Alps, taking the shape of treatises, letters, poems, satires, and predictions, the theme of which was the corruption of the clergy, and especially the worldliness of the Roman curia. To many the ancient Church seemed to be as rotten as the Holy Roman-Teutonic Empire; and many foretold the downfall of both these buttresses of the mediæval system. The signs of the times became more and more threatening. To observant spectators it seemed as if, with the advent to power of the Medici (pope), a heavy storm must break over the Church. . . . The pope disregarded even the most serious warnings, such as those uttered by Alexander in respect to Germany in 1516. He did not co-operate in the half-measures, nor in the super-

<sup>32</sup> See Pastor, vii. 246 f. A convincing evidence of the spirit of revolt in Germany against the intolerable abuses of the papal régime is Luther's "Address to the German Nobility," which appeared three years later.

ficial attempts made to carry out the salutary decrees of the Lateran Council. Therefore the Roman curia, which had for a long time been held in contempt and made the object of the bitterest satires, remained as worldly as ever. While by many it was scorned for its love of money, equal condemnation fell on the unworthy, immoral conduct of the Roman courtiers, of high and low degree, which the supreme head of the Church was either unable or unwilling to check." <sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> vii. 4 f.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### SAVONAROLA—PROPHET AND REFORMER

#### HIS EARLY CAREER

BEFORE the appearance of Luther to give effective expression to the growing demand for reform in Germany, Savonarola had vainly essayed the task of regenerating Church and State in Italy. His career as prophet and reformer is interesting, if only as an evidence that individual effort within the Church in Italy was as unavailing to effect a reformation at the end of the fifteenth century as that of the reforming councils in the earlier part of it had been. How he conceived and carried out his reforming mission and why it failed within a few years of Luther's advent, I shall attempt to show by a brief survey of his life and work.

He was born at Ferrara in 1452 and was destined for the medical profession, in which his grandfather had distinguished himself as professor in the university of that duchy and physician to the duke. As a preliminary he studied the scholastic philosophy, which was then a preparation for that of medicine, and became absorbed in the works of Thomas Aquinas. The bent of his mind was, however, at an early period towards the religious life, and a disappointment in love as well as his disgust at the wickedness of the age seems to have quickened his determination to become a monk. To the great sorrow of his parents, he slipped away from home in April 1475 and entered the Dominican monastery at Bologna. Here he spent the next six years in monastic devotion, in intensive study of the Bible, in instructing the novices after the completion of his own novitiate, and in brooding over the degenerate state of the Church and the world. Here, too, he made his first essays in preaching and in 1481 was sent to exercise his gift in his native place. He met with no success, and in the same year <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Villari, "Savonarola," i. 31, Eng. trans. by Linda Villari, 1889; new ed. of the original, 1927. Creighton says 1482 (misprinted 1842), "History

he removed to the monastery of St Mark (San Marco) at Florence, which Cosimo de' Medici had restored and which, under the auspices of Fra Antonino, who became Archbishop of Florence, was celebrated for its learning and Christian philanthropy.

Florence was certainly in need of a preacher of righteousness. Its virtual ruler, or "boss," was Lorenzo de' Medici—Lorenzo the Magnificent—who, whilst maintaining its republican institutions, absorbed the government in his own able hands. Under his rule Florence was politically powerful and materially prosperous and outdistanced every other Italian city as a centre of the new art and culture. Himself poet, critic, philosopher, scholar, as well as a statesman of marked ability, he was the patron of a brilliant circle of artists, scholars, and men of letters, which included Ficino, Poliziano, Pico della Mirandola. Nevertheless his rule was both corrupt and corrupting, and whilst his government was undoubtedly effective, its success was, partly at least, due to the skill with which he amused and corrupted the people into acquiescence in his masterly régime. The age, indeed, as well as the man must bear its share of responsibility for this corruption of morals, and the Florence of Lorenzo was not so shocking as the Rome of a Sixtus IV., an Innocent VIII., and an Alexander VI. Villari, however, ascribes no small share of it to Lorenzo himself, whom he portrays, with a certain lack of historic discrimination,<sup>2</sup> in the darkest of colours. "He encouraged all the worst tendencies of his age; multiplied its corruptions. Abandoned to pleasure himself, he urged the people to lower depths of abandonment, in order to plunge them in the lethargy of intoxication. In fact, during his reign Florence was a continuous scene of revelry and dissipation."<sup>3</sup> There can, at anyrate, be no doubt about the moral declension of Florentine society.

A most unlikely place, surely, for the message of the prophet,

of the Papacy," iv. 169. For a discussion of the question, see Gherardi, "Nuovi Documenti e Studi intorno a Gir. Savonarola," 369 f. (2nd ed., 1887).

<sup>2</sup> Armstrong, "Lorenzo de' Medici and Florence in the Fifteenth Century" (1896), gives a much more favourable estimate of Lorenzo, though he does not adopt the attitude of the moralist, but rather puts himself in the place of the Italian of the time. See also his art. in *Eng. Hist. Review*, 1889. Misciatelli agrees with Villari, "Savonarola," 25 (Eng. trans. 1929).

<sup>3</sup> "Savonarola," i. 45.

who, along with his lofty, if narrow moral ideal, was inspired by a childlike belief in visions, spirits, portents. In a city of critical scholars and philosophers there was presumably not much chance of a hearing for the austere monk, the impassioned visionary, who set himself to stem the floodtide of immorality and cynicism. Yet Florence was ripe for Savonarola; there were points of contact between its intellectual temper and the message of the new John the Baptist. In spite of the corruption and religious and moral indifference of the age, men were easily moved by superstitious fancies. They believed in witchcraft, in alchemy and astrology, in the occult influence of the stars above, of inanimate objects in the world around them. In such an environment portents and miracles are rife enough. Even Machiavelli believed the world to be full of spirits who give warning to mortals with sinister auguries of evils about to supervene. Men were oppressed with the forebodings of these calamities, and were, so far at least, predisposed to listen to the prophet. In this respect the prophet was himself the product of his age. At the same time, he combined with an impressionable, imaginative temperament a moral sensitiveness, a prophetic fervour, an intense, if somewhat crude faith that strikingly differentiate him from his age. Thus endowed, it is not surprising that he ultimately succeeded in transforming for the time being the religious and social life of sceptic, sensual Florence.

As at Ferrara, the fervid preacher failed at first to make an impression. The refined, intellectual Florentines were spell-bound by the artificial and highly polished eloquence of the Augustinian monk, Fra Mariano da Genazzano; they only smiled at Savonarola's rugged perorations, and his congregations quickly diminished in numbers.<sup>4</sup> His success, it may be said, began in failure, for his failure only made him the more determined to succeed in his prophetic mission. The visions that came of vigils and fastings and revealed to him the judgments in store for the Church and the world confirmed him in his determination. It was not at Florence, however, but at San Gimignano, where he gave a course of sermons during Lent in 1484 and 1485, that he may be said to have found his vocation as prophet. Here his less refined hearers were thrilled

<sup>4</sup> Villari, i. 72.

by his denunciations of the corruption of the Church and his prophecies of its punishment and regeneration in the near future. At Brescia, too, and other cities of Lombardy, whither he was sent to preach in 1486, he electrified the crowds that pressed to hear him by the vivid picture of coming woes as reflected in the Book of Revelation. The degenerate state of Italy seemed to invite the scourging foretold by the preacher, and the public mood, as well as his vehement oratory, helped to make his reputation. The fact of his widespread reputation is evident from his recall to Florence in 1489, by the General of the Dominican order, at the instigation of Lorenzo de' Medici, prompted by Pico della Mirandola, who had been deeply impressed by him at a chapter of the order at Reggio, which he had attended in 1482.<sup>5</sup> He saw in this summons the call of God and his conviction was heightened by what his excited fancy took to be the apparition of a heavenly messenger, as he lay exhausted on the way back near Bologna, who took him to a hospice and bade him go forward and do the work that God had sent him to do.

#### PREACHER AND PROPHET

His appearance in the pulpit of St Mark on the 1st August 1489 now drew a crowd to listen to his fulminations from the Apocalypse of speedy doom for a godless generation. The Platonists even took to discussing him, and, naturally enough, some of them could not relish the rhapsodic friar. The friar was, however, no ignorant ranter, though he courted the opposition of the philosophers by dilating on the vanity of the new philosophy, and his ecstatic style carried him at times into a wild rhapsody suggestive of "nerves" rather than of reason. He had had a dialectic training, and while teaching the novices at Bologna and Florence, he had, as Villari has shown,<sup>6</sup> treated some points of the scholastic philosophy in an acute, independent spirit. This independent note soon made itself disagreeably felt in his sermons as well as in his writings. In

<sup>5</sup> Gherardi, "Documenti," 381 f.; Villari, i. 86 f. Perrens, "Savonarole," 35 (1853); Ranke, "Historischebiographische Studien," 181 f. (1877); Creighton, "History of the Papacy," iv. 171, unwarrantably reject the intervention of Lorenzo and Pico.

<sup>6</sup> I. c. vi.

Lent 1491 he began to preach in the cathedral (Santa Maria del Fiore) to the crowds whom the chapel of St Mark could no longer contain. Such a preacher, with his divine mission to reform the world as well as the Church, must needs trench on social abuses. He thundered against the greed of the clergy and against the gambling and usury of the rich. Nay, he struck out boldly at Lorenzo and his administration and thus yielded to the impulse to involve himself in politics which, though actuated by moral motives, ultimately contributed to his undoing. His temerity was startling even to himself, and he is found questioning himself whether it were not wiser to practise more self-restraint in his language. But a vision would suffice to stifle such a passing doubt in his mission and a voice would ring in his ears as from God. Fool, dost thou not see that it is God's will that thou shouldst continue in the same path? "All the evil and all the good of the city depend from its head," he declaimed in a sermon delivered before the Signory, "and, therefore, great is his responsibility even for small sins, since, if he followed the right path, the whole city would be sanctified. . . . Tyrants are incorrigible, because they are proud, because they love flattery, and will not restore ill-gotten gains; they leave all in the hands of bad ministers; they succumb to flattery; they hearken not unto the poor, and neither do they condemn the rich; they expect the poor and the peasantry to work for them without reward, or suffer their ministers to expect this; they corrupt voters and farm out the taxes to aggravate the burdens of the people."<sup>7</sup>

The preacher was repeating in the pulpit what was being said of Lorenzo and his government in the street, and such public declamation was both dangerous and exasperating. Savonarola was, however, no mere political pulpiteer. He was actuated by the passion for righteousness and spoke accordingly, though against Lorenzo as the virtual dictator of a formal republic such preaching might easily arouse a political as well as a moral reaction. Lorenzo nevertheless bridled his resentment and strove to win the goodwill of the potent orator, who was elected prior of St Mark in July 1491, by presents to the monastery. Savonarola received his over-

<sup>7</sup> Villari, i. 129. For a Latin summary of the sermon, see the Italian version, i. App. No. 8.

tures coldly, and when he sent five of the principal citizens to remonstrate against his sermons, curtly bade them tell him to do penance for his sins. "For the Lord is no respecter of persons and spares not the princes of the earth." Even the threat of exile only called forth a volley of judgments to come, including the prediction of the speedy death of Lorenzo himself. Lorenzo then tried the expedient of setting Fra Mariano da Genazzano to preach against the irrepressible Dominican. The rival friar denounced the false prophet, but his attacks only added to Savonarola's admirers, and he merely discomfited himself by his virulent violence. Henceforth he became his bitter enemy, while Lorenzo gave up further opposition. He was suffering from a fatal disease and had no need of the prophet to predict his speedy end. On his deathbed he summoned him to confess him at Careggi. In great agitation he confided to him three things that lay heavily on his conscience—the sack of Volterra, the robbery of the Monte delle Fanciulle, which deprived many girls of their dowries and drove them to a life of shame, and the bloody reprisals consequent on the Pazzi conspiracy. "God is good; God is merciful," reiterated Savonarola. "But three things are imperative. Firstly, a great and living faith in God's mercy; secondly, the restoration of all thy ill-gotten gains; thirdly, the restitution to Florence of its liberty." Lorenzo assented to the first two stipulations, but in response to the third angrily turned away on his sick bed from the stern confessor, who departed without granting him absolution.<sup>8</sup> These stipulations are given by Cinozzi, who derived them from Fra Silvestro, an intimate friend of Savonarola, and by Pico della Mirandola, the intimate friend of both Lorenzo and Savonarola. On the other hand Poliziano, another intimate friend of Lorenzo, who, like Pico, visited the dying man at Careggi, but was apparently not present in the sickroom with Savonarola, omits the demand for the restoration of liberty to Florence, and adds instead that the friar exhorted him to endure death steadfastly and gave him his blessing before departing.<sup>9</sup> With Villari I am inclined to accept Cinozzi's and Pico's version as

<sup>8</sup> Cinozzi, "Epistola"; Pico della Mirandola, "Vita," c. vi.; "Biographia Latina"; the Italian Biography, a free translation of this work, wrongly attributed to Burlamacchi.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Jacopo Antiquario, May 18, 1492, Bk. IV., ep. 11.

the more reliable. Although it may seem impracticable to demand from a dying man the restitution of Florentine liberty, the stipulation accords with the above-quoted sermon against tyrants, whilst Poliziano, as an ardent adherent of the Medicean régime, appears to have toned down the episode in accordance with his prepossession.<sup>10</sup>

After Lorenzo's death Savonarola became the central figure of the opposition to his son, Piero, who had inherited none of his father's gifts except the art of versification, and speedily lost all the prestige which his father and his grandfather had won for his family. With such a weakling to support it, the Medicean régime must have crashed even if there had been no Savonarola to undermine it. The preacher does not seem to have entered on a set campaign from the pulpit against him. But his political preaching became increasingly militant in tone; it fanned the general reaction which Piero's infatuated misgovernment quickened; it gave a powerful handle to the competitors for place and power. New visions steeled the daring of the Puritan preacher in the pulpit of the Duomo. During the night before his last advent sermon in 1492 a hand grasping a sword suddenly gleamed in the sky with the words, "The sword of the Lord that cometh speedily and swiftly," inscribed on it. Then the hand that held it turned it towards the earth, and amid a terrible thunderstorm fire, swords, and arms shot downwards and smote the world with destruction. The vision ended as usual with the command to proclaim the judgments of God. At another time it was a black cross rising above Rome, with the inscription *Crux Iræ Dei* upon it, the arms of which overspread the whole earth, while the lightning gleamed and the thunder rolled and the tempest raged upon a doomed world.

Hence the increasing vehemence of his denunciations of the misgovernment rampant in Church and State. "These wicked princes," he cried, "are sent to chastise the sins of their subjects; they are truly a sad snare for souls; their courts and

<sup>10</sup> Misciatelli agrees with Villari, "Savonarola," 56 f.; likewise Roeder, "The Man of the Renaissance," 33, and Vaughan, "Studies in the Italian Renaissance," 80 (1930). Von Reumont is doubtful, "Lorenzo de' Medici," ii. 487 (1876). Similarly, Ranke is sceptical, "Historischebiographische Studien," 350 f. Creighton rejects, iv. 340 f. Armstrong gives both versions and leaves the reader to judge, "Lorenzo," 310 f.

palaces are the refuge of all the beasts and monsters of the earth, for they give shelter to ribalds and malefactors. These wretches flock to their halls because it is there that they find ways and means to satisfy their evil passions and unbridled lusts. There, the false counsellors who continually devise new burdens and new taxes to drain the blood of the people. There, the flattering poets and philosophers, who, by force of a thousand lies and fables, trace the genealogy of these evil princes back to the gods; but, and worse than all, there, the priests who follow in the same course. This is the city of Babylon, O my brethern, the city of the foolish and the impious, the city that will be destroyed of the Lord.”<sup>11</sup> The deluge is at hand is the burden of the discourses on Noah’s ark, begun in 1492 and concluded in the autumn of 1494. Let all, therefore, hasten to enter the ark of the Lord.

#### FRENCH INVASION OF ITALY

The political situation was destined to give a startling fulfillment of the preacher’s prognostications of doom as far as Piero de’ Medici was concerned. Many a fervid pulpiteer before and after Savonarola has indulged in such impassioned denunciation of divine judgment on a godless world, and the world has not been a bit the worse in consequence. Such preachers have often shouted themselves hoarse to no purpose. But Savonarola was a psychic as well as a moralist. He appears to have had the gift of “second sight.” He had at all events gauged the general political situation as well as the will of Heaven in predicting woe upon woe to Florence and Italy. Whilst he was thundering retribution from the pulpit of the Duomo, Charles VIII. of France was on the march across the Alps to the conquest of the land of the Renaissance, ruthlessly massacring and pillaging as he advanced through Liguria. Here, then, was the avenger of Heaven, the sword of the Lord that should smite quickly and swiftly. A strange hand truly to wield the sword that Savonarola had seen in the angry sky. The dissolute, quixotic Charles VIII.<sup>12</sup> the commissioner of heaven to execute righteous judgments on earth! King

<sup>11</sup> Villari, i. 180 f.

<sup>12</sup> On the character and policy of Charles VIII., see my “Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy,” 110 f.

Charles came not, in fact, in the spirit of the crusader to do the will of Heaven. The motives of his expedition were mundane enough. He came at the instigation of that blackest of tyrants, Ludovico Moro, in order to filch the kingdom of Naples for France from the hands of Ludovico's enemy, King Ferdinand. The alliance between Naples, Florence, and Milan, which Lorenzo had striven to maintain, had snapped in Piero's inexperienced hands, and Charles, with Ludovico to prompt him, saw the chance of aggrandising France at Italy's expense. It was, then, as Ludovico's ally and the champion of the claim of the house of Anjou to Naples that Charles and his host poured from the heights of Monte Ginevra down on the Lombard plain in the autumn of 1494. Nor was he altogether an unwelcome intruder to others besides Ludovico. Pope Alexander VI. as well as Ludovico saw in him an ally against his enemy of Naples, and every city with a grievance to redress hoped for remedy at his hands. Florence, in particular, in its aversion of Piero, was ready to acclaim his approach, even though its nerves were kept in a state of acute tension by the friar's terrible sermons. Nevertheless the news that Charles was across the Apennines and marching on Tuscany, and his flying columns were burning and massacring at Rapallo, Fivizzano, and in the Romagna burst like a thunderbolt on the city of Savonarola. The maladroit Piero, after a despairing attempt at resistance, resorted to Charles's camp to surrender the fortresses that barred the French king's advance, and make an abject submission.

This act sealed his doom. The report of his humiliating submission sent a paroxysm of fury through Florence and the cry of "the People and Liberty" resounded from the Piazza. "Behold," cried Savonarola to the throng in the Duomo, "the sword has come upon you, the prophecies are fulfilled, the scourges begun. Behold, these hosts are led by the Lord, O Florence! The time of singing and dancing is at an end; now is the time to shed floods of tears for thy sins. Thy sins, O Florence! thy sins, O Rome! thy sins, O Italy! They have brought their chastisement upon thee. Repent ye then!"<sup>13</sup> On the 4th November Piero Capponi, one of the few men who had preserved the old republican spirit, rose

<sup>13</sup> Villari, i. 214.

at the sitting of the Signory to demand Piero's expulsion. While ambassadors, among whom was Savonarola, were sent to invite Charles to Florence, Piero, who had returned and made a vain attempt to assert his authority, was driven, along with his brother, Cardinal Giovanni, the future Pope Leo X., into exile at Venice.

Shortly after Piero fled, Charles entered and received a magnificent welcome in the splendidly decorated and illuminated city. He was inclined to play the conqueror and recall Piero on his own terms, but changed his tactics and moderated his demands in the face of the firm attitude of Capponi. Ultimately, at the end of November, he agreed to move on southwards at the price of his recognition as the restorer and protector of the liberty of Florence, the payment of a money contribution, and the possession of its fortresses for not more than two years. The divine castigation was after all comparatively mild, except for Piero de' Medici, but the advent of Charles seemed to have fulfilled Savonarola's prognostications, and the fiery friar was now unquestionably master of the situation.

#### POLITICAL AND MORAL REFORM

After the expulsion of the Medici and the departure of the French, the anti-Medicean party grappled with the task of reforming the constitution. In this emergency it had recourse to Savonarola, who rather reluctantly agreed to co-operate, and expounded his reform scheme in a series of sermons. Not a very promising part, it might seem, for the visionary to attempt. But the visionary was gifted with a keen intellect as well as a vivid imagination, and displayed in his constitution making no little practical sense and ability. Instead of foisting on the republic a theocratic constitution based on the Old Testament, he made use of existing institutions, and modified them after the pattern of the constitution of Venice, which was widely recognised as the most effective in Italy. In addition to the existing Signory, the Gonfalonier of Justice or chief magistrate, and the administrative committees with special functions,<sup>14</sup> in whom the executive power was invested, he

<sup>14</sup> Such as the Ten of War and Peace or ministry of War and Foreign Affairs, as we should term it, and the Eight of Watch and Ward, or ministry of Justice and Home Affairs.

introduced the Great Council as the supreme legislative body. He added a Council of Eighty or Senate, whose members were over forty years of age, were chosen by the Great Council, elected the Signory, and acted as an advising body to it. The Great Council consisted of the *beneficiati*, *i.e.*, those—about 3,000 in number—whose relatives had held or been eligible for office for three generations and were over twenty-nine years of age, with the addition of a small number of *non-beneficiati*. To these Councils the Signory was bound to submit all legislative proposals for acceptance or rejection. The new system was not democratic in the modern sense, though the designation is applied to it by Villari and others. It practically represented the financial, mercantile, and craft guilds, *i.e.*, the middle class to which Savonarola himself belonged. It thus excluded from power the nobles at the upper end of the social scale and the artisans at the lower end of it. While it might easily lead, on this account, to discontent and opposition in times of crisis, it was a feasible attempt to substitute a stable government for the arbitrary régime of the Medici. It sought to guard against the maladministration of justice by allowing an appeal, in case of political offences, from the Signory and the Committee of Eight to the Great Council, though Savonarola, who realised the risk of referring appeals to so unwieldy a body, would have preferred to entrust this power to the Council of Eighty or some smaller court. He strove, too, to secure the unity and peace of the reconstituted Republic by a decree guaranteeing an amnesty to the supporters of the late government. Equally enlightened the introduction of an equitable property tax of 10 per cent. on all citizens, the reform of the mercantile code, the fixation of the rate of interest at from 5 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in order to counter the extortions of Jewish and other usurers, which pressed so heavily on the poor (Monte di Pietà), and the abolition of the Parlamento, or mass assembly of the people, by which the Medici or other would-be dictators could make use of the mob for personal or party ends. On the whole, a remarkable constitutional experiment, which had been carried out without bloodshed or mob pressure, and reveals in its author the rare combination of the religious idealist and the practical statesman, who, by his moderation, succeeded in uniting,

for the time being at least, a variety of party opinion in its support.<sup>15</sup>

For Savonarola the reform of the constitution should inaugurate the moral reformation of the Republic. "Christ the King of Florence" was his motto. Moral renovation through repentance and a godly life accordingly formed the theme of his sermons on the book of Job during the Lent of 1495. Nor was he content merely to preach reform. With great practical sagacity he set about organising the young, who should suppress the vices of their elders whom Lorenzo had corrupted. Bands of these youth, with their standard-bearers and officers—"the children of the Friar"—paraded the streets on occasion during the next three years, seizing and burning "the vanities," the indecent books and pictures, the finery of the women and other emblems of luxury, in vogue under the Medicean régime, chanting hymns and collecting alms for the poor. Gambling and prostitution were suppressed. Processions in honour of Christ and the Virgin—the King and Queen of Florence—took the place of the licentious Medicean pageantry. During these years Florence became in appearance a holy city. "It was a holy time," noted Landucci, "if it was short." While he thus succeeded in imposing his moral ideal on Florence for the time being, its depravity was only scotched, not killed. When, for instance, he withdrew temporarily from public work in consequence of the papal excommunication, the gambling hells and brothels were filled to overflowing by the dissolute Compagnacci—the licentious youth who would fain have taken the life of the puritan reformer, and scoffed at his denunciations of vice when they dared. Still worse, faction threatened to upset the new government. The Medici still had their adherents in the Bigi or Palleschi, while the Arrabbiati or aristocratic party (*nobili popolani*) resented the supremacy of the Great Council and the domination of Savonarola and his adherents, the Frateschi or Piagnoni, as they dubbed them, and strove to get control of the government in the interest of their class.

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed account of the reform of the constitution, see Villari, i. 269 f., and, more recently, Erskine Muir, "Macchiavelli and His Times," 208 f. (1936).

## FAILURE AND MARTYRDOM

The failure of Charles' expedition against Naples and his ignominious retreat left the Friar in a dangerous position. Ludovico of Milan, Venice, the Emperor Maximilian, Ferdinand of Spain, and Pope Alexander leagued themselves against the French invader (March 1495), and Charles just managed to break through the allied army at Fornovo in July and escape back to France. The success of the League was a grave menace to Florence, and though Savonarola succeeded in thwarting its attempt to restore Piero de' Medici, the struggle to reassert its sovereignty over rebellious Pisa became ever more disastrous and hopeless. "Believe now in your Friar who declared that he held Pisa in his fist," cried the scoffers. To save the situation for Savonarola, it was imperative that the French should return. But the French came not, and to aggravate the peril he came into collision with the pope, whom his enemies were striving to prejudice against him, and who resented his Francophile policy and his aggressive demand for reform. From the outset he had preached the reform of the Church as well as the State, denouncing in increasingly scathing language the iniquitous papal régime and the degeneration of the papal court. Alexander at first treated his denunciations with indifference. But these denunciations assumed a different aspect when the preacher trenched on Italian politics, and became the passionate supporter of the French king, who ultimately threatened to convene a General Council to execute judgment on the pope.<sup>16</sup> It was this aspect of his sermons that at length impelled Alexander to interfere and order him to cease from preaching (September to October 1495). Whilst professing respect for the papal authority and refraining for a time from preaching in deference to the papal inhibition, he adduced the duty of obeying God rather than man as an imperative reason for resuming his sermons at the command of the Signory.<sup>17</sup> He indulged anew in scathing denunciation of the sins of Rome, and the pope at length launched against him

<sup>16</sup> Pastor, vi. 5.

<sup>17</sup> "Documenti," 133. The pope, it seems, at the instigation of the Signory, had given an informal permission to preach during Lent 1496, provided he refrained from further attacks on Rome, while not formally withdrawing his inhibition.

the sentence of excommunication (May 1497). To make the situation more desperate, plague and famine ravaged the city.

Savonarola refused to submit to the papal sentence on the ground of the invalidity of an unjust excommunication, and appealed to a General Council, as many reformers before him had done. Had the situation at Florence been less precarious, he might have succeeded in his defiance. Unfortunately at a time when the confidence of the Signory and the people was being shaken by the calamities which were overwhelming the Republic, he threw away the chance of a successful issue by allowing his ardent disciple, Fra Domenico, to accept the challenge of the Franciscan Fra Francesco di Puglia to test the truth of his teaching and his predictions by undergoing with him the ordeal by fire. In countenancing this crude device, he played into the hands of his enemies. The suspension of the trial by fire in the crowded Piazza on the 6th April 1498, whilst the rival champions engaged in a wordy theological debate, exasperated the expectant crowd, which had assembled to witness a miracle in vindication of the prophet. The rising of the Compagnacci, who took advantage of the revulsion of popular feeling to attack the monastery of St Mark on the following day, sealed his doom. By this time he had lost the support of the Signory, which was abashed by the papal threat to place the Republic under an interdict, and now joined his enemies in compassing his ruin. He was arrested and tortured by a civil tribunal into confessing himself a deceiver, found guilty, after renewed torture, by the papal commissioners of heresy, along with his associates, Fra Domenico and Fra Silvestro, and handed over to the magistrates, who condemned them to be hanged and burned and their ashes thrown into the Arno. In their mad revulsion, the people, who had crowded to hear his sermons in the cathedral, now cursed the false prophet and crowded the Piazza on the morning of the 23rd May to applaud the spectacle of his degradation and death.

Savonarola's Republic outlived him only fourteen years. In 1512 the Spanish general, Cardona, marched on Florence and forcibly restored Giuliano and Giovanni de' Medici. In that short interval the castigation which he had foretold was meted out to Italy in full measure. It became the battle-ground of French and Spanish ambition, the scene of ravage and slaughter,

which were but the beginning of many woes to come and fulfilled all the prophet's worst premonitions. Rome itself was destined to a terrible atonement for the sins of its rulers in the conquest and spoliation of the city by an imperial army in 1527. Many of his persecutors lived to witness the judgments that a degenerate age had invited. The worst judgment is the fact that Italy was for long crippled morally and politically. The dooms of the prophet had been fulfilled; his forecast of a regenerated republic proved the mere fancy of an overheated brain. Florence played out its rôle as a political force when it swung its prophet from the gallows and threw the ashes of his burned body into the Arno.

Savonarola fell because moral force in such an age was not sufficient to maintain a political position, and also because a man of his visionary type was not fitted to entangle himself in the meshes of Italian politics. He made a grave mistake in seeking to buttress his reform policy by the support of France. The sagacity he had shown in the reform of the constitution of the Republic forsook him in his attempt to direct its foreign policy, which led only to disaster and discomfiture. To rely on the broken reed of French support was to expose himself to the charge of endangering the independence of Italy, of which the anti-French League appeared, for the time being, to be the champion. His ecstatic temperament, his faith in visions and prophecy inevitably tended, in such an environment, to make a martyr of the politician and the Christian moralist. To a certain extent he was the victim of religious exaltation, and it is hardly surprising that a Macchiavelli could only see the lunatic in this side of his character. His lack of insight and judgment as a politician unfitted him to be "the leading spirit of a great political drama," as Villari calls him. But if he mistook his vocation in attempting to direct a political party, he must still be regarded as a great force in his true sphere—that of a preacher of righteousness, an active reformer in an age of crass wickedness. This was his real calling, and from this point of view he appears even to Macchiavelli a truly great figure.

The visionary is by no means the whole Savonarola. He was a moral personality of a high order and was gifted with an alert and fertile intellect. "The Triumph of the Cross" reveals

the resourceful dialectician, who could put up a powerful, if not always convincing case for the reasonableness of Christianity in its mediæval form. He was, in fact, a remarkable combination of the thinker and the visionary, and if the visionary predominates in many of his sermons, the thinker is no less prominent in his didactic works. In spite of his fulminations in the pulpit of the divine wrath, the keynote of his religion and of his character is love. Love of God in purity of heart and active service for others is the constant refrain of his pastoral letters. "The root of right living is the love of God and our neighbour."<sup>18</sup> The object of the ascetic exercises of the monastic life is the inflaming of the heart with love for Christ crucified and ultimate union with Him. There is a mystic strain in him which finds in love the bond between the infinite and the finite.<sup>19</sup> Of the reality of his religious profession, the sincerity of his belief in his prophecies and visions there can be no question. His assumption of the prophetic rôle was no mere device to serve a political end, as some have maintained. He believed himself to be the inspired interpreter of the divine will in his apocalyptic visions and his fulminations of the divine judgments on a godless world. In the agony of torture, when his worn-out nerves failed him, he confessed himself to have been an impostor. But no reliance whatever can be placed on admissions extorted by such devilish expedients, and the depositions were undoubtedly falsified by the unscrupulous notary Ceccone. In his meditations in prison on the 51st and part of the 31st Psalms,<sup>20</sup> he passes through a tempest of doubt whether he has not deceived himself and others by his prophecies and visions. These meditations are a moving human document—the mirror of an agonised soul face to face with martyrdom and testing the reality of its faith. His faith has sustained a terrible shock. Hope strives with Depression to overcome the doubt which again and again threatens to overwhelm him that his faith has been a delusion. But at the end of these repeated questionings, Hope, "shining with a divine lustre," ever asserts itself and finally triumphs. His

<sup>18</sup> "Spiritual and Ascetic Letters of Savonarola," 52 f., and many other passages (Eng. trans. by Williams, ed. by Randolph).

<sup>19</sup> It finds specific expression in the "Trattato dell' Amore di Gesù Cristo," Villari, i. 113 f.

<sup>20</sup> Latin text and trans. by Perowne (1900).

faith has not been a delusion, but a divine inspiration. "For joy I began to sing, The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."

#### PLACE AS A REFORMER

Was Savonarola a forerunner of Luther? Yes and no. There are certain affinities between them. Like Luther he went the length of defying the pope and maintaining that an unjust excommunication is invalid. The pope is a man and a sinner, and if he errs, he is to be withstood as Paul withstood Peter. The elect, of whom the Church consists, cannot be cut off from Christ by the mere exercise of ecclesiastical power. He regarded the Bible as the supreme source of faith, and the supreme place which the Bible holds in his sermons and writings is a foretaste of the Lutheran doctrine of the Word as the norm of faith. "Be instant in the study of Holy Scripture." "Read and re-read the Scriptures."<sup>21</sup> In his meditations on the Psalms it is with passages of Scripture that he confronts depression and despair, as did Luther in his contests with the devil. He dwells on the importance of its exposition in preaching in contrast to the current theological or philosophical sermons.<sup>22</sup> In his "Meditations" during his tragic last days it is to it, not to the Church, that he turns for the assurance of salvation. Not by their own deservings or their own works have the righteous been saved. Merits are ruled out in the experience of salvation, and justification is due to God's grace. Christ is the sole mediator. Personal trust in Him as the divine Redeemer from sin and sorrow is the only consolation. Inwardness is the great thing in religion. "Salvation standeth not in divers workings and ceremonies, but in the grace of Christ and the renewal of the Spirit."<sup>23</sup> Though he conformed to the current ecclesiastical religion, he does not hesitate trenchantly to criticise and denounce it.

<sup>21</sup> "Letters," 50, 41.

<sup>22</sup> "Triumph of the Cross," Lib. II., c. viii., Eng. trans. ed. by Procter (1901) from the Latin and Italian originals ed. by Ferretti; "De Simplicitate Christianæ Vitæ," Lib. I., 62 f. (ed. 1550).

<sup>23</sup> "Letters," 50.

The multiplicity of religious rite is a sign of the decay of real religion. "All fervour and inward worship are dead. Ceremonies wax more numerous, but have lost their efficacy. Therefore are we come to declare to the world that outward worship must give way to inward, and that ceremonies are naught save as a means of stirring the spirit."<sup>24</sup> It is thus evident that he is, to a certain extent, a type of the individualist spirit which was striving to break new ground in religion as well as life and culture. It is hardly surprising that Luther, who republished the "Meditations" in 1523, canonised him as a saint and a martyr.

On the other hand, the affinities are offset by fundamental divergences. He is a fervent upholder of the monastic life, which Luther denounced and finally renounced as a distortion of the Christian life. He demands of its votaries the total renunciation of the world and detachment from the creature, which Luther came to estimate more sanely. He practically identifies mediæval Christianity with that of the early Church, though he fiercely denounces its abuses. He highly appreciates reason as an adjunct of revelation, even if he regards the new philosophy as a slavish return to antiquity. He is an adherent of the scholastic theology, which Luther strenuously combated. He attacks heretics who depart from the teaching of the Church and would, apparently, have accounted Luther among the number. In spite of the emphasis on justification as due to God's grace, he shares the current doctrine of merit. "Practise love and thus merit eternal life."<sup>25</sup> He commends prayer to the Virgin, St Dominic, and other saints.<sup>26</sup> If he condemned the pope, he upheld the papal headship of the Church, which Luther disowned. His "Triumph of the Cross," published the year before his martyrdom, reveals him as a convinced adherent of the doctrine and usages of the mediæval Church. "Whoever departs from the unity and doctrines of the Roman Church unquestionably departs from Christ."<sup>27</sup> If at times he seems to anticipate the Lutheran evangelical standpoint, his distinctive position as a reformer thus aligns him, not with

<sup>24</sup> "Della Orazione Mentale," Villari, i. 112 f.

<sup>25</sup> "Letters," 55.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Lib. IV., c. vi.

Luther, but with the conciliar reformers, whose work he would fain have revived and brought to fruition.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> The standard life of Savonarola is that of Villari, though more recent writers have rightly tended to modify his interpretation and judgment in some respects. See Misciatelli, "Savonarola" (Eng. trans., 1929); Roeder, "Savonarola" (1930); Schnitzer, "Savonarola" (1924); Heimpel, "Studien der Kirchenreform des 15<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhunderts," (1929). An excellent account of the Florence of Savonarola's time is given by E. G. Gardner, "Story of Florence" (1902).

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

#### WIDESPREAD POPULAR AGITATION

IN the second half of the fifteenth century a revolutionary movement was developing in Germany comparable to that which had culminated in the rising of the English peasants in the second half of the fourteenth. In the fifty years preceding the advent of Luther a large part of South and West Germany was seething with the revolutionary spirit. The Hussite movement in its extreme Taborite form of social as well as religious revolution was not without its effect in fomenting this spirit in the empire. Similarly, the example of the valiant Swiss freemen in vindicating and maintaining their independence was not lost on the peasants of Suabia, Franconia, Baden, and Alsace.

A marked feature of this revolutionary movement is the growth of secret societies in South and West Germany for the forcible redress of their grievances. Such a society we find busy concocting revolution in the Hungersberg near Schlettstadt in 1493. Another was hatched at Untergrombach in the bishopric of Spires in 1502. In 1512 the village of Lehen, near Freiburg in Breisgau, was the centre of another widespread conjuration. About the same time the peasants of Würtemberg united themselves in the society of "The Poor Conrad," and in 1517 Baden and Alsace were again seething with revolutionary propaganda. There were similar movements in Hungary and among the Styrian and Carinthian mountaineers, who rose in 1514 against their feudal lords.

#### TABORITE INFLUENCE

A contemporary scribe sees in the Hussite movement the origin of the revolutionary movement. "To John Hus and

his followers are to be traced almost all these false principles concerning the power of the spiritual and temporal authorities and the possession of earthly goods and rights, which before in Bohemia, and now with us, have called forth revolution and rebellion, plunder, arson, and murder, and have shaken to its foundations the whole commonwealth. The poison of these false doctrines has been long flowing from Bohemia into Germany, and will produce the same desolating consequences wherever it spreads.”<sup>1</sup> The social revolutionary tendency, begotten of the reaction from feudalism, is, however, discernible long before the Bohemian revolution in the periodical revolt of the masses against the dominant social system in the late mediæval centuries, as in the Jacquerie in France and the peasant revolt in England. Though Hus himself was not a social revolutionist, the doctrine of lordship borrowed from Wiclif, if practically applied, tended to nullify all law and all rights that militated against the law of God, and the extreme Taborites, as we have seen, did not hesitate so to apply it. After the defeat of Lipan some of those extremists seem to have carried their revolutionary creed into the empire, and we hear of Hussite congregations in Franconia and the bishopric of Eichstädt from about the middle of the fifteenth century. We have an echo of this creed in the revolutionary preaching of Hans Böheim of Helmstadt in the Tauber valley, a strolling drummer and piper, who wandered about the countryside in the performance of his calling at rustic village festivals. Visions of the Virgin, whose shrine at Niklashausen drew crowds of pilgrims, led him in 1476 to burn his drum and bagpipes and turn preacher. In his sermons he mingled denunciations of the existing social and religious system which seem an echo of those of the extreme Taborite preachers. Ignorant and illiterate, though passionately in earnest, he had evidently picked up this revolutionary gospel as it circulated in the countryside. A thoroughgoing communism shall displace the existing order and inaugurate the régime of freedom and equality. No man, be he emperor, pope, prince, baron, or bishop, shall henceforth lord it over the free Christian community. They ought to possess no more than the common folk and ought, like them, to labour for a day’s wage. All

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Bax, “German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages,” 94.

things shall be free to all, fish and game be in common. Tolls, servitudes, rents, taxes, and tithes shall be done away. More especially a degenerate clergy shall be deprived of their inordinate wealth, and if they do not amend their lives, shall be slain. From far and near the people crowded in their thousands to listen to the impassioned rustic at Niklashausen. When at last the preacher summoned them to appear in arms, the Bishop of Würzburg judged it high time to intervene and seize and barbarously burn him as a heretic in spite of the forlorn attempt of his followers to rescue him.<sup>2</sup>

#### SOCIAL REVOLUTION

In general the revolutionary movement is social and economic, not specifically religious in character. It is a revolt on the part of the peasants and the discontented class in the towns, who conspire for the forcible redress of their grievances. There had from the thirteenth century onwards been a gradual improvement in the lot of the peasants, in keeping with the remarkable development of industry and commerce in the empire. In a large part of Germany serfdom had, it seems, been practically transformed into tenancy. The serfs had become leaseholders, who paid rent in money or kind or service. Whilst they could not leave their holdings without the permission of their lords, they enjoyed personal liberty and held their leases in perpetuity.<sup>3</sup> Under this system the peasants had risen in the social scale. They were, it seems, better clothed and fed, and, as pictured in the popular literature of the time, had become correspondingly class conscious and self-assertive.

There is, however, a reverse side of the picture. The relative improvement of their lot had only made them more restive under what remained of their servile status—the dues they were still liable to pay (the tithes of corn, of a head of cattle, the death due or heriot, etc.), or the services involved in their tenancy. “There remained,” to quote Dr von Bezold,

<sup>2</sup> On Böhme, see Ullmann, “Reformers Before the Reformation,” i. 335 f. and Appendix, where the original sources are given. See also “Archiv des historischen Vereins von Unterfranken und Aschaffenburg,” xiv., III., 1 f.

<sup>3</sup> Janssen, “History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages,” i. 309 f. (Eng. trans., 1905).

“ a terrible remnant of oppressive burdens, which just in an age of economic development, and by reason of its rampant luxury, pressed doubly hard on the peasant.”<sup>4</sup> If times had changed for the peasant they had also changed for the lord, and the temptation of the lord was to make him pay for the luxury which had become fashionable in the agricultural domain as well as in the wealthy commercial city. Hence the tendency to rackrent the peasant in the form of increased dues or services. Especially obnoxious was the widespread attempt to override the old customary law and restrict or ignore the rights of the tenants to the common meadows, fishings, woodlands in virtue of the application of the Roman law, on the plea, adduced by the lawyers, that the lord is the absolute proprietor of his lands and is entitled to break old agreements as he pleases. Whilst the peasant claimed the abolition or modification of what remained of his servile status, the lord strove to press him back into serfdom by legal chicanery very hard to bear. No wonder that he hated the lawyer as he hated the Jew or the *Raubritter* (robber-knight). Moreover, the peasant was liable to taxation by the territorial prince as well as the local landlord, and the growing imposts of the territorial sovereign swell the grievances which nurture the revolutionary spirit.

Given, in addition, the widespread antagonism to a feudalised ecclesiastical hierarchy and a largely degenerate priesthood, and we have a sufficient diagnosis of this spirit. For the movement, if not specifically religious, is markedly anti-ecclesiastical. Bishops and abbots share in the odium of the feudal system, especially those of them who, like the Abbot of Kempten, are aggressively tenacious of their feudal rights and powers over the peasants on the Church lands. The revolutionary movement includes the radical reform of ecclesiastical abuses, which the overgrown power and wealth of the Church have thwarted. The Church as well as the State and society shall pass through the crucible of the renovation which the people is resolved to take in hand.

With the growth of the century the idea of such a renovation has become a fixed idea. Ominous prophecies, elaborate schemes of this far-reaching renovation pass from lip to lip and are written down like any modern party programme. A

<sup>4</sup> “ Geschichte der Deutschen Reformation,” 42 (1890).

deliverer shall appear (for long it was the resurrected Frederick II.) who shall carry out a radical reform of empire and society, and the outline of this reform is ready for him. Such an outline is "the Reformation of Kaiser Sigismund," to whom, when the great Frederick came not, the popular expectation eagerly but vainly turned. Another, "the Reformation of Kaiser Frederick," pinned the popular faith to Sigismund's successor, the third Frederick,<sup>5</sup> and then the hopes that Frederick III. disappointed sought their realisation in his son, Maximilian. But the peasants were doomed to discover again and again that, in spite of the favourable omens which the astrologers read in the movements of the planets, each imagined reformer on the imperial throne would not, or could not, fulfil his humanitarian mission. The peasant, it was evident, must help himself, and to this end must unite in a great "Bund" or union, and achieve by his own brawny arm the reformation which emperor, prelate, prince, lord refused to concede.

To this end popular agitators like Joss Fritz, Jacob Wimpheling (not the humanist of this name), and Hans Ulman are busy conspiring, organising the revolutionary movement in South and West Germany in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries which shall fundamentally transform the existing social institutions. First of all, every man must be free, and in order to assure his freedom all traditional authority—that of the emperor and the pope, which Hans Böheim would have destroyed, excepted—must be swept away, all social inequality rooted out, the ecclesiastical and territorial courts, all dues and services abolished, lands, woods, pastures be free to all. In some cases nobles, priests, lords, who withstand the popular will, shall be slain; in other cases compelled to give back the rights they have usurped and cease oppressing the people and waging their interminable feuds at the people's expense. It was to secure such a radical reformation that the leaders and their local followers furtively deliberated, with the result that whole provinces were imperceptibly drawn into the conjuration, and tens of thousands of peasants were ready to strike at the given moment. Joss Fritz proved a veritable

<sup>5</sup> For an examination of these schemes, see Schapiro, "Social Reform and the Reformation" 93 f. (1909).

kobold, who sprang into activity where he was least expected—now as priest, now as pedlar, pilgrim, beggar. Thus the Bundschuh was furtively hatched into a vast organisation, arranged in "Circles," whose leaders kept up an active correspondence. Its emissaries—pedlars, beggars, wandering musicians, or cunning spirits disguised as such—moved from village to village, scheming, exhorting, enrolling, in secret, giving the watchword. Each of these rustic movements had its programme on behalf of "the Justice of God" (*Gerechtigkeit Gottes*) and the rights of man, of which all swore acceptance. Each had its mottoed banner—a peasant's shoe emblazoned on a piece of silk—to which all swore to rally.

At the decisive moment the people would hasten to the general rendezvous and begin the revolution. But at the decisive moment something would go wrong. The Swiss, to whom the peasants looked for help, would not move. Or, a traitor would warn the enemy, and the enemy would swoop down on the unsuspecting rustics before they had time to gather in large masses, and seize, torture, kill, quarter them in detail. Fortunate those who managed to escape into Switzerland to await the opportunity of another venture. Needless to say, each successive venture, in spite of cunningly laid plans, was as hopeless as its predecessor.

#### UNREST IN THE TOWNS

With the agrarian movement was contemporary, and sometimes combined, a democratic movement in the towns. It is an age of economic transition for the civic as well as the rural population. Hence the ferment in the towns, closely analogous to that of the country people. The disaffected working class in the towns join hands with the peasants in the forcible attempt to redress their grievances. This attempt becomes widespread and simultaneous as the revolutionary spirit is intensified, and in the years 1512-14 a veritable tidal wave of revolt swept over town as well as country from Constance to Aachen.

The emancipation of the towns from the domination of the feudal lords, secular and ecclesiastical, was coeval with a remarkable development of industry and commerce. The

hardly won autonomy of the German town was at once the offspring and the nurse of an economic revolution which, in spite of the political decline of the empire for several centuries, gave Germany a leading position as a commercial and industrial state. The German city, with its busy looms, its great fairs, its skilled artisans, its thriving merchants, was the admiration of Europe. German art and industry challenged comparison with those of Italy or Flanders. The gild system at its best, with its organised and trained workers, was conducive to the thoroughness and finish of all handiwork. Industrial activity went hand in hand with the commercial development which culminated in the great organisation of the Hansa, whose mercantile sway extended over Northern and Western Europe. Moreover, in virtue of its gold and silver mines, the empire "was formerly the Mexico and Peru of Europe."

Here, too, the picture has its reverse side. In spite of the material efficacy of the gild system, there was evidently a great deal of poverty and discontent among the masses. As in the country, so in the town, there were frequent conspiracy and revolt against the dominant class of incorporated burghers. The large proletariat, which had accumulated from the surrounding territory and had no share in the privileges and benefits of gild membership, was nursing the revolutionary spirit equally with the peasants beyond the walls, and even within the gilds there were frequent quarrels between the masters' gilds and the journeymen gilds (*Gesellen*) about wages and hours of labour to threaten the dominant order. Luxury on the one hand, poverty on the other, showed the glaring contrast between the higher and the lower classes. The "Ehrbarkeit" or patrician class of the "Geschlechter," swelled by the new men, whom trade and industry had raised in the social scale since the emancipation of the industrial gilds from the old patrician tyranny, was confronted by the mass of workers, gildsmen and non-gildsmen, who had grown restive under their corrupt régime and demanded an account of their stewardship in the government of the city. The quasi-democratic revolution, which had given the craft gilds a voice in its government, bade fair to be followed by a really democratic transformation, which should realise the aspirations of the artisans and the proletariat.

There was much outcry in particular against the monopolist companies which absorbed the trade in certain articles and raised prices at will. The result was the accumulation of wealth in a few hands in many of the great commercial towns. The wealthier merchants were thus enabled, according to a decree of the Reichstag at Nürnberg in 1522-23, to cripple the small trader by manipulating prices. They sold goods to the small trader at a high price, and then, by lowering their own, ruined him. Competition, continues the decree, was impossible where a few men commanded the market and demanded what price they pleased even for the necessities of life. Hence the chronic discontent on the part of the poor man, "which, if timely measures be not taken, will grow more formidable." To obviate this discontent the amount of stock should be limited, prices should be fixed, loans by wealthy merchants to poor peasants, on the security of their land or produce, be forbidden, etc.<sup>6</sup> These rich, monopolist moneylenders are worse than the Jews. In the popular literature of the time they are bitterly denounced as the bloodsuckers of the people in town and country. It was an age of economic transition, in which trade was passing more and more under the régime of the capitalist class, and the central government was too feeble to deal effectively with the abuses incidental to this transition. The Diet might decree, but the gold of the wealthy monopolist and moneylender, who bribed in the highest circles, was mightier than the Diet. "Many of the town councillors," complain the inhabitants of Ulm, "were members of the trading companies, and among the imperial councillors many were open to bribes or had secret shares in these enterprises."<sup>7</sup> "The emperor's councillors are swindlers," roundly declares a chronicler; "they nearly all grow rich while the emperor grows poor."<sup>8</sup> The critics might not understand the new political economy which was transforming the old economic system; they were quick to see and resent the evils which this transformation brought in its train.

Add to all this the rampant vagabondage, the widespread lawlessness of the age, when the robber-knight lurked on the

<sup>6</sup> "Deutsche Reichstagsakten," iii. 381 f. (1901).

<sup>7</sup> Schmoller, "Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft," xvi.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Janssen, ii. 84.

roads and plundered and murdered at will, and the irresponsible use of force was widely practised. Add further the fact that authority is relaxed, the central government little more than a figure of state and each magnate is a law unto himself, and it is not surprising that, on the eve of the Reformation, Germany should witness a widespread revolt against the existing political, social, and economic order. Nor will it be surprising if Luther's resounding challenge to Rome, his plea on behalf of the liberty of the Christian man, in the religious sense at least, his drastic rebukes of the abuse of the temporal as well as the ecclesiastical power, should find a widespread response in both town and country.

NOTE.—I have taken this chapter mainly from Chapter IX. of vol. i. of my "History of Modern Liberty" (1906), abridged and revised by reference to some more recent writers on the subject: Rosenkrantz, "Der Bundschuh, die Erhebungen des südwest Deutschen Bauernstandes, 1493-1517" (1927); Von Below, "Die Ursachen der Reformation" (1917), and his review of Kaser's book, "Politische und Sociale Bewegungen im Deutschen Bürgerthum zu Beginn des 16<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhunderts," *Hist. Zeitschrift*, 1911; Stolze, "Bauernkrieg und Reformation" (1926); Fay, "Roman Law and the German Peasant," *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 1911; Schapiro, "Social Reform and the Reformation" (1909); Ranke, "Deutsche Geschichte" (new ed., 1925).

## CHAPTER XX

### LATE MEDIÆVAL DISSENT AND MYSTICISM

#### RISE OF MEDIÆVAL SECTS

A REMARKABLE feature of the religious history of the Middle Ages is the growth of dissent from the mediæval Church. This dissent was the result of a widespread reaction on the part of the laity from the Church in its developed mediæval form. In opposition to the current institutional Christianity it sought to revive the simpler form of the early Christian age. These mediæval dissenters would fain have reformed the Church, on the ancient model, from within. But their antagonism to it inevitably provoked the antagonism of the Church to them. The resulting conflict and persecution as inevitably transformed them into sects outside it. This dissenting movement persisted throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Waldensians, the Fraticelli, the Lollard and Hussite remnants, and others, and contributed more or less to pave the way for the great disruption of the early sixteenth.

In its early form the lay dissenting movement is represented by the Cathari (mediæval Puritans), who combined Gnostic-Manichæan views with their primitive Christian profession, and under various designations<sup>1</sup> spread, in the eleventh century, from the East along the trade routes into Italy, Southern France, Spain, Flanders, and Western Germany. The rise of the free communes in Italy and Southern France fostered an active social and industrial life, which tended to arouse the interest of the laity in religion as well as politics, and became a fertile seed-ground of this sectarian movement.<sup>2</sup> These Cathari were dualists. They absorbed the heritage of Gnostic-Manichæan

<sup>1</sup> Patarini, Albanensians in Italy; Publicani, Albigensians, Apostolici, etc., in France.

<sup>2</sup> Troeltsch, "Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirche und Gruppen" (Eng. trans.); "Social Teaching of the Christian Churches," i. 351 f. (1931).

heresy, which the ancient Church had rejected and condemned. There are, they maintained, two eternally antagonistic powers in the universe—good and evil, light and darkness, God and the devil. This belief, mingled with primitive-Christian elements, evidently had a wide appeal on its practical side, which was the important one. It offered a means of deliverance from the power of evil inherent in material being, the consciousness of which tends to oppress the human soul. This power can be overcome by eschewing the life of sense and fostering the life of the Spirit. This ascetic ideal they might have sought to realise in monastic fashion within the Church. But for them the Church, in its mediæval form, was an aberration from true Christianity, especially from the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount as they understood it. They accordingly rejected the sacerdotalism and sacraments of the Catholic Church and substituted the priesthood of believers for the official priesthood, baptism of the Holy Spirit for water baptism, and the breaking of bread for the Catholic Eucharist. They disowned the papacy as the creation of Constantine, not of Christ, condemned the worship of saints and relics, the use of images and crucifixes, the giving of tithes and taxes, and insisted on the right of lay preaching, and the literal observance of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount against the taking of oaths and the use of force. Their adherents were graded in three classes—the perfect (*perfecti*, *electi*, who eschewed marriage and all animal food), the believers (*credentes*), and the hearers (*auditores*). The believers were admitted by the ceremonial washing of hands and the delivery of the Lord's Prayer and the New Testament, and were ultimately initiated into the higher class of the perfect by the baptism of the Spirit and by laying the Gospels and the hands of the perfect on the head of the initiate.

The anti-ecclesiastical movement, thus originated, found ardent propagandists among the clergy—in Peter, a priest of Bruys in Southern France, and Henry of Toulouse, a Cluniac monk, for instance. In fanatics like Tanchelm in the Netherlands and Endo of Stella it took the form of religious mania. Despite such visionary extravagances, their high, if narrow moral standard, attracted large numbers who were repelled by the degenerate and secularised character of the priesthood,

whose lives the Gregorian reformation by no means succeeded in amending, whilst quickening the critical spirit among the laity. Distinct from, though in some respects similar to, this Catharist sectarian movement, was that represented by the Waldensians and the Franciscan Spirituals or Fraticelli.<sup>3</sup> "Simplification of life and of religious organisation, a passion for the early Church and a literal interpretation of Holy Scripture, an exact following of the word and teaching of Christ, a complete and likewise a mechanical repetition of the apostolic life—that is the common foundation upon which the different sects arise."<sup>4</sup> "Such is the great sect movement of Southern Europe, with its various branches. Its fundamental element was primitive-Christian individualism, aroused by the New Testament, breaking out in opposition to the materialised institutional Church, coupled with the co-ordination of individuals into groups for the practical performance of good works, combined with great hostility towards the world and its institution of authority and property. It is that typical combination of religious individualism and moral rigorism which characterises the sect spirit; the rigorism holds fast to the Sermon on the Mount and the absolute law of Nature. . . . In all this the bond of fellowship is solely the 'Law of Jesus,' literally understood, and the institution, likewise based on this law, of missionaries and apostles, vowed to poverty, who live only for the fellowship; the latter are often also priests, and are thus in the line of apostolic succession, but their qualifications and their influence are still held to be dependent only on personal moral purity and austerity."<sup>5</sup>

#### THE WALDENSIANS

Among these sects the Waldensians are, in point of their persistent activity and influence, the most important. In its original form the Waldensian sect was not hostile to the Church, but strove to evangelise the masses within it by the lay preaching of the Gospel. Though it eschewed Catharist speculation, it

<sup>3</sup> For the Spirituals, see *supra*, p. 41 f.

<sup>4</sup> Volpe, "Eretici e Moti Ereticali del XI. al XV. Secolo," "Rinnovamento" (1907), quoted by Troeltsch, i. 356.

<sup>5</sup> Troeltsch, i. 357.

reproduces features of the Catharist sect movement on the practical side.<sup>6</sup>

Its founder was Peter Waldo or Valdes, a rich merchant of Lyons in the second half of the twelfth century, who was led by the sudden death of a friend to renounce his business and devote his life and his wealth to the service of Christ,<sup>7</sup> in obedience to the command, quoted by a clerical friend whom he consulted, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me." He strove to know and to make known Christianity as taught by Christ and the apostles, and to this end caused the Bible, or parts of it, to be translated into the Romaunt or Provençal language. He ere long won a number of adherents among the lower classes, who were attracted by his evangelical teaching, and some of whom followed his example and expounded the Gospel as they were able to their fellows. Such unauthorised preaching gave offence to the clergy, and the archbishop at length ordered them to desist. Waldo retorted with the plea that they must obey God rather than man and quoted the text, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Whereupon they were banished the diocese and betook themselves to Rome to appeal to the pope, Alexander III., for liberty to preach. The pope was then holding the Third Lateran Council (1179), and after discussion of their appeal, he, in the name of the Council, granted their request on condition that they should only preach with the sanction of the clergy of their native country. This was, of course, in view of the archbishop's decision, equivalent to a refusal. On resuming their preaching, they were again driven forth into Dauphiné. But their expulsion only widened the movement. Like the seventy of old, these "poor men of Lyons" (*Pauperes de Lugduno*),<sup>8</sup> as they were called, travelled by twos over the South of France and into Spain and Germany, and into Northern Italy, where

<sup>6</sup> Tocco exaggerates the Catharist influence, "*L'Eresia nel Medio Evo*," 139 f. (1884).

<sup>7</sup> There are two accounts of Waldo's conversion, one in "*Anecdotes Historiques*," etc., tirés du Recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon, Dominicain du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, publié par la Soc. d'Histoire de France, by Lamarche (1877); the other in an anonymous chronicle in Bouquet, xiii. 680 f.

<sup>8</sup> From the circumstance that they wore wooden sandals (*sabatum*, Fr. *sabot*), they were also known as *Insabatati*.

the kindred society of the Humiliati, who amalgamated with them, had prepared the way for the spread of the movement, preaching their simple gospel and gathering many followers both by their message and their pure and devoted life, in spite of excommunication by Pope Lucius III. in 1184.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century Pope Innocent III. discarded for a time this repressive policy and formed groups of them into a brotherhood of "Catholic Poor." But he subsequently revoked his patronage and in the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) renewed their excommunication. Hitherto, whilst striving to evangelise in accordance with the precepts and example of Christ, they were not hostile to the Church. The older theory<sup>9</sup> that they had preserved the teaching and the simplicity of primitive Christianity in the seclusion of the Dauphiné Alps throughout the Middle Ages has been disproved by more recent investigation. The story current among the Waldensians at a later time, and adopted by the Protestant reformers, that from the fourth century, when Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, accepted the dominion of the West from Constantine and the Church definitely departed from apostolic Christianity, their ancestors had handed down the true faith from generation to generation for eight centuries, is a fiction. The early Waldensians made no claim to such an ancient origin. All that they asserted was that, by going back to the Scriptures and deriving their teaching from them, they represented the Christianity of early times. "They say," remarks the Inquisitor Moneta, who in the thirteenth century had examined many of their adherents, "that the Church of God declined in the time of Sylvester, and that in these days it had been re-established by their efforts, commencing with Waldo." This testimony is confirmed from their own records. "In the year 1218," says Comba, "the Waldensians held a conference with their brethren of Lombardy; the name they then bore was that of Valdensians or Associates of Valdes. Together they composed the Valdesian Society. In their debates

<sup>9</sup> Defended by Gilly in his "Waldensian Researches" (1831), and Fisher in "An Enquiry into the History and Theology of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses" (1838). It is refuted by Dieckhoff, "Die Waldenser im Mittelalter" (1851); Herzog, "Die Romanischen Waldenser" (1853); and Comba, "History of the Waldenses of Italy," 6 f. (2nd ed., 1889, Eng. trans.).

not the slightest allusion is found to a time anterior to Waldo." <sup>10</sup>

Though, thus, no isolated remnant of the ancient Church, their study of the Scriptures and the persecution to which, on both sides of the Alps, they were subjected, tended more and more to estrange them from the mediæval Church. The extent of this estrangement differed with the region, the Lombard section of them adopting a more radical attitude than the French section.<sup>11</sup> From an early period they were divided into two classes, the *perfecti*, to whom the preachers belonged, and the *credentes* or ordinary believers. Their clergy were composed of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, who were elected by the brethren and supported themselves by manual labour or voluntary contributions. They met once or twice a year, under the presidency of a supreme bishop or majoralis, for deliberation in their general assemblies or "chapters."<sup>12</sup> The hierarchical spirit was evidently not strong. According to some authorities laymen and even women could preach and administer the sacraments. They emphasised voluntary poverty, the reading of the Scriptures in the vernacular as the norm of faith and the religious life, obedience to God, as revealed in the law of Christ, above submission to ecclesiastical authority, and free preaching. Like the Cathari, they rejected the doctrine of purgatory, the taking of oaths, and the death penalty,<sup>13</sup> and maintained a puritan standard of life, coupled with a practical Christianity. If they accepted transubstantiation, they maintained that it could only be effected by persons of pure life. Similarly the power to loose and bind depends, not on ordination, but on Christian character, and confession to a layman of good life is as valid as that to a priest. Indulgences, pilgrimages, prayers to the saints are inadmissible.

<sup>10</sup> "The Waldenses," 9.

<sup>11</sup> K. Müller, "Die Waldenser und Ihre Einzelnen Gruppen bis zum Anfang des 14<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhunderts," 100 f. (1886).

<sup>12</sup> Comba, 256. Preger maintains, against Müller, that though the Waldensians recognised the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons (in accordance with scriptural usage), in practice they made use, not of the term bishop, but of majoralis. He concludes that they were at most two in number. "Die Verfassung der französischen Waldesier," "Abhandlungen der Hist. Classe der König Bayer Akad. der Wissenschaften," xix. 674 f. He also maintains, against Müller, that they held the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Comba, 244 f.

The recurring persecutions to which they were gradually exposed quickened the spirit of dissent. "Their hostility to the Church," says Milman, "grew up with the hostility of the Church to them."<sup>14</sup> The influence of the Hussite movement, with which the German Waldensians entered into close association in the fifteenth century,<sup>15</sup> greatly widened the breach with the Church, which they ultimately came to regard not only as unchristian, but as anti-Christian. In the "Nobla Leiczon" (Noble Lesson), one of their poetical writings, which was formerly attributed to the twelfth century or beginning of the thirteenth, but is now generally believed to belong to the fifteenth (c. 1400),<sup>16</sup> the reactionary spirit against the Church is strongly marked. In this exhortation to a practical life in the spirit of the Gospel the writer denounces the pretensions of the hierarchy. "All the popes from Sylvester down to the present one, and all the cardinals, and all the bishops, and all the abbots, even all such put together, have no power to absolve or pardon a single creature in regard to a single mortal sin; inasmuch as God pardons and no other can do it."<sup>17</sup> With the approach of the age of the Reformation they are found rejecting or doubting the doctrine of transubstantiation and other Roman beliefs and practices. Though the doctrine of justification by faith alone is lacking and they share the current conception of salvation by faith conjoined with works, they were evidently well on their way to Wittenberg and Geneva.

In France, though they were most numerous in the south-east, their missionary zeal established communities in other parts of the kingdom. The fact is evidenced by the persecution from which they suffered from the thirteenth to the end of the fifteenth century, with occasional intervals of immunity. This persecution was especially severe under the auspices of Popes John XXII. and Gregory XI. in the fourteenth century, and under the latter pope the Inquisitor of Provence, François Borel,

<sup>14</sup> "Latin Christianity," v. 395.

<sup>15</sup> See Lea, "History of the Inquisition," ii. 414 f.; Haupt, "Waldensertum und Inquisition im Südöstl. Deutschland" (1890).

<sup>16</sup> Comba, however, still regards it as a thirteenth-century production. The belief in its later date is based on the inference that the "4" in 1400 has been erased for a "1" in one of the MSS. of it in Cambridge University Library, 232 f. In another MS. the "4" was actually discovered.

<sup>17</sup> Faber, "Vallenses and Albigenes," 411. He gives copious extracts from the "Noble Lesson." See also Comba, 231.

carried on an energetic crusade against them in the regions of Provence, Dauphiné, and the Lyonnais. During the Schism they were left to multiply in peace and the immunity continued throughout the greater part of the fifteenth century. To his credit Louis XI. shielded them from the bigotry of Sixtus IV., who vainly urged him to destroy the heretics. Louis persisted, nevertheless, in assuming that these Vaudois were good Catholics and directed the royal officials to put a stop to the proceedings of the Inquisition against them. This protection was withdrawn by his successor Charles VIII., who found it expedient to cultivate the goodwill of Innocent VIII. in the interest of his policy of Italian conquest, and in 1489 an expedition, organised by the papal Inquisitor and the Parliament of Grenoble, invaded the valleys of Dauphiné and Savoy and carried out the bloody vengeance of the Church against those who resisted or refused to recant. Happily, Charles' successor Louis XII. reverted to the moderate policy of Louis XI., and the remnant were suffered to retain their evangelical faith under the guise of a formal profession of Catholicism.<sup>18</sup>

On the other side of the Cottian Alps the communities in the Piedmontese valleys maintained themselves, in spite of recurring persecution in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, by the indomitable heroism which resisted the sanguinary efforts of the Inquisition, backed by the Dukes of Savoy, to suppress them. The offshoots of them in Calabria and Apulia in the far south, who secured by their industry the protection of the local nobles, whose lands they tilled, and who conformed outwardly to the rites of the Church, were more fortunate, and "dwelt in comparative peace for nearly two centuries."<sup>19</sup>

In Germany their numbers were already so considerable at the beginning of the thirteenth century as to bring upon them persecution at Strassburg and Metz. Throughout the century they spread to other parts of the empire, and we hear in the second half of it that there were as many as forty-one Waldensian communities in the wide diocese of Passau, embracing at this period Eastern Bavaria, Northern Austria, and the kingdom of Bohemia. A hundred years later they and the allied sect of the Winklers were to be found by the thousand all over

<sup>18</sup> Lea, "History of the Inquisition," ii. 145 f.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 259 f.

Central Europe from the Rhine to Hungary and Poland, and in the Baltic region as far east as Königsberg. Here, as in other lands, their outward conformity to the rites of the Church and their humble social position had preserved them from systematic persecution. But the discovery of their growth led to attempts to suppress them towards the end of the fourteenth century and these were continued throughout the fifteenth. A notable example is the burning of Frederic Reiser, one of their most zealous preachers, who adopted and propagated extreme Hussite views, at Strassburg in 1458. They nevertheless maintained their existence in close association with the Bohemian Brethren, on whose preachers two of their bishops conferred ordination, down to the advent of Luther, for the spread of whose teaching they contributed, in their own humble fashion, to pave the way.<sup>20</sup>

These sectaries are strictly puritan in life as in worship. They confess their sins to their pastors and do penance in the form of prescribed fasting and prayer. Their ethic is based on the Sermon on the Mount, which they strive to apply in their personal conduct and in their relations with others. There are the usual tales of gross immorality. But these are the stereotyped inventions of the scandalmonger, and are refuted by the inquisitors themselves. "They assemble particularly at night," says the inquisitor David of Augsburg, "in order more freely to indulge in their iniquitous rites (worship). It is said that after they have extinguished the lights they all give themselves up to fornication; but I do not believe this can be said of this sect; and of a truth, I have never heard any such report from the lips of trustworthy persons."<sup>21</sup>

"The unanimous testimony of their persecutors," remarks Lea, "is that their external virtues were worthy of all praise, and the contrast between the purity of their lives and the depravity which pervaded the clergy of the dominant Church is more than once deplored by their antagonists as a most effective factor in the dissemination of heresy. . . . The tales which were told as to the sexual abominations customary among them may safely be set down as devices to excite popular

<sup>20</sup> Lea, "History of the Inquisition," 316 f., 347 f., 395 f., 414 f.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Comba, 276.

detestation. . . . An inquisitor admits his disbelief as to these, for which he had never found a basis worthy of credence, nor does anything of the kind make its appearance in the examinations of the sectaries under the skilful handling of their persecutors until in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the inquisitors of Piedmont and Provence found it expedient to extract such confessions from their victims. . . . There was also objected to them the hypocrisy which led them to conceal their belief under assiduous attendance at mass and confession and punctual observance of orthodox externalities; but this, like the ingenious evasions under examination, which so irritated their inquisitorial critics, may readily be pardoned to those with whom it was the necessity of self-preservation, and who, at least during the earlier period, had often no other means of enjoying the sacraments which they deemed essential to salvation. They were also ridiculed for their humble condition in life, being almost wholly peasants, mechanics, and the like—poor and despised folk, of whom the Church took little account, except to tax when orthodox, and burn when heretic. But their crowning offence was their love and reverence for Scripture, and their burning zeal in making converts. . . . Surely if ever there was a godfearing people it was these unfortunates under the ban of Church and State, whose secret passwords were, ‘Ce dit Saint Pol, ne menter,’ ‘Ce dit Saint Jacques, ne jurer,’ ‘Ce dit Saint Pierre, ne rendre mal pour mal, mais biens contraires.’ The ‘Nobla Leiczon’ scarce says more than the inquisitors, when it bitterly declares that the sign of a Vaudois, deemed worthy of death, was that he followed Christ and sought to obey the commandments of God.”<sup>22</sup>

#### BRETHREN AND SISTERS OF THE FREE SPIRIT

In the Waldensians we have a sect, which, while not formally separating from the Church, hold certain distinctive beliefs, and ultimately, under stress of persecution and the influence of other reforming movements, renounce all connection with it. In the “Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit” we have a couple of associations, representing a distinct type of the mediæval mystical Christianity, which forms a characteristic feature

<sup>22</sup> “History of the Inquisition,” i. 85 f.

of the religious thought and life of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This mysticism developed a twofold tendency—the one pantheistic and inimical to the Church, the other theistic and deemed by its votaries compatible with the orthodox faith.

The father of mediæval pantheistic mysticism was John Scotus Eriugena, the ninth-century wandering Irish monk, who drew on the neo-Platonic philosophy and the mystic teaching of the so-called Dionysius, and elaborated his pantheistic mysticism in his work, "De Divisione Naturæ." It was revived by Amaury of Paris or Bena towards the end of the twelfth century. This mystic revival was also influenced by the Arabian philosophers, from whom David of Dinant, the contemporary of Amaury, seems to have drawn his inspiration.<sup>23</sup> Though their pantheistic mysticism, which identified God and the universe, was condemned in 1209 by a Provincial Synod at Paris and its votaries burned or imprisoned, it won many adherents in its popular form. In spite of repression it survived into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the "Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit," whose founder seems to have been Ortlieb of Strassburg, very probably a follower of Amaury. According to Ortlieb and his followers of the thirteenth century, the soul is of the substance of God, and man is, therefore, capable of becoming divine. He may attain to such a state of perfection even in this life that God operates all in him and he ceases to sin and becomes the equal of Christ, nay of God. He can attain to this state if he sets himself to will it. This deified man has no need of priesthood, or sacrament, confession, prayer, fasting, or other usage of the Church. For him sin is non-existent and he may allow himself full liberty, since whatever he does, he does by the will of God which has become his will. He is freed from all law and precept and all things belong to him (communism). For him there is no future resurrection, which has already taken place in his spiritual transformation. Purgatory and hell are mere priestly fictions.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See articles in Herzog-Hauck "Real Encyclopedie"; Loofs, "Dogmengeschichte," 538; Renan, "Averroes," 174 f. Preger thinks that he drew his teaching from the Aristotelian philosophy as well as neo-Platonic sources, "Geschichte der Deutschen Mystik," i. 184 f. (1874).

<sup>24</sup> From an anonymous MS. dating from about the middle of the thirteenth century, printed by Preger, i. 461 f.

Daringly speculative, this pantheistic mysticism substitutes for institutional Christianity in its developed form an accentuated religious individualism. Institutional Christianity is only for the ignorant and the crude. Deified man, as an incarnation of God, can afford to dispense with it. On the speculative side its weakness is obvious. It ignores the fact of human personality, its consciousness of the distinction between itself and God, and its finite limitation, whilst realising a certain kinship, in its rational and moral nature, with Deity. Moreover, on its ethical side, it belittles the fact of sin, the moral imperfection, which is also an instinctive conviction of the soul. Its indifference to this fundamental fact might easily lead, in weak natures, to the abuse of spiritual liberty in gross self-indulgence.

The members of the sect of the Free Spirit were recruited largely from the Beguinae and Beghardi. The former were an association of women, whose reputed founder was a priest of Liège, named Lambert le Bègue.<sup>25</sup> They took no monastic vows and lived a practical religious life. Lambert hit on this expedient, which had already been unsuccessfully adopted by the Præmonstratensian order at Liège, for providing maintenance and a useful vocation for the large numbers of poor women who needed protection and livelihood. The movement which thus arose in Flanders between 1170 and 1180 rapidly spread into other lands, and subsequently led to the establishment of male associations for the same purpose (Beguini, Beghardi).<sup>26</sup> The freedom of these associations appears to have encouraged freedom of thought, and ultimately, if we believe their orthodox critics, laxity of morals, and by the beginning of the fourteenth century their "free spirit" drew upon them the condemnation of the Council of Vienne. The two canons relative to them passed by the Council in 1311 reproduce the creed of these followers of Ortlieb (Ortliebians) as it was professed at the beginning of this century. According to this pronouncement, "the abominable sect of men and women, popularly called Beguines and Beghardi," has spread widely

<sup>25</sup> The "stammerer"; hence the name applied to this community, a more probable derivation than that from a term meaning "to beg." See Rufus Jones, "Studies in Mystical Religion," 197 f. (1909).

<sup>26</sup> Jones, 199; Hermelink, "Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte," ed. by Krüger, ii. Theil, 148 f.; see also Mosheim, "De Beghardis et Beguinabus, Commentarius" (1790).

in Germany. These misguided sectaries maintain that man can attain such a state of perfection that he has become impeccable and has no need to grow in grace. Otherwise he would reach greater perfection than that of Christ Himself. In this state fasting and prayer are superfluous. Since the life of sense is so completely subject to reason, he may concede full liberty to the body. He no longer owes obedience to the Church, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. He has already attained in this life the final blessedness of the life eternal. Every rational being has in itself the capacity of this blessedness, so that it needs not the divine illumination in order to rise to the contemplation and enjoyment of God. Those who exercise themselves in the virtues are still imperfect. The perfect soul has got beyond this stage. It is under no obligation to show reverence for the elevated body of Christ in the mass. To descend from the height of contemplation in order to meditate on the humiliation and passion of Christ would be for it a mark of imperfection. Wherefore, on account of these and other corrupting and execrable errors, they shall be examined by the inquisitors of heretical pravity, and if they refuse to recant, shall suffer condign punishment.<sup>27</sup> In consequence of this condemnation, which was promulgated by John XXII. in 1317, they were exposed to a rigorous persecution<sup>28</sup> as dangerous to the Church as well as morality, exception being only made in the case of communities which accepted the rules of some recognised order and led a pious life.

In fairness to them, it must be said that in the indictment of the Council, it is their hostility and insubordination to the Church that constitute their chief offence. They are not charged with actual immorality, though it is implied that their free spirit must tend to moral laxity. Similarly in the pastoral letter<sup>29</sup> of the Bishop of Strassburg in 1317, in which he directs the confiscation of their houses and the destruction of their works, while their subversive teaching is emphasised, the immoral application of it is not substantiated. The numerous martyrs who unflinchingly went to the stake rather than abjure their pantheistic faith, show a heroic strength of character

<sup>27</sup> Mansi, "Collectio Ampl.," xxv. 416, and his ed. of the *Annales of Raynaldus*, iv. 550 f.; Hefele-Leclercq, vi., Pt. II., 681 f.

<sup>28</sup> For their persecution, see Lea, "History of the Inquisition," ii. 367 f.

<sup>29</sup> Given by Mosheim, "De Beghardis," 253 f.

and conviction. They were assuredly not moral weaklings. Moreover, the tales of gross immorality, extracted by torture, or coming from prejudiced sources are by no means reliable evidence. At the same time, these tales, if exaggerated, seem, in view of their principle of absolute liberty, to have a substratum of truth. There appears, in fact, to have been two tendencies within the movement—the tendency to strict asceticism on the ground of the vanity of all that is fleshly and finite, and the tendency to libertinism on the ground that everything being divine, there is no distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, and that all the promptings of the soul, low as well as high, are equally legitimate. That their principle of absolute liberty was, to a certain extent, practised as well as professed, is attested by Tauler and other high-minded mystics, whose testimony is not open to the suspicion of ecclesiastical bias. “Whatever nature desires,” says Tauler, “*that* they can freely do, in their estimation, without sin, since they have attained to the highest innocence and no law or command is applicable to them. Thus whatever nature urges, this they follow, so that the freedom of the spirit may remain unhindered.”<sup>30</sup>

#### MEISTER ECKHART

The most profound representative of theistic mysticism was Meister Eckhart,<sup>31</sup> though in his subtle speculations he seems to steer clear of pantheism only by a hair's-breadth, and was ultimately condemned as a heretic. He was probably born about 1260 at Hochheim in Thuringia. He entered the Dominican monastery at Erfurt, continued his studies in the Dominican seminary at Strassburg and at the University of Cologne, and taught at that of Paris, where in 1302 he took the master's degree. His prominence in the order in Germany is attested by his rapid promotion to high office. He became successively Prior of the Dominican monastery at Erfurt, Provincial Prior of the order in Saxony, and in 1307 Vicar-General for Bohemia. After a further sojourn at Paris in 1311, he sprang into fame as professor (*Lesemeister*) and preacher

<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Preger, iii. 134.

<sup>31</sup> The oldest form of the name is Ekehart. Preger gives Strassburg as his native place, i. 326. Denifle has made out a strong case for Hochheim, “*Archiv f. Lit. und Kirchengeschichte*,” v. 349 f.

at Strassburg—the great centre of the religious life of Germany. Here he appears to have maintained sympathetic relations with the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and subsequently at Cologne, where he spent his later years in the same capacity. “He was,” says Büttner, “the most distinguished theologian, the most esteemed preacher in Germany. Copies of his sermons, of his German writings and extracts from them passed from hand to hand, and carried his teaching to regions which his spoken word did not reach. The fact that his doctrines more and more penetrated among the people led the secular clergy, first in veiled, then in open, hostility, to attack his teaching and attempt to drive him out of the Church.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1320 we find the Archbishop of Cologne warning Pope John XXII. of the danger of such subversive preaching. The pope referred the matter for investigation to the Dominican Nicolas of Strassburg, who exonerated him from the charge of heresy. The archbishop next attempted to secure his condemnation through the diocesan inquisitors of heretical pravity. Eckhart countered this attempt by challenging his accusers in February 1327 to appear with him before the pope at Avignon, where he was ready to defend his teaching, whilst declaring his readiness to revoke beforehand any error of which his opponents might prove him guilty. His death shortly after did not suspend the process against him, and in 1329 the pope formally condemned seventeen of the twenty-eight articles of the indictment as heretical and pronounced the remainder rash and suspect of heresy.<sup>33</sup> In spite of this condemnation, there can be no doubt about his general orthodoxy. He works into his mysticism the traditional doctrines, and rebuts the charge of heresy by saying that his opponents do not understand and have misinterpreted his mystic meaning. In intention at anyrate he was no heretic, if his reasoning and terminology have at times a pantheistic ring. “His doctrine . . . is certainly susceptible of a pantheistic interpretation. . . . There is, however, no doubt that, in spite of excessive language, his intentions were strictly orthodox.”<sup>34</sup>

He distinguishes between the Godhead and God. The

<sup>32</sup> “Meister Eckehart’s Schriften und Predigten,” i. 20 (ed. 1923).

<sup>33</sup> The bull is given by Preger, “Geschichte der Deutschen Mystik,” i. 479 f.

<sup>34</sup> Underhill, “Cambridge Mediæval History,” vii. 799 (1932).

Godhead is "the unnatured nature,"<sup>35</sup> or absolute reality, "Deity in itself," the ultimate ground of all being. Of this ground we can know nothing. "What God is to Himself no man may know. God is nothing that we may express."<sup>36</sup> God is the Godhead become personal, knowable in the Father, Son, and Spirit—the Trinity of the orthodox creeds, expressed in terms of mystic philosophy. God through the Son—the instrument of the eternal divine ideas—created all things, which are the expression of these eternal ideas. He is immanent in all things and all things are one in Him. Though this sounds pantheistic, he holds fast to the Transcendence of God. "God is in the creatures, but above them. He is above all nature and is not Himself nature."<sup>37</sup>

In virtue of his rational nature man has a kinship with God. There is in him a divine "spark" (*Fünkelein*) which unites him to God. In his earlier teaching this divine spark is identified with reason. Later it is the mysterious "ground" of the soul, and is higher than reason, by which we know only the finite and the sensible as we experience them. It is God in us and by it we become one with the Godhead. "When I attain this blessedness of union, then all things are in me and in God, and where I am there God is, and where God is, there I am."<sup>38</sup> This conception of the divine immanence also sounds pantheistic. At the same time he does not completely absorb human personality in that of God. "But what, you may ask, is the fate of the soul that is lost in God? Does she find herself or not? My answer is, it seems to me that she does find herself and this at the point where every rational being sees itself with itself. For though she sinks and sinks into the oneness of Deity, she never touches bottom. Wherefore God has left her one little point from which to get back to herself and know herself as creature."<sup>39</sup>

Nor does he, like some of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, wipe out the distinction between right and wrong, good and

<sup>35</sup> He indulges at times in a strange jargon, see Pfeiffer, "Meister Eckhart," 385. Collection of Eckhart's Sermons and Tractates, trans. by Evans (1924). There is much discussion over the authenticity of some of his writings. Evans omits some of the works in Pfeiffer's Collection and adds others.

<sup>36</sup> Pfeiffer, 380.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 210 f.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 27; cf. 90.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 282, Evans' trans. slightly amended. Deutsche Schriften," i. 109.

Büttner, "Eckhart's

evil. He emphasises the reality of sin. He denies that any one is free till he becomes free from sin. Again and again he insists on the cardinal fact that only by dying to the life of sin can we attain to the higher knowledge and life of God. The mystic life is the life of complete self-renunciation, the emptying of self in the pursuit of this higher knowledge and life. This self-emptying is an indispensable condition of regeneration, by which God begets his Son anew in the soul. In this new birth the soul is passive, leaving God to work His will in it and make our will one with His.<sup>40</sup> But this passivity by no means excludes the life of active goodness. "What a man takes in by contemplation, he must pour out in love."<sup>41</sup> If, like St Paul, one was caught up in rapture, and one knew of a person in need, it would be far better to interrupt this rapture and serve the needy person.

Eckhart's religion is pronouncedly subjective, experimental. Its keynote is the striving to find God in religious experience, and to live the higher religious life in personal union and communion with Him. He makes little account of external observances, though he does not desire to disparage or to withdraw from the teaching and usages of the Church. He subordinates these observances—fasts, vigils, prayers, and all other forms of ecclesiastical discipline—to the experience of God in the soul. Even the external revelation of God has no value for him unless it is verified in experience. "What," he asks, "is the good of searching among dead bones (relics of saints)? Why not seek the living sacrum that gives eternal life? The dead give not, nor do they take."<sup>42</sup> Nor does he leave much room for priest and Church as intermediaries between God and the soul. God is in you, he reiterates; God begets his Son in you. The Word is very nigh you, and with God within as well as beyond, the great goal is to grow into God. Dr Inge sees in him, in this respect, a precursor of the Reformation, and Büttner finds an echo of his teaching in Luther's "Liberty of a Christian Man." In so far as his teaching, if practically applied, was fundamentally subversive of ecclesiastical institutions, he was a pre-Reformer. Otherwise he is not an ecclesiastical controversialist and would not have brought about a disruption of the Church, with the

<sup>40</sup> Pfeiffer, 336 f.<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 215, 425.<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

dogma and practice of which he is not actively at variance. He concerns himself with the individual rather than with the corporate body. His religious experience did not, as in the case of Luther, lead him to defy pope and hierarchy, though his opinions brought upon him a posthumous condemnation as a heretic. As a thinker he indulges freely in paradox and abstraction and therefore appears at times to contradict himself. He is much addicted to allegorising his texts into conformity with his mysticism, and is on this ground alone often unconvincing. He might be described as a high-minded doctrinaire and a very lovable character. Only, his doctrinarism is apt at times to become tiresome to the more rational and less mystical reader.<sup>43</sup>

#### THE FRIENDS OF GOD

Meister Eckhart is the speculative genius of theistic mysticism, which, on its more practical side, is represented by the Friends of God. These consisted of groups or "circles" of mystics in Southern and Western Germany and the Netherlands—in Bavaria, at Strassburg, Basle, Cologne, Louvain. These groups maintained a close intercourse by means of correspondence and visits, and some of them lived together in "brotherhood houses," after the model of the Beghards. Their leaders, who all flourished in the fourteenth century, were Rulman Merswin, Nicolas of Louvain, John Tauler, Henry of Suso, Henry of Nördlingen, Jan Ruysbroek, Margaret and Christina Ebner, the unknown author of the "German Theology," and the mysterious "Friend of God from the

<sup>43</sup> Among the many works on Eckhart are Pfeiffer, "Deutsche Mystiker des 14<sup>ten</sup> Jahrhunderts," ii. (1857), a collection of his works trans. by Evans (1927); Denifle, "Meister Eckhart's Lat. Schriften," "Archiv für Literatur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters," ii. (1885-6); Delacroix, "Essai sur le Mysticisme Spéculatif" (1900); Spamer, "Texte aus der Deutschen Mystik der 14 und 15 Jahrhunderte" (1912); Büttner, "Meister Eckhart's Schriften und Predigten," a free trans. from Middle High German into modern (ed. 1923); Strauch, ed. of Eckhart's "Buch der Göttlichen Tröstung" (1910, in "Kleine Texte"); Diederichs, Eckhart's "Reden der Unterscheidung" (1913, *ibid.*); Field, trans. of some of his sermons, "Heart and Life Booklets"; Preger, "Geschichte der Deutschen Mystik," i. (1874); chapters in Inge's "Christian Mysticism" (1899); Rufus Jones, "Studies in Mystical Religion"; W. M. Scott, "Aspects of Christian Mysticism" (1907). See also Underhill, "Mysticism" (3rd ed., 1912).

Oberland" (Switzerland), the professed author of a number of mystic writings. The last named was long identified with Nicolas of Basle, the Beghard martyr. He is more probably a fictitious creation, like Christian in "The Pilgrim's Progress," invented for the purpose of furthering the movement by Merswin or his secretary, Nicolas of Louvain.<sup>44</sup> Characteristic of them are an intensive piety; devotion to the ascetic, contemplative life; insistence on experimentalism as the all-important thing in religion; a proneness to visions, apocalyptic fancies, hallucinations, and a rather morbid religious sentimentalism, frequently expressing itself in ecstasy and delighting in sensuous imagery without relaxing a pure morality; excessive introspection which lends a certain egotistic colouring to their piety and, in seeking to transcend the limits of religious knowledge, neglects or underrates the more solid knowledge of God by way of rational reflection. The ascetic, ecstatic tendency is most marked in Suso or Seuse, the psychic *par excellence* of the movement, who in his most extreme moods, as depicted in his autobiography, verges on insanity. He refused, for instance, for many years to take a bath for the love of God. He slept in a shirt studded with 150 sharp nails in order to discipline his body for the contemplation of God, and allowed himself to be tormented by vermin. Truly a strange hallucination to assume that dirt, vermin, and bodily laceration are adjuncts to perfection in the divine life, and to depreciate so flagrantly the human body as a temple of God. He continued this repulsive self-castigation for sixteen years before he gave it up by divine direction in order to devote himself to preaching and active well-doing. His is, indeed, an extreme case of misguided zeal in the quest for mystic union with God. In general they are extremely devout, if rather eccentric and morbid folk, and some of them, like Tauler and the author of the "German Theology," are men of remarkable intellect and personality. Whilst sharing in the superstition of the age, they laid the utmost stress on religious inwardness in their onesided fashion. They assiduously read the Bible,

<sup>44</sup> Denifle identifies him with Merswin, "Der Gottesfreund im Oberlande" (1870). So also Hermelink, "Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte," ii. Theil, 198. Jones, who gives a good discussion of the problem, thinks the inventor was Nicolas of Louvain, "Studies in Mystical Religion," 245 f. So also Rieder, "Der Gottesfreund vom Oberland" (1905).

though they did not limit inspiration to it, and believed in a continuous revelation through the Holy Spirit, the inner light, which illuminates and raises them to union with God and is superior to the teaching of the Church in its scholastic form. They assigned an important part to laymen thus taught by their spiritual experience. The movement is, in fact, a lay movement in reaction from the dominant ecclesiastical religion of a demoralised priesthood. The Friends constitute the true spiritual Church within the Church. Though remaining within its pale and professing submission to its authority, they vigorously denounced its rampant corruption, and their predictions of its coming chastisement, as well as their peculiar psychic experiences, were intensified by the calamities which in the fourteenth century afflicted both the Church and the world.<sup>45</sup>

By two of these mystic Friends of God, Luther was powerfully influenced in working his way towards what he called "the new theology." In his progress toward it he confesses his indebtedness to the author of the "German Theology," as he termed it, and to Tauler's sermons. The nameless author of the "German Theology" was a priest and warden of the house of the Teutonic order at Frankfurt, according to the preface to the manuscript of 1497. Luther was so fascinated by its teaching that in 1516 he published a fragment of it under the title of "A Spiritual Noble Booklet," and two years later the whole work under the title of "A German Theology." Next to the Bible and St Augustine, he had never come across any book in which he had learned more about God, Christ, man, and all things. "Let anyone who will read this little book, and then say whether our theology is new or old. I thank God that I thus hear and find my God in the German tongue, as I have not hitherto found in the Latin, Greek, or Hebrew tongue."<sup>46</sup> What attracted him was not the speculative conception of God, which the writer takes from Eckhart, but the presentation of the divine life engendered by Christ in

<sup>45</sup> On Suso, see Diepenbrock, "Leben und Schriften" (4th ed. 1884), and Denifle, "Die Deutschen Schriften des H. Seuse," i. 1876 f. In Italy the mystic movement is represented by Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena, in France by Gerson, in England by Rollo and Walter Hilton. All five combined the life of contemplation with that of active service on behalf of the reform of the Church.

<sup>46</sup> "Werke," i. 378 f. (Weimar ed.).

the soul. The writer shows a keen sense of sin and its evil effects, of the impotence of human nature by reason of sin to attain this divine life apart from God, of the complete dependence of the soul on God for salvation, of the innate disposition to seek the good of self instead of the good for its own sake, of the necessity of self-distrust, self-effacement in the relation of man to God. For him, as for Luther, sin is self-will in disobedience to the will of God, the egoism of the creature over against the Creator. From this egoism God alone can restore man. In order to be restored he must begin by realising that he can do nothing by himself to effect this restoration. For the mystic, as for Luther, there is a spiritual crisis in which the soul thus becomes conscious of sin, guilt, unworthiness, and in which it tastes of hell. This is what is involved in true repentance for sin, which God works in it. But God does not leave it in this hell, though this experience may often recur. He lays hold of man so that he becomes a partaker of the mystic joy, bliss, and peace of heaven. This peace does not, indeed, imply absence of tribulation. As with Christ, the Cross, suffering is the inevitable experience of the mystic Christian.

The restoration of man to God is effected in the incarnation of Christ. God assumed human nature in Christ in order that man might become divine. By no other way could his self-will in disobedience to God be remedied. Hence the surpassing significance of the life and death of Christ. Through Him the death of self-will, the old man has been accomplished and the new man, the life of perfect obedience, has become a reality, and has been made possible for His followers. Christ's human nature was so utterly bereft of self that it became the very home and habitation of God. Thus through Him His followers may be restored from sin and its evil effects and become partakers of the divine life in Him. At the same time, they may not presume that they are without sin or regard the good in themselves as their own doing, since goodness belongs to God alone. They may only credit themselves with what they do amiss. Nor does the death of self mean indifference to, or irresponsibility for, the evil in them. It means the fashioning of their lives after that of Christ, putting on the life of Christ, the new man from love and not for the sake of reward. The Friend of Christ

will seek only to become the instrument of the will of God. He will submit with complete patience and resignation to all the crosses that befall him, without desire of redress, or deliverance, or resistance, or revenge, in accordance with the example of Christ. Nor will he substitute licence for liberty, like the Brethren of the Free Spirit, who follow the false light of nature and are misled by spiritual pride and practise a lawless freedom. Though he is not under the law, but under grace, and external regulations are not necessary for the perfect, and though salvation does not depend on them, he will submit to the laws and precepts and sacraments of the Church, knowing that laws and ordinances are necessary for the multitude, and that Christ thus submitted Himself.

So far he has said nothing about the significance of faith in the restoration of man to God, and it is only towards the end of the book that he touches on faith as a fundamental element in the experience of the mystic Christian. Faith in Christ must precede knowledge. It is not identical with mere belief in the articles of the creed. It is the inward experience of the words of Christ. "He that believeth not shall be damned," and without this experimental faith one can have no true knowledge of these things. In what it consists he does not specifically tell us, for his concern is rather with the divine life in the soul through Christ and what this life involves than with the theological interpretation of it. We miss the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, which was to Luther the kernel of the Gospel. The author seems to have no ear for the Pauline reasoning on the law and grace, faith and works, though believing is to him an inward experience and not a mere intellectual apprehension. Equally striking is the quietistic note. The monotonous emphasis of the writer on self-effacement to the extent of the annihilation of the will suggests too much the negative life. Yet he has some room for the active Christian spirit of service for others. He sometimes, too, means by self-repression not only the repression of evil in the self, but the dying to self in order truly to live. "I would fain," he finely says, "be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man."<sup>47</sup>

What appealed to Luther was the emphasis on sin as

self-will, egoism; on salvation from sin as the work of God alone. It is not attainable by any act of the will apart from that of God. It is made possible only by God in Christ, and the true, divine life is attainable in no other way. His enthusiastic appreciation of the book was evidently influenced by the fact that in these respects he felt the touch of a kindred spirit. He found in it, too, an evidence that his theology was, to this extent at least, old, not new, and that he did not stand alone in his revulsion from the scholastic theology in favour of one based on the experience of God's grace in the soul. In this mood he was prone to find a fuller reflection of his teaching in any work that strongly moved him than the facts warranted. The mystic strain in him responded enthusiastically to this discovery, and though his specific apprehension of the Gospel is not there, he undoubtedly assimilated some ideas from this mystic source.<sup>48</sup>

"If," wrote Luther to Spalatin in December 1516, "you take delight in pure and solid theology in the German language—a theology very similar to that of the ancients—get the sermons of John Tauler, of the order of Preachers, of whose teaching I send you herewith an epitome."<sup>49</sup> Tauler, whose sermons Luther appraised so highly, was also a disciple of Eckhart and a member of the brotherhood of the Friends of God. They were addressed to the congregations that crowded to hear him at Strassburg and Cologne. Though a member of the Dominican order, his vocation as a preacher brought him into close contact with the people, and whilst the speculative mysticism of Eckhart forms the philosophic kernel of his message, he strove to make it intelligible to the ordinary hearer in the interest of practical Christianity. If, on the intellectual side, he was obsessed by the Meister's ideas, his main interest as a preacher lies in experimental religion, and his great theme is the incarnation, life, suffering, and death of Christ in their bearing on the regeneration, the spiritual and moral uplift of the soul. With Augustine he regards human nature as totally corrupted by original sin, which, as in the

<sup>48</sup> I have taken this in abridged form from my "Luther and the Reformation," i. 212 f. I have used Mandel's edition of the "Theologia Deutsch" (1908), and also that of Pfeiffer, based on the 1497 MS., with translation into modern German (3rd ed., 1875). There is an Eng. trans. by Miss Winkworth (1854, new issue, 1934).

<sup>49</sup> Enders, "Luther's Briefwechsel," i. 75; cf. 90.

“German Theology,” consists in self-will. He pictures this corrupting effect of sin as luridly as Luther himself. Sin has enslaved the will and poisoned man’s nature. It has alienated him from God and doomed him to eternal death and damnation. It is only in virtue of the divine grace, operating in the inward “ground” of the soul, that he can turn to God and free himself from the bonds of sin. Conversion, regeneration is wholly the work of God. It is God that seeks man rather than man that seeks God. In this experience the soul is purely receptive, cannot even co-operate with God. It cannot take place except through self-humiliation, self-negation, springing from true self-knowledge and repentance, and the sense of absolute dependence on God’s grace and mercy. Moreover, true repentance is not that which springs from the fear of hell and the mere desire to escape its consequences in the interest of self. Repentance considers God, not self. It is the fruit of the consciousness that sin is an offence against Him, and only such repentance is acceptable to Him, only so the sinner experiences His grace in repentance.

Not only is the experience of conversion, regeneration wrought solely by God’s grace. It is not possible without the incarnation, life, suffering, and death of Christ. By His death He has saved us from the guilt of sin and the power of the devil, and rendered it possible for God in His grace to forgive the sinner. He took our sins on Himself and made satisfaction to God. In the presence of the Cross the sinner realises the heinousness of sin. But it also arouses in him a firm faith in the unspeakable grace and mercy of God in Christ and the sure hope of eternal life, which rests not on his own works or merits, but on this firm faith, manifesting itself in love. It is only as we set all our hope and trust in God’s mercy, crying with the publican, God be merciful to me, a sinner, that we can build the Christian life on its true foundation. The emphasis on faith and trust in God’s word and promise, in humble dependence on His grace and mercy in Christ, constitutes the most evangelical note in these sermons. In keeping with it is the reiterated stress on inwardness in religion, on the direct relation and contact of the soul with God, on the immanence of God, the inner light in the soul, on the futility of external works apart from the inward disposition.

Hence the marked opposition in these sermons to the current externalism in religion. Works in the ecclesiastical sense are of no spiritual value in themselves. Salvation is not attainable by works, but only by yielding ourselves to the working of God in us. Good works are not to be done for any reward, but purely and solely in obedience to God's will and from the pure love of Him. God, he says with Augustine, crowns not our works, but His own. Though outward works have their uses, they are only figures and shadows. Penitential works, self-discipline in obedience to the ecclesiastical regulation of the Christian life are, indeed, serviceable. But only if they are done from the pure love of God, and not with the thought of reward. He equates the schoolmen and the zealots for external religion with the Scribes and Pharisees, from whom Christ departed to Tyre and Sidon. The kingdom of God is within, and he who would find Him must seek Him, not in external things, but in the depth of his own soul and conscience. The Churches, he insists, do not make you holy; but pious, god-fearing people make the churches holy. At the same time Tauler does not in principle reject ecclesiastical authority and ritual. Nor does he preach against good works done in the right spirit. The true Friends of God do not neglect good works; only they do not build on them. In opposition to the Brethren of the Free Spirit, he insists on the obligation of the moral law and rebukes their tendency to despise the laws and ordinances of the Church, to refuse obedience to the pope, the bishops, and the clergy, and give themselves up to licentious living on the ground that they are above the law. At the same time he declaims against the moral declension of the Church and the world. He denounces the degenerate condition of the clergy, high and low. The Church is for him really the community of the Friends of God, who, whilst reverencing the actual Church and its teaching and participating in its ordinances, live the true spiritual life in direct inner fellowship with God. The Friend of God is essentially an alien in both the Church and the world and can only attain the divine life by withdrawal into himself, in the solitude of his own soul. In this connection he cites the dreary saying of Seneca: "I never come among men but I return home less of a man than before." But while he insists on self-negation in extreme

terms at times, he is not really a quietist. He would fain reform both the Church and the world, and insists that all service, however lowly, may be made the service of God. "One can spin; another make shoes; some have skill in business, which brings them much gain and for which others are unfit. If I were not a priest and belonged to some craft, I should esteem it a great privilege that I knew how to make shoes, and should strive to do it better than anyone else and gladly earn my bread with my own hands."<sup>50</sup>

The evangelical train of thought is thus much more definite in these sermons than in the "German Theology." There is in them, in addition, the force and fire of individual conviction and a living religious experience. Luther had more justification in this case in regarding them as an anticipation of his own evangelical teaching, and his thought was undoubtedly, to a certain extent, influenced by them. "Although," he says in one of his early controversial writings, "John Tauler is ignorant and held in contempt in the theological schools, I have found in him more solid and true theology than is to be, or can be found in all the scholastic doctors of the universities."<sup>51</sup> Moreover, these sermons had for him a practical value, which rendered his appreciation all the more cordial. In view of his long spiritual conflict in the search for a gracious God, the ever-recurring emphasis on the Cross, suffering as the normal experience of the soul in the ascent to the higher life, seems to have appealed to him with special force. From the psychological point of view, Tauler undoubtedly did him a real service in showing him that the troubled way he had gone in search of peace of conscience, deliverance from the sense of sin and condemnation, was the God-appointed way. On the other hand, it is questionable whether he did not read into these sermons more of his own apprehension of the Gospel than they really contained, and whether in making use of these mystic ideas and terms he did not impart to them a different significance from that of Tauler. In spite of the evangelical note in the sermons, Tauler was only relatively a forerunner of Luther, and Preger seems to go too far in ascribing to him the clear and unequivocal

<sup>50</sup> Sermon, 47.

<sup>51</sup> "Werke," i. 557.

assertion of the Lutheran principle of justification by faith alone.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE BRETHERN OF THE COMMON LIFE

Whilst mysticism found characteristic expression among the Friends of God, its practical side was best represented by the Brethren of the Common Life or Lot. The Brethren combined the contemplative with the life of active service in imitation of Christ, and thus exemplified "the new devotion" (*Devotio moderna*), the keynote of which is struck by Thomas à Kempis. "Never be wholly idle, but either be reading or writing or praying or meditating or endeavouring something for the common good."<sup>53</sup> "He does much that loves much; he does much who does well; he does well that serves the community rather than his own will."<sup>54</sup> "We ought to bear with one another, comfort one another, help, instruct, and admonish one another."<sup>55</sup> Christian altruism is an essential of the mystic life, if the author seems, in the "Imitation," to live exclusively in mystic meditation and contemplation. Their founder was Gerard Groote, who was born at Deventer in 1340, studied at the University of Paris, and became professor at Cologne. Through the influence of Henry de Kalkar, the prior of a Carthusian monastery near Deventer, he discarded the scholastic philosophy for experimental religion, and acquired fame as a fervid and eloquent lay-preacher of this religion in the Netherlands. In addition he attacked the rampant ecclesiastical corruption with such vehemence that he was forbidden by the Bishop of Utrecht to preach. Under the influence of Ruysbroek,<sup>56</sup> he founded at Deventer an association of women, who earned their living by working and voluntarily undertook to live the life of

<sup>52</sup> This is also an abridgment from "Luther and the Reformation," i. 220 f. I have used the edition of the sermons in the original fourteenth-century German, by Vetter (1910), and the modern German version by Kuntze and Biesenthal "Tauler's Predigten" (1841). A. W. Hutton's Eng. trans. of thirty-six of them under the title "The Inner Way" (2nd ed. 1909). Miss Winkworth also translated twenty-five of them (1857).

<sup>53</sup> "De Imitatione Christi," i. c. xix.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, i. c. 15.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, i. c. 16.

<sup>56</sup> Ullmann, "Reformers Before the Reformation," ii. 68; Underhill, "Ruysbroek," 31 (1915).

obedience and chastity. Before his early death in 1384, he had conceived the plan, which his friend and disciple Florentius Radewin carried out, of forming an additional community of clerics and laymen at Deventer to extend his philanthropic and educational work. It was a voluntary association of pious young men, who took no vows and did not separate themselves from the world. They worked at some craft, shared everything in common and taught the young, copied manuscripts and wrote devotional books, devoted themselves to works of charity and mercy. From Deventer this double organisation expanded into numerous branch communities throughout the Netherlands and Western Germany. Their schools at Deventer, Zwolle, Hertogenbosch, and other places were the most effective educational institutions of the age. In the fifteenth century they became the first nurseries of the new culture, to which some of the most famous German humanists—Agricola, Mutianus, and, above all, Erasmus—owed the beginnings of their classic erudition. During the year he spent at Magdeburg (1497) Luther appears to have been taught by some members of the fraternity, who served on the staff of the Cathedral School. That his specific religious development was influenced by them, as some contend, is hardly more than a guess.<sup>57</sup> Two years after Groote's death Florentius developed the movement by founding, in accordance with his bequest, a monastery of canons regular of the Augustinian order at Windeshem, near Zwolle, and in the first half of the fifteenth century a considerable number of these regular communities was established in Holland and Germany. They survived the attacks of the mendicant monks, who unsuccessfully petitioned the Council of Constance, where they were defended by Gerson, for their suppression. By the end of the fifteenth century, however, they had lost their earlier vitality, if we may trust the testimony of Erasmus,<sup>58</sup> who was himself an inmate for a time of the monastery at Steyn, near Gouda, and speaks in no flattering terms of their dissolute manners. From the monastery of St Agnes, near Zwolle, came the perennial "Imitation of Christ," in which Thomas à Kempis (Thomas Haemmerlein) gave an ever-appealing expression to the mystic

<sup>57</sup> See "Luther and the Reformation," i. 13 f.

<sup>58</sup> See Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," 19 f.

side of the Christian life. Here the unobtrusive writer,<sup>59</sup> who was born at Kempen in the Duchy of Cleves about 1380, after being educated in the school at Deventer, spent from 1400 onwards the last seventy-one years of his long life. His contemporary, Cardinal Cusanus—humanist, leading churchman, reformer, and theologian—seems also to have derived the mystic strain in his thought from the school at Deventer, where he very probably received his early education. "The mystic strain which is so strong in him, his dependence on Eckhart, and indeed the whole cast of his philosophy would seem to date back to the school at Deventer."<sup>60</sup>

In the late mediæval mysticism there are features which seem to herald the coming of the evangelical Reformation. As we have noted, Luther was powerfully influenced by it in his early search for a gracious God. Its influence is likewise discernible in the religious thought of evangelical reformers of the stamp of a Hans Denck and a Sebastian Franck. These mystics emphasise inwardness, personal religious experience as the pathway to God. Similarly, Luther and his fellow-reformers find this pathway in their personal experience of the Gospel, though it might not be identical with theirs. While, unlike Luther and his fellow-reformers, they conformed to the Church in doctrine and usage, their subjectivism in-

<sup>59</sup>The authorship of the "Imitation" is a much debated question. It has been attributed to a Jean Gersen, who is supposed to have been abbot of Vercelli, in North Italy, in the thirteenth century. Renan, for instance, accepts his authorship. In his essay on the subject he goes completely astray, "Studies of Religious History," 223 f. (Eng. trans., 1893). The existence of this Gersen is problematic. Renan thinks that Thomas à Kempis did not write it, but only included it in a collection of ascetic little works, and the authorship thus came to be ascribed to him. The "Imitation" has also been ascribed to Jean Gerson, the famous churchman and chancellor of the University of Paris. Dr Barron, the most recent writer on the subject, so ascribes it after an examination of the history of the controversy: "Gerson, the author of the 'De Imitatione Christi'" (1936). His main argument is that it was the interest and the striving of the Ultramontane party in France to suppress anything that might increase the prestige and influence of their great opponent. It does not seem to me a very compelling one, and I am inclined to credit à Kempis with its composition, which, in accordance with his principle, *ama nesciri*, was anonymous. Among English-speaking writers this conclusion has found able support in Kettlewell, "Thomas à Kempis" (1877), and De Montmorency, "Thomas à Kempis" (1906). Of the piety of a mystical type, combined with practical well-doing, a characteristic example is afforded on the eve of the Reformation by St Catherine of Genoa; see Von Hügel, "Mystical Element of Religion" (1909).

<sup>60</sup>Bett, "Nicholas of Cusa," 5 (1932); Underhill, *Introd. to Emma G. Salter's trans. of his "Vision of God"* (1928).

evitably tended to weaken, if not to nullify the authority of the hierarchy as the indispensable medium between the soul and God. Their concern is with the salvation of the individual soul, which only attains the divine life in direct communion and union with God, in the flight of "the alone to the Alone." While striving to attain this end by the inner Word, and believing in a progressive revelation, they do not neglect the external Word. Hence, as in the later Reformation movement, the emphasis on the reading of the Scriptures and their supreme authority, even if this authority, in accordance with the traditional mediæval conception, may derive its sanction from the Church. To the influence of these mystics we may, I think, in part at least, ascribe the fact of the widespread circulation of the Bible in the vernacular (translated from the Vulgate) in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which prepared the way for the reception of the evangelism of the reformers. Equally significant of the coming reaction towards a Biblical theology is the rebound from the scholastic theology, already discernible in these mystics, who are living in the springtide of the expanding humanist movement. "Happy the man whom truth teaches by itself, not by fleeting figures and words ; but as it is in itself. Our opinions and our sense often deceive us, and see but little. What profit is there in lengthy quibbling about dark and hidden things, when we shall not be reprovèd at the day of judgment because we know them not ? It is great folly to neglect things that are profitable and necessary, and take needless pains for that which is far-fetched and hurtful. We have eyes and see not. What have we to do with genera and species ?" <sup>61</sup> In this challenge to the scholastic doctors, Thomas à Kempis was anticipating the attack of an Erasmus, a Colet and other humanist reformers as well as of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

<sup>61</sup> " De Imitatione," i. c. iii.

## CHAPTER XXI

### MEDIÆVAL THOUGHT IN RELATION TO THE REFORMATION

#### SCHOLASTICISM

SCHOLASTICISM in its widest sense is the philosophy and theology elaborated by the schoolmen from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. These schoolmen were the great teachers in the mediæval universities, to the development of which they gave a powerful impulse. The more distinguished of them from the thirteenth century onwards were members of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, and in them the union of the reflective and the religious life reached a very high level. The long series may be said to have begun with Anselm and Roscellinus in the eleventh century. It was continued by Abelard and Peter Lombard in the twelfth, Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura, Roger Bacon, and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, and by Duns Scotus in the late thirteenth and early years of the fourteenth, and William of Occam in the first half of the fourteenth. With the speculation of Scotus and Occam it may be said to have spent its force, and from the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century it entered on a period of decline, and was ultimately superseded, in Protestant lands at least, by the new philosophy, theology, and science, which the Reformation and the Renaissance evolved in opposition to it.

#### THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

In philosophy the schoolmen discussed a variety of problems in their striving to solve the perennial enigma of man's existence as a rational being in a material world. Do universal ideas exist only in the mind (nominalism or conceptualism), or is there something corresponding to them in external reality

(realism)?<sup>1</sup> Is there a distinction between the soul and its faculties? Is the human intellect only part of a universal intelligence or a distinct and independent entity in each human being? Can matter exist without form, substance without accident?<sup>2</sup> Is it eternal or the result of a creative divine act in time? What is the nature or essence of God, the Being who is the supreme source of all being? To the solution of such problems<sup>3</sup> they devoted an astonishing intensity, nimbleness, and subtlety, combined, in some cases, with a prolixity which does not attract the modern mind. But in spite of their proneness to labyrinthic objections and distinctions and the use of a Latin terminology, which all but a specialist find it difficult to understand, they did a great deal of hard and serious thinking. Though their method was logical and technical rather than scientific, as we understand the term, the thinking of the leading schoolmen was by no means the trivial and pedantic syllogising with which the scholastic philosophy was esteemed equivalent in later times. Nor have there been wanting modern philosophers, like Hamilton and Maurice, Macintosh and Coleridge, who have paid cordial tribute to their intellectual activity. "Until recently it was assumed, indeed, that scholasticism, in so far as it was concerned with philosophical as distinguished from theological interest, was little more than an academic restatement of Aristotelian 'dogmas,' carefully petrified into syllogisms, overlaid with hairsplitting verbal disputes and 'logic-chopping,' and utterly devoid of any critical examination of basic principles or premises. First-hand investigation of mediæval philosophical literature has, in recent years, brought about a considerable change in the attitude of competent scholars and historians of philosophy with respect to the character of the mediæval period. The mediæval interest in logic is now seen to have been not so much an

<sup>1</sup> The Realists held that universal ideas (for instance, the idea man in general apart from any individual man) express something that exists apart from the mind conceiving them. The Nominalists that they are merely abstractions or concepts of the mind and have no objective reality. Occam and the Nominalists of his school are also known as Conceptualists.

<sup>2</sup> Accident is the merely contingent or external property of a thing (such as colour, size, taste, etc.) apart from the thing in itself.

<sup>3</sup> For a recent discussion, in addition to the "Histories of Philosophy" of Erdmann, Ueberweg, De Wulf, etc., see Gilson, "The Spirit of Mediæval Philosophy," Gifford Lectures, 1931-32 (Eng. trans., 1936). The work is an apologetic as well as a discussion.

interest in argument for argument's sake, as a preoccupation with the nature and grounds of scientific certainty, and an attempt to discover and to formulate the criteria by which science might be distinguished from opinion." <sup>4</sup>

### THE SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY

What is characteristic of the scholastic theology is the application of reason to the elaboration of theological doctrines, under the influence of Greek philosophy, especially the dialectic and metaphysics of Aristotle, and within the limit of the authority of the Church. Previous to the eleventh century, with the exception of so notable and original a thinker as John Scotus Eriugena in the ninth, theologians had been content to summarise the teaching of the Fathers without substantially attempting to subject it to logical elaboration. They did not materially advance beyond traditionalism.<sup>5</sup> In the eleventh century came the transformation of theology resulting from the application of the Aristotelian dialectic and philosophy to theological discussion. The earlier schoolmen had, however, but a very imperfect knowledge of "the Philosopher," as Aristotle was termed in the Middle Ages. They knew him only in Boethius' translations of a couple of his logical works, and of the "Isagoge" of Porphyry (Introduction to the Categories of Aristotle).<sup>6</sup> Later a more extensive knowledge became available through the works of the Arabian scholars, especially of Averroes, who in the twelfth century continued at Cordova, in the West, the study of Aristotle, to which Avicenna and other celebrated Arabian teachers had given an impulse at Bagdad in the East. These Arabian scholars used an Arabic translation of his writings, and it was till recently assumed and asserted <sup>7</sup> that this translation had been made not directly from the Greek, but from a Syriac version, and that it was through a Latin translation of this second-hand Arabic translation that the

<sup>4</sup> Moody, "The Logic of William of Ockham," 11 f. (1935); see also Harnack, "Hist. of Dogma," vi. 23 f. For the older appreciations, see Townsend, "The Great Schoolmen of the Middle Ages," 7 f., 321 f.

<sup>5</sup> Seeberg's art., "Scholastik," Herzog-Hauck, "Encyclopedie," xvii. (1906).

<sup>6</sup> Stewart, "Boethius," 244 f. (1891); Townsend, "The Great Schoolmen," 153; Reade, "Cambridge Mediæval History," v. 789 (1926).

<sup>7</sup> By Taylor, for instance, "The Mediæval Mind," ii. 389 f. (1911).

schoolmen first amplified their knowledge of the Aristotelian philosophy. In refutation of this assumption it is now established that translations from the original Greek into Arabic had been made from the ninth century onwards. Moreover, in the course of the thirteenth century translations from the Greek into Latin of the "Metaphysics" and the "Ethics" were available<sup>8</sup> as the result of the intercourse with the Eastern Empire through the crusades, especially of the capture of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204. One of these, the "Ethics," was made by Nicholas, a Greek monk of St Albans, at the expense of Grossteste, Bishop of Lincoln, in the first half of the thirteenth century; another by William of Moerbeke and Henry of Brabant in the second half of this century.<sup>9</sup>

It was in this indirect fashion that Aristotle came to dominate mediæval thought, for none of the great schoolmen, with the exception of Roger Bacon, who learned Greek and wrote a Greek grammar, seems to have been able to read him in the original. Even so, his authority was second only to that of the Scriptures, the Fathers, the Church, though there were some dissentients. It is singular, indeed, that so much deference should have been paid by the mediæval doctors to a Greek philosopher. But there was already a great deal of Greek philosophy in the teaching of the Fathers, especially Augustine, from whom the schoolmen also drew so largely, and besides, they assumed that the dialectic and philosophy of Aristotle were more or less capable of being adapted to the elaboration of Christian doctrine. Hence the application of both in mediæval theological discussion, in spite of the initial opposition of the Church, which at first regarded his writings with suspicion, on account both of their non-Christian teaching and their association with the brilliant culture of Mohammedan scholars like Averroes. By the beginning of the second half of the thirteenth century, the University of Paris, in spite of earlier papal prohibition, explicitly included his works in the list of books to be studied and commented.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Reade, "Cambridge Mediæval History," v. 811 f.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, "The Mediæval Mind," ii. 391; De Wulf, "History of Mediæval Philosophy," 242. It was of this latter trans. that Aquinas made use.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, ii. 392; De Wulf, 253; Rashdall, "Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages," i. 357 f.

Aristotelianism, though the most influential, was not the sole moulder of mediæval thought. Platonism, or rather Neoplatonism, also exercised a considerable influence. The Platonic influence was kept alive throughout the Middle Ages by the study of Augustine, who was powerfully influenced by the Platonic philosophy and had read Plotinus in a Latin translation, by the works of the pseudo-Dionysius,<sup>11</sup> by Chalcidius' translation of the "Timæus," and by the writings of Boethius. It is apparent in the pantheistic speculations of Scotus Eriugena, the translator of the pseudo-Dionysius. It is traceable in the works of the schoolmen, including Aquinas, who frequently cites Dionysius. It is especially operative in mediæval mysticism, whether of the orthodox or heterodox type. The former type, which is closely allied with Augustinianism, is represented by Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo and Richard of St Victor, Bonaventura; the latter by Amaury of Bena who revived the speculations of Eriugena. The Platonic-Augustinian influence in mediæval religious life and thought subsisted, in fact, onwards to the Reformation, of which it became one of the main forces.

In thus making use of Greek dialectic and metaphysic in the elaboration of Christian doctrine, the schoolmen more or less recognised that reason as well as revelation is a source of the knowledge of God. They profess, indeed, to draw the content of Christian doctrine from Scripture and tradition. Some of them—Anselm and Lombardus, for instance—appeal to both indiscriminately. Others—Abelard, Aquinas, Duns Scotus—distinguish between them and give Scripture the precedence.<sup>12</sup> In practice, however, the distinction was not observed. But while thus emphasising revelation, they are ready to admit reason as an adjunct of the knowledge of God. "Yet sacred science (theology)," says Aquinas, in the exordium of his "Summa Theologiæ," "also makes use of human reason, not, indeed, to prove the faith, because this would take away the merit of believing, but to make manifest other things which may be treated in this science. For since grace does not annul nature, but perfects it, natural reason should

<sup>11</sup> Assumed to be the Dionysius who was converted by Paul at Athens, but who was in reality a Christian Neoplatonist and perhaps a pupil of Plotinus, Whittaker, "The Neoplatonists," 188.

<sup>12</sup> Landerer, Herzog-Hauck, "Encyclopedie," art., "Scholasticism."

serve faith. . . . Hence sacred science uses the philosophers also as an authority, where they were able to know the truth through natural reason.”<sup>13</sup> Theology was thus raised to the level of a perfect science, as the schoolmen understood the term.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, they made use of reason on the understanding that it must be subordinate to faith. Their method was not historical or critical in the modern sense. They did not study Christian origins in a scientific spirit or subject tradition to the test of historic criticism. They vitiated the evidence of Scripture by the arbitrary interpretation, to which the allegoric method, which was universally applied, gave scope.<sup>15</sup> They accepted the dogmas of the mediæval Church as absolute truth and made use of the Aristotelian dialectic and metaphysic to set forth this truth as something that reason can illumine, but the validity of which does not depend on it.

The conditions of the age did not permit of the critical study of history or of the free exercise of the reason. There was little or no science of history in those mediæval centuries. There were at most only the beginnings of it in writers like Dante, Marsiglio of Padua, and Occam who, as we have seen, made some attempt to apply the critical spirit to the discussion of politico-ecclesiastical questions in the conflict between the papal and the imperial power in the fourteenth century. Nor was freedom of thought, which is indispensable to true scientific knowledge, possible in an age which set faith in the mediæval sense above reason, and made the external authority of the Church the arbiter of truth. “Freedom of thought in the modern sense was impossible. . . . In the last analysis theology always had the final word.”<sup>16</sup> Its principle was that of Anselm, following Augustine, *credo ut intelligam* (“I believe in order to understand”) rather than that virtually applied by Abelard, *intelligo ut credam* (“I understand in order to believe”). It was the age of external authority in spiritual things. What the Church held to be true could not be gainsaid even if it

<sup>13</sup> Taylor's trans., “Mediæval Mind,” ii. 293.

<sup>14</sup> Harris, “Duns Scotus,” i. 67 (1927); Hampden, “The Scholastic Philosophy considered in its Relation to Christian Theology,” 76 f. (1833).

<sup>15</sup> See Law, “Biblical Studies in the Middle Ages,” “Collected Essays and Reviews,” 25 f.

<sup>16</sup> Harris, “Duns Scotus,” i. 41.

demanded implicit belief in crass mediæval accretions of the faith. All the schoolmen, indeed, laid more or less stress on the *intelligo* as well as the *credo*. They sought to transform theology into a system of rational beliefs and even the mystics, St Bernard and Hugo of St Victor, rationalised in their own fashion. But they all do so in greater or less degree on the understanding that the *intelligo* in the last resort must yield to the *credo*, that reason, either in its assertions or its criticisms, must not conflict with faith in its mediæval form. Reason, for instance, may not rebel against such a doctrine as transubstantiation. It may not question, but only confirm it, and Berengar of Tours, who ventured to do so and insisted that the bread remained bread after consecration, was compelled to recant (at Rome in 1059 and again in 1079). Similarly, Roscellinus was fain to retract his tritheistic conception of the Trinity at Soissons in 1092. Even Abelard is no champion of freedom of thought in the real sense. To understand is always in the end to believe,<sup>17</sup> or at least to profess to believe. He assumes that the teaching of the Church is necessarily true, and only claims the liberty to test by reason the interpretations of it by the Fathers. He strives to combine the *necessitas credendi* with the *libertas judicandi*. In the "Sic et Non" he does not hesitate to set forth and contrast the various and sometimes contradictory views of the Fathers and even of the Scriptures. He is the champion of a certain measure of rational criticism as far as these views are concerned. But he does not venture to apply the critical method to the received doctrines of the Church. Even so, his comparatively independent attitude brought him, at the instigation of St Bernard, into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities and he was condemned by the Council of Soissons in 1121 and again by that of Sens in 1141. Aquinas himself, in maintaining that the creation of the world in time cannot be proved by reason, aroused the suspicion and protests of conservative members of the Dominican order to which he belonged. Thus it fared also with Roger Bacon, whom a chapter of his order, the Franciscans, held at Paris in 1277, condemned to a long imprisonment. A pupil of

<sup>17</sup> See on this point, Harris, "Duns Scotus," i. 49; Webb, "Studies in the History of Nat. Theology," 229 f. (1915); Gilson, "Études de Philosophie Médiévale," 21 f. (1921).

Grosseteste, he studied Greek as well as mathematics, chemistry, optics, and astronomy, and wrote a Greek grammar. Whilst sharing the common submission to the Church, he had the real scientific instinct, and at least the foretaste of the critical method as applied even to the Vulgate. He roundly denounces the scholastic theologians as futile wiseacres, mere pretenders to sound knowledge, scientifically based. "The theologians accept a mass of false and futile propositions, taking the doubtful for certain, the obscure for evident; they suffer alike from superfluity and the lack of what is necessary, and so stain theology with infinite vices, which proceed from sheer ignorance."<sup>18</sup> They are ignorant of Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, and therefore ignorant of all the sciences contained in these tongues; and they have relied on Alexander of Hales and others as ignorant as themselves. They study and lecture on the "Sentences" of Peter Lombard, instead of the text of Scripture, and the lectures on the "Sentences" are preferred in honour, while anyone who would lecture on Scripture has to beg for a room and an hour to be set. The text of the Vulgate is horribly corrupt.<sup>19</sup>

It was thus only in a very dependent sense that the schoolmen applied reason to the demonstration of faith. Within the limits of external authority they developed, however, a very intense intellectual activity. Subject to the acceptance of authoritative dogmas, there was, too, a large measure of speculative liberty in the schools, if there was no adequate conception of the right of free enquiry.

#### REACTION

In the first half of the fourteenth century came, with Occam, a reaction, if not from the scholastic method of syllogising, from the scholastic attempt to rationalise theology in accordance with Greek dialectic and metaphysic. The

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Taylor from the "Opus Majus," "Mediæval Mind," ii. 497. See also Little, "Studies in English Franciscan History," 193 f. (1917); "Roger Bacon Commemoration Essays."

<sup>19</sup> Paraphrased by Taylor, "Mediæval Mind," ii. 497. See also Reade, "Cambridge Mediæval History," v. 325 f. While he argues that he was a reactionary rather than a progressive thinker, in his opposition to the philosophic theologians, he recognises his genuine contribution to scientific method.

germ of this reaction is discernible in Aquinas himself and in his critic, Duns Scotus, though both accept reason as an adjunct of revelation. Aquinas denied that the doctrine of the Trinity, which Anselm and Abelard had attempted to prove on rational grounds,<sup>20</sup> and the creation of the world in time could be rationally demonstrated.<sup>21</sup> Similarly Scotus, in one of his presumably early works,<sup>22</sup> held that the fact that God is a living and intelligent being cannot be proved by reason.<sup>23</sup> Then came Occam, who applied this partial scepticism to the whole scholastic theological system, as far as it was based on the assumption of the harmony of reason and faith. Unlike Aquinas and Duns Scotus, who were Realists, he was a Nominalist in philosophy, maintaining that ideas relative to the sensible world are purely subjective conceptions of the mind (conceptualism), and that, apart from revelation, it has no knowledge at all of supersensible things and cannot demonstrate their existence. Not only the attributes of God, but even His existence are not strictly demonstrable by reason.<sup>24</sup> In theology, therefore, revelation is the only source of knowledge, and theological dogmas are to be received in implicit faith, solely on the authority of this revelation. He carried his scepticism the length of affirming that an assertion might be true in philosophy, but false in theology,<sup>25</sup> and thus shook to its foundations the scholastic assumption of the harmony of faith and reason, theology and philosophy. The result of this teaching was ultimately to bring the scholastic theology, in as far as it rested on this assumed harmony, into discredit. There was, in truth, much in Aristotle's philosophy that was incompatible with Christianity and the attempt to reconcile them was too problematic to succeed.

It was in the school of Occam that Luther received his theological training. It was from this source that he derived the tendency to emphasise in theology faith *versus* reason, which he denounced in excessive and at times gross language,

<sup>20</sup> Webb, 174 f., 218 f.

<sup>22</sup> The "Theoremata."

<sup>23</sup> Harris, "Duns Scotus," i. 24, 120. He thinks that the "Theoremata," if genuine, do not, in view of Duns' other undoubtedly genuine works, prove that he was sceptical as to the use of reason in theology, 95 f. He holds that, on the contrary, the scholastic theology reached in him its highest development, 112, 267.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 286.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 235; Harris, i. 74, 81.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 290.

to exalt faith in the Word of God as the unique source of Christian truth.<sup>26</sup> From this source came, too, his antagonism to the mixing up of Greek philosophy and Christian theology, which, in his "Address to the German Nobility," went the length of demanding that the books of the "blind heathen, Aristotle," should be banished from the universities. Moreover, he and his fellow-reformers not only followed Occam in rejecting the scholastic intermixture of Greek philosophy and theology. They denounced the scholastic syllogistic method itself, as this method had degenerated in the schoolmen of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. In this they were at one with Erasmus, Colet, and other humanists, to whom this method, with its technical terminology, its subtlety, its logical hairsplitting was an abomination. They were at one, too, with Erasmus in going beyond the scholastic theology to the Fathers and the New Testament, in which they found "the philosophy of Christ," as Erasmus termed His teaching. Both likewise followed Occam in the appeal to Scripture and in their attempt at a critical treatment of history in the interest of a reformation of the Church, though they might differ as to the scope of this reformation.

On the other hand, Luther ultimately found himself at variance with the neo-Pelagian doctrine of salvation of Occam and his school, which was a reversion from that of Augustine and was widely prevalent in the schools in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In opposition to Pelagius, who denied original sin and asserted the capacity of the will to choose and attain the good, Augustine maintained the total corruption of human nature and its moral helplessness in consequence of the fall (original sin), denied the freedom of the will in the sense that it is free to realise the good by its own determination, and ascribed this power solely to the grace of God, which works in the sinner the faith that saves or justifies. This grace is not given in return for any merits in the sinner, since in virtue of the total corruption of human nature, the complete impotence of the will, justification, salvation by the works of the law is ruled out. Moreover, this grace is given solely to the elect, to those whom God in His good pleasure has predestined to salvation.

<sup>26</sup> See my "Luther and the Reformation," i. 54, 77.

This anti-Pelagian doctrine of salvation wielded a powerful influence on the scholastic theology, which operated with Augustine's theological conceptions and terms. At the same time there is discernible a neo-Pelagian tendency to diverge from or tone down its more extreme features, and this tendency becomes very marked in the teaching of Duns Scotus, Occam, and his followers D'Ailli and Biel in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The doctrine of the total corruption of human nature, the total impotence of the will apart from grace, for instance, seemed to endanger man's responsibility. Similarly, absolute predestination, which arbitrarily saves and damns, according to God's pleasure, could not fail to antagonise the reason and shock the heart. Hence the tendency of both Scotus and Occam and other schoolmen to minimise the corrupting effect of original sin and maintain the freedom of the will. The fall did not bring about the total corruption of human nature or result in the complete impotence of the will. In virtue of its essential freedom, man can do what he wills. He can of himself turn from sin to God and thus by his own merit, which God is pleased to accept as such, contribute to his salvation through the merits of Christ. Salvation is the result of divine grace and human merit. "Although," says Biel, "Christ's suffering is the principal merit on account of which grace is conferred, it is, nevertheless, not the sole and total meritorious cause (of man's salvation). For it is manifest that there always concurs with the merit of Christ a certain operation of merit in the recipient of grace."<sup>27</sup>

This developed neo-Pelagian reaction from the extreme teaching of Augustine produced, in turn, a counter-reaction in its defence. Of this counter-reaction, which was to culminate in the Reformation, Gregory of Rimini, Bradwardine,<sup>28</sup> and Wiclif, in the fourteenth century, were the precursors. In the fifteenth it found representatives in John Pupper of Goch, John of Wesel, and Wessel Gansfort.<sup>29</sup> Luther himself

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by Loofs, "Leitfaden," 615.

<sup>28</sup> On Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury, and reviver of Augustine's theology, see Laun, "Z.K.G." (1928), 333 f.

<sup>29</sup> Ullmann regards them as the precursors of Luther, "Reformers Before the Reformation." Ritschl, on the other hand, contends that their conception of justification and merits is more in the line of that of Bernard and the more evangelical mediæval teachers, "Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification," 111 f. Luther himself, at all events,

was to pass from the neo-Pelagian school of Occam to that of Augustine, after he had worn himself out, in his early period as a monk, in the vain attempt to find by the Occamist way of self-acquired monastic merits "a gracious God." It was this sense of failure and the misery engendered by it that finally drove him back to Augustine, and ultimately beyond Augustine to Paul and the Epistle to the Romans, in which he discovered for himself his distinctive doctrine of justification by faith alone and not by works, and therewith the dynamic principle of the Reformation as a religious movement. His defence of this principle against his numerous opponents ultimately led him to attack not only the Scotus-Occamist theology, but the papal supremacy, the mediæval conception of the Church, the mediæval sacramental system, the theory and practice of indulgences based on the superfluous merits of Christ and the saints, the monastic conception of the religious life.

recognised in Wessel Gansfort a kindred theologian and had read the works of Wesel as a student at Erfurt. On Gansfort, see Miller and Scudder, "Wessel Gansfort" (1917).

## CHAPTER XXII

### HUMANISM IN RELATION TO THE REFORMATION (I)

#### THE NEW CULTURE

COINCIDENT with the decline of scholasticism is the growing influence of the new culture, which took its inspiration, not from the schools, but from the literature of classic antiquity. The late Middle Age was also the age of the Renaissance or rebirth of the human mind to a new and larger life which manifested itself in the whole sphere of human activity—in art, education, philosophy, theology, political thought, historical study, science, exploration, invention, as well as in scholarship and literature. From it evolved modern as contrasted with mediæval civilisation, though its beginnings go well back into the Middle Age.<sup>1</sup> It betokens a far-reaching enlargement of the powers of the mind, whose incentive and object, according to Mr Symmonds, “is the attainment of self-conscious freedom by the human spirit, manifested in the European races.”<sup>2</sup>

The literary and educational side of this comprehensive cultural movement—the humanist side in the more restricted sense of the term—is of cardinal significance in relation to the Reformation. Humanism, which was the fruit of the quickened interest from the fourteenth century onwards in the ancient classic literature, was the antithesis of scholasticism with its predilection for abstract thought, the dialectic pursuit of truth. As a scholarly movement it busied itself with the study of this literature and the collection and publication of the manuscripts

<sup>1</sup> See Haskins, “Renaissance of the Twelfth Century” (1927). The idea of a Renaissance, a rebirth (*regeneratio, renovatio, reformatio*) of the present out of the past, of the Church, the State, society finds impassioned expression in Joachim of Fiore, St Francis, Bonaventura, Dante, Rienzi. See Burdach, “Reformation, Renaissance, Humanism” (2nd ed., 1926). The term was not applied to the movement of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, but is a later designation.

<sup>2</sup> “Renaissance in Italy,” i. 3 f.

which had survived in the east and the west. But it was more than a purely literary or scholarly movement. It strove to assimilate and reproduce the spirit as well as the form of the *litteræ humaniores*, in which the life and thought of the Græco-Roman world were reflected. It sought to make the revived study of the classics the instrument of a liberal education, to foster the free self-development of the individual, in reaction from its mediæval trammels, to attain to a larger conception of, and outlook on life and nature. To it is largely due the intellectual quickening, the scientific progress, which have powerfully contributed to the making of modern civilisation. In the religious sphere, in particular, it gave an impulse to the assertion of the right of private judgment, of the individual reason and conscience against corporate ecclesiastical authority, even if the humanists were not consciously or aggressively hostile to the traditional Church. It prepared the way for the application of the critical, historical method to the study of ecclesiastical dogmas and institutions, of the Scriptures in the original languages, and of the early history of Christianity. It gave a new force to the appeal "Back to the Sources" as the test of creed and ecclesiastical constitution. It intensified the reaction from tradition, unrolled the chart of the pristine faith as revealed in these sources, gave scope to individual religious thought and aspiration, and voiced the demand for a trenchant practical reformation of ecclesiastical abuses. Moreover, it trained many of the men who were to become leaders of the evangelical Reformation. Many of the reforming humanists, like Erasmus, stopped short at a practical Reformation and laboured hard, though mostly in vain, to achieve it. But not a few went beyond the Erasmian standpoint, and after beginning as practical reformers ended by demanding a reform of doctrine as well as practice. Luther himself owed not a little to humanism, though it was as a monk and not as a humanist that he came, by way of his personal religious experience, to his position as an evangelical reformer. Others, who had been ardent humanists before passing over to the evangelical movement, came to it by the humanist approach. Melancthon, his intimate associate at Wittenberg, for instance, Zwingli in Switzerland, Calvin in France, William Tyndale in England, Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart in Scotland.

## HUMANISM IN ITALY

It was in accordance with historic conditions that humanism should take its rise in Italy. In spite of the barbarian invasions, Italy had retained the impress of its ancient classic culture. "In Italy," says Mr Taylor, "the antique education never stopped, antique reminiscences and traditions never passed away, and the literary matter of the pagan past never faded from the consciousness of the more educated among the laity and the clergy."<sup>3</sup> The dominance of scholasticism from the eleventh century onwards did not succeed in effacing the classic tradition, as the appreciation of the classics by scholars like John of Salisbury in the twelfth and Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century shows.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Italy was less under the scholastic influence than the lands of the north. Though some of the great schoolmen—Anselm, Lombardus, Bonaventura, and Aquinas—were Italians, it was in the schools of Paris and other northern cities that they wrote and taught.<sup>5</sup> Besides, the Italians were more concerned with the emotional and ecclesiastical than the scholastic side of religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that with the decline of scholasticism in the fourteenth century modern humanism should have found its pioneer in the Italian Petrarch (1304-74). Its advent at this period was further facilitated by the decline of the mediæval empire in its Germanic form, by the rise of the Italian city republics in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and by the removal of the papacy to Avignon, which combined to stimulate Italian national consciousness and led to attempts like that of Rienzi to revive the institutions of a classic past.

Petrarch has a much stronger claim to be regarded as its pioneer than Dante, who, though an ardent student of the classics<sup>6</sup> and a fervid admirer of imperial Rome, is mediæval, not modern, in thought. Renan has called him "the first

<sup>3</sup> "Mediæval Mind," i. 251; cf. Burckhardt, "Civilisation of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy," i. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, ii. 114; Sandys, "History of Classical Scholarship," i. 568 f. (1908).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 269.

<sup>6</sup> Geiger, "Renaissance and Humanismus in Italien und Deutschland," 15 (1882).

modern man,"<sup>7</sup> and though such a generalisation is risky, he was certainly the strenuous protagonist of the new culture, which, if based on antique models, is distinctively modern in spirit and outlook. He received his early education at Avignon, where his exiled father had settled in 1313, and at Carpentras, and completed it as a student of law at Montpellier and Bologna. But he was more interested in the study of Virgil and Cicero than in that of the *corpus juris civilis*, and renounced the profession for which his lawyer father, rather than his own inclination, had destined him, for the life of a scholar and a poet. "Nothing can succeed that is against nature," wrote he, "she made me a lover of solitude, not of the forum."<sup>8</sup> As the result of the self-culture derived from the study of Virgil and Cicero, Horace and Livy, he came to cherish a deep aversion for the conventional culture of the schools. Nor did he refrain from outspoken criticism of both the matter and the method of what we should call the higher instruction. He attacked the science of his times—astrology, alchemy, even medicine and law, as then taught and practised. He attacked, too, the scholastic erudition which was degenerating into mere feats of logic, and struck out daringly against the universal subservience to Aristotle, especially by the Averroists, whom he disliked all the more on account of their anti-Christian teaching. "Aristotle was certainly a great man and very learned. But after all he was only a man and was liable to err. He did err even in matters of the greatest importance."<sup>9</sup> He preferred Plato, along with Cicero and Augustine, to Aristotle, and in this preference he is the precursor of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. In his opposition to the conventional culture he gave forcible expression to the individualist spirit, so characteristic of the men of the Renaissance period. He refused to fit himself into the mediæval groove, strove to follow his own bent in culture, and realise himself in the free exercise of the faculties of mind and soul. "The essential character of the new man, which Italy was then fashioning," says M. Nollac, "appears in him with a rare vigour. By the direction of his thought he escapes almost entirely from the influence of his

<sup>7</sup> "Averroes," 328 (ed., 1882); Nollac, "Pétrarque et l'Humanisme," 10 (1892).

<sup>8</sup> Jerrold, "Francesco Petrarca, Poet and Humanist," 13 (1909).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Nollac, "Pétrarque et l'Humanisme," 15.

century and his environment, and this is doubtless not the least incontestable mark of genius."<sup>10</sup> He went direct to the classics, to nature, to human life for his inspiration, and gave perfect expression in his Italian poems (Sonnetti and Canzoni)<sup>11</sup> to this inspiration. His chief title to fame in the eyes of posterity rests, indeed, apart from his merit as a pioneer of humanism, on these poems in the vernacular,<sup>12</sup> though he himself affected to think little of them and stressed his reputation as the restorer of classic literature, and the author of his numerous Latin works—poems, letters, essays.<sup>13</sup> In this preference for antiquity and the consequent tendency to depreciate the modern for the classic languages, he is also the forerunner of the later humanist, though happily his one-sided enthusiasm did not prevent him from enriching Italian literature with the exquisite fruits of his poetic genius. His great passion, next to the divine Laura, was Cicero, and he not only strove to reproduce the style and wisdom of Cicero in his letters and essays, he travelled in various countries widely in order to recover his works from the oblivion of the monastic libraries, and more than once experienced the joy of discovering some long lost treasure.

In his pioneer activity Petrarch had the advantage of the co-operation of Boccaccio, his contemporary (1313-75), who outlived him only a year and whose power as a writer also rests on his Italian rather than his Latin works. It is as the author of the "Decameron"—a masterpiece of Italian prose of its kind—not as the laborious scholar that the modern world knows him, and not in all respects to his credit, for with him the lax spirit of Italian humanism obtrudes itself. In this respect he occupies a lower plane than Petrarch, from whose pen never came an impure line. At the same time, from 1361, when he underwent the experience of his "conversion," to his death in 1375, the moral levity of this production is redeemed by the more elevated tone of his later scholarly contributions. As a scholar, he went further than Petrarch. He attempted to

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Nolhac, "Pétrarque et l'Humanisme," 10. Mr Ker, on the other hand, limits to some extent the emancipation of Petrarch from his age, "Boccaccio," Taylorian Lectures (1900).

<sup>11</sup> For these see "Opera," v., ed. by Gesualdo.

<sup>12</sup> See Reeve, "Petrarch," 8.

<sup>13</sup> Burckhardt, "Civilisation," i. 286 f.; Tatham, "Petrarch," i. 277 f. (1925).

learn Greek with more success than he, for Petrarch was never able to read the Homer, with which Niccolao Sigeros presented him, except in the rude translation of Leontius Pilatus.<sup>14</sup> Though his proficiency in this language was not great, his attempt marks the beginning of the striving to attain a fuller knowledge of antique culture by the study of the Greek as well as the Latin classics.

It derived a new stimulus from the advent of Emmanuel Chrysolorus, who towards the end of the fourteenth century was sent by the Greek emperor to Italy to seek assistance against the advancing Turks, and who settled for a time as teacher of Greek at Florence and Pavia. He was followed during the next half-century by others, and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 increased their number.<sup>15</sup> Italians whom they inspired or taught ere long appeared to equal or eclipse their fame as teachers and scholars. The more eminent of them were Poggio, the translator of Diodorus Siculus and Xenophon and a great searcher for Latin MSS.; Filelfo, who went to Constantinople itself to study Greek; Lorenzo Valla, the keen critic of early ecclesiastical tradition and the translator of Thucydides; Ficino, the great exponent of Plato; Pico della Mirandola, who knew not only Greek and even the Kabbala, but claimed to know everything; Poliziano, the greatest scholar of them all; Cardinal Bembo, who was so enthusiastic a votary of the pagan writers that he would not read St Paul or his breviary for fear of spoiling his style.

Florence, where Salutati, the scholarly chancellor of the republic, continued the work of Boccaccio, was the chief centre of the early movement, and its hegemony was continued in the fifteenth century under the régime of the Medici, especially of Cosimo and his grandson Lorenzo, the munificent patrons of the new culture. In the middle of the century Rome bade fair, under the pontificate of the enlightened Nicolas V., to eclipse even Florence as a humanist centre. The movement gained, too, ardent patrons in most of the rulers of Italy,

<sup>14</sup> Jerrold, "Petrarca," 61 f., 185 f. (1909); E. Hutton, "Boccaccio," 205 f. (1909).

<sup>15</sup> Among the more distinguished of these itinerant Greek scholars were Chalcondyles, John Chrysolorus, Theodore Gaza, George of Trebizond, Gemistos Plethon, Bessarion, who became a cardinal, Argyropoulos, John and James Lascaris.

including Alfonso of Naples, Frederick of Urbino, the Duke of Ferrara, the Visconti and Sforza at Milan.<sup>16</sup> Their generous patronage enabled collectors like Poggio to ransack the monasteries all over Europe for MSS., and to transfer to Italian libraries the literary treasures of Greece, whilst the printing press multiplied critical editions of these MSS. and thus powerfully contributed to the diffusion of the knowledge of them. Moreover, the academies or literary associations which sprang up at Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice gave the movement a corporate organisation and ensured its triumph. This triumph is evidenced by the fact that, in spite of the opposition of the monks, it captured the universities and the Church itself. Among its most distinguished patrons were four popes, Nicolas V. in the middle, Sixtus IV. towards the end of the fifteenth century, Julius II. and Leo X. at the beginning of the sixteenth. Cardinals like Bessarion and Bembo were more distinguished as humanists than as churchmen. In the fourth and fifth centuries the Church had conquered the Roman empire, had displaced or absorbed paganism. In the fifteenth and sixteenth the literature of ancient Rome and Greece reconquered the Christian world.

The Italian humanists, if the antagonists of the scholastic culture, were not professedly hostile to the Church. Many of them, in fact, held office in the curia as apostolic secretaries. In the opinion of Petrarch the Church had nothing to fear from the revival of classic culture. For him knowledge, not ignorance, is the nurse of an enlightened piety.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Leonardo Bruni, Traversari, Manetti, Vittorino da Feltre, Guarino da Verona, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola combined loyalty to the Church with enthusiasm for the study of classic literature. A distinction has been drawn by Pastor between Christian and pagan humanists and he is followed by other Roman Catholic historians like M. Guiraud. The distinction is a subjective and artificial one. Some of the humanists were, indeed, individualists in morality as well as culture, lax in thought and conduct. Valla gave expression to this

<sup>16</sup> Burckhardt, i. 311 f.; Voigt, "Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums," i. 444 f. (1893); Symmonds, ii. 496 f.

<sup>17</sup> See his letter to Boccaccio, in "Mémoires pour la Vie de Pétrarque," iii. 606. Dobson's "Life of Petrarch." See also Guiraud, "L'Eglise Romane et les Origines de la Renaissance," 68 (4th ed., 1909).

individualism in his "De Voluptate," and Poggio, Fīlelfo, Beccadelli disgraced themselves by printing obscene rubbish in the "Facetiæ," "De Jocis et Seriis," "Hermaphroditus." But their morality was not laxer than that of many churchmen, whose lives belied their Christian profession so shockingly. The humanists in general were not professedly pagan in an anti-Christian sense, though some of the later ones adopted a sceptical attitude towards traditional dogma, and Pomponazzi went the length of attacking the belief in the immortality of the soul ("De Immortalitate," 1516), while professing to leave the decision of the validity of the doctrine, on the ground of revelation, to the apostolic see. Moreover, apart from such an extreme, the tendency to adopt a free, critical attitude to current institutional Christianity was by no means necessarily anti-Christian, though it may appear so to Roman Catholic writers who identify Christianity exclusively with the mediæval Church.<sup>18</sup>

As the head of the Platonic Academy at Florence, Ficino, who took priestly orders in middle age, might carry his ardour for Plato, before whose image a lamp was kept burning, and whose birthday was celebrated as a high festival, to the verge of worship. But in thus extravagantly honouring the master, he had no desire to substitute his teaching for that of Christ. His striving was rather to reconcile Platonism and Christianity, in which he was a firm believer. With the study of Platonism he combined that of the Epistles of Paul. Towards the close of his life he lectured to large audiences in the cathedral at Florence on the Epistle to the Romans, and contemplated the writing of a commentary on the whole of them, which was frustrated by his death.<sup>19</sup> It is to him that the revival of interest in the Pauline theology among the northern humanists is due; from him that Colet, Lefèvre, and, above all, Erasmus took their inspiration.<sup>20</sup> In thus giving an impulse to the study of

<sup>18</sup> Pastor modified his division between Christian and pagan humanists in the latest edition of his "History of the Popes." He recognises that many humanists wavered and mediated between the two tendencies. On Pomponazzi, see A. H. Douglas, "Philosophy and Psychology of Pomponazzi," ed. by C. Douglas and R. P. Hardie (1910). On the sceptical tendency of some of the later humanists, see Rodocanachi, "La Réforme en Italie," i. 43 f. (1920).

<sup>19</sup> Corsi, "Marsilii Ficini Vita," quoted by Denifle, "Die Abendländische Schriftauslegung Bis Luther," 280.

<sup>20</sup> Troeltsch, "Kultur der Gegenwart," i. Abth. IV., 270 f.

Paul, he was not conscious of inaugurating a religious upheaval like that to which this study was ultimately to lead in the case of Luther and his fellow-reformers. Such an upheaval he did not foresee and evidently would not have approved. His pupil, Pico della Mirandola, who combined a knowledge of the theosophy of the Jewish Kabbala with that of Greek philosophy, and insisted on the importance of studying the Scriptures in the original languages, brought upon himself a charge of heresy and was compelled to seek refuge for a time in France. It is, in fact, doubtful whether he held the doctrine of the Trinity in the orthodox sense.<sup>21</sup> Even so, there can be no doubt about his profoundly religious spirit and his attachment to the Church in its mediæval form. He had some thoughts of entering the Dominican order, and at his own desire was buried in the Dominican habit. Like Petrarch and the more serious-minded Italian humanists he would have reformed the Church in the spirit of Savonarola, by whose preaching he was profoundly influenced. Italian humanism of this elevated type did not go beyond a reformation of the practical abuses which its representatives would fain have redressed. It would hardly have produced a reformation on evangelical lines, though not a few scholarly Italians later became adherents of the evangelical movement.

At the same time, there is discernible a critical spirit which was less submissive to the authority of the Church and tended to question the validity of received doctrines and institutions. In addition to the revived study of Paul inspired by Ficino, it is in this critical tendency, which was allied with a naturalistic, in opposition to the monastic, ascetic conception of life and, in some cases, with religious scepticism, that the significance of Italian humanism in relation to the Reformation lies. Its chief representatives were Valla, Filelfo, Poggio, Gemistos Plethon, Pomponius Laetus, Pomponazzi. Of the critical tendency as applied to ecclesiastical institutions and documents, Valla is the brilliant exemplifier. He not only attacked the scholastic method and theology and the monastic conception of the religious life, he exposed on historical grounds the falsity of the so-called Donation of Constantine, and in so

<sup>21</sup> Rigg, *Introd. to the "Life of Pico,"* by his nephew; trans., along with some of his letters, by Sir Thomas More, 26.

doing denounced in no measured terms the temporal power of the popes.<sup>22</sup> He attacked the assumption that the Apostles' Creed was composed by the Twelve, and disputed the authenticity of the letter of King Abgar of Edessa, and the writings ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite. In his annotations on the New Testament, he questioned the correctness of the text of the Vulgate,<sup>23</sup> as Roger Bacon had done before him, and pleaded that it should be compared with the original Greek. He may justly be regarded as the father of modern historic criticism in its application to the scientific study of ecclesiastical history. It is not without significance that his attack on the Donation of Constantine was republished by Hutten in support of Luther in his early struggle with Rome. Unfortunately, like too many of his Italian fellow-humanists, he was an opportunist as well as a scientific critic, and, in his eagerness to secure the patronage of the tolerant Nicolas V., was fain to explain away his obnoxious production.

#### GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS

Italian humanism was a distinctively culture movement, though in some of its best representatives, like Pico della Mirandola, it was inspired by an ardent reforming spirit. In the northern lands, to which the movement spread, it took a wider sweep in its active endeavour to effect a reformation of the Church and society as well as of culture. It was in this respect much more distinctively than in Italy a practical as well as a literary and scholarly movement, and its significance as a preparation for, and, up to a point, an ally of the Reformation is correspondingly greater. Luther himself owed not a little to the humanist influence, though he ultimately parted company with Erasmus and the conservative reformers. Many of his fellow-reformers in Germany and other lands passed over to the evangelical movement by the humanist approach.

In the second half of the fifteenth century humanism was

<sup>22</sup> See Döllinger, "Fables Respecting the Popes in the Middle Ages," 175 (Eng. trans. by Plummer); Pastor, "History of the Popes," i. 18 f.; MacKinnon, "From Christ to Constantine," 541 f. (1936). Critical ed. of the "Donatio," by Schwahn (1928).

<sup>23</sup> Sandys, "Hist. of Classical Scholarship," i. 571. See also the detailed account of Voigt, "Wiederbelebung," i. 461 f.; Mestwerdt, "Die Anfänge des Erasmus," 29 f., etc. (1917).

already exerting a powerful influence on the intellectual life of Germany and the Netherlands, where the educational activity of the Brethren of the Common Life and the multiplication of universities had prepared the way for its rapid spread.<sup>24</sup> The most distinguished of its earlier representatives were Cardinal Cusanus, scholar as well as reforming churchman; Rudolf Agricola, Alexander Hegius, and Jacob Wimpfeling, all three active educational reformers; Trithemius, the scholarly Abbot of Sponheim, historian, and book collector; Conrad Celtes, a wandering humanist of the free-thinking type, who finally settled as professor at Vienna; Sebastian Brant, who lashed the follies and vices of his age in his "Narrenschiff" (ship of fools); Heinrich Bebel, professor at Tübingen and drastic satirist of society; Wessel Gansfort, who travelled far in search of the new culture and professed Greek and Hebrew at Heidelberg for some years. As in Italy, the movement ere long found a focus in the cities, especially in Nürnberg, Augsburg, Erfurt and Basle, and influential patrons in the Emperor Maximilian, the Electors of Saxony, the Palatinate, and Mainz Johann V. Dalberg, Bishop of Worms, and the Count of Württemberg. Of the humanist circle at Nürnberg the most distinguished leader was Pirckheimer; of that of Augsburg, Conrad Peutinger, while Mutianus Rufus gathered around him at Gotha a band of enthusiastic young humanists, which included Eobanus Hessus, Ulrich von Hutten, and Crotus Rubianus. At Basle the movement found an early protagonist in Johann A. Lapide, a brilliant exponent in Beatus Rhenanus, and active propagandists in the printers Amorbach and Froben. Its growing strength in the second half of the fifteenth century and early years of the sixteenth is further attested by the establishment of additional universities (among them Freiburg, Tübingen, Basle, and (1502) Wittenberg), which became the nurseries of the new culture in opposition to the votaries of the scholastic education.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> From the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century eight universities had been founded in Germany—Prague, Vienna, Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt, Leipzig, Würzburg, and Rostock. Hartfelder, "Der Zustand der Deutschen Universitäten am Ende des Mittelalters," *Hist. Zeitschrift*, 1890.

<sup>25</sup> On the early German humanists, see Geiger, "Renaissance und Humanismus in Italien und Deutschland"; Janssen, "History of the German People," i. 61 f.

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Unlike Zwingli in German Switzerland, Luther cannot, even in his early period, be reckoned a wholehearted adherent of German humanism. His concern as a monk was mainly with religion, not with culture. Whilst as a student at the University of Erfurt he read a number of the Latin authors and had a special liking for Virgil and Plautus, he was more interested in the scholastic philosophy. In the intimate circle of his fellow-students he was, in fact, known as "the philosopher," and later in the Erfurt monastery devoted himself to the study of the scholastic theology. At the same time, in the progress of his theological studies and as lecturer in theology at Wittenberg, he availed himself of the critical results of the new learning and ranged himself among the supporters of Reuchlin in his conflict with the Cologne theologians. He, in turn, valued the support of the humanists in his own early conflict with the scholastic theologians on behalf of his distinctive religious teaching. He made use of Erasmus' Greek New Testament in his lectures on the Scriptures, and set himself to master Greek and Hebrew for the purpose of translating them into the vernacular. He became, too, the champion of educational reform on Christian-humanist lines. But as early as 1517 he was beginning to dissent from Erasmus' annotations on the Epistle to the Romans, and ultimately, on theological grounds, became the declared antagonist of the humanist movement as inspired and directed by him, if not of humanist studies.<sup>26</sup>

Some of these early German humanists were keenly national-conscious. They valued Italian culture, but they resented the Italian assumption of superiority over the "barbarous" Germans, and in rebutting this assumption and accentuating German national feeling in opposition to it, they contributed to prepare the way for the German Reformation. When Rudolf Agricola was at Pavia, the Italians rudely derided him as a "Phrygian." "The ancient hatred between us," growled Celtes, "can never be dissolved. But for the Alps we should be eternally at war." Even Erasmus, who was a cosmopolitan, gave vent at times to his indignation at the charge of barbarism levelled by the Italians against the Germans and

<sup>26</sup> In more detail see my "Luther and the Reformation," i. 249 f.; iii. 211 f.

other non-Italians. "We must make allowances for Italian conceit," wrote Zwingli. "In their heads is always running the refrain, 'Heaven and earth can show none like to us.' They cannot bear to see Germany outstepping them in learning." Wimpfeling wrote a "Defensio Germaniæ" to glorify the deeds of German kings and emperors, and Beatus Rhenanus contended that German history is as important as Roman. Luther knew his business as a reformer when, in the "Address to the German Nobility," he appealed to this rising national feeling to make an end of Roman tyranny and extortion. "I think Germany now pays more to the pope than it formerly paid to its emperors . . . and, in return, we are scoffed at and put to shame."<sup>27</sup>

In Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) German humanism produced its first distinguished Hebraist, who fought the battle on behalf of critical scholarship against the obscurantists of the schools. Though a jurist by profession, first as assessor at Stuttgart and later as one of the judges of the Suabian League, he had combined the study of Greek as well as Latin with the usual subjects of the Arts course at Paris and Basle, and with Law at Orleans, to which he subsequently added that of Hebrew. He perfected his knowledge of the classics during several visits to Italy, where he made the acquaintance of Ficino and Mirandola, and ere long signalled his proficiency in classical and Hebrew philology by the publication of several works which gained him an international reputation. His mastery of Hebrew made him acquainted with the errors of the Vulgate translation of the Old Testament, which, though a layman, he did not hesitate to point out. His great merit consists in his being the pioneer of the critical study of the original language of the Old Testament, to a true knowledge of which he contributed by his method as much as by his erudition to open the way.

It happened that at the time that Reuchlin was awakening by his philological studies a new interest in the Hebrew language, the anti-Jewish spirit was being fanned by a converted Jew, named John Pfefferkorn, who signalled his conversion by his fanatical intolerance of the Jewish religion. Pfefferkorn

<sup>27</sup> "Werke," vi, 417 f. On this subject see Allen, "Age of Erasmus," 264 f. (1914).

published a number of violent pamphlets against his former co-religionists, in which he advocated their forcible conversion to Christianity by compelling them to attend Christian sermons and burning their Hebrew books. To this end, with the assistance of the Inquisitor-General, Hochstraten, and the Dominicans of Cologne, he succeeded in 1509 in obtaining from the Emperor Maximilian an edict confiscating all anti-Christian Jewish books. The application of the edict, which was committed to him, aroused the opposition of Archbishop Albert of Mainz, who persuaded the emperor to submit the question to a commission, of which Reuchlin was a member. In a written opinion submitted to the emperor, Reuchlin strongly protested against this intolerant proposal on the ground of the value of the Talmud and other Jewish writings for the study of Christianity, and emphasised its injustice as well as its futility. This judgment roused against its author the bitter enmity of Pfefferkorn and his Dominican allies and inaugurated a violent controversy, which concerned not merely the particular question at issue, but developed into a battle royal between the champions of the new and the old culture.

Pfefferkorn began the quarrel by a violent philippic (the *Handspiegel*, *Handglass*), in which he called in question Reuchlin's Hebrew scholarship and revelled in the abusive controversial language of the age. To this Reuchlin retorted with the *Augenspiegel* (*Eyeglass*), and whilst retreating somewhat from the standpoint of his official judgment to the emperor, exposed his antagonists' ignorance in equally abusive terms. Pfefferkorn and Hochstraten raised the cry of heresy and succeeded in enlisting the support of the theological faculty of Cologne, which required him to renounce certain propositions drawn from his objectionable pamphlet. Reuchlin replied instead by a Defence of his opinions and a counter-attack on the Cologne theologians. Whereupon they appealed to the emperor, who prohibited the circulation of the Defence, and to the theological faculties of Louvain, Mainz, Erfurt, and Paris, which joined in the condemnation of his opinions, though that of Erfurt added a testimony in favour of his learning, and exonerated him from heterodoxy. Hochstraten, as Inquisitor-General, now summoned him to appear before his

tribunal at Mainz in September 1513. Instead of complying, Reuchlin appealed to the pope, who referred the question to the decision of the Bishop of Spire, the Cologne theologians meanwhile publicly burning the *Augenspiegel*. In his capacity as arbiter, the bishop decided that there was no ground for the charge of heresy and ordered the disputants to cease from further controversy. Against this decision Hochstraten, in turn, appealed to the pope, who now appointed a commission to examine the book. Once more the decision was favourable to Reuchlin, who had, besides, succeeded by this time in securing the good will of the emperor and was the hero of a host of humanist defenders. Though Hochstraten ultimately in June 1520 succeeded in extorting from Leo X. the formal condemnation and suppression of the *Augenspiegel*, his success was but a Pyrrhic victory. The growing spirit of enlightenment in Germany had rallied in support of Reuchlin. To this support the wit of Crotus Rubianus and Ulrich von Hutten, the authors of the "*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*," in no small degree contributed. In these letters, the first instalment of which appeared at the end of 1515,<sup>28</sup> they pelted with nimble, if coarse, ridicule the pedantry, casuistry, stupidity, and antiquated notions of the obscurantists, as they appeared in the eyes of the more contemptuous and less moderate of their humanist opponents.

Reuchlin's fame as a critical scholar was surpassed by that of the cosmopolitan Erasmus, who applied his critical method to the New Testament writings. He is a brilliant combination of the critical scholar and the Christian moralist and reformer. Born at Rotterdam, probably in 1466, the illegitimate son of a priest,<sup>29</sup> he laid the foundation of his knowledge of Latin and

<sup>28</sup> A second instalment appeared in 1517 and was mainly the work of Hutten. Ellinger in Gebhart's "*Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte*," i. 553. On the controversy in detail, see Geiger, "*Johann Reuchlin*" (1871); Strauss, "*Ulrich v. Hutten*," 188 f. (1858), 2nd ed. 1874; Hirsch, "*Essays*" (1905). The *Epistolæ* are given in the supplementary volume of Böcking's edition of Hutten's works. To his wide learning in classic and Hebrew literature his library, which he bequeathed to his native Pforzheim, bears eloquent testimony, see Christ, "*Die Bibliothek Reuchlin's in Pforzheim*," "*Beiheft zum Centralblatt f. Bibliothekswesen*," No. 52 (1924).

<sup>29</sup> Allen, "*The Age of Erasmus*," 33 (1914). Emerton, "*Desiderius Erasmus*," 3 (1899), says 1467. Hyma, "*The Youth of Erasmus*," prefers 1469, 51 (1930).

acquired at least the elements of Greek under Hegius at the School of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer.<sup>30</sup> He subsequently attained his mastery of both languages by his own industry, for he was one of those students who owe little to any particular teacher, but develop their faculties and acquire knowledge by following the bent of their own minds. On the death of his parents in 1484, his guardians sent him to the school at Hertogenbosch, instead of to a university. Here he wasted nearly three years, under incapable teachers, with a view to the monastic career. Thereafter, at the behest of his guardians and, according to his own account, much against the grain, he passed into the monastery at Steyn, where, after a year's novitiate, he took the monastic vows. At first he appears to have accommodated himself passably to his new vocation, but ultimately tired of its restrictions and the grossness of some of his fellow-monks. There is some reason to infer that he later exaggerated their failings<sup>31</sup> in his revulsion from the monastic system, of which he became the mordant critic. At all events, in 1492 or 1493 he gladly exchanged the life of the monastery for the post of secretary to the Bishop of Cambrai, who ordained him priest. From Cambrai he went to Paris to continue his studies, whilst maintaining himself by private teaching. His first Parisian sojourn, during which he made the acquaintance of the Scottish student, Hector Boece,<sup>32</sup> and probably also of Boece's fellow-countryman, John Major, was followed, in the closing year of the century, by a visit to England, at the invitation of Lord Mountjoy, one of his Parisian pupils. This visit marks the beginning of his intimate relations with the leaders of English humanism—Colet and More, Linacre and Grocyn—whose scholarship and reforming zeal materially contributed to help him on his way to his future vocation as scholar and moralist. Colet, whose predilection for a scriptural in preference to the scholastic theology especially influenced him, would fain have retained him at Oxford, and

<sup>30</sup> Emerton, "Erasmus," 6 f. Hegius himself knew little Greek. His elementary knowledge of this language Erasmus seems to have derived from Sintheim, one of the masters of the school.

<sup>31</sup> See Hyma, "Youth of Erasmus," 152 f.; cf. Pfeiffer in, "Denkschrift Zum 400 Todestage des Erasmus," 50 f. (1936); Woodward, "Des. Erasmus," 4 f. (1902).

<sup>32</sup> Nichols, "Epistles of Erasmus," i. 105.

Erasmus was delighted with his English environment.<sup>33</sup> But he was possessed by the spirit of the wandering humanist, and this spirit carried him back to Paris and other cities in France and the Netherlands, and ultimately, after a second visit to England in 1505-06, to Italy, where he spent the next three years (1506-09) and obtained the doctor's degree at the University of Turin.<sup>34</sup> During the next five years (1509-14) he sojourned for the third time in England, chiefly at Cambridge, where he is said to have filled the post of Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity,<sup>35</sup> and worked at his editions of the Epistles of Jerome and the Greek New Testament (with Latin translation), both of them published at Basle in 1516.

By this time he had acquired a wide literary reputation as the author of the "Adages" (1500), the "Enchiridion Militis Christiani" (1505)—usually translated "The Christian Soldier's Handbook," but also "The Christian Soldier's Dagger"—and the "Praise of Folly," a play on the name of Sir Thomas More (*moria*), which he wrote in More's home at London in 1509. In them he appears as the Christian moralist, to whom humanism is the means not merely of self-culture, but of the moral amelioration of the Church and the world and the education of public opinion in favour of a practical reformation. The first is a collection of sayings from the classical writers, interspersed with disquisitions on morals and politics. In the "Enchiridion" he stresses the practice of religion as Christ taught and exemplified it, and forcibly points the contrast between this religion and the current ecclesiasticism. "The 'Enchiridion,'" he writes to Colet, "was not composed for the mere display of genius or eloquence, but only for the purpose of correcting the common error of those who make religion consist of ceremonies and almost more than Jewish observances, while they are singularly careless of the things

<sup>33</sup> Nichols, i. 200 f. Hyma contends that it was Wessel Gansfort, not Colet, who influenced Erasmus against the scholastic theology ("Youth of Erasmus," 125 f.). Erasmus was a product of the "Devotio Moderna," represented by à Kempis and the Brethren of the Common Life, as Meswerdt ("Die Anfänge des Erasmus," (1917)) has shown. See my "Luther and the Reformation," iii. 228 f. Even so, Colet's influence undoubtedly confirmed and strengthened in him this tendency. Hyma admits that he "was affected by the opinions of many scholars," 127.

<sup>34</sup> The degree was that of D.D. Tatham, art. "Erasmus in Italy," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1895.

<sup>35</sup> His occupation of this chair is doubtful, Allen, "Age of Erasmus," 138.

that belong to piety.”<sup>36</sup> The same purpose inspired the “Praise of Folly.” “As nothing,” he writes in the dedication to More, “is more trifling than to treat serious questions frivolously, so nothing is more amusing than to treat trifles in such a way as to show yourself anything but a trifler. We have praised folly not quite foolishly.”<sup>37</sup> In both of these works, especially in the latter, he attacks, with a boldness astounding in one who was by nature not remarkable for courage or militant conviction, the formalism, superstition, and hypocrisy of churchmen. The audacity of the attack shows the seriousness of the abuses against which it is directed, and Erasmus must have felt fairly sure both of his case and of the sympathy and approval of powerful partisans in Church and State before running the risk of the censure of the Church. In the “Praise of Folly” the attack takes the form of a stinging satire on the society of his time. In cap and bells Folly mounts the rostrum and addresses all sorts and conditions of people. Her votaries are to be found among those who pride themselves on their wisdom as well as those who live according to their passions. They include the pope himself (Julius II.), cardinals, bishops, monks, scholastic theologians and philosophers, grammarians. Especially scathing is the indictment of the pope and the dignitaries of the Church. It is a daring anticipation, without the coarseness, of the “*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*,” and more caustic and outspoken than anything Luther uttered in his early sermons and lectures.<sup>38</sup>

While his edition of the Greek New Testament and the Epistles of Jerome were solid contributions to the new learning, they also prepared the way for the Reformation. In the “Method of the True Theology,” with which he prefaced the former, he anticipated Luther in insisting on the importance of a knowledge of the original languages for the understanding of the Scriptures, and in exalting such direct knowledge above the scholastic theology, of which the apostles and the Fathers knew nothing and are, in fact, the antagonists. He advocates the reading of the Bible in the common tongue by the common people. Like W. Tyndale in England, he wished that the

<sup>36</sup> Nichols, i. 376; Allen, “*Opus Epistolarum Erasmi*,” i. 403 (1906).

<sup>37</sup> Nichols, ii. 13.

<sup>38</sup> I have taken this paragraph mainly from my “Luther and the Reformation,” i. 248 f.

peasant following the plough should solace himself with its content. "I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, and that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey."<sup>39</sup> In historical criticism, as applied to the Scriptures, he followed the method of Valla, whose work as a critical scholar he appraises highly, and whose annotations on the New Testament he republished in 1505.<sup>40</sup> The critical attitude comes out strongly in the Latin "Paraphrases" (*i.e.*, commentaries) of the various books of the New Testament. He denies, for instance, that the saying about the rock in Matt. xvi. 18 applies exclusively to the pope, and maintains that Christ is the only teacher that has been appointed by God Himself.<sup>41</sup> In these writings are to be found the true theology as against its later scholastic development. With the exception of Aquinas, he had no interest in the scholastic theologians, unless to criticise and satirise their dialectic hair-splitting and their contentiousness over abstruse and profitless problems. For him, as for his friend Colet, belief in the Scriptures and the Apostles' Creed is sufficient. He would, in fact, displace the scholastic by a scriptural theology, and accord liberty of opinion in theological speculation. He shares Luther's denial of the right to impose such speculations as articles of faith, and his protest against the excessive ecclesiastical regulation of the Christian life. The Church has become Judaic in this respect, and with Paul he would restore the liberty of the Gospel, of which monasticism is a deformation. Though he was fain to remain a reformer within the Church and ultimately diverged from and opposed Luther's more radical and aggressive attitude, his critical scholarship, in directing his many followers to the sources of Christianity as the fountain of true theology, and in bringing the light of critical knowledge to bear on the abuses and assumptions which had overlaid and obscured it, was a contribution of the greatest value to the Reformation.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Murray's trans., "Erasmus and Luther," 21. The quotation is from the Preface to the Latin Paraphrases of the books of the New Testament, which he began immediately after the publication of the edition of the Greek.

<sup>40</sup> Nichols, i. 70 f., 379 f.

<sup>41</sup> Murray, "Erasmus and Luther," 23.

<sup>42</sup> On the subject in more detail, see my "Luther and the Reformation," i. 245 f.; iii. 224 f., in which fuller references to the numerous recent writers will be found.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### HUMANISM IN RELATION TO THE REFORMATION (2)

#### FRANCE

THE expedition of Charles VIII. to Italy in the last decade of the fifteenth century and the Italian wars of his successor Louis XII. brought France into close touch with Italian humanism. Its incipient influence is already discernible in the second half of the previous century, in the reigns of Charles V.—himself a man of culture and the generous patron of scholars and artists<sup>1</sup>—and his successor Charles VI. The faint dawn of French humanism breaks on the classic culture of Christine de Pisan, of Jean de Montreuil, the friend and correspondent of Salutati, and Nicolas de Clémanges, humanist and ardent reformer, who professed Latin literature in the College of Navarre at Paris before he became secretary to Benedict XIII. in 1397, and after fully a quarter of a century resumed his lectures in the same college.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the fifteenth the study of Greek and even Hebrew made some progress.<sup>3</sup> But it was only at the close of it that Italy became the intellectual magnet of France and humanism a distinctively and growingly influential movement. It gained the support of Louis XII. and his minister Cardinal Amboise. Louis attempted to induce Leonardo da Vinci to migrate to France and welcomed Italian humanists, among them John Lascaris, to his court,<sup>4</sup> whilst French students crossed the Alps to perfect

<sup>1</sup> See my "Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy," 57 f., 132.

<sup>2</sup> Muntz, "Nicolas de Clémanges" (1848); Bonet-Maury, "Précurseurs de la Réforme," 183 f. (1904); Van Dyke, "Age of the Renaissance," 177 f.

<sup>3</sup> Sandys, "History of Classical Scholarship," ii. 168 f. See also Tilley, "Cambridge Mediæval History," viii. 782 f., and "The Dawn of the French Renaissance," 56 f. (1918).

<sup>4</sup> Lemonnier, "Hist. de France" (ed. by Lavissee), v., Pt. I., 158 (1903). Lascaris assisted Louis in organising the royal library at Blois, and later Francis I., when it was removed to Fontainebleau.

their knowledge of the classics at Florence and other humanist centres. His successor, Francis I., was a genuine product of the Renaissance in his artistic tastes, his interest in the new learning, and his dislike of scholastic obscurantism, if his personal culture was rather superficial. Equally so his sister Marguerite d'Angoulême, Duchess of Alençon by her first marriage, Queen of Navarre by her second, who added to the personal piety lacking in her brother a keen interest in theology and religious reform. German humanism, through Reuchlin and Erasmus, added its influence to the Italian in quickening the movement.<sup>5</sup> In this favourable atmosphere the movement ere long produced an imposing array of notable scholars in Lefèvre, Guillaume Budé, Danés, Vatable, Berquin, Toussain, Rob. Étienne, Berauld, Olivetan, Dolet, Postel, Ramus, J. C. Scaliger, and many more.<sup>6</sup>

G. Budé has been called the "Restorer of Greek Studies" in France, in the mastery of which he was the worthy rival of Erasmus, though devoid of his consummate literary power. In his earlier career he had studied law and become a diplomatist of some note before he attained fame as a scholar. His scholarship led him incidentally to criticise the text of the Vulgate.<sup>7</sup> With the ardour of the scholar he combined that of the religious and educational reformer. His influence with Francis I. led to the foundation of the Collège de France in 1530<sup>8</sup> for the free cultivation of humanist studies, in opposition to the Sorbonne, which, under the influence of Noel Bédau, strove to stem the tide of the new culture. Modelled on that founded by Busleiden at Louvain in 1515,<sup>9</sup> its importance lies in the fact that it recognised and encouraged the right of free research not only in classical literature and science, but in biblical studies. Even in some of the colleges of the university the movement succeeded in asserting itself, notably in that of La Marche, in which Cordier, one of Calvin's masters, taught. Nor was its influence confined to the capital. It leavened provincial universities like that of Bordeaux, where Cordier and,

<sup>5</sup> Lemonnier, v. 142; Tilley, "Dawn," 287 f. On the relation of Erasmus to the French humanists, in detail, see Mary Mann, "Erasmus et les Débuts de la Réforme Française" (1934).

<sup>6</sup> Art. "Humanism under Francis I," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, July 1900.

<sup>7</sup> Tilley, "Dawn," 592.

<sup>8</sup> Croisset, art. in "La Science Française," ii. 148 (1915).

<sup>9</sup> See Allen, "Erasmus," 156 f. (1934).

along with him, George Buchanan also taught for some years ; Bourges, where the German, Melchior Wolmar, another of Calvin's masters and the preceptor of Beza, professed Greek ; Montpellier, where Rabelais took his doctor's degree and lectured on the Greek texts of Hippocrates and Galen. It even penetrated into the stronghold of mediæval orthodoxy, Toulouse, which produced in Jean de Caturce<sup>10</sup> one of the first French evangelical martyrs, and in Étienne Dolet even a humanist martyr.<sup>11</sup>

Till the middle of the sixteenth century French humanism may be described as generally sympathetic to religious reform.<sup>12</sup> In Lefèvre (Faber Stapulensis) and his disciples Farel, Gérard Roussel, Pavannes, Louis de Berquin, Olivetan, its reforming tendency found its most active expression. Lefèvre is the French counterpart, though hardly the compeer, of Reuchlin and Erasmus in the application of the critical method of Valla to the Scriptures. With Erasmus he maintained friendly relations, though they quarrelled for a time over the exegesis of a passage in Hebrews. He was already a notable teacher of mathematics and physics in the University of Paris and an incipient educational reformer before his first visit to Italy in 1492, which he repeated in 1500 and 1506. He strove to foster a better knowledge of Aristotle and reform the higher education by writing Introductions to his works and publishing Italian translations of them. Thereafter he turned to theology and edited a Latin version of the mystic Dionysius and other early Christian writings. His own mystic tendency led him to visit Germany in search of German mystic manuscripts, and edit a work of Ruysbroek and a complete edition of those of Cusanus. From 1509 he devoted himself to biblical study and published a collection of versions of the Psalms ("Quintuplex Psalterium").<sup>13</sup> In 1512 appeared his revised Latin version of the Pauline Epistles, based on the original Greek, with a Latin commentary, of which Luther made use before the

<sup>10</sup> "Hist. Ecclesiastique," i. 21 f. Attributed to Beza, ed. by Baum and Cunitz.

<sup>11</sup> See Christie, "Étienne Dolet," 472 f. (1899).

<sup>12</sup> See Hauser, art. "De l'Humanisme et de la Réforme en France," *Rev. Historique*, 1897 ; "Ils (the humanists) préparaient un chemin aux autres," says the author of the "Histoire Ecclesiastique," i. 7.

<sup>13</sup> On his literary and educational work up to 1512, see Tilley, "Dawn," 233 f.

critical edition of the New Testament of Erasmus came into his hands. Though his knowledge of Greek<sup>14</sup> and his critical ability were limited, his Commentary on the Epistles marks him as an original interpreter of the thought of the apostle, and in important respects a precursor of the evangelical reformers. He rejects the fourfold sense of Scripture, and, with the exception of Richard of St Victor and other mediæval mystics, ignores the scholastic exegetes and cites only the Fathers. His main guide in the exposition of Scripture is the Scripture itself. For him it is the supreme authority for theology and the religious life. Whilst, unlike Luther, he believes in the freedom of the will and the power to accept or reject the grace of God, he emphasises the doctrine of justification by faith and not by works, and denies the validity of human merits for salvation. To believe in justification by the works of the law is to deny grace and render futile the death of Christ, though he makes an exception in favour of those who have not known the Gospel and whom God in His mercy saves. If the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith alone is lacking, and with the apostle James he also emphasises the necessity of works as the sign of a living faith, man's justification is solely the work of God. "Confide neither in faith nor in works, but in God, who alone justifies." He explains baptism, with Paul, as a spiritual dying with Christ and a resurrection to new life. He seems to have held the current doctrine of the Eucharist, whilst emphasising the spiritual significance of the sacrament as a nourishing and vivifying of the spiritual life, and teaching that the mass is not a sacrifice, but the memorial of that of Christ. He accepts monasticism as a legitimate form of the Christian life, but denies its necessary superiority to that of the ordinary Christian and denounces its corruptions. Penance is salutary, but not if it leads us to trust in our satisfactions instead of in that made for us by Christ. He holds the unity of the Church and the papal supremacy over it, though he feels keenly the need for its reformation and longs for its coming.<sup>15</sup> Despite his spirituality and his independence,

<sup>14</sup> "His knowledge of Greek and Latin was very inferior to that of the best humanists," Tilley, "Dawn," 247. On his deficiencies as a critic, see Imbart de la Tour, "Origines de la Réforme," ii. 393 f. (1909).

<sup>15</sup> For his theology as contained in his commentary on the Pauline Epistles, see Barnaud, "Jacques Lefèvre," 25 f. (1900); Renaudet, "Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris," 622 f. (1916).

he is not apparently conscious of any jar between himself and it. Nor does he contemplate any revolutionary innovation of its constitution and doctrines. He is not polemic, though he is evidently not in sympathy with the scholastic theology and the ecclesiastical religion of his time.

The commentary on the Pauline Epistles was written in the Abbey of St Germain des Prés, of which Guillaume Briçonnet was abbot, as well as Bishop of Lodève, whose secretary he became in 1504, and who was translated to Meaux in 1516. Thither Lefèvre, worried by the outcry raised by some of the Sorbonne doctors against his critical work on the three Marys of the Gospels and similar writings, retired in 1520. For some years Meaux became the centre of the Reformation within the Church which the bishop and the scholar, whom he appointed his vicar-general, co-operated in bringing to a practical issue in the diocese. His former pupils Farel and Roussel joined him, and the circle included Mazurier and Pierre Caroli, like Roussel, doctors of the Sorbonne, D'Arande, Vatable, and Pavannes,<sup>16</sup> one of the first French martyrs. It enjoyed the patronage and protection of Francis, his mother Louise of Savoy, and his sister Marguerite of Angoulême. Francis was no friend of the obscurantist monks and theologians and his humanist sympathies inclined him to favour a reformation of the type advocated by the votaries of the new culture, though he was by no means disposed to apply it to himself. Marguerite's religion was of a more serious caste and her devotion to the new culture rested on a more solid ground of knowledge than that of her brother. She had studied Latin seriously, had some acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew, wrote graceful French, and was a poetess of no mean merit.<sup>17</sup> She was the enemy of the obscurantist intolerance of the Sorbonne, and her religion might be described as evangelical mysticism, with a strong sympathy for the new theology, even in its Lutheran form, of which she bade fair for a time to become the champion. She does not, however, seem to have been by conviction a Lutheran or a Calvinist, and remained

<sup>16</sup> "Hist. Ecclesiastique," i. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Lefranc, the editor of her latest poetic work, rates her poetic gift highly, even enthusiastically, "Dernières Poesies de Marguerite de Navarre," *Introd.* (1896). On Marguerite's religious views see, further, Lefranc, "Les Idées Religieuses de Marguerite de Navarre d'après son œuvre poétique" (1898).

to the end of her life in devout communion with the Church, though in one of her latest pieces<sup>18</sup> she introduces a convinced Protestant, in the person of *La Sage*, confuting and seeking to convert *La Superstitieuse*, who represents the Roman Catholic orthodoxy. It would be rash to call her a Protestant, though she patronised and protected on occasion the extreme as well as the moderate reformers and emphasised the sole efficacy of faith in Christ and of grace for salvation, the Gospel as distinct from the scholastic theology. She preferred the mystic Briçonnet as her spiritual adviser and confidant. This evangelical mysticism was not incompatible with a certain levity of tone, in accordance with the laxity of the age, which even in her mature years found unrestrained expression in the "Heptameron"—a collection of tales in the style though not in the spirit of Boccaccio.<sup>19</sup> Their moralist tone is in fact a redeeming feature, though it is not edifying to find a cultured religious lady not only talking, but writing down such questionable matter.

In the congenial atmosphere of Meaux and under such powerful patronage, Lefèvre continued for some years his theological and practical activity. In his Commentary on the Gospels, published in 1522, he insists on the necessity of true repentance as a conversion to God, whilst not rejecting the doctrine of penance and retaining his belief in purgatory, on the universality of the offer of grace, on the sufficiency of the Scriptures apart from tradition, on the inadmissibility of saint worship, if not of their invocation, as incompatible with the honour due to God alone. He emphasises the unity of the Church and will have nothing to do with heretics. But it is a unity founded on Christ and not on Peter. He strenuously advocates the reading of the Scriptures by the people for whom he translated the New Testament into the vernacular, and the preaching of the pure Gospel by the priests.<sup>20</sup> No wonder that the Sorbonne sounded the alarm and Briçonnet began to hesitate in the face of the rising opposition. The

<sup>18</sup> "La Comedie jouée au Mont de Marsan."

<sup>19</sup> It was only published after her death, though written in the years immediately preceding this event. On Marguerite's facility in this kind of literature, see Genin, *Introd.* to her letters.

<sup>20</sup> See Barnaud, "Lefèvre," 62 f. On his trans. of the New Testament, see Quievreux, 30 f. (1894).

bishop was not prepared to go all the way with the advanced reformers of the school of Luther, and in April 1523<sup>21</sup> deprived Farel and his fellow-reformers of the right to preach. In the autumn of the same year he forbade the reading of Luther's works, which had been condemned by the Sorbonne, and silenced the Lutheran preachers in the diocese. He seems to have been actuated by fear of the consequences and apparently also by a conservative dislike of revolutionary methods. He nevertheless continued his patronage of Lefèvre, despite the condemnation by the Sorbonne of certain propositions drawn from the prefaces to his Commentary on the Gospels and his translation of the New Testament. The intervention of the king saved him from its hostility for the time being. But the defeat of Pavia and the defection, for political reasons, of the Queen Mother to the side of the bigots cleared the way for a renewed attack by the Sorbonne, led by the fanatic and obscurantist Noel Bédá and seconded by the Parliament, which condemned his translation of the New Testament to the flames and arraigned him, Roussel, Mazurier, Pierre Caroli, and others on a charge of heresy (October 1525). From this danger he saved himself by flight to Strassburg. The Parliament continued the process against him in spite of the renewed intervention of Francis, who at the instigation of Marguerite sent a missive from Madrid ordering it to stay further proceedings. The reform movement within the Church, of which Meaux promised to become the focus and which, as represented by his teaching, approximated in some essential respects the more aggressive movement led by Luther, though independent of it, thus received a decisive check. Briçonnet, who was also involved in a suit before the Parliament, gave satisfactory evidence of his orthodoxy and proof of his zeal in the repression of heretics. Farel had already retired from Meaux two years earlier and Roussel accompanied Lefèvre to Strassburg. Both were enabled by the favour of Francis to return to France in the following year, and Lefèvre continued his exegetical labours and his translation of the Old Testament under the protection of the king and his sister, in spite of the renewed attacks of Bédá, at Blois and Nérac, where Calvin, the rising star of the

<sup>21</sup> The date of these measures is, however, a matter of controversy. Some place them two or three years later.

evangelical party, visited him in 1534.<sup>22</sup> But his influence as an active reformer henceforth recedes into the background of the stage on which the martyrs of a more aggressive movement take their heroic stand for a faith which, in essentials, he seems to have shared, but for which he was not fitted to brave the stake. He had, in fact, welcomed the writings of the Swiss and German reformers and had expressed his joy at the progress of their efforts to diffuse the light. He felt himself at home in the evangelical atmosphere of Strassburg and had been stimulated in his biblical studies by his intercourse with Bucer and Capito.<sup>23</sup> In respect of his practical agreement with their teaching, and especially of his pioneer work as an evangelical interpreter and translator of the Scriptures, there is considerable justification for the claim that he was the Father of the Reformation in France.<sup>24</sup> He cannot, however, be regarded as one of its militant leaders, and he remained to the end in communion with the Church, though, on the eve of his death at an advanced age, he bewailed the weakness that "shrank from the martyr's crown and betrayed the cause of God."<sup>25</sup> The stake or exile was the alternative for the militant reformer, and, while remaining true to his convictions as a reformer within the Church, he was unable to face either. Of his old associates, Farel, Pavannes, Berquin were made of sterner stuff. Others like Roussel and Mazurier preferred the path of prudence, the former ultimately becoming Bishop of Oléron, the latter Canon and Penitentiary of Paris, whilst Michel D'Arande became Bishop of St Paul Trois Chateaux.<sup>26</sup>

#### SPAIN

In Spain, humanism, as represented by its most distinguished adherent, Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, combined

<sup>22</sup> See my "Calvin and the Reformation," 48 (1936). Laune considers his translation of the Bible an immense progress on former translations like that of Rely, of which he made use, while improving it, "Lefèvre d'Étaples et la Traduction de la Bible."

<sup>23</sup> Barnaud, 76 f., 81 f.

<sup>24</sup> Doumergue, "Jean Calvin," i. 85 (1899). Imbart de la Tour, who gives a detailed exposition of his religious position from the Roman Catholic standpoint ("Origines de la Réforme," iii. 109 f., 1914) dissents.

<sup>25</sup> See Baird, "Rise of the Huguenots," i. 95 f.

<sup>26</sup> "Hist. Ecclesiastique," i. 12 f. Farel appears to have owed his conversion to Lefèvre. Barnaud, "La Jeunesse et la Conversion de Farel," 40 f. (1928).

fidelity to orthodoxy with the reformation of practical abuses. Ximenes, who was born in 1436, studied canon and civil law at Salamanca, and thereafter repaired to Rome to practice as an ecclesiastical lawyer. On the death of his father he returned to Spain, carrying with him a papal brief entitling him to the first vacant benefice in the diocese of Toledo. On the death of the incumbent he accordingly took possession of that of Uzeda. His claim was disputed by the archbishop, who had conferred the benefice on one of his almoners and threw him into prison, in which he kept him for nearly six years. Unable to bend his strong will by this harsh treatment, he was fain to release him. Ximenes took the first opportunity of exchanging this curé for the post of chaplain to Cardinal Mendoza, Bishop of Sigüenza, in 1480, and in this capacity he is said to have devoted himself to the study of oriental languages. Mendoza ere long made him his vicar-general, but eventually his predilection for an ascetic life led him to join the Observantine section of the Franciscan order (1484 or 5). For a number of years he lived in the strictest conformity to his vows until, through the influence of Mendoza, who had become Archbishop of Toledo, he was, in 1492, summoned from his life of austere seclusion to become confessor to Queen Isabella. Two years later he was elected provincial of his order in Castile and set about the clamant work of reformation with a vigour which only grew with the opposition it aroused. On the death of Mendoza in 1495 he was, much against his will, appointed to succeed him as Archbishop of Toledo, the highest office, next to that of the crown, in the Spanish kingdoms. Its occupant was primate of Spain, president of the Royal Council, and was regarded as, next to the pope, the highest ecclesiastic in Christendom.<sup>27</sup> As primate he not only continued the work of reforming his order, but added to it the reformation of the other monastic orders and the secular clergy, who were deeply affected by the general demoralisation of the Church. Supported by Queen Isabella, he beat down all opposition to his inflexible purpose—even that of Pope Alexander himself. To the papal prohibition queen and primate, in virtue of the concordat of 1482, which invested the crown with certain rights over the Church, paid no heed, and the pope was fain

<sup>27</sup> Burke, "History of Spain," ii. 168 f. (2nd. ed., 1900).

ultimately to waive further opposition (1499). His adamant energy produced most salutary results, and he deserves the unique credit of making reform within the Church effective long before the days of the counter Reformation. "The Spanish clergy, both regular and secular," says Mr Burke, "were reduced to order and to submission. They were made more respectable, more efficient, and as churchmen vastly more powerful than before. And thus it came to pass that the Reformation found the Spanish Church already reformed, at least in morals and behaviour. More than 1000 friars are said to have quitted their country and passed over to Africa, preferring the liberty of self-indulgence under the protection of the infidel to submission to Ximenes in Spain. The figures may be, and probably are, exaggerated; but the story tells truly of the magnitude of the evil, and of the tremendous vigour of the curé."<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, he permitted his zeal to degenerate into fanaticism in his efforts to bring about the forcible conversion of the conquered Moorish inhabitants of Granada. In order to hasten the process, he not only burned thousands of Moorish MSS., to the irreparable loss of history and literature<sup>29</sup>; he prevailed on Isabella to let loose on the conquered provinces the Inquisition, whose repressive operations were seconded by a series of savage edicts.

His fanaticism is all the more reprehensible in view of his interest in the new learning and his enlightened educational policy. He was rather a man of action than a scholar himself, though he had acquired some learning during the earlier part of his career. But he was the generous patron of scholars and a strenuous educational as well as ecclesiastical reformer. In this capacity also he found an ardent co-operator in Queen Isabella, whilst her husband Ferdinand devoted himself to a tortuous and unscrupulous statecraft. New universities were founded at Avila, Palma, Seville, Santiago, and Alcalá, and the older ones like Salamanca extended and reformed. At Alcalá, which was opened in 1508 and was most liberally

<sup>28</sup> "History of Spain," ii. 174. See also Hefele, "Cardinal Ximenes," 173 f. (1844); Martin Hume, "The Spanish People," 315 f. (1901); Conde de Cedillo, "El Cardenal Cisneros," (1921).

<sup>29</sup> On this lamentable episode, see Merton, "Cardinal Ximenes," 76 f. (1934).

endowed, ample scope was afforded for the pursuit of the new culture, by the establishment of three colleges for the study of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Foreign as well as native scholars were welcomed to its chairs and to those of the other universities. It was by the co-operation of a number of these scholars that Ximenes carried out his plan of publishing a critical edition of the Scriptures, based on the collation of a number of manuscripts of the original text, which he bought or borrowed for this purpose. It was known as the "Complutensian Polyglot," and contained in six volumes the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek version of it known as the "Septuagint," the New Testament in Greek, the Latin or Vulgate translation of both Testaments, and an Aramaic version (with Latin translation) of the Pentateuch. The printing of the Greek New Testament, which formed the fifth volume, was completed in 1514, two years before the publication of that of Erasmus, though it did not appear till 1520, when Pope Leo X. accorded permission for the publication of the whole work. Judged by the standard of modern biblical scholarship, the Polyglot, as in the case of the New Testament of Erasmus, is, of course, imperfect. The Greek text was not based on the best Greek manuscripts, and the critical workmanship of the editors is very immature.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, it was a remarkable pioneer achievement and its undoubted merits were for long unduly minimised by modern critics.<sup>31</sup>

Under the patronage of Queen Isabella and Cardinal Ximenes, humanism made itself powerfully felt in Spanish culture in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In Lebrija or Nebrixa, professor of Latin at Seville, Salamanca, and Alcala, who collaborated in the production of the Polyglot, it produced a scholar of European reputation, worthy to rank with Erasmus himself. Alfonso de Palencia, who had studied in Italy under George of Trebizond, Pedro de Osma, who collated a number of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, Alfonso de Manrique, professor at Alcala and later Archbishop

<sup>30</sup> Kenyon, "Our Bible and The Ancient Manuscripts," 67; Hefele, "Ximenes," 131 f.

<sup>31</sup> Burke, ii. 214 f. A detailed examination of it is given by Hefele, 120 f. See also Lyell, "Cardinal Ximenes," 24 f. (1917), and Allen, "Erasmus," 140 f. (1934). Complutum is the old Latin name for Alcala.

of Seville and Inquisitor-General, also distinguished themselves as teachers of Greek. The new culture counted among its exponents scholarly women, such as Beatriz de Galindo, the Latin teacher of Queen Isabella, Francesca de Lebrija, Lucia de Madrano, who lectured on Latin literature at Alcalá and Salamanca. "The men are scarcely more liberal and the ladies are scarcely more learned in the halls of modern Cambridge."<sup>32</sup> Isabella not only encouraged these scholars. She included in her patronage the Portuguese Grecian Barbosa, professor of Greek at Salamanca, "the Athens of Spain," and Italian scholars like Peter Martyr of Anghiera, whom she appointed tutor to her son Juan in 1492. With the co-operation of such scholars she effectively contributed to make the new culture fashionable, as well as a powerful factor in education. "No Spaniard," ran the saying, "was considered noble who showed indifference to learning."<sup>33</sup>

Among these and other scholars Erasmus had many admirers, if he also had some bitter opponents like Zuñiga or Stuñica, who attacked his New Testament and denounced him as an Arian and a Lutheran, and thereby brought upon himself the rebuke of Ximenes. "Would to God," retorted the cardinal to a violent outburst of the prejudiced critic, "that all writers did their work as well as he. You must either show that you can do better, or cease reviling that of another."<sup>34</sup> Among the Spanish Erasmians were Gattinara and Alfonso de Valdés, the chancellor and the secretary of Charles V., the brothers Juan and Francisco Vergara, Lebrija, and high Church dignitaries, besides Ximenes, like Fonseca, Archbishop of Toledo, even Manrique, the Inquisitor-General, who described him as a second Jerome and Augustine, Alfonso de Virues, the Benedictine preacher, who became Bishop of the Canaries. Alfonso Fernandez de Madrid translated the "Enchiridion" and in the preface advocated the translation of the New Testament into the vernacular.<sup>35</sup> As late as 1527 Valdés informs

<sup>32</sup> Burke, ii. 209. See also McCrie, "The Reformation in Spain," 61 f. (1829), on the humanist movement in Spain; Altamira y Crevea, "Historia de España," ii. 506 f. (2nd ed., 1909).

<sup>33</sup> Burke, ii. 208; Walsh, "Isabella of Spain," 482 (1931). On Peter Martyr and his correspondence, see Heidenheimer, "Petrus Martyr und sein Opus Epistolarum" (1881).

<sup>34</sup> Hefele, 143.

<sup>35</sup> Lea, "Religious History of Spain," 35 f. (1890).

him that his books were everywhere to be found in Spain and no merchandise there was more saleable.

"The Spaniards," wrote Erasmus, "have attained such eminence in literature that they not only excite the admiration of the most polished nations of Europe, but likewise serve as their models."<sup>36</sup> The first quarter of the sixteenth century thus bade fair to leaven Spain with the spirit of an enlightened culture, combined in some cases with religious reform on Erasmian lines. Unfortunately this promise was not realised. A conservative reaction, which struck at the followers of Erasmus as well as Luther, succeeded in asserting itself in Church and State and gave scope to the blighting scourge of the Inquisition. In 1527 the "Praise of Folly" and the Paraphrases in the New Testament were prohibited by an ecclesiastical assembly at Madrid to be bought, sold, or read.<sup>37</sup> Pedro de Lerma, professor at Alcala, who was suspected of Lutheran heresy, was fain to seek safety in flight to Paris, whither his nephew, Luis de Cadena, ere long followed him.<sup>38</sup> The Erasmian Juan de Vergara was thrown into prison by the Inquisition and compelled to abjure the Lutheran views ascribed to him. The same fate befell other Erasmians—Bernardino de Tovar, in whose possession Lutheran works<sup>39</sup> were discovered, Maria Cazalla, Juan de Valdés, and Virues. Even Alfonso de Valdés, Juan's brother, who was suspected of sympathy with Lutheranism and in his "Dialogo" denounced the corruption of Rome, had to run the gauntlet of the Inquisition on his return to Spain from Germany.<sup>40</sup>

#### ENGLAND

As in Germany, France, and Spain, humanism imparted in England a stimulus to the reform of the Church. Its

<sup>36</sup> For the flourishing state of learning in Spain, see the letters of Erasmus to Fonseca, Archbishop of Seville and afterwards of Toledo, in succession to Ximenes, Allen, vi. 410 f.; vii. 161. See also his letter to Vives, iv. 280 f.

<sup>37</sup> McCrie, 128 f.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>39</sup> Some of Luther's early works were known in Spain as early as 1519. In 1520 his "Commentary on Galatians" was translated into Spanish. It was followed soon after by that of his tract on "Christian Liberty" and his work on the "Unfree Will." For the Reformation in Spain, see also Maurenbrecher, "Die Kirchenreformation in Spanien," "Studien zur Geschichte der Reformationszeit" (1874).

<sup>40</sup> Lea, 251 f.; McCrie, 123 f.; Moeller, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 71; Roth, "The Spanish Inquisition," 164 f. (1937).

pioneer was Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, who, already in the first half of the fifteenth century,<sup>41</sup> was an ardent patron of the new culture, and not only acted the part of a Maecenas of young Italian as well as English scholars, but brought some of them to England. "Around him," to quote Mr Einstein, "were grouped the other scholars of the age in England. His protégé was Thomas Beckynton, Bishop of Wells and a doctor of laws of Oxford, who corresponded also with many learned Italians. . . . His letters reveal quite a little group of English humanists—such men as Adam Mulin, Thomas Chandler,<sup>42</sup> and W. Grey." Gloucester and his protégés did not achieve much in the effort to transform education and culture, but they collected books and MSS. and pointed out the way for others to follow. Englishmen had been accustomed throughout the Middle Ages to resort to Italy in quest of knowledge of the scholastic type, and at the University of Bologna there was an English "nation." From about the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, English students like Grey, Free, Flemming, Gunthorpe, and Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, were attracted beyond the Alps by the humanist movement. They were followed later by William Tilley of Selling and Hadley, two Canterbury monks who first visited Italy in 1464. It was Tilley, the translator of one of Chrysostom's sermons, who taught Linacre Greek in Christ Church School at Canterbury. Linacre and Grocyn, W. Latimer and Lilly improved their knowledge by a period of study at Florence or other Italian cities, and this knowledge Grocyn imparted to a group of ardent students at Oxford on his return from Italy in the last decade of the fifteenth century.<sup>43</sup> Among these students were Thomas More and perhaps John Colet, who were both destined to eclipse their teacher's fame.

Colet, whose father was twice Lord Mayor of London and

<sup>41</sup> Poggio accompanied Cardinal Beaufort on his return from the Council of Constance. But his visit seems to have had little effect in paving the way for the new culture in England. The same may be said of the visit of Æneas Silvius some years later. Voigt, "Wiederbelebung," ii. 251 f.

<sup>42</sup> "Italian Renaissance in England," 12 (1902). On Gloucester's correspondence with the Italian humanist Decembrio, Secretary of the Duke of Milan, see Newman in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 484 f. (1905). See also Tilley, "Cambridge Mediæval History," viii. 796 f. (1936); Schirmer, "Der Englische Frühhumanismus" (1931).

<sup>43</sup> Grocyn established himself as a teacher of Greek at Oxford in 1491, Sandys, "History of Classical Scholarship," ii. 228.

who was born about 1467, was finishing his course in arts, philosophy, and theology at Oxford when Grocyn began the teaching of Greek there. Whether he was one of his students is not quite clear,<sup>44</sup> but he had already contracted a love for the philosophy of Plato and Plotinus,<sup>45</sup> which he had read probably in the Latin translation of Ficino, and ardently desired to augment his knowledge by a sojourn in Italy. Accordingly about 1493 he followed in the footsteps of so many eager young scholars across the Alps, spending some time at Paris<sup>46</sup> and Orleans on the way. Of this three years' sojourn in Italy we know almost nothing, but in view of his special interest in Plato and his predilection for St Paul's Epistles, it is highly probable that he listened to Ficino's expositions of both at Florence, though his command of Greek was not extensive. He may, too, in view of his later zeal as a practical reformer, have been one of Savonarola's hearers. According to Erasmus, he devoted himself, whilst in France and Italy, to the study of the Scriptures and the Fathers. It was as an expounder of the Scriptures, especially of Paul's Epistles, and as a practical reformer, that he made his mark during his subsequent career as lecturer at Oxford and Dean of St Paul's. He was ultimately, in fact, as a passage in his exposition of 1st Corinthians shows, inclined to disparage the study of pagan literature, whilst valuing the ancient languages, and would have restricted the reading of works in these languages to ancient Christian authors.<sup>47</sup> If he was repelled by the humanist of the type of a Poggio, he was ready to welcome one of the type of Erasmus to Oxford in 1499 and had already contracted a warm friendship with Grocyn, Linacre, and especially the brilliant young More. Erasmus, who gives us a glimpse of this English humanist group in a letter written during this visit to England, returned this appreciation in no stinted fashion, albeit with a spice of exaggeration. "I have met," wrote he

<sup>44</sup> His subsequent knowledge of Greek does not seem to have been very extensive, see "Letter to Erasmus" in Nichols' edition, ii. 287, in which he regrets that he had not learned Greek. But in a letter to Erasmus, More says that Colet, in 1516, is working hard at Greek, Nichols, "Letters of Erasmus," ii. 393.

<sup>45</sup> So Erasmus, Froude's, "Life and Letters of Erasmus," 105 f.

<sup>46</sup> He notices his sojourn at Paris in one of his letters to Erasmus, Nichols, i. 205.

<sup>47</sup> Lupton, "Life of Dean Colet," 76 f.

in December 1499, "with so much kindness [in England], and so much learning—not hackneyed and trivial, but deep, accurate, ancient, Latin and Greek—that but for the curiosity of seeing it, I do not now so much care for Italy. When I hear my Colet, I seem to be listening to Plato himself. In Grocyn who does not marvel at such a perfect round of learning? What can be more acute, profound, and delicate than the judgment of Linacre? What has Nature ever created more gentle, more sweet, more happy than the genius of Thomas More? I need not go through the list. It is marvellous how general and abundant is the harvest of ancient learning in this country."<sup>48</sup>

The friendship of these associates, especially of Colet, More, and Erasmus, makes a delightful chapter in the literary history of the time, as told in Mr Seebohm's "Oxford Reformers." Together they worked in their various ways to foster a reforming culture—Colet as an expositor of Scripture and a reformer of ecclesiastical abuses, Erasmus as critic and scholar as well as a practical reformer, and More as ardent humanist and social reformer.

In his Oxford lectures Colet eschewed the artificial and unhistoric method of interpretation in vogue in the schools. He emphasised the importance of exact biblical knowledge in place of the scholastic theology. He urged his students, among whom was probably Tyndale, the future translator of the New Testament and then a student at Oxford,<sup>49</sup> "to keep firmly to the Bible and the Apostles' Creed, and let the divines, if they like, dispute about the rest."<sup>50</sup> Following the lead of Ficino he preferred Plato to Aristotle and went beyond the scholastic theology to Christ and Paul. He could not stand either Duns Scotus or Aquinas, and shocked Erasmus, whom, however, he converted to his views and turned to the study of biblical and patristic theology, by the prejudiced vehemence of his dislike of the greatest of the mediæval doctors. "He thought the Scotists," says Erasmus in his short life of him, "who are considered so clever, were stupid blockheads. He regarded their word-splitting, their catching at objections, their minute subdividings, as signs of a starved intellect. He hated Thomas Aquinas even more than Scotus. I once praised

<sup>48</sup> Nichols, i. 226.

<sup>49</sup> Seebohm, "Oxford Reformers," 13 and 80.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

the 'Catena Aurea' to him. He was silent. I repeated my words. He glanced at me to see if I was serious, and when he saw that I meant it he became really angry. Aquinas [he said] would not have laid down the law so boldly on all things in heaven and earth if he had not been an arrogant fool, and he would not have contaminated Christianity with his preposterous philosophy if he had not been a worldling at heart."<sup>51</sup> Assuredly a superficial as well as an irate judgment.

In his Oxford lectures he would at times digress to attack the manifold abuses of the time, in one passage denouncing the extortions of the ecclesiastical courts and the trickery of ecclesiastical lawyers, in others the immorality, ignorance, worldliness, and simony of the clergy.<sup>52</sup> He continued his advocacy of reform on a larger scale in his sermons after he left Oxford in 1505 to become Dean of St Paul's, and in one of the most notable of them, delivered before Convocation in 1512, he demanded a thorough reform of these practical abuses which had evidently not diminished since the fourteenth century. "We are grieved nowadays also by heretics, men mad with marvellous foolishness," he thundered from St Paul's pulpit, "but the heresies of them are not so pestilent and pernicious to us and the people as the evil and wicked lives of priests."<sup>53</sup> For this sermon he was himself charged with heresy by the Bishop of London, but the charge was quashed by Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, the patron of Erasmus and a sympathiser with the party of reform.<sup>54</sup>

Nor did he refrain from outspoken criticism and denunciation of political as well as ecclesiastical abuses. Witness his sermon against the sin and scandal of Christian kings and nations waging an incessant and brutal warfare against one another, delivered in March 1513 before the bellicose Henry VIII., then about to set out in person to continue the war against France. "On Good Friday," narrates Erasmus, "Colet preached a noble sermon, before the king and his court, on the victory of Christ, exhorting all Christians to war and conquer

<sup>51</sup> Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," 106.

<sup>52</sup> For these passages see Lupton, Latin text and trans. of Colet's "Lectures," 144, 162 f. (1876); cf. his "Treatises on Dionysius," 123, 126, 136. See also Lupton's "Life," 68 f.

<sup>53</sup> Seebohm gives the sermon in "Oxford Reformers," 162 f. See also Lupton, App. C.

<sup>54</sup> Seebohm, "Oxford Reformers," 185.

under the banner of Him, their proper king. For they, he said, who through hatred and ambition were fighting, the bad with the bad, and slaughtering one another by turns, were warring under the banner, not of Christ but of the devil. At the same time he pointed out to them how hard a thing it was to die a Christian death; how few entered on a war unsullied by hatred or love of gain; how incompatible a thing it was that a man should have that brotherly love, without which no one would see God, and yet bury his sword in his brother's heart. Let them follow, he added, the example of Christ, their prince, not that of a Julius Cæsar, or an Alexander. Much more to the same effect he gave utterance to on that occasion, so that the king was in some apprehension lest the soldiers, whom he was leading abroad, should feel their courage gone through this discourse."<sup>55</sup> Henry, who sympathised with his reforming zeal as well as with the new culture, summoned the intrepid preacher to an interview at Greenwich, and after an explanation, which entirely removed his apprehensions and must surely have been of a temporising character, pledged his health in the well-known words, "Let every one have his own doctor; but this is the doctor for me."<sup>56</sup> His extreme contempt for the scholastic type of education led him to found, largely from his private means, St Paul's School, of which Lilly became the first headmaster, and laymen, not ecclesiastics, formed the governing body. Its object was to supply a Christian education on the lines of the new culture. Its pupils were accordingly to be taught, besides Latin and Greek, "the knowledge of Christ and good Christian life and manners."

While Colet was attacking ecclesiastical abuses from the pulpit, Thomas More was applying his pen in "Utopia" on behalf of political and social reform. He was born at London in 1478, received his early education at St Anthony's School, served as page for some years in the household of Cardinal Morton, and spent some time at Oxford.<sup>57</sup> Here he may have acquired a rudimentary knowledge of Greek<sup>58</sup> before studying

<sup>55</sup> Lupton, "Life," 190 f.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>57</sup> He would appear to have gone to Oxford as early as 1493, Hutton, "Life of More," 11.

<sup>58</sup> His study of Greek at Oxford is doubtful, Chambers, "Thomas More," 65 f. (1935). Algernon Cecil is not so sceptical as Chambers, "Portrait of Thomas More," 16 (1936). More afterwards took lessons from Grocyn and Linacre at London.

law at Lincoln's Inn, rather at the instigation of his father, who was a judge of King's Bench, than in virtue of his own inclination. He became a rising young lawyer, lectured on Augustine's "De Civitate Dei" in the church of St Lawrence, of which Grocyn had become rector, and entered Parliament. His opposition to a demand for a large grant in 1504<sup>59</sup> exposed him and his father to the ill-will of Henry VII. and clouded his prospects for a time. He had some thoughts of turning monk, but got married instead, busied himself with his classical studies, and wrote epigrams against tyranny and in praise of constitutional government. With the accession of Henry VIII. the tide turned and he rose rapidly in his legal and political career, and ultimately, on the fall of Wolsey in 1529, became his successor as Lord Chancellor. It was while he was residing at Antwerp as a member of an embassy to the Netherlands in 1515 that he wrote the second book of "Utopia,"<sup>60</sup> which was published in the following year. In Utopia we have not only a literary masterpiece of the Renaissance age, but a characteristic criticism of political and social abuses. The romancer is the thinly disguised reformer, who would fain rebuke and remedy these abuses by presenting an ideal social and political state.

The England of his day was beginning to play an important part in international politics. But its internal condition was far from corresponding to its growing external prestige. The French wars of Henry had increased taxation, and the internal exhaustion is evidenced by the large arrears which Parliament in 1515 endeavoured to meet by increasing the income tax, levied even on the wages of labourers. It regulated these wages to the exclusive advantage of the employer, in the spirit of the old labour statutes, for the war had the effect of limiting the supply of labourers, whilst the practice of turning arable land into sheep pastures, in spite of enactments to the contrary in 1489, and again in 1515, led to the ejection of the peasantry on many estates. The return of disbanded soldiers swelled the

<sup>59</sup> There is some obscurity about the story of Roper to this effect, as nothing is otherwise known about the opposition to the grant in the parliament. Stubbs concludes that More was instrumental in diminishing the grant, "Lectures on Mediæval and Modern History," 365. See also Hutton, "Life of More," 25.

<sup>60</sup> Lupton, *Introd. to "Utopia,"* 27. The first was written in the following spring, the second having been written first.

proletariat. The inevitable result was the increase of crime and misery throughout the land.

“Utopia” is an exposure and a denunciation of these evils. Not only so; but it attacks the trickery of statecraft, whether national or international; the immoral aggressions and wars of contemporary kings; their oppressive expedients in the government of their subjects; the barbarous criminal codes, which engender instead of lessening crime; the class selfishness and greed which have no care for the general welfare. At the same time it portrays an ideal state in which all this is remedied, in a fanciful fashion to some extent, but which is a sagacious anticipation, in some respects, of future social and political reform.

The religion of Utopia presents an equally striking advance on the spirit of the age. It is that of an enlightened and tolerant man who has emancipated himself to an extraordinary degree from the theological narrowness of the age. Whether or not More actually meant, at the time at which he wrote it, to go all the length of his principles, he did not shrink from putting in print what is virtually a plea for toleration. There is variety of religion in Utopia, or rather of religious forms, for all are agreed as to the nature of God as a sovereign being, though they worship Him variously. Diversity of opinion and liberty of disputation in things theological is a fundamental law. “This is one of the ancientest laws among them—that no man shall be blamed for reasoning in the maintenance of his own religion.” King Utopus, in fact, decreed that it should be lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he would, and that he might do his best to convert others to his opinion provided he refrained from violence in controversy. Violence and angry contention are punished by banishment or bondage. Truth, reasoned Utopus, should be its own witness and vindicator and would in the end prevail. Free thought is thus an inviolable privilege in Utopia, and More would only stop short at the denial of Providence and the immortality of the soul.<sup>61</sup> Even in this extreme case the Utopian free-thinker is only deprived of office in the commonwealth and is not subjected to a more severe punishment.<sup>62</sup> Nor shall he

<sup>61</sup> He evidently has in mind here the case of Pomponazzi and the suit of the Lateran Council against him.

<sup>62</sup> *Caeterum nullo afficiunt supplicio*, “Utopia,” Lib. II., c. ix.

be constrained by threatenings to dissemble his real opinion and profess what he does not really believe. At the same time he is not at liberty to dispute in public on these questions, though he may in private among priests and men of gravity, and is even encouraged to do so in the hope that he may be persuaded to give up his mad opinions. In respect of these two doctrines, there is freedom of thought, but only a restricted freedom of speech. If he persists in contravening this law, he is evidently liable to banishment or bondage, though not to the death penalty, as in the case of heretics in More's day.

Utopian religion has its priests, who are married and are immune from the civil tribunals. In view of the smallness of their number, no harm accrues to the commonwealth from this privilege. They are men "of exceeding holiness and therefore," he adds with gentle irony, "very few," leaving the reader to infer that in a case in which they are numerous, as in England, the privilege might wear another aspect. They do not take part in battle, like too many of the mediæval prelates, but only accompany the army to the field in order to intercede for victory and intervene in favour of moderation. As in the case of the magistrates, they are elected by the people by secret ballot. Even women may exercise the priestly office! Unlike Erasmus he is a great admirer of monasticism, though he has his hit at the friars on occasion. "You begging friars are the greatest vagabonds going."<sup>63</sup> Though they have gorgeous churches and delight in elaborate ceremonial, they allow no images. For the rest Utopian religion is pervaded by a firm belief in a future life, in the providential government of the world and its affairs, especially in Utopia, and is marked by a beautiful serenity of soul that is the best proof of the power of creed.<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately More proved himself unable to carry his plea for even a qualified toleration into practical politics after the Reformation movement had begun to trouble the land with religious contention and division. He was an Erasmian in the matter of Church reform and joined in Erasmus' attack

<sup>63</sup> Lib. I.

<sup>64</sup> I have used Lupton's ed. of "Utopia" (1895), which gives the Latin original and Robynson's trans. (1551). There is a modernised Eng. ed. in Henry Morley's "Ideal Commonwealths" (1885).

on the rampant ecclesiastical abuses. He encouraged him to write the "Praise of Folly" and enjoyed its biting sarcasm. Even before 1509 he himself could write in scathing terms of these abuses. He says, in reference to one of the "Dialogues of Lucian," some of which he translated along with Erasmus, "it teaches us, on the one hand, not to put faith in the illusions of magic, and on the other to keep our minds clear of superstition, which creeps in under the guise of religion. . . . No wonder, then, if ruder minds [than that of St Augustine] are affected by the fictions of those who think they have done a lasting service to Christ, when they have invented a fable about some saint, or a tragic description of hell, which either melts an old woman to tears or makes her blood run cold. There is scarcely any life of a martyr or virgin in which some falsehood of this kind has not been inserted; an act of piety, no doubt, considering the risk that truth would be insufficient, unless propped up by lies. They have not scrupled to stain with fiction that religion which was founded by truth herself, and ought to consist of naked truth."<sup>65</sup> He shared Erasmus' dislike of the scholastic theology, hailed the publication of the Greek New Testament, and denounced the obscurantism which would not dare to differ from the Vulgate. In a letter to the University of Oxford, in which he championed the study of the classics and a liberal education against the obscurantism of a ranting university preacher, he insisted that the Scriptures and the early Fathers are the only source of the knowledge of God. "What right has he to denounce Latin, of which he knows little; science, of which he knows less; and Greek, of which he knows nothing? He had better have confined himself to the seven deadly sins, with which, perhaps, he has closer acquaintance. . . . He calls those who study Greek heretics. The teachers of Greek, he says, are full-grown devils. The learners of Greek are little devils. . . . The finest writers on all subjects, theology included, are in Greek. The Romans had no philosophers save Cicero and Seneca. The New Testament was written in Greek."<sup>66</sup> Heretics! "The best of mankind," he exclaims in an impassioned epistle

<sup>65</sup> Nichols, "Epistles of Erasmus," i. 404. On his attitude to superstition at this period, see Eliz. Routh, "Sir Thomas More and His Friends," 34 f. (1934).

<sup>66</sup> Froude, "Life and Letters of Erasmus," 148 f. (ed., 1910).

in defence of Erasmus against an obscurantist monk, "have been called heretics. . . . You pretend that the Gospels can be understood without Greek ; that there is no need of a new translation ; we have the Vulgate. . . . For the Vulgate itself, it is nonsense to talk of the many ages for which it has been approved by the Church. It was the best or the first which the Church could get. When once in use it could not be easily changed, but to use it is not to approve it as perfect." There follows a salvo of denunciation of the monks as contentious, superstitious zealots, among whom there are even criminals. "I am not holding good men answerable for others' sins. Wholesome plants and poisonous plants may grow on the same stem. The worship of the Virgin may do good to some people. With others it is made an encouragement to crime. That is what Erasmus denounces, and if you blame him, you must blame Jerome, who says worse of monks than Erasmus says. . . . *Moria* ('Folly') contains more wisdom and less folly than many books that I know, including your own."<sup>67</sup>

Such was More about 1518. Luther was already on the warpath, dealing terrific blows against the papacy and mediæval sacerdotalism. Three years later Henry VIII. entered the fray against him with a "Defence of the Seven Sacraments," which More appears to have edited. The royal controversialist treated the redoubtable reformer with vituperative contempt, and was consequently very unceremoniously handled in reply.<sup>68</sup> In 1523 More rushed into print in Latin in defence of his sovereign under the pseudonym *Gulielmus Rosseus*.<sup>69</sup> He was repelled by the reformer's doctrines as well as by his vehemence in the maintenance of them, though he himself was not above indulging in the scurrilous controversial style of the time. During the next five years the evangelical movement had found an entrance into the universities and threatened serious trouble in the Church. Tyndale's translation of the New Testament from the original Greek and his polemic writings in particular were unsettling many and making not a few converts. At the instigation of Tunstall, Bishop of London, More took up his pen in 1528 to refute

<sup>67</sup> Froude, "Life and Letters of Erasmus," 151 f.

<sup>68</sup> For these polemics, see my "Luther and the Reformation," iii, 123 f.

<sup>69</sup> "Vindicatio Henrici VIII. a Calumniis Lutheri."

Luther and his disciple Tyndale.<sup>70</sup> He rebuts his doctrine of justification by faith alone; maintains the inerrancy of the Church in the essentials of the faith; defends pilgrimages, clerical celibacy, images, prayers to and worship of the saints, relics; condemns Tyndale's translation, champions the burning of heretics, and exonerates the Church from blame on the plea that the burning is done by the State, not by the Church.

He has evidently resiled, to a certain extent at least, from the liberal, critical spirit of "Utopia."<sup>71</sup> He has become less critically and more fanatically minded. He was entitled to criticise and dissent from the Lutheran theology, and there is no reason to doubt that he did so from conscientious conviction. But under the strain of religious controversy he rather flagrantly contravenes the Utopian law against religious contention and reviling. In his fanatic hatred of the Lutheran reformation, he sees in this movement only rebellion and anarchy, fatal alike to the Church and the State. In important respects he both underrates and misinterprets it. He overlooks the fact that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, were the staunch supporters of the civil authority, if they also, on occasion, reminded the State of the limitations of its authority. They erred, in modern eyes, rather on the side of exaggerating the power of the State, as in Tyndale's "Obedience of a Christian Man." Nor was he quite fair to the reformers in maintaining that they exalted faith at the expense of reason. Luther, indeed, in his extreme moods railed at reason in very unreasonable language. But he advocated the training of reason by a liberal education, and his doctrine of consubstantiation is at least a degree less irrational than that of transubstantiation, which More defended. Zwingli would have placed Socrates and Plato among the saints, and his doctrine of the Eucharist was too rational for the Roman Catholics as well as Luther. Calvin's doctrine was

<sup>70</sup> "Dialogue concerning Heresies," "The Workes of Sir T. More, wrytten in the Englysh tonge" (1557).

<sup>71</sup> Professor Chambers and Mr Algernon Cecil seem to me too positive, in their recent works on More, in contending against Creighton, Froude, and other earlier writers, that he did not in his later attitude depart from that of "Utopia." Both works show expert knowledge of the sources and are a vivid presentation of the subject. They would be even more valuable if their authors did not show a rather ill-balanced dislike of the Reformation, which they measure by the standard of the Henrician variety of it, and had refrained from intruding at times their personal religious and political creed on the reader.

also more rational than that of the Roman Catholics or Luther. All of them believed in a natural as well as a revealed theology. He was quite in error in depreciating and denouncing Tyndale's translation, which was a scholarly attempt to render the original Greek into its English equivalent,<sup>72</sup> even if it shows the trace of the influence of the new theology. In advocating the death penalty for heresy, he was decidedly at variance with the humane spirit of Utopia as well as of his more enlightened fellow-humanists. In placing the responsibility for this revolting practice solely on the State, he was guilty of something very like sophistry. The Church did not burn heretics. But it handed them over to the State to be burned, and was, therefore, hand and glove with it in this barbarous business. As chancellor, More was not personally concerned in the trial of heretics. He only held a preliminary investigation before sending them to be tried in the ecclesiastical court, and while we may believe his disclaimer that he subjected them to cruel treatment,<sup>73</sup> he did his utmost to secure their arrest and safe keeping. On the other hand, if he could not tolerate the exponents of the new theology, he deliberately chose, to his infinite honour, to become the martyr of his convictions rather than sacrifice his conscience to the despotism of an arbitrary ruler.

#### SCOTLAND

By the end of the fifteenth century the influence of the new culture is also traceable in Scotland. Scotland, in fact, gave promise in the reign of James IV.—himself a cultured man who spoke several foreign languages as well as Latin—of an expanding intellectual life, which is reflected in the vernacular poetry of Dunbar and Douglas. It was in this reign that its first printing press was set up (that of Chepman and Myllar, at Edinburgh) in 1507, and that it added a third university—

<sup>72</sup> "It was vigorously condemned by the authorities of Church and State, who attributed to error many novelties which were in fact due to Tyndale's use of the original Greek," Kenyon, "The Story of the Bible," 48 (1936); cf. the same writer's "Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts," 214 (1895). See also the favourable verdict of Westcott, "History of the English Bible," 158 (ed. by Wright, 1905), and Gairdner, "Lollardy," i. 367 f.; Mozley, "W. Tyndale" (1937). On his indebtedness to Luther's trans., see Gruber, "The First English New Testament and Luther" (1928); Demaus, "William Tyndale," 120 f. (1871).

<sup>73</sup> "The Apology of Sir Thomas More," 131 f. (ed. by Taft, 1930).

that of Aberdeen, founded by Bishop Elphinstone in 1495—to the two already established in the beginning and middle of the fifteenth century. Scotland was fairly well provided with grammar schools and the interest in education is further shown by an Act of Parliament (1496) ordaining that the eldest sons of barons and freeholders of substance should attend these schools and thereafter the universities. Unfortunately, the death of James at Flodden obscured, if it did not blight, the promise of his brilliant reign, and the consequent troubles long reacted unfavourably on the intellectual as well as the material progress of the kingdom.<sup>74</sup>

The most distinguished representative of early humanism in Scotland is Hector Boece or Boethius, who was born at Dundee about 1465.<sup>75</sup> He was, as he tells us himself, a student at Paris for some years from 1497, and like his contemporary, John Major, a teacher in one of its colleges—that of Montaigu.<sup>76</sup> Among his fellow-students were, besides Major, Erasmus, whom he calls “the glory and ornament of our age”; George Dundas, expert in Greek as well as Latin literature<sup>77</sup> and afterwards master of the Knights of St John in Scotland; William Hay, like himself a native of Dundee, and his future colleague as professor at Aberdeen. In spite of his own depreciation of his attainments, his reputation must have been already considerable, for it was whilst professing philosophy in the college of Montaigu that Bishop Elphinstone in 1500 appointed him principal of the newly founded King’s College.<sup>78</sup> His scholarly eminence is attested by the fact that he was the friend and correspondent of Erasmus<sup>79</sup> and by the appreciation of George Buchanan. He mentions in his “Lives of the Bishops of Aberdeen” the names of a number of students who did credit to the effectiveness of his instruction and that of his fellow-professors.<sup>80</sup> Among the number may have been the notable humanist Florentius Volusenus (Florence Wilson), who was born in 1504 and was educated, partly at least, at

<sup>74</sup> Gregory Smith, “The Days of James IV.” (1890); MacKinnon, “Social and Industrial History of Scotland,” i. 114 f. (1920).

<sup>75</sup> Hence called Deidonanus.

<sup>76</sup> “Murthlacensium et Aberdonensium Episcoporum Vitæ,” 88 f., ed. by Moir for New Spalding Club (1894).

<sup>77</sup> Græcas atque Latinas literas apprime doctus, *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> For the foundation, see “Vitæ,” 87 f.

<sup>79</sup> Nichols, “Epistles of Erasmus,” i. 147 f.

<sup>80</sup> “Vitæ,” 91 f.

Aberdeen, but who spent his career as scholar chiefly in France, where he died in 1547 whilst on his way back to his native land.<sup>81</sup> That Boece did much to promote the new culture in the north is evident from a letter of Erasmus to him after he had laboured for thirty years in the northern university.<sup>82</sup> At the same time his scholarship was not distinguished by its critical quality, in his capacity at least as historian of his native land, for in his "*Scotorum Historiæ*" (published in 1527) he shows a remarkable credulity and imagination. In this respect, however, he is not much worse than Buchanan, and both in their treatment of remote Scottish history are greatly inferior to their contemporary Major, who, though a scholastic theologian, reveals no little critical ability in his "*History of Greater Britain*."<sup>83</sup>

On the other hand, it is evident that Boece belonged to the Erasmian school of reformers, and in his "*History*" he does not hesitate to criticise the Church. He gives vent to his indignation at the ignorance and worldliness of the higher clergy and to his conviction of the clamant need of an ecclesiastical reformation.<sup>84</sup> He celebrates the enlightened interest of James I. in education and the efficiency of the Church of his time in contrast to its miserable state in his own day. Lorimer has hazarded the assertion that many of his pupils went over to the side of the evangelical reformers.<sup>85</sup> Whilst this may have been the case, their master himself appears in his "*Lives of the Bishops of Aberdeen*," which was published in 1522, as an orthodox churchman and evidently continued so till his death in 1536.<sup>86</sup>

Boece had a number of distinguished fellow-workers in the pioneering of humanism in Scotland. John Vaus, his colleague at Aberdeen, earned by his scholarship and his merit as a teacher the cordial recognition of the Italian humanist Ferrerius.<sup>87</sup> Ferrerius himself, whom Robert Reid, Abbot of

<sup>81</sup> For Volusenus, see Hume Brown, "George Buchanan," 71 f.

<sup>82</sup> It was written in 1530; see *Introd.* to Bellenden's trans. of his "*History of Scotland*" (1821).

<sup>83</sup> Trans. and ed. by Constable (Scot. Hist. Soc.).

<sup>84</sup> See his "*Scot. Hist.*," Lib. XVI., 342 (ed., 1574).

<sup>85</sup> "*The Scottish Reformation*," 3. He gives no proof of this assertion.

<sup>86</sup> The available details of Boece's life are collected by Mr Mackay in the "*Dict. of Nat. Biog.*"

<sup>87</sup> Lorimer, "Patrick Hamilton," 56

Kinloss and later Bishop of Orkney, brought from Paris in 1528, lectured for some years on the classics, among other subjects, to the monks at Kinloss.<sup>88</sup> Patrick Panter, a fellow-student of Boece at Paris and Abbot of Cambuskenneth, became one of the secretaries of James IV., and imparted to the official letters written by him his elegant Latin style. His nephew David acquired a like distinction as one of the secretaries of James V.<sup>89</sup> Other pioneers of humanism were Alexander Stewart, Gavin Douglas, and John Bellenden—all three distinguished churchmen. Alexander Stewart, a natural son of James IV., the pupil of Patrick Panter, and Archbishop-elect of St Andrews, had the advantage of completing his studies under Erasmus at Siena during the residence of the great humanist in Italy. Erasmus taught him Greek and rhetoric, and after his early tragic death at Flodden enthusiastically praised his attainments, his devotion to the new culture, and his attractive personality.<sup>90</sup> On his return to Scotland he gave a foretaste of his enlightened interest in education by founding St Leonard's College at St Andrews for the study of the liberal arts and theology.<sup>91</sup> Gavin Douglas, who became Bishop of Dunkeld, added to his lustre as a poet in the vernacular the merit—so rare in the Scottish episcopal order of the period—of Latin scholarship. That he was inspired by the humanist spirit is evident from his translation of Virgil, and if he studied at Paris, as Wharton concludes,<sup>92</sup> he probably owed his humanist inspiration to the same source as Boece and Panter. He appears, too, as the opponent of the scholastic theology in a Dialogue between him and David Cranstone, written by John Major, in which he denounces the subtleties and mystifications of the scholastic method as applied to theology, and advises Major to renounce this barren pursuit and

<sup>88</sup> "Ferrerii Hist. Abbatum de Kynlos" (Bannatyne Club); Edgar, "History of Early Scottish Education," 232 f., 298 f. (1893); Hay Fleming, "Reformation in Scotland," 515 (1910). He made use of Latin versions of Greek works.

<sup>89</sup> Their letters were published by Ruddiman in the collection entitled "Epistolæ Regum Scotorum."

<sup>90</sup> "Opera Erasmi," ii. 554, ed. by Leclerc; Nichols, "Epistles," i. 252 f.; Tatham, "Erasmus in Italy," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1895; Herkless and Hannay, "Archbishops," i. 208 f., 262 f.

<sup>91</sup> Herkless and Hannay, "The College of St Leonard," 136 f. (1905).

<sup>92</sup> "Dict. of Nat. Biog.," art. "Gavin Douglas."

devote himself to preaching.<sup>83</sup> Like Douglas, John Bellenden, Archdeacon of Moray, who had also studied at Paris, left the memorial of his humanist culture in a translation of Livy and of Boece's "History of Scotland."

These distinguished churchmen combined zeal for humanist studies with fidelity to the current orthodoxy. In their contemporary, Patrick Hamilton, humanism is ultimately found identifying itself with the cause of the evangelical Reformation. Through his mother, Catherine Stewart, daughter of the Duke of Albany, brother of James III., he was nearly related to James IV. himself, in whose reign he was born, probably in 1503 or 1504. Perhaps with a view to an ecclesiastical career, which often provided the younger sons of noble Scottish families with a livelihood, he was sent at the age of about thirteen, *i.e.*, in 1516 or 1517, to the University of Paris and was made titular Abbot of Ferne in Ross-shire. At Paris he spent the next three years and graduated Master of Arts towards the end of 1520. Though Erasmus was no longer at Paris, the new culture, of which he was now the acknowledged international leader, was already a powerful force in France, and it is certain that Hamilton became an ardent adherent of it. His ardour was intensified by his sojourn at the University of Louvain, whither he repaired after taking his master's degree, and where a college for the study of the ancient languages had recently been established. At Louvain he probably came into contact with Erasmus himself, whose departure for Basle did not take place till the autumn of 1521. "He was," we learn from his friend Alexander Alane (Alesius), "a man of brilliant learning, and was bent on recalling philosophy to its sources, *i.e.*, Aristotle and Plato, and banishing sophistry from the schools."<sup>84</sup> Before his return to Scotland in 1523, when he was incorporated as Master of Arts in the University of St Andrews, he had probably become acquainted with the evangelical movement which Luther had started at Wittenberg in 1517, which was already making its influence felt in the University of Paris during his sojourn there, and of which he ere long became the active protagonist and martyr in his native land.

<sup>83</sup> Lorimer, "Patrick Hamilton," 229.

<sup>84</sup> "Com. on the Psalms," extract in Lorimer, "Patrick Hamilton," 238, and "Scottish Reformation," 8; *cf.* Knox, "History of the Reformation," i. 15 (Laing's ed.).

Unlike Hamilton, George Wishart, who had not the advantage of a sojourn at a foreign university, was a product of early Scottish humanism. Like George Dundas he added a knowledge of Greek to that of Latin, and began his brilliant if checkered career as a teacher of this language in the grammar school at Montrose. His friend and relative, John Erskine of Dun, who was provost of the town, had introduced the study of Greek into the school in 1534, by installing as teacher of the language a Frenchman, whom he had brought back with him from France for this purpose.<sup>95</sup> The study of Greek was then regarded by obscurantist churchmen in Scotland, as elsewhere, as equivalent to heresy, and the almost incredible ignorance of most of the Scottish bishops at this period made them liable to rush to this conclusion. The Scottish clergy, it was sarcastically said, affirmed "that Martin Luther had lately composed a wicked book called the New Testament; but that they, for their part, would adhere to the Old Testament."<sup>96</sup> Of the Bishop of Dunkeld, Knox says that he "neither knew the New Testament nor the Old."<sup>97</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that Wishart was charged by the Bishop of Brechin with the heresy of teaching the Greek New Testament, and that he deemed it advisable to escape the consequences by flight to England, where he acted for a time as tutor in Corpus Christi College (Bennet's College), Cambridge, and where his learning as well as his character and evangelical fervour aroused the enthusiastic appreciation of his pupils.<sup>98</sup> The teaching of Greek had, nevertheless, by this time been included in the curriculum of Aberdeen University, for James V. was welcomed there in 1540 with orations in the Greek and Latin tongues.<sup>99</sup> Three or four years later Wishart returned to undertake an evangelical mission in various parts of Scotland and to meet a martyr's doom at St Andrews in 1546.

In George Buchanan, who was born at Killearn in 1506,

<sup>95</sup> McCrie, "Life of Knox," 3, and Note C; Strong, "History of Secondary Education in Scotland," 47.

<sup>96</sup> See Buchanan, "Rer. Scot. Historia," Lib. XV., 292, and McCrie, "Life of Knox," Note C.

<sup>97</sup> "Historie of the Reformation," i. 97.

<sup>98</sup> See the letter of Emery Tylney, one of his pupils, in Foxe, "Acts and Monuments."

<sup>99</sup> Leslie, "De Rebus Gestis Scotorum," Lib. IX., 430 (ed., 1675), and McCrie, Note C.

Scotland produced one of the most brilliant Latinists of the age, and one in whom humanism was also ultimately allied with the evangelical faith. In 1520, at the age of fourteen, he migrated to Paris to continue, at the College of Ste Barbe, the studies which he had begun in the schools of Killearn and Glasgow.<sup>100</sup> He owed this privilege to the generosity of a maternal uncle, and the death of this uncle in 1522 compelled him to return to Scotland and prosecute his studies (under John Major) at the University of St Andrews. He listened with impatience and without profit to Major's scholastic prelections and took the degree of Bachelor in 1525. He had, in fact, conceived a keen dislike to "the art of sophistry," as he contemptuously termed this scholastic instruction, and under the influence of this dislike he had the bad taste to write a very cutting epigram on his old teacher, all the more inexcusable, if, as has been inferred, he owed to him the bursary in the Scots College which he entered on his return to Paris in 1526 to continue his studies for his master's degree. This he acquired in 1528. For some years thereafter he taught as regent in the College of Ste Barbe. In this office, with which for some time he combined that of Procurator of the "German nation," he distinguished himself as an educational reformer, and is credited with the merit of being instrumental, along with other scholars, in introducing into the college "genuine instruction in the classical languages."<sup>101</sup> He appears in truth to have been in the front line of the battle between the votaries of the new and the old culture, and the intensity of his reforming zeal may explain the stinging lines on Major, who had preceded him to Paris in 1525 and was by this time a leader of the anti-reform party in the university, with a reputation that extended far beyond the bounds of Scotland and France. Others besides Major were made to wince under his biting sarcasm. Gonellus, for instance, a Dominican monk, and a notable member of the Sorbonne, whose doctors, according to Rabelais, who

<sup>100</sup> Hume Brown thinks it probable that he attended the school at Dumbarton, "George Buchanan," 11 f. (1890). Mr Renwick decides for Glasgow Grammar School, "George Buchanan, Glasgow Centenary Studies," 33 f. (1906).

<sup>101</sup> Quicherat, "Histoire de Sainte Barbe," i. 152 (1860), quoted by Hume Brown, "George Buchanan," 65.

also made sport of poor Major,<sup>102</sup> were only too fond of good living.

It was during this period, too, that, as he tells us himself, "he fell among the Lutheran sectaries," and though not yet an adherent of the reformed doctrine, he appears to have been an associate of the reforming circle which produced a Farel and a Calvin. About 1532 he became tutor to the young Earl of Cassilis and with him he returned to his native land in 1534 to fill, shortly after, the same vocation to a natural son of James V. He was not long in giving fresh vent, with the approval of the king, to his satiric vein in a series of three pieces in ridicule of the Franciscan order. In the third of them—the "Franciscanus"<sup>103</sup>—he makes a Franciscan monk give a stinging, amusing, and perforce exaggerated exposure, in the indelicate fashion of the time, of the hypocrisy, ignorance, and immorality of the order. For these daring effusions he was in 1539 thrown into prison, but escaped, while his guards were asleep, to England, and thence to France to spend over twenty years in exile. Paris, where Cardinal Beaton then sojourned as ambassador of James V., was a dangerous halting place, and he eagerly accepted an invitation to fill the post of regent in the Collège de Guienne at Bordeaux, of which André de Gouvéa, his former fellow-regent at Ste Barbe, was principal, and where Montaigne was one of his pupils. Here he spent three years until the danger of a charge of heresy led him to leave Bordeaux for Paris, where he acted for a time as regent in the Collège Lemoine. In 1547 he was again invited by his friend André de Gouvéa to be regent in the recently founded University of Coimbra in Portugal, of which Gouvéa was now principal. Here he was arraigned and imprisoned by the Inquisition,<sup>104</sup> and this experience deepened his hatred of

<sup>102</sup> Among the books which Pantagruel finds in the library at St Victor at Paris is one entitled "The Art of making Puddings," by John Major!

<sup>103</sup> The others were the "Somnium," practically a Latin trans. of Dunbar's poem on the same subject, and the "Palinodia," written at the instigation of James himself. He showed "Franciscanus" only to the king, and it was not published till later.

<sup>104</sup> Hume Brown ascribes his prosecution to the hostility of the Jesuits. Henriques has shown that it was due to the rancour of Diogo Gouvéa, uncle of André, who had been removed from the office of principal and replaced by his nephew, and avenged himself by instigating the process against Buchanan and two other professors, "George Buchanan and the Lisbon Inquisition" (1906). See also T. M. Lindsay in "Glasgow Centenary Studies," 16 f.

tyranny and accentuated his alienation from the Church. To this hatred he had already given voice in his "Baptistes,"<sup>105</sup> a dramatic presentation of the story of John the Baptist. It was, however, only after his liberation from prison and his return in 1553 to France, where he acted for some years as tutor to the son of the Maréchal de Brissac, that he devoted serious attention to the controversy that divided Roman Catholic and Protestant. So far he had shown little trace of any decided conviction on the one side or the other. He had castigated the monks and the schoolmen from the humanist rather than the religious point of view. But during the last years of his sojourn in France he gave himself, as he tells us, to the study of the Scriptures in order to attain a definite judgment on the religious question. The result was his decision, on his return to his native land in 1561, to join the Reformed Church of Scotland.

His Latinity earned him a European reputation and in his versatility as pædagog, satirist, poet, dramatist, historian, publicist, and reformer he had few equals among the leading humanists of his age. His scholarship has, indeed, been overrated. Judged by the modern standard, and even of that of his contemporaries Turnebus, or Scaliger, or Heinsius, he may easily be weighed in the balance and found wanting. He did not, like them, contribute anything worth mentioning to Latin scholarship, but he was a master in the use of Latin to convey his ideas to others, and "no one has ever equalled him as a writer of Latin verse."<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> An Eng. trans. was published in 1643. Printed in "Glasgow Centenary Studies." Mr J. T. T. Brown argues forcibly in *ibid.*, 61 f., that Milton was the translator. Milton's authorship has been too categorically rejected by Buchanan's biographers.

<sup>106</sup> W. M. Lindsay, "St Andrews Memorial Volume," 205.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### CONCLUSION

#### THE ORIGINS OF THE REFORMATION

THE Reformation may be described as a reaction and, more or less, an emancipation from mediæval conditions in Church and State, a landmark in the transition from the mediæval to the modern age. Long desiderated and long delayed, it came at last, in the early years of the sixteenth century, in the form of the Protestant revolt against the papal régime initiated by Martin Luther in Germany. This survey of the history of the late mediæval Church has shown that it had been long in the making, in virtue of the operation of the complex forces or factors tending, in the previous two centuries, towards this revolt. The origins of the Reformation in the wider sense undoubtedly lie in these centuries. That the revolt broke out in Germany was due, indeed, to the heroic stand made by Luther at Wittenberg, Augsburg, and Worms in behalf of his religious convictions in defiance of pope and hierarchy. But the heroism of the indomitable monk of Wittenberg would have been unavailing without the complex forces which had prepared the way for his mission as a militant reformer. His reforming mission was only the consummation of the reaction, on political, economic, social, constitutional, and intellectual as well as religious and moral grounds, from the secularised papal absolutism and the demoralisation of the late mediæval Church. The complex forces of this reaction rendered possible the widespread uprising, to which he contributed the religious impulse, and entered into and moulded its development. In the making of this reaction he had many forerunners, and these forerunners were to be found not merely in the ranks of the heretics of the pre-Reformation period. In the Church and the State alike the cause of reform on various grounds, from various motives, and in various degree found numerous protagonists

among the statesmen, churchmen, theologians, scholars, and preachers of this period. If it may be said that Luther made the Reformation as a religious movement, it may also be said, with no little force, that the factors operating towards it in the late mediæval Church materially contributed to the making of Luther.

In conclusion, let me briefly review them as displayed in this survey of the relevant history of the previous two centuries.

#### THE POLITICAL FACTOR

In the political sphere the papal profession of superiority over the civil power becomes in this period virtually a mere pretence. In the case of the empire this right is ignored in the Golden Bull of Charles IV. which regulated the imperial constitution. It is challenged and overridden in the case of the rising nations in virtue of the growing strength of the national spirit. In the national ruler of the type of a Philip IV. of France, an Edward I. of England, a Ferdinand of Spain, the pope has found his master, who does not hesitate to vindicate his sovereign independence and the rights of the national crown at the expense of the papal pretension. As a temporal sovereign the pope is immersed in the international disputes and wars of the age, and the recurring conflict on political grounds with other rulers not only in Italy, but in Central and Western Europe inevitably tends to diminish the respect for his office as Head of the Church. In such a contingency he is, for the time being, the national enemy to be fought and overcome, and runs the risk of forfeiting even his spiritual authority. The Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria, for instance, carried his antagonism to the papal interference in imperial politics the length of deposing the pope. Philip IV. of France not only burned an arrogant papal bull, but seized the person of Boniface VIII. France was later, more than once, on the verge of a breach with Rome for political reasons. Charles VIII. threatened to call Alexander VI. to account for his misdeeds by means of a General Council, and Louis XII. actually convened one to depose Julius II. England came very near to a breach with Rome in its resentment against a French-ridden papacy during the early period of the Hundred Years' War. Scotland was within an

inch of renouncing its allegiance to Rome over the disaster of Flodden.<sup>1</sup> The danger to the papacy from political friction was thus a very ominous one. It might once too often run the risk of an irreparable breach on this ground.

The tendency towards the ecclesiastical independence of the rising nations was, in truth, latent in the principle of nationality. A universal jurisdiction like that of the papacy might fit in with the theory of a universal State as exemplified by the mediæval empire, though even with the head of this State it was involved in conflict throughout the Middle Ages. The danger of such conflict was even greater in the case of independent nations which, unlike the declining empire, were developing into powerful organic political unities and whose development was the negation of the universal dominion for which both pope and Kaiser stood. The Church was, indeed, a universal institution in virtue of the fact that Christianity was a universal religion. But the papal jurisdiction, as Marsiglio contended, was not necessarily an essential of the Church, though in the Middle Ages proper the one was almost unthinkable without the other. As the result of the growing political trend away from the universal to the national State, the independent national Church ultimately proved to be the logical concomitant of this State. The principle of nationality might not, indeed, necessarily be incompatible with the recognition, on certain conditions, of a universal ecclesiastical authority. National Churches in France and Spain, for instance, continued to recognise this authority despite the Reformation in the sixteenth century. But given an unreformed papacy, the abuses connected with the papal régime, the growing tendency to resent and resist its oppressions and corruptions—the papal interference or dictation in matters in which national interests were concerned rendered national revolt, eventuating in the establishment of independent national Churches, an ever more probable contingency.

Very significant is the tendency throughout the period to ascribe to the civil power the right and obligation to reform the Church as the only effective means of dealing with the rampant ecclesiastical abuses. It had become a current doctrine in

<sup>1</sup> For details, see Hay Fleming, "The Reformation in Scotland," 165 f. (1910).

the Church itself, which others, besides Occam and Wiclif, had voiced, that, in case of necessity, the civil authority may ignore the papal headship and take active measures for the common good in the interest of the Church as well as the State. The civil authority is an integral part of the Christian corporation, which embraces the secular as well as the spiritual side of life. Equally with that of the pope and the hierarchy, its power is derived from God, since the ruler, whether emperor, king, prince or municipality, rules by God's grace. Its function is religious and ethical as well as political and social. "It belongs to the vocation of the temporal authority to care not only for their temporal welfare, but for the salvation of the souls of its subjects."<sup>2</sup> In appealing for the intervention of the secular power in behalf of reform, Luther was thus enunciating an old, not a new principle—the principle of "equity" (*epieikeia*). The Great Schism had provided a strong argument in favour of this contention. Hence the recurring attempts to limit the papal jurisdiction over the national Church as well as vindicate the rights of the national State. This tendency is discernible in the anti-papal legislation in England in the fourteenth century, in Scotland in the fifteenth century, in the movement in France in behalf of the "liberties of the Gallican Church," in the concordats relative to the German Church, in the anti-papal policy of a Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. It reappeared in Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century in von Hutten's polemic against Rome on patriotic grounds, and especially in the appeal of Luther to the German nobility on behalf of the incipient German Reformation against the papal demand for the arrest and surrender of the daring heretic. The appeal to the temporal power was, indeed, a risky expedient, for the temporal power might reform the Church in its own interest rather than that of the Church. In the disposal of ecclesiastical property, for instance, it might direct a large proportion of it into the hands of a self-seeking aristocracy. The policy of secularisation had, in fact, been in partial operation, with or without the connivance of pope and hierarchy, from such motives in the pre-Reformation period,

<sup>2</sup> Rieker, "Die Rechtliche Stellung der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands," 133 (1893). In detail, Hashagen, "Staat und Kirche vor der Reformation," 433 f. (1931).

though the overgrown and misused wealth of the Church afforded plausible reasons on practical grounds for its spoliation. Witness the secularisation of the alien priories by Henry V. in 1414, for instance.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the incompetence of the Church to reform itself seemed to leave no alternative to the pre-Reformation as well as the Protestant reformers but to appeal for the co-operation of the temporal power, in spite of the risk of such an appeal, in the effort to remedy the evil of ecclesiastical abuse. The hostility of the curia which persisted not only in evading but in crushing the reform movement impelled the more militant reformers to enlist the patronage and protection of the State.

Equally significant is the gradual extension of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the temporal rulers and the municipal authorities in Germany. This extension was the natural result of the growth of the territorial and municipal sovereignty within the empire in consequence of the weakness of the imperial power. There is a tendency to counteract in this way the concentration of ecclesiastical government in the Roman curia, though in origin it was not necessarily anti-papal. Despite this growing centralisation, the pope was fain, from various motives, to cultivate the support of the civil authority for his schemes. On the other hand, the civil authority sought the support of the pope against the territorial or city clergy. The Great Schism and the conciliar movement favoured the development of the influence of the civil power on the Church. Rival popes competed with one another in their efforts to secure by concessions the allegiance of the princes and municipalities. Similarly in the period of the Councils they strove in this way to counteract the ecclesiastical opposition to the papal absolutism. It was equally the interest of the civil power to secure the goodwill of the pope in its striving to subject the clergy to its jurisdiction in respect of clerical immunity from taxation, free election, and other liberties of the Church. In the traffic in benefices pope and prince were equally ready to go halves to their mutual advantage. There was collusion as well as collision at times between them in matters ecclesiastical. On the eve of the Reformation the ecclesiastical

<sup>3</sup> Marti, "Economic Causes of the Reformation in England," 89 f. (1929). For Germany, Hashagen, 342 f.

jurisdiction of the civil power had thus materially developed and had given rise to a system of territorial and municipal ecclesiastical law which was no longer compatible with the canon law. The civil authority might and did recognise the papal supremacy over the Church, and in France, Italy, Spain, and partly in Germany this development did not necessarily lead, as the result of the Reformation movement, to the renunciation of the papal headship in favour of the civil power. On the other hand, it might and did facilitate the transition to the independent national or territorial Church, the establishment of the State Church wherever the national king, or territorial prince, or civic authority favoured the adoption of the reformed faith.<sup>4</sup>

Thus long before the establishment of the Reformation the secular authority is found intervening in ecclesiastical litigation. It exercises its right to nominate to ecclesiastical benefices, high and low, to confirm or reject papal decisions, to publish or not papal bulls, to sanction or prohibit papal indulgences. It even ventures to assume the direction of purely spiritual matters, and regulates worship, religious ceremonies, processions, etc. It prescribes through its officials the discipline of the Church, deposes abbots and priests, reforms the monasteries, supervises the secular clergy. This process is observable in greater or less degree in England, Scotland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and elsewhere. In England the later State Church is discernible in the early fifteenth century. Henry V. has virtually anticipated Henry VIII. as head of the national Church. Similarly in France the Gallican liberties have gone far to establish the ecclesiastical supremacy of the French monarch. In Venice the Church, on the confession of Martin V., is trampled by the civil government more than anywhere else except in England. In Scotland the king maintains a running fight for the rights of the crown in ecclesiastical affairs throughout the fifteenth century. If the central power is weak in Germany, in the territories of the princes—in

<sup>4</sup> On the development of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the civil authority in the pre-Reformation period, see the recent elaborate work of Hashagen, "Staat und Kirche vor der Reformation," 69 f., 305 f. Shows mastery of the literature on the subject in Germany; less complete in reference to other lands. See also, in more concise form, Haller, "Ursachen der Reformation," 24 f. (1917).

Austria, Bavaria, Württemberg, Thüringia, Saxony, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Jülich and Cleve—the growing ecclesiastical ascendancy of the secular power is equally observable. To the Duke of Cleve is ascribed the saying that he “is pope in his own lands.”<sup>5</sup> “When once the question arose whether the people shall remain subject to the old ecclesiastical order, the State had the decision in its hands. The territorial prince (in Germany) had only to signify his will to decide that of his subjects. . . . The German princes decided the faith of their subjects not because the Reformation conferred on them the dominion over the Church—there is no more false and foolish reproach—but because they were already lords over the Church.”<sup>6</sup>

#### THE ECONOMIC FACTOR

Closely connected with the opposition on political is the opposition on economic grounds to the papal jurisdiction. In Central and Western Europe the Church has become possessed of a large portion of the land. From this source the Roman curia derives a substantial income in the form of the taxation of the clergy. A variety of papal dues increases the drain on the national wealth Romewards. The drain is aggravated by the lavish practice of Provisions and Reservations for the benefit of members of the curia and other aliens, by the heavy charges for appeals to Rome and other expedients for exploiting the nations. Apart from the incidence of papal taxation and other financial devices, the Church aroused antagonism on account of the immunity of Church lands and the industrial undertakings of the monks from State and municipal taxation, of the harassing economic effects of ecclesiastical penalties, of excommunication and interdict, often imposed from unworthy motives, of the mercenary indulgence traffic in the service of a corrupt ecclesiastical system. The antagonism of the mercantile class in the towns was intensified by the suits in the ecclesiastical courts for the recovery of various kinds of Church dues. The vast ecclesiastical organisation

<sup>5</sup> The saying refers to certain concessions granted to the Duke during the Basle Schism, which were, however, limited to the period of the schism. Hashagen, “Staat und Kirche vor der Reformation,” 550 f. The claim appears to have been made by others of these petty potentates as well as by other greater rulers. *Ibid.*, 552 f.

<sup>6</sup> Haller, “Ursachen,” 28 f.

directed from Rome might necessitate the imposition of taxes and dues in order to maintain an efficient central administration. But the financial expedients developed within this period had degenerated into a widely ramified system for the exploitation of Christendom. It was glaringly incompatible with the teaching and spirit of the Gospel and was resented and resisted as an unwarrantable anti-Christian oppression of both the State and the Church. Hence the recurring outcry against the papal fiscal system throughout the late mediæval period and the attempt to counter it by anti-papal legislation in the national interest. The corruption of the Roman curia, which the system nurtured, aggravated the spirit of revolt and inevitably paved the way for the ultimate rupture, on economic grounds, with Rome in a large part of Europe. The economic factor thus became a powerful adjunct of the radical Reformation voiced by Luther in the "Address to the Nobility." His indictment of the papacy on this ground won him, in the years of his early struggle with the curia, far more adherents than his arraignment of Rome on theological grounds. It powerfully contributed to intensify the revolt in other lands as well.

To see in the Reformation, with Lamprecht, Kautsky, and others, a reaction, on purely material grounds, against the dominant ecclesiastical fiscal system is both one-sided and short-sighted. At the same time, this system undoubtedly contributed to alienate the various classes affected by it from the papal régime. It was not only injurious to the material welfare of the nations. It affected disastrously the religious work of the Church. In particular, the incorporation of benefices in monasteries and cathedral chapters resulted in the vicious practice of employing ill-paid and incompetent vicars to discharge the duties attached to them for a mere pittance out of the revenues, which accrued to the incorporating body. Equally detrimental to the spiritual oversight of the people was the abuse of pluralities—the holding of a number of benefices by one person to the neglect or the imperfect discharge of the pastoral function. Similarly papal provisions for the benefit of aliens contributed in no inconsiderable degree to the widespread inefficiency of the Church as a religious institution. No wonder that criticism and detestation of such vicious financial expedients were widespread among both clergy and laity.

## THE SOCIAL FACTOR

The social factor appears in the unrest of the lower class in town and country throughout the period. It breaks out in popular risings in France, England, Germany, Bohemia, to enforce emancipation from serfdom and the amelioration of their material lot. It is coupled with the aspiration for a more democratic order in the State in antagonism to the feudal constitution, which conferred power and privilege on the higher classes at the expense of the lower. It is directed against not only the feudal lords but against the Church, which was closely identified with the feudal system of society. The movement for social reform is, in fact, also a movement for religious reform. It has a distinctly religious aspect, for the masses appeal not merely to natural rights, but to their rights as Christians in vindication of their demands. They pit against the feudal system in Church and State the ideal of Christian brotherhood and base their demands on the teaching of Christ democratically interpreted. For them, reform of the Church necessarily involves the reform of the inequitable social conditions, for which they hold the Church as well as the State responsible and which they had long been planning and spasmodically striving to enforce in these late mediæval centuries. This anti-clerical feature is discernible long before the final uprising of the peasants in Germany, in which the social emancipation movement culminated at the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century. It appears in connection with the reform movements initiated by Wiclif and Hus. Every attempt at religious reform in these centuries is, in fact, more or less accompanied by the attempt to enforce a social reformation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the German peasantry hailed in Luther the champion of a new social as well as religious order. In his "Address to the German Nobility," he appealed to the civil authority to take in hand the urgent task of social reform and thus encouraged the masses to see in the religious movement the dawn of a better social order. Though he ultimately withstood the attempt to achieve it by revolutionary violence, the hope of social betterment undoubtedly, in the earlier stage of the Lutheran movement, materially contributed to rally the common people over a large

part of the empire in his support. The social reform movement forms, in fact, the radical wing of the evangelical party, whose appeal to the Bible in support of religious reform was in line with its appeal to the primitive Gospel in support of social reform. Lutheran preachers in Southern Germany, if not Luther himself, took an active part not only in urging but organising the social movement.

#### THE CONSTITUTIONAL FACTOR

Equally potential in its bearing on the Reformation is the demand for the constitutional reform of the Church. It finds expression in the persistent attempts, in the first half of the fifteenth century, of the clerical hierarchy to limit the papal absolutism over the Church and transform it into a constitutional ecclesiastical monarchy. "The Roman bishops," declared Parentucelli even after he became the successor of Eugenius IV. as Nicholas V., "have stretched their authority too far and left the bishops no jurisdiction."<sup>7</sup> The conciliar movement proved an ultimate failure. But the conciliar theory survived even the debacle of Basle. In the face of the inability or unwillingness of pope and curia to reform the increasing demoralisation of the Church towards the end of the period, it reappears in the widespread conviction that the Church itself, in General Council, must once more undertake the task of reform. Hence the appeal of Savonarola in 1498 to the princes of Christendom to convene such an assembly. Hence the recourse in 1511 to this expedient in defiance of the pope, under the auspices of Louis XII. of France, with the incipient support of the Emperor Maximilian. Though the second Council of Pisa proved abortive, it compelled Pope Julius II. to reverse the anti-conciliar decree of Pius II. and summon the Fifth Lateran Council in order to counter its anti-papal rival. Far more significant, the conciliar idea appears some years later in the demand addressed by Luther to the temporal power for the convocation of a free Reform Council to overthrow the papal absolutism and transform the ecclesiastical constitution on national lines by restoring to the national hierarchy, under a German Primate, the right of self-government.

<sup>7</sup> Boulting, "Æneas Silvius, Pope Pius," ii. 85.

## THE INTELLECTUAL FACTOR

A fifth factor operating towards the Reformation throughout the late mediæval period makes itself increasingly felt in the new culture, which by the beginning of the sixteenth century has become a powerful intellectual movement. It broadened the outlook on life and fostered the tendency to venture away from the old to a new order of things. Though not necessarily inimical to the papacy or the Church, it represents a reaction from the thought, the mental temperament and outlook of the Middle Ages, and its tendency is to undermine the basis on which the mediæval ecclesiastical system rested. It set itself against the scholastic theology and the scholastic method in education, and substituted a culture inspired and moulded by the study of classic literature. In their reaction from the scholastic theology, Luther and his fellow-reformers were only continuing and carrying further the anti-scholastic reaction led by a Valla, a Crotus Rubianus, an Erasmus, and a Colet. This reaction, combined with personal religious experience, inevitably led to a revaluation of Christianity, a transformation of the Church—its creed and institutions—based on the New Testament. It discarded a one-sided theological and monastic view of life for the larger humanist conception, the free development of the individual, the free exercise of the reason for the mediæval system of authority. It evoked the critical spirit and threw the searchlight of criticism on institutions, systems, doctrines. Most important of all, it gave a potent impulse to the study of the Scriptures and the early Christian writers in the original languages, the historical origins of Christianity in contrast to its later mediæval developments. It applied the test of historic criticism to the papal claims and the mediæval dogmatic spirit. In some of its votaries, indeed, it nurtured a licence in thought and life which threatened to submerge Christianity itself as well as the Church under a wave of scepticism. In others, happily, it was combined with an earnest appreciation of the spiritual and ethical teaching of the Gospel and with a striving to reform the Church and the world in accordance therewith. In not a few cases it ultimately furnished recruits for the cause of evangelical reform. From the school of Erasmus, in particular, came many of Luther's fellow-workers in this cause, if not Luther himself.

## THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

From the religious point of view the Reformation was the culmination of the individualist tendency which had found expression in the sects and the mystic movement of the late mediæval period. In sects like the Spiritual Franciscans, the Waldenses, the Lollards, the Hussites, it is combined with an appreciation of early Christianity and the tendency to return to it and live in its spirit. It is aggressively hostile to the secularised ecclesiastical form of religion and tends to develop the separatist spirit. In spite of the persecution which intensified it, it prevailed down to the eve of the Reformation and contributed to the response of the common people, which Luther's evangelical teaching evoked. The activity of the Inquisition in the attempt to repress it reveals this undercurrent of dissent from the traditional creed and practice. The Reformation inaugurated by Luther was, in fact, in some respects the continuation and the completion of the dissenting movement led by Wiclif, Hus, and others in these two pre-Reformation centuries, if it involved larger issues and differed in its far-reaching scope and effect.

In the mystics the individualist spirit finds expression in the personal quest of God, the union of the soul in direct communion with Him, apart from Church, or priest, or sacrament. The Church might condemn Eckhart, its most profound representative, as well as the more extreme votaries of the Free Spirit, but the movement persisted even within the Church in such associations as the Friends of God. By this mystic movement Luther, on his own confession, was powerfully influenced in his search for a gracious God. In this search he failed to find the solution of this crucial problem in the conventional doctrine of meriting salvation by way of the monastic life. Gerson and other mystics so far helped him by pointing out the way of personal access to God for the troubled soul; but they did not take him all the way, and it was only when he went back to Paul by way of Augustine that he discovered what became for him the only way to a solution of this problem. Not by meritorious monastic works, but by fiducial faith alone is salvation possible from the guilt and power of sin. This is the germinal discovery to which his protracted spiritual conflict in the monastery led him and which finally came to

him after long meditation on the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. This was his original, distinctive, epoch-making contribution to the Reformation as a religious movement, as far as it was the fruit of his personal religious experience. Even so, he was helped towards this contribution by the reaction from the late semi-Pelagian scholastic theology to Augustine, represented by Bradwardine, Wiclif, Gregory of Rimini, and others, which led him beyond Augustine back to Paul. If he derived his cardinal principle of justification by faith alone, not by works, directly from Paul, the revived study of Augustine in the late mediæval Church prepared the way for the ultimate discovery of this principle, which became the distinctively religious factor of the Reformation as initiated and directed by him.

This principle, as the norm of faith and practice, with its corollaries of the supreme authority of Scripture, the priesthood of all believers, the rights of the individual soul apart from external ecclesiastical authority, the liberty of the Christian man and the Christian conscience from ecclesiastical prescription, inevitably culminated in the radical breach with the papal mediæval Church which the indomitable monk of Wittenberg achieved. This cardinal doctrine reverberated over the empire and far beyond like a thunder-peal. Its effects were electric. It arrested and it appealed to the deeper religious spirit of the age which in Germany had survived the widespread decline of the Church. A striking feature of the late fifteenth century is just the presence of this spirit alongside this decline. During the sixty years preceding Luther's advent, champions of this movement appear in reformers like Savonarola in Italy, Cardinal Cues, practical preachers like Geiler of Kaisersberg, progressive theologians like John of Wesel and Wessel Gansfort in Germany. In view of this fact, the reform movement started by Luther is, on its practical if not its specifically doctrinal side, the culmination of this late mediæval religious revival. Evidence of a quickened religious spirit appears further in the numerous translations of the Scriptures, in the ardent if not always enlightened piety nurtured by the worship and usages of the Church. "Luther found in existence a religious generation. He did not create the piety of his time. . . . But he gave this piety a new

direction.”<sup>8</sup> This quickened religious spirit was an indispensable preparation for the Lutheran movement. Even the demoralisation of the Church, which subsisted alongside it by intensifying the yearning for a better state of things, tended to foster the religious spirit, if it also tended, in many cases, to nurture scepticism or indifference. The people was waiting for its prophet, and when the prophet appeared to denounce the evils rampant in the Church and society and proclaim his distinctive religious message, he found a generation ready to respond and rally to his side. The religious conditions—positive as well as negative—were there, and without these conditions effective religious reform, even with a Luther as its leader, would have been impossible.

At the same time there is difference as well as affinity between Luther and the pre-Lutheran reformers. Reform within the Church was conditioned by the mediæval standpoint. It did not involve an essential departure in theological thought, except perhaps in a case like that of Wessel Gansfort, for instance. It was of the conventional and conservative type as represented by reformers who martyred Hus and Jerome and burned the bones of Wiclif. Hence its general ineffectiveness, though in particular cases it did achieve at least partial results. It failed to produce a general and permanent abolition of the gross evils it sought to remedy. It made little or no impression on the unreformed papacy, nor did it transform the government of the Church at large in accordance with its ideals and aspirations. It was based on the principle of the permanence of existing dogmas and institutions—the very things which stood in need of reform. The vested interests, the traditional beliefs and claims of pope, cardinals, bishops, priests and monks, combined to render it very partial, if not entirely futile. It needed the original mind and religious experience of a Luther to provide an adequate dynamic for the situation. Luther has, indeed, been represented as solely a product of the Middle Ages. To Troeltsch the Reformation was the outcome of the mediæval, not the modern spirit. There is, indeed, a mediæval strain in Luther's theology. In his cherished belief in consubstantiation,

<sup>8</sup> Von Below, “Die Ursachen der Reformation,” 94 (1907). A good account in English of this pre-Reformation piety is given by Lindsay, “History of the Reformation,” i. 114 f. (2nd ed., 1909). See also von Bezold's “Geschichte der Deutschen Reformation.”

for instance, his reversion, albeit reluctantly, to the policy of the violent repression of ecclesiastical dissent. But in his cardinal principle of justification by faith alone he dealt a fatal blow to mediæval belief and usage by invalidating the doctrine of salvation in and through the sacerdotal Church, discarding root and branch the principle of salvation by meritorious works, and placing the soul in direct relation to God through personal faith. Moreover, he made a clean breach with the mediæval, ascetic conception of the religious life, and substituted for it the freedom of the Christian man, the human life in accordance with the liberty, if also the moral obligation of the Gospel. His doctrine of justification by faith alone, as theologially developed in the controversy between him and his opponents, may perhaps have lost some of its appeal for modern thought. Many may be inclined with the publican to commit themselves to the mercy of God in Christ, and leave the theory to the theologians, whether Roman Catholic or Reformed. They will none the less realise the emancipating power, the immense practical significance of the Lutheran principle of individual fiducial faith in overthrowing the accumulation of religious usage and practical abuse, with which the mediæval Church had encumbered Christianity.

#### THE MORAL FACTOR

The reaction on moral grounds from a secularised papacy and a demoralised Church finds expression in criticism and denunciation of ecclesiastical abuse throughout these two pre-Reformation centuries. It is voiced in numerous official documents as well as in sermons, letters, histories, pamphlets, satires, and other literary effusions. The general moral standard of the period might not be a high one, though it appears to have been higher among the clergy than the laity,<sup>9</sup> and allowance must be made for the difference of standard in judging the actions and customs of a former generation. What seems gross and inexcusable to us did not necessarily appear in the same light to the mediæval mind and eye. Allowance must be made, too, for the ascetic as well as the lax view of life so characteristic of the Middle Ages, which tended to warp the

<sup>9</sup> Acton, "Lectures on Modern History," 90.

judgment and exaggerate delinquency. Moreover, there was then, as now, the ingrained tendency to scandal-mongering, indiscriminating fault-finding, undue generalisation. Diatribe of this kind is apt to degenerate into the habit of an age. Even so, it is possible to carry this apologetic too far and unwarrantably explain away as well as explain the demoralisation so continuously and widely denounced and deplored. There seems to be only too ample ground for the charge of corruption levelled against the Roman curia, in spite of the efforts of individual popes and of reforming councils to eradicate it. Under the régime of the later fifteenth-century popes it shocked even a Machiavelli, who was no fastidious censor, and impelled him to the conclusion that the ruin of the Church was close at hand.<sup>10</sup> The immorality of the centre of Western Christendom was bound to have a nefarious effect on the Church at large. The evidence of Popes and highly placed churchmen in the fifteenth century may be cited in abundance. Even if we may not take such sweeping generalisations literally, the evils complained of must have been sufficiently grave to give point to such utterances if not completely to justify them. Eugenius IV., for instance, applied to the Church the text, "From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it."<sup>11</sup> The clergy, declared the Bishop of Lübeck at the Council of Basle, should be allowed to marry, since there was hardly one priest in a thousand without a concubine.<sup>12</sup>

In a sermon preached before the conclave which met to elect a successor to Calixtus III. in August 1458, the Bishop of Torcello complained that "the clergy are universally corrupt. They cause the laity to blaspheme and bring them to eternal perdition. All ecclesiastical discipline has disappeared. Day after day the authority of the Church becomes more despised. Who shall restore it? The Roman curia is degenerate. Who shall reform it?"<sup>13</sup> "There is none that doeth good, yea not one," avowed Hadrian VI. of the prelates of his day in 1522.<sup>14</sup> One might quote scores of such testimonies throughout the period. While they are more or less exaggerated, they

<sup>10</sup> "Discorsi," i. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Haller, "Concilium Basiliense," i. 330.

<sup>12</sup> Fea, "Pius II. a Calumniis Vindicatus," 58.

<sup>13</sup> Boulting, "Æneas Silvius" (Pius II.), 238, etc.

<sup>14</sup> Raynaldus, xxxi. sect. 70.

are only the exaggerations of a very real evil. The intensified foreboding, on moral grounds, of impending disaster to the Church is sufficient proof of the fact.

Much has been written on this question during the last three-quarters of a century, though research has by no means exhausted the available provincial and local sources in Germany and elsewhere. In the case of the German Church the writers of numerous monographs<sup>15</sup> on the subject admit its declension. They only differ as to its degree. The majority, including a number of Roman Catholic historians, conclude that it was widespread and grave in spite of synodal, local, and individual efforts to provide a remedy. Those of Cues and others to reform the monastic orders were only partially and temporarily successful. That of Andreas Proles to reform the Augustinians seems to have been exceptionally effective, and the same may be said for the Franciscan Observants. There was widespread antagonism to the clergy, high and low, on account of the all too prevalent clerical worldliness and immorality. The religious revival of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries appears to have strengthened this hostility. It is coupled with a deep-seated antagonism to the Roman curia as an institution for the exploitation of the people. Along with it is a sense of helplessness and a yearning for betterment, religious and social. A great opportunity, verily, for the dynamic personality of the born religious leader to improve. In the second decade of the sixteenth century he is on the way. Here at last is a man of tremendous force of character and will, who wields a direct and drastic pen, who knows how to arrest and appeal, and through whom the outraged moral sense of Northern Christendom finds impassioned utterance. Even if its vehemence appears to us at times to be overdone, it was prophetic to the age to which he directed his message. Listen to this, for instance: "At Rome there is such a state of things that baffles description. There is a buying, selling, exchanging, cheating, roaring, lying, deceiving, robbing, stealing, luxury, debauchery, villany, and every sort of contempt of God that Antichrist himself could not possibly rule more abominably. Venice,

<sup>15</sup> Paul Wunderlich has recently contributed a valuable critical survey of the literature on the subject in German, "Die Beurteilung der Vorreformation in der Deutschen Geschichtsschreibung Seit Ranke," (1930).

Antwerp, Cairo are nothing compared to this fair and market at Rome, except that things there are done with some reason and justice, whilst here they are done as the devil himself wills. And out of this ocean flows a like virtue into the whole world. . . . Since this devilish régime is not only a public robbery, deceit, and tyranny of the gates of hell, but also the destruction of Christendom in soul and body, it is our bounden duty to ward off this misery and desolation of the Christian commonwealth."<sup>16</sup> "Hearest thou, O Pope, not the most holy, but the most sinful? Would that God would hurl thy chair headlong from heaven and cast it down into the abyss of hell! Who has given thee power to exalt thyself above thy God, to break and loose what He has commanded, to teach Christians . . . to be unreliable, breakers of their oath, traitors, villains, and lacking in faith. God has commanded us to keep oaths and troth even with enemies, and thou takest it upon thee to cancel such a command, setting it forth in thy heretical, unchristian decrees that thou hast such power, and through thy mouth and pen Satan lies as he never lied before, and thou dost twist and pervert the Scriptures according to thine own arbitrary will."<sup>17</sup>

In Italy the moral standard appears to have been lower than in Germany, although to the Italians the Germans were "barbarians." It did not, in general, take the moral declension of the Church so seriously as in the northern lands. Even so, as the preaching of a Savonarola, whose sermons in Northern Italy as well as at Florence drew crowds for years on end, shows, there was a widespread sense of the need for reform. If the tendency of humanism was, in too many cases, to foster a lax conception of life, there were not a few, like Vittorino da Feltre, who strove to instil into their pupils a high standard of conduct, coupled with an ardent piety.<sup>18</sup> In Italy, as in Germany, there was a religious revival in the late fifteenth century, which found expression in the brotherhood of Divine Love founded at Genoa about 1497, and followed by the establishment of communities at Vicenza, Verona, Brescia,

<sup>16</sup> "Werke," vi. 425 f. (Weimar edit.).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 453.

<sup>18</sup> See Woodward, "Vittorino da Feltre," 21, 37, 90 (1897). For the piety which persisted in Italy during the fifteenth century, in spite of the growing declension of curia and Church, see Pastor, "History of the Popes," v. 11 f.

Venice, Rome. Their aim was the revival of practical Christianity as well as the nurture of an active individual piety.<sup>19</sup> This and similar movements are symptomatic of the deepset, if perhaps partial longing for the reformation of the religious life, which ultimately produced in Pallavicino, Ochino, Vermiglio (Peter Martyr), etc., not a few distinguished Italian evangelical reformers.<sup>20</sup> These movements were the natural reaction from the demoralisation of the Roman curia and the secular and monastic clergy in Italy.<sup>21</sup> In the fifteenth century the diatribes of Catherine of Siena and Petrarch in the fourteenth are echoed by Ambrogio Traversari, general of the Camaldolites, Benedetto Accolti, Paolo Toscanella, Massucio, and humanists like Valla and Mirandola.

There are not lacking testimonies to the declension of the Spanish clergy in the fifteenth century before the advent of Ximenes as Provincial of the Franciscans and especially as Archbishop of Toledo and cardinal. With the staunch support of Queen Isabella he achieved a practical reformation of the clergy, secular and regular, in the teeth of the opposition of Alexander VI.,<sup>22</sup> who was fain ultimately to give way.

Equally clamant the need for a practical reformation of the French Church. For a large number of the higher clergy the clerical office was merely a profession, a means of livelihood rather than a means of grace, a wealthy corporation, whose higher posts were the ambition of enterprising hirelings of noble lineage, or the rewards of royal favourites. Simony, nepotism, pluralities, absenteeism, were the results. The French prelate at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a number of good men excepted, was a politician and an ecclesiastic, a courtier and a *bon vivant*, a soldier even rather than a pastor, and was at no pains to conceal his *affaires de femme*. It was his interest to maintain the corruptions, which ministered to his personal advantage, the system which brought him influence and prestige in the Church at large as well as in the national Church. The cardinals of French birth numbered at this period thirteen<sup>23</sup> and exercised a powerful influence in the curia, which it was

<sup>19</sup> Rodocanachi, "La Réforme en Italie," i. 207 f. (1920).

<sup>20</sup> See Rodocanachi, 214 f.; G. K. Brown, "Italy and the Reformation," 476 (1933).

<sup>21</sup> For details, see Rodocanachi, 96 f.; Pastor, v. 169 f.

<sup>22</sup> Burke, "History of Spain," ii. 170 f.

<sup>23</sup> Baird, "Rise of the Huguenots," i. 52.

not to their interest to reform. The laxity of the higher ranks was reflected in that of the lower. As the higher offices were usually reserved for the nobility, the office of curé, or parish priest, was filled by the sons of the peasants. In spite of his education, the curé usually remained a rustic, drank with his peasant parishioners at the *cabaret*, got drunk like them and sometimes quarrelled on festival and fair days, was the father of numerous bastards, and saw no inconsistency in thus getting drunk and begetting children like any other peasant. There were, of course, not a few cases of devotion to pastoral duty and moral obligation. But far too frequently the curé was far from being an example to his flock. The same may be said of many of the monks and nuns.<sup>24</sup> The dissolute priest and monk is the conventional butt of the ridicule of the satirist. Witness the "Heptameron" of Margaret of Navarre, the tales of Rabelais, the verse of Marot. Nevertheless this degenerate body absorbed a large part of the wealth of France.

In spite of the widespread degeneracy of the clergy there was no lack of religiosity among the people. In the reign of Louis XI. it made a religious hero of François de Paule, the illiterate miracle worker from the mountains of Calabria, whose spells of praying and fasting were stupendous, and who wielded an extraordinary influence over king and court and people. It appears to have been steeped in ignorance and superstition. The peasant readily saw the devil, and apparitions of the Virgin and the saints were equally common. It implicitly believed in miracles, charms, incantations, relics, sorcery. Pilgrimages, processions, indulgences, were popular. This religiosity was not necessarily coupled with a consistent morality. The moral standard of all classes seems, indeed, to have been all too generally low on the threshold of the age which was to give its martyrs, in impressive array, to French reformed Christianity. In the early sixteenth century, as the result of

<sup>24</sup> For the moral declension of the French clergy in the first half of the sixteenth century, see "Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens," "Documents Inédits," ii. 126 f.; cf. ii. 494. Corroero and Lippomano were staunch Catholics. Lippomano's report is dated 1577, but is also retrospective. See also "Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François I.," "Soc. de l'Histoire de France," 373, 380, 381; De Maulde-la-Clavière, "Origines de la Révolution Française" (1889); Jouenneaux, "Plea for Monastic Reform," abridged and trans. by Coulton, "French Monasticism in 1503"; Imbart de la Tour, "Origines de la Réforme," ii. (1909).

the baneful effects of the expedition of Charles VIII. to Italy on a dissolute soldiery, France was overrun with sexual disease, which ravaged villages as well as towns with all the virulence of an epidemic.

Clerical degeneracy is offset in France, as elsewhere, by the presence of an active reform party within the French Church, which denounced the rampant lack of discipline, the atrophied moral sense of clergy and people. Of this party in the early sixteenth century Jean le Maire de Belges, Claude de Seyssel, Bishop of Marseilles, Giles Dauphin, were the outspoken exponents, and Cardinal George d'Amboise the drastic leader. To the task of a practical reformation the energetic minister of Louis XII. forcefully set his hand. He went the length of expelling the recalcitrant Jacobins of Paris and Rouen and compelling the Cordeliers to submit to the reforming measures of their superior. Unfortunately such measures were merely of the nature of tinkering with a deep-seated evil. More comprehensive and growingly influential was the humanist movement, which, as in Germany and England, was actuated by a serious reforming spirit and stood for educational as well as religious reformation. For early French humanists like Lefèvre the revival of letters was not merely a revival of classical scholarship. It involved a return to Christianity in its purer form. Its focus was Meaux, the seat of Bishop Briçonnet, its master Lefèvre, some of whose disciples ere long went beyond the master and became the aggressive champions of a religious revolution. As Correro remarks, the degeneration of the Church was the door by which heresy entered France.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly a strong case can be made out, on moral grounds, for a reformation of the English and Scottish Churches. At the end of the fourteenth century, according to the poet Gower, simony prevails in the English Church. The prelates are eager only for their own enrichment and are actuated by the ambition of place and power. The clergy are wolves, not shepherds, and fleece the sheep. They make an obnoxious use of excommunication. The Schism has demoralised them and has produced the Lollard heresy. They do not practise what they preach, though there are good as well as bad clerics.<sup>26</sup> The

<sup>25</sup> "Relations," ii. 150.

<sup>26</sup> "Confessio Amantis," Prologue, i., 10 f. (ed. by Macaulay, 1900).

delineation is sombre and is perhaps overcoloured, though Gower is no Lollard grumbler, but a good churchman with a quick eye for the discrepancy between the Christian ideal and the ecclesiastical reality. The Black Death and the Schism had together bequeathed an inferior common clergy to the Church, and on the evidence of episcopal registers and ecclesiastical synods concubinage and absenteeism are common evils.<sup>27</sup>

The monastic life is on the decline. In the fifteenth century civil war aggravates the prevailing abuses. A reliable witness, Thomas Gascoigne, who was Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1434 and several subsequent years, sketches in very dark colours the demoralisation of the clergy, high and low, in his "Liber Veritatum." The papal régime is thoroughly corrupt and is most deleterious to the national Church. The scandalous trafficking in benefices, in which the king participates, has filled the higher offices of the Church with a host of unworthy hirelings. The bishops with few exceptions are place-hunters, hold secular offices as ministers of state and court officials, seldom reside in their dioceses or preach, and otherwise neglect their function. Like bishops, like clergy. Under the régime of these worldly prelates, pluralities, simony, concubinage, appropriations of benefices by monasteries, widely prevail, and are indignant common-places among the people, who hate the bishops and despise the clergy.<sup>28</sup> In confirmation of this lugubrious testimony, we may cite one of these worldly prelates, Cardinal-Archbishop Bouchier of Canterbury from 1455 to 1486, who perforce appointed a commission to reform the rampant evils in his province.<sup>29</sup> He himself, as Bishop of Ely for ten years, was a flagrant example of prelatic dereliction, and is said to have officiated but once in his cathedral, and this on the day of his installation.

To most of his fellow-prelates of the period the charge of worldliness and neglect of duty or incapacity only too deservedly applies.<sup>30</sup> With the advent of Henry VII. and of Morton as

<sup>27</sup> Capes, "History of the English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," 258 (1900).

<sup>28</sup> Gascoigne's book has been edited with an exhaustive introduction by J. E. F. Rogers under the title, "Loci e Libro Veritatum" (1881).

<sup>29</sup> Gee and Hardy, "Documents illustrative of English Church History," 141 f.

<sup>30</sup> See Capes, 202 f.

Archbishop of Canterbury an attempt at reform was made in a statute which only too cogently reveals its necessity.<sup>31</sup> But the measure does not seem to have been very effective. Too many of the prelates—Morton, Fox, Warham, Wolsey, among the number—continued to be immersed in the business of the State at the cost of the proper discharge of their episcopal function. A visitation of the monasteries enjoined by Innocent VIII. in 1490 revealed grave disorders in some of them, and Polydore Vergil, an Italian who became Archdeacon of Wells, denounces among the evils rampant in the Church “the incredible degradation” of the monks, and longs for a General Council to reform it.<sup>32</sup> There may have been some improvement in the early sixteenth century. Wolsey, indeed, though himself a pluralist and the father of several children, convened a National Council in 1523 for the discussion of the question of reform (*ad tractandum de reformatione*<sup>33</sup>), and, on the eve of his fall, he appears to have contemplated the creation of several bishoprics and the trenchant reform of the secular and regular clergy. But the deliberations of the National Council seem to have had little or no effect.<sup>34</sup> That the demoralisation of the Church substantially remained appears from the arraignment by Colet and others of the manifold abuses in Henry VIII.’s reign. In “Colin Cloute” and other verses Skelton, Henry’s tutor and rector of Diss in Norfolk, as well as poet laureate, satirises the ignorance, worldliness, and moral laxity of his order with an amount of detail that was evidently derived from real life.<sup>35</sup> As in France and Germany, the humanist influence was thrown on the scale in favour of a practical

<sup>31</sup> i. “Henry, VII.” c. 4.

<sup>32</sup> See Fisher, “Political History of England,” v. 155 f. (1920).

<sup>33</sup> Wilkins, “Concilia,” iii. 700.

<sup>34</sup> For his reform schemes, see Letter of Fox to him, Strype, “Ecclesiastical Memorials,” i., Pt. II., 25 f. See also Taunton, “Thomas Wolsey, Legate and Reformer” (1902); Blunt, “Ref. of the Church of England,” i. c. ii. (7th ed., 1892). Brewer, on the other hand, thinks that he concerned himself very little with religious reform, “Reign of Henry VIII.,” ed. by Gairdner, i. 58. This seems too limited a judgment. Canon Dixon holds that the English clergy “at the beginning of the Reformation were the purest in the world,” “History of the Church of England,” i. 22. He gives no proof of this statement, and in any case, in view of the clerical demoralisation of other countries, this is no great compliment. Mr Gairdner thinks that a great improvement resulted from the efforts of Henry VII. and Morton, “Lollardy,” i. 275. He adduces no evidence in support of his belief.

<sup>35</sup> “The Poetical Works of Skelton,” ed. by Dyce (1843). I have left out of account Fish’s “Supplication of Beggars” as an extreme production.

reformation, with the patronage of the king himself, and doubtless quickened the sense of its necessity.

In the fifteenth century the Scottish Church produced a number of prelates and other notable men, whose work reflected honour on themselves and conferred benefit on their country. Three at least of the bishops of St Andrews—Traill, Wardlaw, founder of the University of St Andrews, and Kennedy, founder of one of its colleges—were men of outstanding ability and character. Bishop Turnbull of Glasgow also showed his interest in learning by founding the University of Glasgow, and Bishop Elphinstone shed lustre on the See of Aberdeen as prelate, statesman, and founder of its university. Other clerics of lower rank distinguished themselves by their scholastic learning and as academic teachers at home and abroad, from Laurence of Lindores at the beginning of the century to John Major in the early part of the sixteenth. A church that established three universities within less than a hundred years, that produced at least one theologian of European reputation, and counted among its prelates men like Wardlaw, Kennedy, Turnbull, and Elphinstone can hardly be described as an utterly decadent institution.

At the same time, by the beginning of the sixteenth century religion in Scotland appears to be in a crapulous condition. The evidence of decay is furnished by orthodox churchmen. From the thirteenth century onwards there are complaints in successive Scottish ecclesiastical councils of concubinage, of ignorant, incapable, and absentee priests, and other disorders.<sup>36</sup> The great wealth of the Church in proportion to that of the country had evidently proved detrimental to its spiritual life. The lavish gifts of land made by David I. to the religious houses which he founded and the misuse of this and subsequent accumulations of property by the older and newer orders alike, with the exception of the Spiritual or Observantine section of the Franciscans, led writers like Major and Bellenden to conclude that such generosity had done more harm than good to the Church and the country.<sup>37</sup> We have

<sup>36</sup> "Statutes of the Scottish Church," 14, 16, etc., ed. by Patrick, a trans. of Robertson's "Statuta Ecclesie Scoticanæ."

<sup>37</sup> Major, "History of Greater Britain," 136, 165 f., trans. by Constable, "Scottish Hist. Soc." (1892); Bellenden's Scottish version of Boece's "History," ii. 299 f. For the religious activity of the Observantines, see Bryce, "The Scottish Greyfriars," i. 60 f. (1909).

explicit evidence of the degeneracy of the Benedictine and Augustinian orders in the reign of James I., who strove to reform the Church as well as the State, and in 1425 warned their abbots and priors of the evil consequences of their relaxed discipline and urged a trenchant reformation.<sup>38</sup> When we enter the sixteenth century, there can be no doubt about the declension of religion and morality within the Scottish Church. This declension becomes simply a commonplace in official records as well as in the works of contemporary writers.<sup>39</sup> There is no explaining away the charges of worldliness, immorality, greed, simony, ignorance, general inefficiency in official documents both secular and ecclesiastical. In 1540, for example, Parliament complains of "the unhonestie and misrule of kirkmen baith in witte, knowlidge, and maneris."<sup>40</sup> If it be said that the Scottish nobility, who composed the bulk of the members, were estranged from the higher clergy as their rivals for State offices and their superiors in wealth, and therefore too prone to defame them, the same objection cannot be taken to the admission of the Provincial Council sitting at Edinburgh in 1549. It is still more explicit (in Latin) on "the corruption of morals and profane lewdness of life in churchmen of almost all ranks, together with crass ignorance of literature and of all the liberal arts."<sup>41</sup> The details contained in the acts of the Council furnish a sinister commentary on this general confession. There are "very grievous scandals arising from the incontinence of churchmen," the keeping by the clergy of children born of concubinage and the promotion of them to benefices.<sup>42</sup> Deans take bribes from those who

<sup>38</sup> "Acts of Parliament of Scotland," ii. 25 f.; cf. "Copiale Prioratus Sanctiandree," 104 f., 141, and the letters of Quintin Folkherd, *ibid.*, 230 f., ed. by Baxter (1930).

<sup>39</sup> Dr McCrie concludes that "the corruptions by which the Christian religion was universally disfigured before the Reformation had grown to a greater height in Scotland than in any other nation within the pale of the Western Church" ("Life of Knox," 7). Knox's biographer had apparently not read with due attention the testimonies to this corruption in other Western lands, which it would be difficult to outmatch from Scottish records.

<sup>40</sup> "Acts," ii. 370. There were six bishops and eight abbots present, and they evidently assented.

<sup>41</sup> "Statutes," 84.

<sup>42</sup> For details proved by authentic documents of the immorality of the clergy, high and low, see Hay Fleming, "Reformation in Scotland," 45 f. Father Forbes Leith endeavours to minimise this evidence, "Reformation Scholars in Scotland" (1915). See Hay Fleming's trenchant criticism in "Knox Club Publications," No. 39 (1916).

keep concubines and commit adultery. The clergy engage in secular pursuits and traffic in church lands to the neglect of the cure of souls. Pluralities, non-residence, and the practice of holding benefices *in commendam* are common. Discipline is relaxed in the monasteries and the neglect of preaching is widespread, etc. Nor was the attempt to remedy by pains and penalties the abuses, particularised and proscribed, of much, if any, effect. The higher clergy as well as the lower were too generally infected by the prevailing declension for the Church to reform itself. The records of a subsequent Council held in 1559 show that these statutes had not been effectively enforced.<sup>43</sup>

In view of this official testimony, it would be superfluous to add that of individual churchmen, such as John Major, John Bellenden, Archibald Hay, Ninian Winzet, Quentin Kennedy, Bishop Leslie, not to mention Sir David Lyndsay and John Knox, who joined the evangelical reform party.<sup>44</sup> The testimony of these churchmen serves to remind us that, though so seriously corrupt, there was still a leaven of good in the Scottish Church. In Scotland, as elsewhere, there was an active if small reform party within it whose zeal is not to be measured by its impotence. There were some good prelates if there were too many bad ones. Robert Reid, Abbot of Kinloss, Bishop of Orkney, and President of the College of Justice, and Alex. Inglis, Abbot of Cambuskenneth, for instance, who were distinguished by their interest in learning as well as by their blameless lives. Despite the complaints of the corruption of the regular clergy in official documents and other

<sup>43</sup> "Statutes," 135 f.

<sup>44</sup> For Lyndsay, see "The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay" (Laing's ed., 1879), and the ed. of the Scottish Text Soc. For Knox, "Historie of the Reformation," i. and ii., of "Works" ed. by Laing (1895). Major, "History of Greater Britain" (Scot. Hist. Soc.); Bellenden, "Scottish Version of Boece's History"; Archibald Hay, "Ad Dominum Davidem Betoun Panegyricus" (rare copy in the National Library); Nin. Winzet, "Certain Tractates," ed. by Hewison, Scot. Hist. Soc. (1888); Kennedy, "Ane Compendius Tractate," Misc. Woodrow Soc. I.; Leslie, "Historie of Scotland," ii., ed. by Cody and Murison, Scot. Text Soc. Add the "Complaynt of Scot.," composed in 1549, ed. by J. A. H. Murray, Early Eng. Text Soc. (1872), and Foxe's "Acts and Monuments"; "Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism," ed. T. G. Law (1884). The latest work on the monastic orders in Scotland is Dr Coulton's admirable "Scottish Abbeys and Social Life" (1933). The reader will rise from its perusal with a chastened sense of the literary and educational service ascribed to the Scottish monks. See also his Introduction to Richardson's "Commentary on the Rule of St Augustine," *Scot. Hist. Soc.*, 1935. The author appears to have been a monk of Cambuskenneth.

writings of the time, there was, it would appear, something of the old spirit of devotion left in some of the religious orders. As in the case of Luther himself, the Augustinian canons, especially those of the Priory of St Andrews, contributed a number of champions or martyrs of the evangelical Reformation in Alexander Alane or Alesius, Gavin Logie, John Wynram, and Thomas Forret. Almost equally numerous were the recruits whom the Reformation drew from the Dominican order. Knox, who was no friend of the monks, notes with satisfaction the readiness of many of the friars to accept the Reformation.<sup>45</sup> The declension of the friars at least—the Dominicans and Franciscans—was evidently less extreme than in the case of the secular clergy. We can in truth detect the presence of a reform movement within these orders which set many of their members to work to preach against the practical abuses of the time, and, in individual cases at least, in favour of even a reformation of doctrine. Knox himself may be cited as a witness of the fact. “Within few years efter” (the burning of Patrick Hamilton), “began baith Black and Grey Friars publictly to preach against the pride and idele lief of Bischoppis, and against the abuses of the whole ecclesiasticall estaite.”<sup>46</sup> “And yitt ever still,” he notes again, in speaking of the persecution of the early evangelical reformers, “did some lycht burst out in the myddis of darkness; for the breath of Christ Jesus entered evin in the cloisterris, als wiiall of Frearis as of monkis and channounis.”<sup>47</sup> In the case of the Dominicans this reforming zeal was due to the exertions of John Adam, Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen and superior of the order in Scotland. “The result of his labours,” says Boece, “was that there are now found among us many men of that order, learned, pious, and religious, who expound the Scriptures, take the triple vows of a monk, and preach.”<sup>48</sup>

The friars, it thus appears, distinguished themselves by their zeal in preaching at a time when it had fallen into almost complete disuse among the secular clergy. “It was thus a great novelty in Scotland,” notes Foxe in relating the martyrdom

<sup>45</sup> “History,” i. 36 and 62. See also Lorimer, “Scottish Reformation,” 165 f.

<sup>46</sup> “History,” i. 36.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 62.

<sup>48</sup> “Lives of the Bishops of Aberdeen,” 93, trans. by Moir for New Spalding Club (1894).

of Thomas Forret, Dean of Dollar, who preached every Sunday to his parishioners, "to see anye man preach, except a Blackfriar or a Greyfriar."<sup>49</sup> To judge from the sample of their sermons given by Knox, they harangued the people in homely fashion on the abuses of the time, interspersing their exhortations with rough stories and parables fitted to excite ridicule as well as indignation against the vices of the degenerate bishops and seculars.<sup>50</sup> Even Lyndsay has a good word for these friar preachers who do the work which the lazy and sensual bishops and parish priests neglected. Their preaching is, indeed, a redeeming feature of the ecclesiastical situation.

"War nocht the preching of the begging freris  
Tynt (lost) war the faith among the secularis."

Relatively to the seculars and some of the other orders, the activity and earnestness of the friars relieve the dark picture of religious declension to some extent, and this is especially true of the Observantine section of the Franciscans, who would appear to have remained faithful to their vows, and to have been among the most esteemed of these popular preachers. Both James IV. and V. took them under their especial protection in their quarrel with the laxer conventual section of their order. "By their care," wrote James IV. in their defence to Pope Julius II., "the salvation of souls is here most diligently advanced, the negligence of others more fully remedied, the sacraments administered, and the Word of Christ spread abroad by the lips of the faithful."<sup>51</sup>

#### INEVITABLE DISRUPTION OF THE CHURCH

As the leader of the Protestant revolt, Luther is often charged with the sin of unwarrantably disrupting the Catholic Church. In his defence it may be forcibly maintained that an effective Reformation was only possible by way of this revolt. The pre-Reformation reform movement had lamentably failed

<sup>49</sup> "Acts and Monuments," 1564, and see Laing's "Knox," i. App. V.

<sup>50</sup> See the Sermons of Friar Arth and Friar Seaton in "History," i. 36 f.

<sup>51</sup> "Epistolæ Regum Scotorum," i. 23, Ruddiman; Moir Bryce, "The Scottish Greyfriars," i. 92, and ii. 276 f. The letter of James V. to Clement VII. is equally appreciative, date 1531.

to remedy the intolerable evils that had made the Church under the late papal-mediæval régime largely a travesty of Christianity. The humanist reformers as well as the reforming churchmen (with the exception of a Ximenes) were alike powerless, in the face of the papal-curial opposition, to effect an adequate and permanent renewal of the religious life. The efforts of Wiclif and Hus to remodel the Church on the institutions of the early period had been paralysed by the opposition of the hierarchy as well as the pope. The reformers of Constance and Basle devoted nearly a quarter of the fifteenth century to the task of reform within the lines of the existing constitution, and failed. Under the popes of the second half of the century no lasting improvement was effected, and under some of them the condition of the Church went from bad to worse. Cardinal Cusanus wrought only a temporary and partial amendment of the German Church, and the reform movement of the Brethren of the Common Life shared the same fate. By the end of the fifteenth century the spirit of the "Modern Devotion" had lost its earlier intensity, and in any case its sphere was too limited to make much impression on the Church at large.<sup>52</sup> Savonarola's forlorn attempt at the close of it ended in his martyrdom, and his martyrdom conclusively showed the hopelessness of such attempts. "Luther himself," rightly remarks Villari, "could scarcely have been so successful in inaugurating his reform had not the sacrifice of Savonarola given a final proof that it was useless to hope in the purification of Rome, and that no attempt to reform the Church would possibly succeed without destroying her unity, at least for the time being."<sup>53</sup>

But should not the reformers have striven for "a Catholic reform of the Church" rather than "a reform of the Catholic Church," to use a later Jesuit phrase? The reformers might and in fact did contend that the Reformation achieved by them was Catholic, inasmuch as it preserved the doctrine and usage of the early Church as distinct from its later papal form, to which it pleases our Roman Catholic brethren exclusively to apply the designation Catholic. But was not the

<sup>52</sup> De Jong, art. "Een Nederlandsche Godsdienstige Beweging," in "Nederlandsch Katholieke Stimmten" (1928).

<sup>53</sup> "Savonarola," ii. 419 f.

*via media* of Erasmus the better, the more promising way? It might have been if Erasmus had possessed the militant qualities of a Luther. But the scholar, the critic, the moralist was largely a leader without followers, except in humanist circles. Learning and literature were his proper sphere, not the battlefield, where the fight demanded daring and determination. "It has been thought that the Reformation of the Church, which its own leaders knew to be urgently needed, might have come more easily and more successfully if the counsels of Erasmus could have prevailed over the counsels of Luther. With many of the faults that required correction, the grosser things which men's consciences permit, but which none can defend, this might very likely have been so; but it may be questioned whether sharper measures than Erasmus would have permitted were not necessary."<sup>54</sup> He was, besides, himself denounced as a heretic, and only saved his skin by a good deal of trimming. Moreover, it was very questionable whether the attempt to sew new cloth on an old garment would have met the hard necessity of the case, since compromise with the diseased and degenerate ecclesiasticism embodied in Rome had proved a failure in the past. For the papacy it was a question of "Aut Cæsar aut nullus." As things were, a permanent renewal of the religious life could only come by way of passionate religious conviction, coupled with a rare strength of will and a rare power of popular appeal. In the face of hard facts, what the Church needed was the application of the surgeon's knife rather than the physician's palliatives. What might have been seemed to be ruled out by what was. The historic situation, not our personal predilections, whatever they may be, conditioned the Reformation. It needed the Reformation to produce the counter-Reformation. "It has often been questioned," writes the Roman Catholic professor, F. H. Funk, "whether, had it [the Reformation] not occurred, a reform of the Church [of Rome] would have been possible. To return a simple negative would indeed be to despair of the Church's vitality and of Providence. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the reforms were far too long delayed, and that they were introduced only when the Church had been

<sup>54</sup> Allen, "Erasmus," 25 (1934). See also Figgis, "From Gerson to Grotius," 36.

shaken to her foundations and when a large fraction of the world had already abandoned her in disgust. History also shows us that the wholesale apostasy not only preceded, but actually caused the reforms within the Church. Hence there can be no doubt that the Church's improvement is closely bound up with the Protestant Reformation."<sup>55</sup> An accumulation of ecclesiastical abuse had grown up with the mediæval development of the papal monarchy and hierarchy. Development had ended in deformity and degeneration, and the time had clearly come not only to arrest, but to supersede it. After all, was it an aberration to go back to Christ and the early Church for the model of faith and practice, even at the cost of the disruption of a Church so palpably at variance in both respects with the Christian ideal? Pope, curia, and hierarchy might raise the outcry of heresy. There was no little force in Luther's retort that not he but the demoralised papal Church was the real heretic. At all events, it left him no alternative but to defy and disown this Church as anti-Christian. That, at any rate, it had become to a certain extent unchristian in creed and practice was patent enough. Hence the strength of the intrepid refusal of the heroic reformer to surrender in the presence of the emperor, the papal representative, and the ecclesiastical and secular estates of the empire. "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or an evident reason . . . I am held fast by the Scriptures adduced by me and my conscience is taken captive by God's Word, and I neither can nor will revoke anything. God help me! Amen!"<sup>56</sup> There can be no doubt that conscientious conviction was behind the movement in the case of Luther and his fellow-reformers. What was to him and to them the voice of God was the overmastering motive. Nothing less could have given to the movement in its religious aspect its strength and its power to prevail, though other adjuncts were there to abet it.

Those who tax Luther with the dismemberment of the German empire as well as the Catholic Church, as the result of the Protestant revolt, forget that the religious division was possible only because of the political division which had long been rending it. "There is no more preposterous assertion

<sup>55</sup> "Church History," ii. 271 (Eng. trans., 1910).

<sup>56</sup> "Reichstagsakten," ii. 555.

than the one often made that the appearance of Luther and the religious division created by him brought about or hastened the division of the empire. Turn the sentence round and it will be correct. Because the empire was already half dismembered was it possible for a permanent confessional division to arise. If the territorial states had not already been so powerful and independent, the ecclesiastical question would, in Germany, as in other lands, have been solved in a united fashion. Moreover, because the components of the empire had already attained so high a degree of independence and power, the emperor found it ultimately impossible to enforce a united faith." <sup>57</sup>

#### A FAR-REACHING MOVEMENT

The Reformation thus gave scope to the complex tendencies and forces which were forging the transition in Church and State from the mediæval to the modern age during the previous two centuries. In this respect it is a kaleidoscopic movement, in which the interplay of these forces is discernible. From this point of view it is the landmark of a far-reaching revolution of the Church, the State, Society in their mediæval form. It is a creative as well as a destructive movement, fraught with the potentiality of doom and destiny. It let loose the forces of which it was itself the outcome. Hence its surpassing interest. The purely theological element in this dynamic movement may have lost part of its appeal for the modern mind. We are apt to be bored rather than edified by the subtleties of the scholastic terminology and thought which encumber the intricate debate between the evangelical reformers and their ecclesiastical and scholastic opponents. Much of this is for us a dead sea of theological and philosophical shibboleths. At the same time it is infused by a religious verve and passion of conviction that invest it with the perennial interest of a living movement. It makes of religion once more an absorbing reality instead of the appalling sham, in its institutional form, which it had too largely become, even if it gave scope to the grosser instincts of human nature, the self-interested motives of too many of its patrons in high places. It effectively challenged and overthrew the papal autocracy and substituted for it the

<sup>57</sup> Haller, "Epochs of German History."

independent national Church in a large part of Western Christendom. It revived the Church Catholic in its early form as an autonomous organisation, even if it tended in Germany, Scandinavia, and England to subordinate it too much to the State. It dealt a crushing blow to mediæval priestcraft on behalf of the priesthood of the believer under Christ the supreme High Priest, and, in its Zwinglian and Calvinist form at least, recognised the right of the laity in the government of the Church. It asserted the supreme authority of Scripture as the norm of faith and practice and the unrestricted right of the Christian to read it in the vernacular. It made it the main factor in nurturing the individual religious life, the grand inspiration of faith and morality. It emphasised the importance of primary and higher education as an essential of the well-being of the Christian State as well as the Christian Church. It substituted for the monastic conception of the Christian life the life of active service in the world, and ennobled and vitalised the vocation of even the humblest Christian worker. In its earlier stage at least, it stood for liberty of thought and conscience in its struggle with the papal autocracy and the accumulation of superstition in belief and practice inherited from the Middle Ages. Luther's stand on behalf of freedom of belief against the Inquisition is magnificent. "We should seek to overcome heretics with arguments, not with fire. If there were any skill in overcoming heretics with fire, the executioner would be the most learned doctor in the world."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, he and too many of his fellow-reformers ultimately proved untrue to the principle on which they professed to base their cause. The maintenance of this principle was the task of the Renaissance rather than the Reformation, except in the case of reformers of the type of a Hans Denck, a Sebastian Franck, a Castellion, and the more moderate of the dissenting sects of the period. We are apt to forget that the movement was wider than the specifically Lutheran or Zwinglian or Calvinist version of it. It includes the large variety of religious thought and tendency embodied in the general anti-Roman movement of the time. In this and some other respects Luther and his fellow-reformers had withdrawn only one foot from the Middle Age. In their theology, for instance, they

<sup>58</sup> "Werke," vi. 455.

did not apply the critical method to the same degree as to the traditional Church. They retained more or less the belief in verbal inspiration and accepted the patristic creeds as the test of orthodoxy.<sup>59</sup> In his conflict with Zwingli and the Swiss reformers Luther even clung to the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament, if he discarded transubstantiation. Nor did he succeed in completely counteracting, even among his own adherents, the demoralisation against which the Reformation was a powerful protest. The principle of justification by faith alone might, and did to a certain extent, lead to moral laxity, though Luther was careful to insist on the moral as well as the doctrinal side of this principle. It would, indeed, have been a marvel had he transformed by the preaching of the Word the mass of his adherents into saints and martyrs, and created all at once the new creature in Christ. Paul himself could not accomplish this, as the Epistles to the Corinthians show. This was to be the work not of one man or of one generation, but of the gradual leavening influence of the Gospel. But even in his lifetime the good seed, sown in a soil so ill-cultured, produced, in spite of antinomian tendencies, a new type of evangelical piety—godfearing, self-disciplined, fertile in good works. It says much for the vitality of the movement that it ultimately succeeded in creating out of what seemed like chaos “an ordered Church, standing through the centuries upon its quickly laid foundations and upholding those simple virtues which are the common treasures of all good men.”<sup>60</sup>

In view of the long period of accumulating abuse which we have traversed we may well wonder why the Reformation was so long delayed. During this period the demand for reform and the effort to effect it had been made by rulers, corporate national bodies, international councils, parties and individuals within the Church as well as by sects outside it. Why did the reformer achieve so little? Why, on the contrary, did the condition of the Church seem to get worse rather than better? The failure of repeated attempts at reform was, in part, due to the political exigencies of the period, especially to the recurring warfare of the period.

<sup>59</sup> Loofs, “Dogmengeschichte,” 741 f.

<sup>60</sup> Allen, “Erasmus,” 26.

War—that curse and crime of humanity, denounced by the more enlightened minds of the age—was then, as ever, a terrible drag on the higher life of mankind. In England, for instance, the long duration of the war with France in the fourteenth century absorbed the energy of king and people, if it also gave rise to friction, on national and economic grounds, with the curia. A change of dynasty at the beginning of the fifteenth rallied the ruling house to the side of the Church and frustrated the Wiclifite reform movement. In Scotland the recurring strife between the crown and a turbulent nobility left little scope for reform in Church and State, in spite of long continued friction with the papacy over taxation and the ecclesiastical claims of the crown. In France the Hundred Years' War lasted into the middle of the century, and after its close the French monarchs were immersed in the struggle to consolidate their power on the ruins of that of the feudal nobility and extend it over Italy. In Germany and Bohemia religious reform was so interwoven with social-revolutionary reform that it ranged the dominant classes on the side of the old feudal order in Church as well as State. In Italy the multiplicity of warring states rendered unity of aim and enterprise in the general interest hopeless. Savonarola's reforming mission failed because there was no strong central power to back it against the pope, as in the case of Ximenes in Spain. In any case, the papacy as an Italian institution appealed to such Italian national feeling as then existed, and its preservation appeared on this ground a patriotic obligation.

Apart from such political exigencies, the spiritual forces tending towards an ultimate breach with the papacy were only in the making during this period. Such was the spell of Rome over the mind and conscience that organised religious dissent was confined to a few sects. It needed the degeneration of the later pre-Reformation papacy to weaken this spell before the anti-papal spirit could effectively assert itself. Similarly, the power of feudalism had to be broken before the sense of nationality, though more or less active in the later Middle Ages, could measure its full strength against the decadent papacy. Moreover, the critical spirit, as applied to historical origins, institutions, dogmas, though already operative in the fourteenth century in the works of a Marsiglio and an Occam, required

to develop and foster a widespread public opinion, under the growing influence of humanism, before it could expose the gradual process by which the papacy had imposed itself on the Western Church, and effectively challenge the dominant ecclesiastical system. Thus the fullness of the time, and with it the man of titanic nature to give full scope to these forces, only came with the dawn of the sixteenth century.

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