Die Beziehungen John Wiclifs und der Lollarden zu den Bettelmönchen.

Inaugural-Dissertation

zur

Erlangung der theologischen Doktorwürde

der

Hohen theologischen Fakultät

der

Ruprecht-Karls-Universität zu Heidelberg

vorgelegt von

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London
The Kingsgate Press, 4 Southampton Row, W.C.
1911.

Gedruckt, ausnahmsweise englisch, mit Genehmigung der theologischen Fakultät der Universität Heidelberg.

Dekan:
Prof. Dr. Tröltsch.

Referent:
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Heidelberg 1911.

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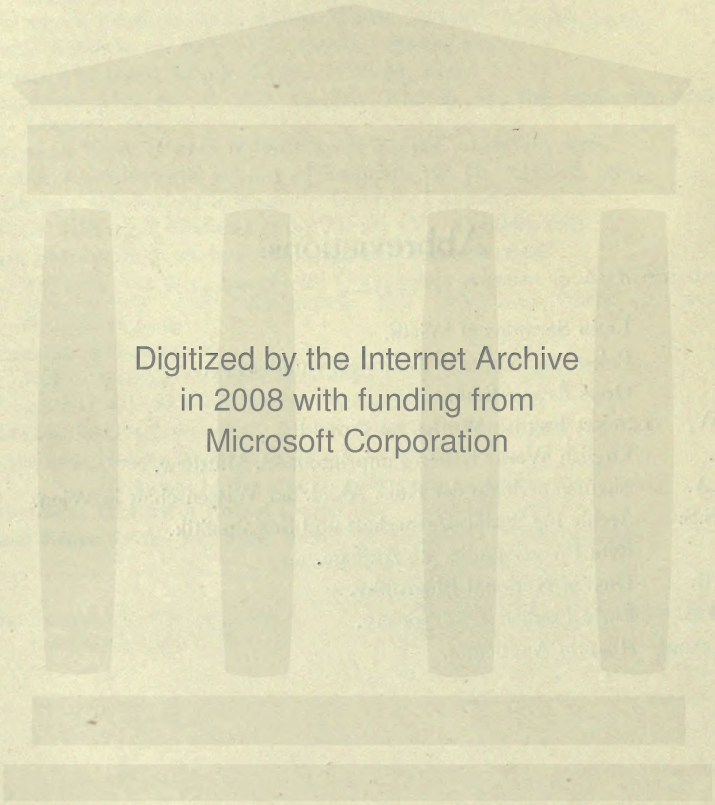
Abbreviations.

S.S.	Latin Sermons of Wiclif.
P.W.	Polemical Works in Latin, ed. Buddensieg.
O.E.	Opus Evangelium.
S.E.W.	Select English Works, ed. Arnold.
E.W.	English Works hitherto unprinted, ed. Matthew.
S.W.A.	Sitzungsberichte der Kais. Akad. der Wissenschaft in Wien.
Ar.f.S.S.	Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik.
R.E.	Real Encyclopädie, 3te Auflage.
D.N.B.	Dict. of National Biography.
E.E.T.S.	Early English Text Society.
Hist. Angl.	Historia Anglicana.



Preface.

The recent publication of the works of John Wiclif—many of them for the first time—by the Wiclif Society has made necessary a complete revision of the biography of Wiclif, and has furnished the material for such a revision. The activities of the Society have made it possible to examine many points connected with the Reformer's life and work that were hitherto obscure, and to exhibit an altogether clearer and more accurate presentation of his position. The attack on the Friars is one of the points that demand a thorough investigation on the basis of the new material at hand. The large place that attack occupies in the writings of the Reformer suggests that it was a more important part of his work than has yet been admitted, and that it demands at the hands of students of the period a more detailed treatment than it has hitherto received. The biographers of Wiclif have dismissed the subject with a few pages at most, and even then have done little more than discuss the question of the date when the controversy arose. No attempt has, as yet, been made to give a systematic presentation of Wiclif's objections to the Friars, or to unfold the positive position he developed against them. To supply this defect is the object of the present treatise, which is written in the belief that the ideals unfolded by Wiclif in this part of his activity are of vital importance for a just estimate of his life's work, and that they throw not a little light on his position as a reformer of the Medieval Church.

Mention should here be made of the fact that the smaller

tracts of Wiclif (to be edited by Loserth, v. R.E.[3], ix., p. 226) are not yet published. But so much is given on the subject of the Friars in the works of Wiclif that are easily accessible, that the Reformer's position on this point can with confidence be presented.

The subject matter presented no small difficulty, especially with regard to the arrangement of the material. It must be borne in mind that the two phases of the controversy discussed in Chapters II. and III. respectively run concurrently in the works of Wiclif, but the writer deemed it advisable for the sake of clearness to treat them separately even at the risk of a certain amount of repetition. Likewise, the unevenness of the chapters could scarcely be avoided if anything like a complete treatment of the subject was to be given—*e.g.*, in Chapter IV. it was useless to recapitulate the work done on the point by Mr. Matthew, yet it was felt necessary to show what bearing the presentation given in Chapters II. and III. had on the important question of the date of the outbreak of the controversy.

The writer desires gratefully to acknowledge the continued kindness and gracious help of Dr. H. von Schubert (Professor of Church History at the University of Heidelberg), under whose guidance the work was accomplished.

May, 1911. A. D.

Chapter I.

Previous Opposition to the Friars in its relation to Wiclif's Attack.

More than a hundred years had passed since the life of St. Francis gave the impulse to that religious revival which marked the thirteenth century, when John Wiclif brought the strength of his matured intellect to bear against the Friars. He was not the first to take up the cudgels against them. Throughout the whole century of development voices of criticism and condemnation had been raised. The new organisation, in spite of its favourable beginning, had its inevitable struggle for existence. The roots of the opposition go back to the days of the birth of the Orders. Before St. Francis died, signs of coming difficulties were appearing. He himself had forebodings of approaching struggle. His Testament was a last attempt to ward off that which he felt to be inevitably approaching. "Les dernières années de sa vie," says his biographer,[1]) "furent une *via dolorosa* aussi pénible que celle où son maître avait plié sous le poids de la croix,—car c'est encore une joie de mourir pour son idée—mais quelle amère douleur que d'assister par avance à l'apothéose de son cadavre et de voir son âme, je veux dire sa pensée, méconnue et trahie." Here, in the fact that the ideal of St. Francis was so early "méconnue et trahie," we have the source of one of the two currents of opposition to the Friars, that meet us in the century between St. Francis and Wiclif—viz., the opposition

[1]) Sabatier, Vie de S. Fran., p. ix.

springing from the corruptions that separated the practice of the mendicants from the ideal of the first Friar. It was the opposition that inevitably follows the later modification of an ideal. Not only did this lead to a severe criticism from within, which ultimately cut the Order in two, but it naturally provided a powerful handle of attack to all who ranged themselves against the mendicants from without, from William of St. Amour down to Wiclif himself.

But, even had the ideal of St. Francis never been "méconnue et trahie," conflict would have come. The Saint had declared, "No one showed me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I ought to live according to the form of the sacred evangel."[1]) That is, he made claim to a direct revelation from God, as the basis of his Order. He himself might succeed in combining with this claim a strict filial obedience to the Pope and to the existing order of clergy, but he could never guarantee that the Pope and clergy would always regard him and his followers strictly as sons. The inherent contradiction remained, and the inevitable result was a chasm between the newcomers and the old Church organisation. In renewing the apostolic life, St. Francis made live again the contradiction that existed in the Apostolic Church, viz., that between a settled ministry on the one hand, and a charismatic ministry, claiming special inspiration, on the other. In the case of the Friars, this contradiction was made the more evident when the Pope did accept the new organisation as his own and made it the special instrument of his activities. "In den Bettelorden schuf sich der römische Papst ein Werkzeug um die Landeskirche fester an seinen Stuhl zu Knüpfen, und die Selbständigkeit der Bischöfe zu brechen,"[2]) says a famous historian. That being the case, an attack from the side of the older organisation was inevitable. The clergy ranged themselves against

[1]) Testament, Boehmer's Analekten, p. 37; cf. Spec., p. 51.
[2]) Harnack, Mönchtum, p. 53.

the Franciscans—and since the other three Orders under the Pope's protection came to share similar privileges and to take up a similar position to that of the first founded, the clergy placed themselves in opposition to the whole fraternity of begging monks.[1])

These two streams of opposition, then—the one taking its rise in the corruption of the ideal of St. Francis, the other in the contradiction hidden in the very basis of the Orders—make up the antagonism to the Friars before Wiclif, and flow on side by side throughout the whole century that leads us to the English Reformer.

Nor were these two streams confined to the Continent. They characterise also the religious life of England during this century between St. Francis and Wiclif. The Friars were not allowed to settle in our island unchallenged, and we find them attacked in England before Wiclif from these same two points of view. In the writings of our author alone, as we shall see later, there is abundant evidence that the spiritual Franciscans were by no means a small body in this country, and that they did not fail to lament the fall of their brother Friars from the original ideal of strict poverty. From the other side, both monks and clergy raised their voices against the invaders. The antagonism of the former was early voiced by no less famous and capable a person than Matthew Paris—the greatest of the chroniclers of St. Albans.

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[1]) For the cause of this opposition to the Friars on the part of the clergy, compare the brilliant sketch by E. Troeltsch in "Die Sociallehren der christlichen Kirchen," in Ar. f. S. S., Bd. S. xxviii. Heft 2. This writer distinguishes between the "Kirchentypus" and the "Sektentypus" of the Middle Ages. "Die Sekte geht aus von der Predigt Jesu und dem Vorbild Jesu, von der subjectiven Leistung der Apostel und dem Muster ihres armen Lebens. . . . (p. 403) die Sekte ist Laienchristentum. . . ." He says further: "Auch die franziskanische Bewegung gehörte urspünglich dem Sektentyphus der laien Religion an. Hier aber begriff die Kirche die Lage und gliederte die neue Bewegung ihrem System ein." . . . However, the inherent contradiction between the "Kirchentypus" and the "Sektentypus" remained, and gave rise to serious opposition to the mendicants.

His attack[1]) belongs to the first years of the mendicants' activity in these islands. He complains of their high convents, of their custom of hoarding up wealth in spite of their vow of poverty, of their extortion practised in the making of wills and in the confessional, of their contempt for the older Orders founded by St. Benedict and St. Augustine. They are to him the "executors of the Papal extortions," and in their rapacity and greed they have far exceeded the prophecies concerning them made by St. Hildegard[2]) years before their introduction. The Chronicler is interesting as combining the monastic opposition to the mendicants with the antagonism of the patriot to these emissaries of the Pope—a combination peculiarly English, and one which, as we shall notice, is especially strong with Wiclif.

The clergy of England found the ablest exponent of their views in Richard Fitz Ralph, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. He is the most distinguished opponent of the mendicants on English soil before Wiclif. His attack brings us into the Reformer's own lifetime. They were in Oxford together, Fitz Ralph as tutor, Wiclif as student. However, it was not in Oxford that Wiclif heard anything of the opposition of Fitz Ralph to the Friars, for it was not until the latter had taken up his residence in Ireland that he adopted an attitude of hostility towards them. In 1349 we find him in Avignon as the representative of the English clergy to negotiate concerning certain well-known complaints against the Friars. His attack is from the standpoint of the parish priest. The title of his book, "Defensio Curatorum," gives his point of view.

There can be no doubt that Wiclif was greatly influenced

[1]) v. Chron. Mag. IV., pp.279–280.

[2]) Hildegard plays an important part in this controversy. Wiclif and his followers frequently refer to her. The poems of the time use her name. Even a work such as Pecock's "Repressor" mentions her. Evidently her influence was considerable in England during this period: v. Pecock, p. 483; cp. Trial. IV., 26; S. E. W., IV., p. 413.

by this previous opposition to the mendicants. He is, in a measure, a representative of both the lines of opposition that we have traced. He had too much experience of the parish priest's life not to feel keenly the evil of the interference of the Friars in the existing organisation,[1]) while his own ideal of a poor Church could not fail to make him realise how sadly the Orders had departed from the ideal of the first Friar.[2]) He himself speaks of his indebtedness to these former attacks. In his tract, "De Ordinacione Fratrum,"[3]) which is a kind of *Apologia pro Sua Vita*, he declares: "We are not the first to inveigh against them, but lately the blessed Richard Fitz Ralph, Bishop of Armagh, laboured to purge the Church from the crimes recently introduced by the sects of the Friars. And so also laboured Occam and many other faithful Friars to the expulsion of those brethren who had departed from the original rule. And the same did William of St. Amour, with many others after the Friars began. Yea, Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, Grosseteste,[4]) and subtle of wit, inveighed against them severely, when he was near his end and was in character more mature. What suspicion of evil, therefore, if we, entering into their labours, have added more over and above them of the innovation of the crimes of the Friars?"[5])

Here Wiclif directly claims to be in line with the previous opponents of the mendicants. That he knew their works on the subject is clear, especially when we remember that these very men were his teachers on theological and

[1]) E. W., p. 445. S. S., II., p. 337; III., 310. P. W., 28.

[2]) E. W., p. 39.

[3]) P. W., I., pp. 91-92.

[4]) Grosseteste, we believe, cannot in any sense be regarded as Wiclif's forerunner in the attack on the Friars: v. Appendix.

[5]) It will be noticed that Wiclif does not mention Matthew Paris, but he probably knew of the Chronicle, which he seems to have used—especially the account there given of Grosseteste's last days: v. Appendix. The patriotic side of Matthew's work would certainly attract Wiclif. Hence it is at least a probability that the Reformer did owe something in this matter to the Chronicler of St. Albans.

kindred subjects, and serve throughout his works as the authorities for his teaching.[1]) It must be remembered, too, that some of the questions that constantly occupy the Reformer's mind came to him after frequent discussion—as that, *e.g.*, concerning the poverty of Christ, and that of the begging of Christ. Such discussion Wiclif knew of, and probably used. The whole framework of his attack—his likening the Friars to the Pharisees, his regarding them as the followers of Antichrist—he has in common with his forerunners. Yet here it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that this framework came originally from the Bible, and we have Wiclif's own testimony to the influence of the Bible on the formation of his reform ideas.[2])

But however much Wiclif is indebted to his predecessors, his position against the Friars is essentially new and original. He "added more and above them," and not only is it that he is more vehement than his forerunners, but his point of view is different. It is neither from the standpoint of an Occam, nor from that of a Richard Fitz Ralph of Armagh, that Wiclif turns the engines of his invective against the Friars. His aim is neither to restore the Orders to their pristine purity, nor to defend the right of the parish priest. His attack is rather a thorough investigation of the foundation, the *raison d'être*, of the "newly introduced sects." The question he asks is not, "Are they what they ought to be?" but rather, "Ought they to be at all? Was their origin justified?" He will examine them by the two great canons—the canon of Scripture and the canon of Jesus Christ, truly man and truly God[3])—and discover whether they can stand or no. It is this that distinguishes Wiclif from the former enemies of the mendicants. It is in this that he goes far beyond either

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[1]) Cp. Green's Hist., p. 236; cp. also S. E. W., IV., 281, 412, 416; also De Blas., 232ff.

[2]) S. S., III., p. 199.

[3]) P. W., I., p. 14.

of the two streams, which we have seen characterised the opposition before his day. Here for the first time, not merely the corruptions in the system, not merely its bad effects, but the very first principles of the Orders, the institution itself, met with a ruthless criticism on the basis of Scripture—and this criticism was levelled against it by one who had no compeer in his knowledge of the Bible and in his power of exegesis, and who was by far the most distinguished representative in his day of that system of learning which the Friars had so adorned. The criticism is that of a scholastic theologian ; and we can say, in this particular, what Shirley says of Wiclif in general—" It was to his supreme command of the weapons of scholastic discussion that he owed his astonishing influence."[1])

His point of view being different, the result at which Wiclif arrives is also different from that of his predecessors. At most, they had sought only a reformation of the Orders. Even the opponents from the point of view of the older organisation had merely aimed at limiting the power of the mendicants with regard to the confessional and other ecclesiastical functions. They had sought a working agreement between the new organisation and the old. Wiclif, on the other hand, desires no reformation, and will have nothing to do with a working agreement. His conclusion is that the Friars are not merely useless but pernicious. They must therefore be completely abolished. Annihilation—their expulsion from Church and State—that is the end to which Wiclif's opposition is directed.[2]) The truth is, that annihilation was the only logical method of ending the contradiction that existed between the new Orders and the old organisation. It was left to Wiclif to formulate a thorough-going biblical theory, which once accepted would completely overthrow the whole institution. It is that that is new in Wiclif's attack, and it is that

[1]) Fasc. Ziz., p. xlvii.
[2]) S. S., I., 179.

that made him the keenest, the most systematic, and the most dangerous critic that the Friars ever found.

It is of more than usual interest to recall that this preacher of the policy of annihilation not only to the end of his days "exalted to the skies" the Franciscan ideal of poverty, but sent out a body of preachers who, in aim and method, can be compared only with the first enthusiastic disciples of the mystic of Assisi. How two men so different as were St. Francis and Wiclif—the one a dreamer, the other above all a practical man, the one simple and unlearned, the other trained in the logic of the schools—how these two, traversing different paths, could come to an ideal so similar, and yet remain so far apart, that is the fascinating study presented by this episode in the history of the Church.

The opposition we have so far traced was of a scholastic, theological nature, confined to the theologians and thinkers of the day. We have endeavoured to show Wiclif's relation to that opposition, and we shall see throughout a continuance in his work of this scholastic movement—though with him it is more thorough and drastic. However, in Wiclif's attack there is, side by side with this, an opposition of an entirely different nature—an opposition which we believe is most distinctive of Wiclif's position, and which explains in no small measure his policy of annihilation. This side of the Reformer's work, also, had its preparation in England, though here it was rather the atmosphere of the time than the books of theologians that formed the influence ; and in the development of a man such as Wiclif, that counts for more than the purely intellectual preparation derived from the close study of previous workers in the same field. The seed of this opposition is to be found in the social and political aspirations of the day. In England the pressure of a bad social system was turning men's minds to the consideration of social problems, and consequently also to the consideration of political problems. Men feeling the pinch of poverty began to look

with envy on the wealth of the clergy and monks, and especially on the incongruous riches of the mendicants. It is such a feeling that runs through the great patriotic poem of the period, "Piers the Plowman." The first two editions of the poem—the first appearing in 1362, and the second and longer one at the time when Wiclif was beginning his life's work, about 1377—speak out clearly and bitterly against the mendicants. Complaint is made that the Friars preach only "for profyt of theore wombes," that they "glosyne the Gospel as hem good liketh,"[1]) while it is significant that the author discusses the question whether men should work, and has some severe words to say against worthless beggars. A picture of the method of the Friars in the confessional is drawn with satirical strokes in the confession of Mede.[2]) Milman[3]) well sums up the attitude of the poem in the following passage:—"For St. Benedict, for St. Dominic, for St. Francis, the author has the profoundest reverence. But it is against their degenerate sons that he arrays his allegorical host; the Friars furnish every impersonated vice, are foes to every virtue; his bitterest satire, his keenest irony, are against their dissoluteness, their laziness, their pride, their rapacity, their arts, their lies, their hypocrisy, their delicate attire, their dainty feasts, their magnificent buildings, even their proud learning. Above all, their hardness, their pitilessness to the poor, their utter want of charity, which with Langland is the virtue of virtues." Here we see another movement against the Friars. Here it is the cry of the oppressed against the oppressor, rather than the lament of the indignant ecclesiastic at the sight of his dwindling influence. It is not, as previously, a voice from the cloister or the university, but a voice from the people. The standpoint is that of the patriot and social reformer.

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[1]) Prologue, IV., 58.
[2]) Passus, III., 35f.
[3]) Latin Christianity, IV., p. 536.

The grievance is not ecclesiastical but social. That is the interest of the poem in this connection—that it bears witness to a rising popular movement against the Friars; a movement having its source in the social and political life of the nation rather than in the religious. How far the poem influenced Wiclif it is impossible to say; but that he was ignorant of it is unthinkable, especially when we consider the wide and speedy popularity it won. It is, as we shall see, with this opposition on the part of earnest patriots and social reformers even more than with the opposition of the Church represented by such a man as Richard Fitz Ralph of Armagh, that we must link the attack of Wiclif. The Reformer does, it is true, represent and fully develop the religious opposition to the mendicants; but, nevertheless, the nerve of his invective against them is to be found in his social, patriotic zeal. The interest of Wiclif is, that he combines the scholastic, theological opposition with the popular movement. He is the combination of Piers Plowman and Richard Fitz Ralph of Armagh. It was, however, men of such feeling as is expressed in Piers Plowman that specially recognised in Wiclif their champion. The smouldering opposition in the midst of the populace was only requiring a leader to bring it to a flame. Wiclif became that leader—the leader of a national movement. Significantly enough, owing to Wiclif's position against the Church itself, one of the effects of his controversy with the Friars was to fill up the breach that had existed between mendicants and clergy. They united against the common enemy. Herod and Pilate, as the Reformer expresses it, became friends.[1]) Hence Wiclif, though developing the old scholastic position against the Friars, did not become the leader of the clerical movement against them, but rather the people's leader against both mendicants and clergy—a fact which to a large extent explains the distinctive features of his position.

[1]) Trial., p. 375. Fasc. Ziz., p. 284.

Chapter II.

The Political Side of the Attack. Influence of Wiclif's Patriotism.

What, then, is the standpoint of Wiclif in this controversy with the Friars, and how does his attack relate itself to the remainder of his work of reformation ?

To answer this question it is necessary to appreciate the precise nature of the Reformer's development, and the growth of those ideals that led him ultimately to adopt an attitude of uncompromising hostility to the Hierarchy. Wiclif was one of those men who show a marked dependence on the life and activity around them. He was essentially a son of his time. Spirituality and practicability, asceticism and a living interest in all that concerned his country and his countrymen—that is the rare combination that meets us in the personality of England's greatest Reformer. His outlook is essentially that of a patriot and a statesman ; and apart from the social and political history of the period, his development is inexplicable. The reform ideals of Wiclif sprang out of the England of Wiclif's time.

The years which immediately preceded the period of the Reformer's activity are looked back upon as the days when the foundations of English democracy were laid. The victory for liberty won in the reign of John, the sturdy blows for freedom struck by Simon de Montfort, the establishment of a representative Parliament, and the consolidation of the administration of the realm in the glorious days of Edward I. —all this, coupled with the great contemporary social move-

ments, the rise of the lesser baronage, the rapid growth of the towns, the improved trade with Flanders,[1]) brought to Englishmen an entirely new view of their position in relation to the government of their country, and an entirely new sense of their responsibility. The period is marked by the strengthening of individuality accompanied by the growth of national pride. However, the wars with Scotland, Wales and France, which did so much to strengthen and foster this national pride, were a heavy drain on the exchequer, with the result that the awakening of the people to the realisation of their solidarity was accompanied by a feeling of discontent at the pressure of national burdens. It was the meeting of just these two factors—rising national feeling on the one hand, and an ever-increasing burden of taxation on the other—that gave its distinctive form to the patriotism of the day. Every outburst of national feeling is accompanied by a certain impatience towards those who appear slow to bear the burdens of the State. Such impatience showed itself in England towards the Church. To a king or statesman seeking new fields of revenue the Church was an unworked mine, while to the people, feeling the burden of taxation and glowing with a newly-awakened love of country, it was a source of continual irritation that such a large and wealthy portion of the nation did so little to replenish the empty coffers of the treasury. Thus the national feeling took the form of opposition to the Hierarchy. Patriotism was anti-clerical. The attitude of the Pope and the bearing of the clergy tended only to increase the discontent. The demands of Bonifaz VIII., expressed in the famous Bull "Clericis laicos," and his claim in 1301 to Scotland as a fief of the Roman See,[2]) not merely strengthened the opposition but gave Edward I. the opportunity of establishing a precedent by denying and nullifying the claims of Rome.

[1]) Cp. Green's History, p. 202ff.

[2]) v. *ibid.*, p. 192.

In the early days of Edward III.'s reign the renewal of the war with France made again pressing the problem of taxation. Hence we find a fresh outburst against the Hierarchy. The old questions of the right of the King to appropriate the wealth of the Church in time of pressing need, and the duty of the clergy to pay to the exchequer in proportion to their wealth and influence, were again discussed in Parliament. The first Statute of Provisors, to limit the power of the Pope and to strengthen that of the King with respect to the allocation of benefices, and the first Statute of Praemunire, which struck a blow at the power of the clergy by forbidding appellations to Rome, were passed into law while Wiclif was a student at Oxford. The national feeling grew with the news of the victories of Crécy and Poitiers, while the national reverence for the Pope was weakened by the fact that he now held his Court at Avignon, and showed himself more and more dependent on the will of the country's enemy.

Such was the atmosphere in which Wiclif's ideals grew and ripened. An ardent patriot, above all a practical man, with a living interest in his fellow-countrymen and a burning sympathy for the poor, it was impossible for him to remain aloof from the political and social agitation of the day; and it is as the champion of the national, anti-hierarchical feeling that he, in 1376,[1]) took the first step along that road that led to his work of reformation. He appeared in that year as the champion of the rights of King and Parliament to appropriate in time of need the goods of the Church. Had he remained where he stood then, as a Reformer of the Church he would never have been known. His name would have come down to us as that of an English patriot, whose position was not unlike that of Edward I. But Wiclif's trained mind was bound to carry his doctrine to its logical conclusion. His thorough study of the Bible only convinced him of the justice

[1]) Not 1366, as the older biographers have it: v. Loserth, S. W. A., p. 30ff.

of his position, and, standing on this basis, reached along patriotic lines, he devoted himself to a complete reform of the Church. His position can be summed up in two propositions—firstly, the Church must be poor as in the days of the apostles, and, secondly, the lay power has not only the right, but the duty, to compel it to be so. That was Wiclif's solution of the political problem of his time. And that solution of the political problem he believed would be, too, the solution of the problem presented by the state of the English Church. His love of country and his love of the Church here meet. They are, in fact, one. His aim was a reformation of the Church, but a reformation for the good of the State. Disendowment of the Church is good for the State—directly, for it relieves the pressure of taxation; indirectly, for it makes a stronger and more spiritual Church. So far as the relation of Church and State is concerned, Wiclif will renew the conditions that existed in the Anglo-Saxon period of our history. He will have a truly State Church, one body comprising the whole nation in a uniformity of religion, and being entirely subject to the secular rulers of the realm. We see here, in fact, the rather curious position of the advocacy of a policy of disendowment in the interests of a State Church. Even as a Church reformer his standpoint is that of a statesman. His zeal is patriotic in its origin rather than religious.

Now it was on the basis of this patriotic position, calling for the disendowment of the Church, that Wiclif was brought into bitter opposition to the Hierarchy. Was this position also the cause of his antagonism to the mendicants? That is the question we have now to consider.

What, then, was the relation of the Friars to Wiclif's doctrine of disendowment?

In the Parliament of 1374, we find, during a discussion concerning the claims of the Pope, a member of the Franciscan Order taking up a position precisely similar to that which

Wiclif adopted two years later;[1]) and, further, when Wiclif was summoned before Courtenay, Bishop of London, in 1377, among his defenders sent to him by his patron, John of Gaunt, were four members of the Mendicant Orders.[2])

It would be, however, an unwarranted assumption to infer that, because one or two members of the Orders supported his theory, therefore the whole body of Friars were with him. That there were some members of the Orders who were favourable to Wiclif throughout the whole of his activity is clear, as is also the fact that to the end the Reformer had the warmest regard for the more spiritual and faithful of the Friars. When the controversy is at its height, he frequently declares that there are some good ones amongst the mendicants who faithfully keep the ordinance of Christ and His Gospel.[3]) He calls them "fratres simplices,"[4]) a phrase always implying a certain praise when used by Wiclif, and being, indeed, the very term he employs to designate his own followers.[5]) His frequent appeals to them to leave their Orders and join the pure "sect of Christ" shows that he knew he had sympathisers amongst them. The book "De Apostasia" is devoted entirely to an attempt to win over the faithful Friars, by showing them what apostasy really is. In that book he calls those who live the apostolic life of poverty "filios karissimos."[6]) In as late a work as the "Trialogus," where his language against the Friars is as strong as in any of his writings, he shows that he still has grounds to hope for the conversion of members of the Orders, and, in fact, he states this as the aim of the whole controversy. "For I suppose," he says, "that some Friars

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[1]) Loserth, S. W. A., pp. 43 and 91.

[2]) Chron. Anglie, p. 118. Cp. Lechler, I., p. 369.

[3]) S. S., II., 104; E. W., p. 298; S. S., IV., 109, III., 223; P. W., I., 371.

[4]) P. W., I., 370-71.

[5]) E. W., pp. 298 and 398.

[6]) Page 44.

whom God shall see fit to teach will be converted, and devoutly embrace the religion of Christ in its primitive purity, and abandoning their perfidy will seek and obtain freedom from Antichrist and return of their own account to the primitive religion of our Lord"[1])—a passage not to be taken, as by Lechler[2]) and Burdensieg,[3]) as a prophecy foretelling the coming of Luther, but rather as an indication of what Wiclif expected of the more spiritual and faithful Friars. Such a hope presupposes the knowledge of the existence of a sympathetic attitude, at least, among some members of the Orders. And of this Wiclif was to the end conscious.

This bearing of individual members of the Orders proves nothing, however, as to the attitude of the main body of Friars. Nay, the fact that Wiclif frequently complains of the persecution of these faithful ones in the Orders by their brethren, and, indeed, identifies their persecution with that of his own followers,[4]) suggests that the majority of the Friars were the bitter opponents of these more spiritual brethren, who so nearly approached the ideal of the Reformer. If we consider the question whether as a class the Friars were likely to support Wiclif's theory of a poor Church the only possible answer is in the negative.

In the first place, had Wiclif's ideal of poverty been precisely the ideal of St. Francis—which was really the impulse that gave to all the four Orders their distinctive vow—we dare not assume that therefore the whole body of the Friars would have rallied heartily around his standard. We have seen that, long before, a cleavage had arisen in the Franciscan Order in the attempt to interpret the ideal of the founder.[5]) While there was a minority still devoted to the

[1]) IV., 30.
[2]) I., p. 590.
[3]) p. 212.
[4]) S. S., II., 104, 359; E. W., p. 51; P. W., I., 371; S. E. W., III., 489.
[5]) v. above, page 1.

ideal of absolute poverty, the majority had long ago accepted the various modifications of the original mode of living. The Friars in England were the same in practice as their brethren on the Continent. The majority were not spiritual Franciscans, nor would they be ready to abandon without a struggle their wealthy convents and a mode of living to which they had become thoroughly inured, merely at the bidding of a social and political theorist. On the contrary, it was more likely that they would resent such a theory as that of Wiclif, for what more was it but an exposure of their fall from their original purity and an advertisement of the wide discrepancy that existed between their theory and their practice ? When they found it expedient to drive from their fellowship and persecute with bitterness their own brethren who desired to remain true to the vow of absolute poverty, was it likely that, as a body, they would welcome the new theory of one who was not, and never had been, a member of any of the Orders ?

Again—as will appear in Chapter III. of this discussion —the theory of Wiclif was not that for which St. Francis had stood, and was not by any means a characteristic tenet of the Friars. The poverty of the whole Church—a drastic policy of disendowment—was not likely to find support among men who had not only abandoned their original ideal of poverty for themselves, but had, in fact, endowed themselves to such an extent as to appear in this respect a serious rival to the older Orders of Monks, who had heaped up endowments from the beginning. The Friars were included in Wiclif's doctrine. Disendowment meant a loss to them as well as to clergy and monks, and the doctrine was no more likely to win their support than that of the other two sections of the Church.

Further, the Reformer's point of view, as we have noted, was that of a defender of a State Church, whose poverty would be good for the State, and over whose wealth the State

has a just right of control. Such teaching was in direct antagonism to the Papal position of the Middle Ages, which could brook no interference, on the part of the secular rulers, in the affairs of the Church. The position of Wiclif is seen in its true light when viewed as the direct contrast to the aim of such a Bull as the famous "Clericis laicos." It was, as the Pope recognised, the lineal descendant of the position taken up by Marsilius of Padua in his book "Defensor Pacis." Such a theory could hardly hope for support from the Friars who were still, as formerly, the tools of Rome, especially when Wiclif drew his conclusion that the Pope himself could hold no temporal power. The fact that the Reformer was a representative of the anti-hierarchical patriotic feeling in England, and that his doctrine of disendowment had its roots in that feeling, would be sufficient to rouse the suspicions of the mendicants ; and when we remember that in 1377 Gregory XI. denounced the teaching of Wiclif in four Bulls, we can scarcely think that the Friars would look with anything like favour on the condemned doctrine.

If we ask how Wiclif, in the light of his doctrine of disendowment, would be likely to regard the Orders, we can only arrive at a similar conclusion. The Reformer was well aware of the corruptions that had crept into the Orders in the matter of the possession of worldly goods ; and it was by no means likely that, when he attacked all sections of the Church for their possession of wealth, he would have nothing to say concerning this influential body, who added to their error with regard to temporalities the further sin of hypocrisy. It was inevitable for him to distinguish, sooner or later, his own theory of poverty from the well-known practice of the Friars.

An examination of our author's writings shows both that the Friars did oppose this, the earliest doctrine of the Reformer, and that Wiclif did vigorously attack them on the basis of this very theory. It is astonishing what a large *rôle*

this question of the possession of worldly goods plays in his invective against the mendicants. In his books, "De Officio Pastorali" and "Dialogus," which are the earliest works in which he attacks the Friars—so far as the present state of research in the Wiclif literature allows us to judge—it is the main point of contention against them; while it still occupies a large space in his latest writings—as, for instance, the "Trialogus" and "Fifty heresies and errors of the Friars." In fact, scarcely a single tract in which the mendicants are mentioned fails to condemn them for their hypocrisy with regard to their large possessions. "Friars," Wiclif says, "bear the banner for subtle and feigned poverty." [1]) "What order of mendicants," he writes, "is not defective as regards evangelical doctrine in the number of persons as in the quantity of temporal goods and treasure?" [2]) He denounces again and again their erection of convents—"Caim's castles," [3]) as he calls them—and their hoarding up of wealth in these convents. "For they no longer have dwellings for a day, as they are said to have done in the beginning, but they have dwellings for many years, and garments, with their own treasures, which undoubtedly are contrary to the Christian rule." [4]) In one of his Latin sermons Wiclif asks the question as to which are worst, Friars or Monks.[5]) His conclusion is that Friars not only have the faults of the older Orders with regard to temporalities but hypocrisy as well, and he concludes, "simulata sanctitas est duplex iniquitas." They heap up riches and simulate poverty, and in this, "Friars solemnise hypocrisy, and are more distant from the apostolic

[1]) S. S., II., p. 102.

[2]) *Ibid.*

[3]) The following explains this rather curious phrase:—"Labia habent ex infeccione mendacii crucuata et manus plena sanguine humano: et sic iste homicide de genere Caym sunt, ut hoc nomine quatuor literarum figurati, ita ut C dicat Carmelites, A Augustinenses, Y Jacobites, M Fratres Minores. S. S., II., 84. Cp. "Trial.," pp. 306, 302, 362.

[4]) O. E., p. 349.

[5]) S. S., II., p. 118ff.

custom than are the endowed Orders." In a line with all this is the Reformer's reiterated denunciation of their hypocritical tricks and evil practices, which, he maintains, have their root in an inordinate love of temporal goods. Thus, while endowing themselves in their "Caim's castles," they feign that they have nothing "in proprio nec communi." [1]) They preach only for the sake of hoarding up wealth. Every kind of trickery they use in their begging, and so are worse simonists than Simon Magus himself.[2]) They sell their letters of fraternity, professing to give the buyers a share in the merits of the prayers of the whole Order, and, in addition, hypocritically maintain that their letters are of more worth than those of other Orders, because their Order is dearer to God.[3]) So the whole work of their lives has, according to Wiclif, degenerated into a gigantic fraud, the aim of which is the heaping up of riches. Nor is it that, in attacking these various corruptions, the Reformer looks at them from the point of view of a spiritual Franciscan, who merely sees that the disciples have left the ideal of their founder. His standard of comparison is not the life of St. Francis but the apostolic rule. He looks at all these abuses in the light of his own reform ideal. The practice of the Friars is radically opposed to the apostolic poverty of the Church, and love of temporalities is the root of all the evils of the mendicants, exactly as it is the root of all the evils of Pope, clergy, canons, and monks.

That the Friars, from their side, did strenuously oppose Wiclif's doctrine of the poverty of the Church shows itself in their persecution of Wiclif's "poor priests." This is continually referred to by the Reformer, and often with bitterness. It made a great impression on him, and he laid it entirely at the door of the Friars, in spite of the fact that they were well seconded by the clergy. "Of a

[1]) S. S., III., p. 164.
[2]) S. S., II., p. 340.
[3]) E. W., p. 317.

truth," he says in his "Trialogus," [1]) "of all the sins I have ever marked in the Friars, this appears to me the most iniquitous, for it has proceeded entirely from the unanimous consent and counsel of the Friars." No doubt this persecution increased as the Reformer became fiercer in his denunciations of the mendicants; but it is really an attack on Wiclif's doctrine of poverty. The sending out of the "poor priests" remains yet in some obscurity, but their mission is perfectly clear. "Verbreitung der Bibel, evangelishe Mission war der Zweck dieses lebenskräftigen Instituts," says Buddensieg.[2]) But what was the nature of that evangelical mission, the significance of that spreading abroad of the Bible? The Bible was the basis of Wiclif's ideal of poverty. It gave the account of that apostolic Church he sought to renew, and if his missionaries were sent out to preach the Gospel, that Gospel was the Gospel as Wiclif saw it, and the essence of that was the doctrine of the poverty of the Church. To preach that political, religious theory was the mission of the "poor priests," and it was that doctrine the Friars opposed in their persecution. Two passages referring to this persecution by the mendicants we quote at length. In his tract, "The great sentence of curse expounded," [3]) Wiclif says: "Poor priests preach Christ's meekness, His wilful poverty, and ghostly business, and witness that prelates should follow Christ in these three especially. For these poor priests are slandered as heretics, cursed and imprisoned without answer, forasmuch as they stand for Christ's life and teaching, and the maintenance of the King's rule and power of secular lords, and the saving of men's souls against Antichrist's tyranny and hypocrisy of his wayward disciples, that poison and destroy the Church." Similarly, in the famous tract, "Fifty heresies and errors of the Friars," [4]) he says: "Friars

[1]) Page 380.
[2]) Johann Wiclif und s. Zeit, p. 173.
[3]) S. E. W., p. 272; cp. S. S., III., 304.
[4]) S. E. W., III., p. 391.

also cry loudly that poor priests are heretics because they teach by God's law how clerks should keep the wilful poverty of Christ's Gospel, and the King and lords ought to compel them thereto, and thus they damn Holy Writ and the King's rule."

From these two quotations it is clear that it was, in the opinion of Wiclif, just these two characteristic theses—viz., the poverty of the Church, and the right of the lay power to enforce it, that the Friars opposed in their persecution of the poor priests. Here, according to Wiclif himself, the "heresy" of his followers in the eyes of the Friars was the very doctrine which he had expressed in 1376. The mendicants appear, therefore, as the opponents of his State Church ideals.[1])

From this position two conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, Wiclif's attack on the Friars sprang out of his patriotic zeal. It was a development of his earliest teaching —viz., that of the disendowment of the Church for the good of the State. Secondly, this attack is seen to be in closest connection with the rest of his work of reformation. It is merely a phase of the broader attack—the attack on the Hierarchy, and, like that, it is only to be understood when considered in its relation to the political movement of the time.[2])

The Reformer himself regarded his quarrel with the mendicants in this light. In his discussions of the question of the possession of temporalities, all branches of the Church

[1]) It will be noted that no mention is made here of their view of the Sacrament—a point which only strengthens our argument.

[2]) This position is entirely contrary to that maintained by Lechler in his biography of Wiclif (I., p. 585ff). This writer distinguishes two periods of the Reformer's activity—the first, the period where the main work was the propagation of the doctrine of disendowment; and the second, in which Wiclif began his attack on the distinctive doctrines of the Church. The controversy with the Friars, Lechler maintains, belongs to the *second* period alone. Thus he entirely severs the attack on the Friars from the attack on the Hierarchy. Cp. Chap. IV.

are usually taken together. The Friars are not specially singled out, nor are they omitted. Wiclif attacks, in this particular, the "four sects," *i.e.*, the regular clergy, canons, monks, and friars, and, as he says in one place, the arguments which apply to one will also apply to the remaining three.[1]) Also the view the Reformer takes of the relation of the Friars to Rome is testimony to the same fact. For Wiclif the mendicants appear still in their old *rôle* as the representatives and defenders of the Papal Chair. Were any proof of that needed it would be sufficient to note Wiclif's frequent mention of their active support of the rival Popes at the time of the schism,[2]) and especially the part they played in stirring up Bishop Spencer's Crusade to Flanders in 1383 in the interests of Urban VI. against his rival.[3]) "The Pope," Wiclif declares, "is their patron."[4]) "They have a double father," he says on another occasion, "the Devil and the Pope."[5]) The Hierarchy he likens to a dragon, of which, if the Pope is the head, the Friars form the tail.[6]) They are one of the wings of the army of Antichrist, as the Pope is its head.[7]) Instead of saying "Hec dicit dominus," as did the Old Testament prophets, they say "Hec dicit papa meus,"[8]) and they ought to be called "fratres papales" rather than "fratres Dominici or Francisci."[9]) Hence, to the Reformer, an attack on the Hierarchy meant an attack on the Friars. They stood always between Wiclif and the positive side of his reformation work—viz., his aim at a reform by the lay power. Thus, they opposed his translation of the Bible into English, which

[1]) P. W., p. 140.
[2]) S. E. W., III., p. 351.
[3]) P. W., I., 19; E. W., pp. 491-8; S. S., IV., pp. 39 and 117.
[4]) P. W., I., p. 127; cp. Trial., Cap. XXVIII.
[5]) P. W., II., p. 463.
[6]) O. E., II.. p. 34.
[7]) P. W., I., p. 324; cp. E. W., p. 47; S. E. W., III., p. 303.
[8]) S. S., IV., p. 112; cp. p. 185.
[9]) Trial., p. 363.

was, from his point of view, the means of educating the laity for their task of reformation. Thus, they persecuted his "poor priests," whose aim was to urge the lay power to this work. Further, taking a page out of the Reformer's own book, they attempted to stir up the laity to a persecution of Wiclif and his followers.[1]) An interesting letter is preserved in the "Fasciculi *Z*izaniorum,"[2]) in which the four Orders appeal to John of Gaunt against the followers of Wiclif, and especially against Nicolaus Hereford. We find three times mentioned by Wiclif[3]) an attempt they made on the life of John of Gaunt, because he refused to persecute. Thus we see the struggle developed into a fight not merely between Wiclif and one section of the Church, but between him and the whole Hierarchy. The Pope issued Bulls against him, bishops and clergy joined their former enemies the Friars to put down the preaching of his "poor priests" and to oppose his translation of the Scriptures—but in the whole struggle the most dangerous enemies were the Friars. They had the influence, subtle and potent. They were the real barrier between the Reformer and his goal. Hence their power must be broken before either Church or State could be bettered. Annihilation, therefore, is the only policy. No reformation is enough. The Friars must be driven from the realm.

We have seen the influence of Wiclif's patriotism in his theory of Church disendowment, and we have noticed that patriotism, so expressed, leading to conflict with the mendicants. Evidence of the patriotic spirit of the Reformer shows itself throughout the whole dispute. Indeed, as the controversy advanced, Wiclif seems to have become more and more convinced that love of country and support of the Friars were absolutely inconsistent. We see throughout the antagonism between the English patriot with his anti-

[1]) E. W., p. 5; S. S., III., p. 223.
[2]) Page 291.
[3]) P. W., pp. 95, 227 and 332.

hierarchical feeling on the one hand, and the emissaries of Rome on the other. Thus Wiclif frequently recurs to the idea that the mendicants are a menace to the stability of the Kingdom; and in this they stand in startling contrast to his own persecuted followers. In more than one respect are the Friars represented as being "burdensome to the realm." They are a serious burden by reason of the large amount of money they take. Not only do they extort an immense sum for themselves, for their houses and convents, which are constructed "ad magnum dampnum rei publice,"[1]) but they also, as the representatives of the Pope in England, "rob the land of treasure by his pardons, privileges, firstfruits, tythes, and subsidies,"[2])—and this latter Wiclif regards as nothing else than sending abroad money to support the country's enemies.[3]) He calculates that they take £40,000 annually.[4]) So important is this in the mind of the Reformer, that he considers it alone a sufficient reason for their expulsion from the realm.[5]) In the same line of argument is the assertion that, by admitting so many to their Orders, they depopulate a kingdom, and so make it weaker to resist an enemy.[6]) Their action in stirring up the Crusade to Flanders, Wiclif thinks may be "ad regnum Anglie seducendum."[7]) It weakens the land in respect both of money and men. The mendicants, though subjects of the land, refuse to recognise the authority of the King, for their sovereign is the Pope, whose claims they uphold to the destruction of the people.[8]) Far from giving spiritual benefit to the realm in return for the goods

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[1]) P. W., I., p. 69; De Blas., p. 214.

[2]) S. E. W., III., p. 400.

[3]) S. E. W., III., p. 382. Cp. Trial., p. 369.

[4]) P. W., I., 28 (£1 = 13s. 4d. present cash). Cp. S. E. W., III., p. 384, and S. S., II., p. 419.

[5]) P. W., I., p. 253.

[6]) S. S., IV., p. 9.

[7]) S. S., IV., p. 111.

[8]) P. W., I., p. 103; E. W., p. 50; S. S., IV., p. 61.

they receive, "it is manifest that they betray the people by heresies specially destructive of kingdoms."[1]) "Therefore," says the Reformer, "since before their introduction the realm was more prosperous both in temporal goods and in spiritual, it seems that they spend so much and are onerous to the realm of England."[2]) In all this it is clear that Wiclif's patriotism is the basis of his demand for the expulsion of the Friars. The argument is evidently from the point of view of the external politics of England. We hear distinctly the echoes of the war with France. In face of that war, Wiclif maintains, the Friars are a danger to the nation.

Two other points in this patriotic argument are reserved for separate treatment, as they seem to relate themselves to the inner politics of England. Wiclif frequently brings it as a charge against the mendicants that they are disturbers of the peace of the realm. The cause of this "perturbacio regni," which is referred to again and again, is "the unequal distribution of wealth." This is the part of Wiclif's teaching which has been looked upon as not unlike modern Socialism. For us, the special interest of it is that our author lays this unequal distribution of wealth entirely to the charge of the mendicants. The Reformer's communistic ideas relate themselves to a state of Society which he maintains was brought about by nothing else than the rapid increase of the four Orders of Friars. It is not merely that these beggars take a large amount of money for their convents, and steadily hoard up wealth. The worst is, according to Wiclif, that most of this wealth comes from the poor. Again and again he asserts that they "rob the poor," and "the cause," he says, "why they spoil the poor rather than the rich is because the rich more subtlely perceive their fraud, while to the poor that instruction is lacking whereby they may perceive the deceit."[3])

[1]) P. W., II., p. 463. Cp. S. E. W., I., pp. 19–21, and III., p. 445.
[2]) P. W., I., p. 233. Cp. S. E. W., III., p. 269.
[3]) P. W., I., p. 245. Cp. S. E. W., III., pp. 269, 320.

A thousand Friars in a province, he declares, are worse than a thousand freebooters who should publicly plunder it.[1]) The frequency with which this objection to the Friars is repeated, gives one the impression that Wiclif regarded himself as the champion of the poor and oppressed against their plunderers.[2]) Significantly enough, he speaks on one occasion of the "vulgares" as the "fundamentum regni"[3]); and throughout the whole of his polemical writings against the Friars there shines out a glowing enthusiasm for the humblest, and a full appreciation of the lot of the peasant, that forcibly reminds the reader of the peasant's poem, "Piers the Plowman." His so-called "Socialism" is a reaction against the custom of using, as a handle of extortion, the religious feelings and superstitious fears of an ignorant populace—a custom peculiarly characteristic of the activities of the Friars.

But not only does this unequal distribution of wealth bear hardly on the poor in the matter of their temporal belongings. It ruins the nation also spiritually, for "it extinguishes brotherly love and ignites the fires of envy."[4]) When rebutting the claim of the Friars that they return spiritual help for the material goods they receive, Wiclif says, "on the contrary, they nourish and hide those very sins which are the cause of the whole disorder of the realm."[5]) They are the sowers of discontent and envy, and in addition they fail to preach "evangelical patience."[6])

To this oppression of the poor is to be added the further point of the refusal of the mendicants to labour. This, Wiclif maintains, is a serious detraction from the nation's industrial prosperity.

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[1]) Trial., p. 368.

[2]) Cp. on this point the interesting Tract "Of Lords and Servants." E. W., p. 266ff.

[3]) P. W., I., p. 242.

[4]) P. W., I., p. 42.

[5]) S. S., IV., p. 11.

[6]) Cp. De Blas., p. 192.

Our author shows himself the bitter foe of the laziness of the Friar. But the interest in this attack on their lazy and useless life is that the Reformer specially relates it to agriculture. The fact that they take so many members into their Orders, to be for ever exempt from any kind of manual labour, he finds is the cause why there are so many sterile tracts in England. "Et haec videtur ratio quare in Anglia sunt tantae terrae plus steriles quam solebant," he says in "Trialogus."[1]) In the English tract, "The Church and her Members," he complains that they kidnap children, and especially heirs, and "thus make lands barren by the withdrawal of workmen."[2]) The same is the charge in the English tract bearing the title "De Blasphemia."

When we ask to what disorder in the realm Wiclif here refers, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that he has in mind the social and economic disturbances that culminated in the great revolt of the peasants in the year 1381. Not only does the significant remark concerning the lack of the preaching of "evangelical patience,"[3]) as also the mention of the "igniting of the fires of envy," point to that conclusion, but the idea is strongly supported by the fact that the causes of the rebellion were just those two circumstances to which Wiclif here refers—viz., the extremely bad position of the poor as regards temporal goods, which was made more apparent by the new taxation; and the lack of agricultural labourers, which revealed itself especially after the ravages of the Black Death.

That the rebellion of 1381, which made such an impression on the whole country, should have left Wiclif unmoved, is incredible. His ardent love of the poor, and his burning zeal for the welfare of the country, would scarcely allow him in

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[1]) p. 370.

[2]) S. E. W., II., p. 416. Cp. IV., p. 348. S. S., I., p. 104. E. W., p. 278. De Blas., p. 216.

[3]) De Blas., p. 192.

face of such a disturbance to keep silent. He knew too much of the state of the peasants of England to be ignorant of the fact that they had a just grievance. He was too great a patriot to remain at ease without seeking a remedy for the cause. What is that remedy? If we are correct in seeing in this "disturbance of the realm" a reference to the rebellion, then Wiclif really charges the Friars with contributing to the causes of that uprising. They make the lot of the poor doubly hard by their extortionate begging at a time when taxation presses heavily; they rob the land of labourers when labour is already scarce. The solution of the economic difficulty, then, is the expulsion of these sturdy beggars who encumber the land. Thus, the demand for the extinction of the Friars is seen to be, on this side at least, the outcome of social, economic conditions. We see, in fact, in England at the time of Wiclif, the extreme of the bad social condition, that was bound to follow an institution that threw into the community a horde of worthless beggars. It is the merit of Wiclif that he saw clearly the truth that the system was doomed by reason of the social evils it created.

We have already noticed in "Piers the Plowman" the feeling expressed that the large crowd of beggars was a serious burden to the country, and we learn from the chronicles of the time that there were those who regarded the mendicants as the cause of the rebellion. The author of the "Chronicon Anglie"[1]) himself favours such a view. The position of Wiclif which we have just considered seems to suggest that the Reformer must be placed amongst that class.

It is noteworthy, in this particular, that, at the time, the accusation of being the cause of the rebellion was also brought against Wiclif and his followers. Most historians agree in clearing the Reformer of the charge,[2]) but it must be admitted that his

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[1]) p. 312: cf. Hist. Anglicana, II., p. 13.

[2]) Trevelyan's England in the Age of Wiclif, p. 200ff. Oman, The Great Revolt of 1381, p. 19. Cf. J. R. Green, p. 240.

revolutionary principle of the disendowment of the Church, his love of the poor, and especially his teaching concerning the unequal distribution of wealth, were calculated to have, if not a direct, at least an indirect, influence in fostering the spirit of discontent. The charge against him could easily arise, and, once arisen, it would prove a powerful argument against his teaching. We have seen that the Friars were already in uncompromising opposition to his doctrine concerning the poverty of the Church. We have noted that his theory of the unequal distribution of wealth related itself directly to the mendicants. What more likely course would offer itself to these enemies of Wiclif than that of discrediting their opponent by accusing him of sowing the seeds of discontent? What better could they do than discredit his very patriotism, and make even that appear as subversive of the good order of the realm? Is it not probable, then, that this charge concerning Wiclif was brought against him by the Friars, and that it was, in fact, only the counter-charge to Wiclif's teaching of the unequal distribution of wealth, which cast the blame for the rebellion on the mendicants themselves?[1])

Be that as it may, we gather from Wiclif's writings that the Reformer was deeply impressed by the idea that the condition of the poor was largely due to the thousands of Friars, wandering round the country, living in idleness, and nourished at the expense of the community. That idea could only be

[1]) That these mutual recriminations were common is clearly shown in a letter written by the representatives of the four Orders to John of Gaunt, and preserved in the Fasciculi Zizaniorum, p. 293. The writers there deliberately charged Wiclif with having set servant against his lord, while on the other hand they complain that the Reformer's followers publicly declare that they, the four Orders, have been the whole cause of the rebellion—giving as the reasons for such a statement, first, that the mendicants have impoverished the people; secondly, that they have set the example of idle mendicancy; and thirdly, that being the general confessors they might have prevented it but did not. (Cf. De Blas., p. 192.) The reasons here given, and their similarity to the above statements of Wiclif, suggest strongly that we are correct in assuming that not only Wiclif's followers but the Reformer himself found the main cause of the rebellion in the Friars.

strengthened in him by the events of 1381, and when we remember that the same year saw the outbreak of the controversy concerning the Eucharist, we see that the year 1381 is to be regarded as a landmark in the Reformer's development. From that time forward his attack on the Friars became more bitter and uncompromising. He is confirmed in his idea that the annihilation of the Orders is the only salvation for the Kingdom. The events culminating in the Great Rebellion justified the position his patriotism had impelled him earlier to take up.

Chapter III.

The Biblical and Religious Side of the Controversy.

We turn next to what may be regarded as the biblical and religious side of the controversy. We have in the preceding chapter presented the arguments of Wiclif, the social reformer and patriot. Here we shall consider the arguments of Wiclif, the religious reformer ; though it must throughout be borne in mind that these two aspects are by no means treated separately by our author. They are separated here for sake of clearness.

Wiclif's attack on the Hierarchy is a development of the contrast existing between the Church of his day and the Church of apostolic times.[1]) His practical aim was to renew the state of the Early Church. "Back to the apostles," is the key-note of his religious reform. He stands on the same ground in the religious side of his controversy with the Friars. How do the Orders, claiming to excel all other Christians in their fulfilment of the law of Christ,[2]) appear when viewed in the light of the life and activity of the first followers of Jesus ? In the apostles, and especially in Paul, the Reformer sees the type of the true pastor, and a large part of his work is devoted to the contrast of the mendicants—the false pastors, the disciples of Antichrist—with the true pastors, the disciples of Christ. Hence, as this side of the controversy unfolds itself, there appears at the

[1]) Cp. S. S., III., p. 262.
[2]) De Blas., p. 20. S. S., III., p. 233. P. W., p. 215.

same time Wiclif's own ideal of the pastoral office. It is in working out this contrast that the Reformer shows himself a master of exegesis, and displays that remarkable knowledge of the Bible which raised him above all his contemporaries, and earned for him the title of "Doctor Evangelicus." The Bible supplies the framework of the attack. The method is that of clear exposition and careful exegesis. Thus, in his Latin Sermons, he takes up one by one the recorded sayings of Jesus regarding the Pharisees, and shows how each of these is applicable to the "modern Pharisees"; while he maintains his own attitude to them is exactly that of his Master to their forerunners—that is, he hates their sins while seeking to save their persons, as Christ hated the sins of the Pharisees yet loved Nicodemus and Paul.[1]) In a similar manner he examines each of the New Testament prophecies concerning false prophets who should come.[2]) Each of these, he finds, is fulfilled in the Friars. They are the "ravening wolves in sheep's clothing," "clouds without water," "wandering stars," and so forth. On this point the Reformer knows how to make use of the prophecies of Hildegard,[3]) while he also refers to Joachim of Flores.[4]) In all this exegesis Wiclif is throughout a man of the Middle Ages. He is, in fact, merely treading in the footsteps of former adversaries of the mendicants. Only the sharpness of his intellect and the thoroughness of his work distinguish him here from such men as William of St. Amour and Richard Fitz Ralph of Armagh. But it must be said that he stands far away from the apocalyptic interest that so often dominated such exegesis in the

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[1]) S. S., III., p. 300, and IV., p. 109. E. W., pp. 2 and 297.

[2]) P. W., p. 73ff. See the whole Tract, De Fundatione Sectarum. Cp. E. W., p. 307ff.

[3]) P. W., I., p. 67. E. W., p. 11. S. E. W., III., p. 413. Trial., p. 338. Cf Foxe, Acts and Mon., III., p. 87.

[4]) De Apos., p. 69, and Trial., p. 453.

Middle Ages.[1]) His interest is in showing the discrepancy between the Friars and the apostles; and anyone who takes the trouble to read his invective is bound to admit the aptness of his likening the mendicants to the Pharisees, and the force of his argument that in the "sects newly introduced" is the fulfilment of the prophecies of the New Testament Epistles.

This contrast between the Friars and the early disciples, Wiclif finds partly in the contradiction existing between the practice of the mendicants and the biblical doctrine of poverty, which, as we have seen, is the foundation-stone of the Reformer's work.

Here it is necessary to make a distinction—which has not always been made by writers on Wiclif—between the actual practice of the Friars in the Reformer's day, and the ideal which St. Francis sought to realise, and which was still kept more or less faithfully by the spiritual Franciscans.[2]) We have seen Wiclif in open hostility to the former, and we have already noticed that throughout the whole period of his polemical activity he was extremely sympathetic to the latter,[3]) and, in fact, hoped to win from among them upholders of his own view. But, nevertheless, there is a difference between the ideal of poverty that Wiclif thought to see in the New Testament and that of St. Francis; and when Dr. Loofs[4]) uses the term "Franciscan," to describe Wiclif's earliest reform ideals, he veils a distinction which is of no small importance for the proper appreciation of the Reformer's position with regard

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[1]) This apocalyptical idea is not absolutely absent from Wiclif's works. It occurs, for example, in the small tract, De Solutione Satan, P. W., II., and also Matthew, E. W., p. 48, and Trial., IV., c. 2. De Apos., p. 47. However, in this exegesis of Wiclif, it takes an entirely subservient position.

[2]) Wiclif, of course, attacks all the four Orders. The Franciscans naturally come more into consideration, as embodying most thoroughly the principle for which all stood, and as being the first to adopt that principle.

[3]) v. above, p. 15.

[4]) Dogmengeschichte, 4te Auflage, p. 644.

to the mendicants. We have already remarked that Wiclif's aim is a renewal of the early Church. With him poverty is at most only a means to an end. God's law and the abundance of riches are contradictory.[1]) The true pastor must above all *live* Christ's life. He must first practise what he teaches, and that he can only do *if* poor, for—Wiclif maintains—riches lead to avarice. For a pastor to be rich and faithful at the same time is an absolute impossibility. "Human reason cannot comprehend how such a prelate, burdened with earthly property, is capable of vanquishing the world and making himself an example of his teaching."[2]) That is Wiclif's point of view. Riches are simply regarded as a hindrance to a priest, preventing him, by the very nature of the case, from being that which he ought to be as a faithful follower of Christ. The Church cannot return to apostolic conditions so long as her priests remain rich. Wiclif's theory of poverty, therefore, relates itself to the Church as a body. With St. Francis, however, the ideal was different. With him, poverty was entirely in the interest of the individual ; it was the way of holiness, in the sense that in that life one found one's own salvation. Poverty was, in fact, piety. To be poor and to be holy were synonymous terms. In the difference between the two ideals we see the reflection of the different development of the two men. St. Francis reaches his ideal through his endeavour to realise in himself the life of his Master. Wiclif comes to his through his desire to reform the Church for the good of the State. The one has before him his own salvation, the other the salvation of his country. With the one the impulse is purely religious, with the other patriotic. Hence there is in the ideal of Wiclif a utilitarian element which from the original ideal of St. Francis was entirely absent.

This leads to a further point of divergence. For St. Francis,

[1]) S. E. W., II., p. 172.
[2]) S. S., II., p. xiv.

poverty, being piety, is absolutely rigid. The more strictly poor a man is, the more pious. Hence St. Francis can regard even the poverty due to the renunciation of all education as a mark of merit.[1]) Hence, too, the saint's insistence on the duty of cheerfulness as the accompaniment of rigid poverty—a point which naturally enough was lost sight of as the ideal became modified. Wiclif's ideal, on the contrary, demanded no such rigidity. It was poverty for the Church's sake. Hence it is necessary only to such a degree as it profits that Church. Poverty is therefore in Wiclif's thought only relative, not rigid. He takes as the "regula apostolica" not the words of Christ to His disciples, as did St. Francis, but the words of Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 8), which allow the possession of "alimenta et tegumenta." "And so far as I can see," he says, "it is allowed to curates and bishops to have temporal possessions up to this point and not beyond, and up to so much the faithful people gave alms to the apostles and not beyond; if they had wished to give more the apostles would not have taken it."[2]) Wiclif, indeed, even goes so far as to oppose the ideal of poverty absolutely rigid. He says in his "De Potestate Papae,"[3]) "Evangelical poverty does not consist in not having temporal goods, but in having moderately both as regards the manner of having and the amount, for the sake of the love of Christ, since that so far as temporal goods may help to the performance of the work of a man's office so much precisely God wishes he should have." Even more emphatic is he when, in discussing the meaning of the text, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," he says, "Christ here speaketh of poverty of spirit to make men bold in having of temporal goods as much as moveth to sustain their office."[4]) He allows that curates may take "moderately" of

[1]) Spec. Perf., p. 10. Sabatier, Vie de St. Fran., p. 284.

[2]) S. S., IV., p. 110.

[3]) p. 85; cp. S. S., IV., p. 109, and II., p. 50. Cp. also De Civ. Dom., III., p. 89.

[4]) S. E. W., I., p. 202.

tenths if they render spiritual service in return.[1]) Here the Reformer might appear to be somewhat inconsistent in granting only "alimenta et tegumenta," and then allowing further so much possession as is necessary for the performance of the duties connected with office. But probably by "things necessary for their office" Wiclif meant "alimenta et tegumenta," and left the decision of how much that somewhat vague phrase allowed to the conscience of each. Clear it is that, according to Wiclif, the possession of temporal goods is not harmful in itself, it is only harmful when it hinders the priest's spiritual work. What he needs for the performing of that work he has a right and a duty to possess. Thus Wiclif's ideal of poverty has in it a universal element. The Reformer would make it binding on all sections of the Church, and thus would end the distinction between seculars and regulars. He would see all clergy living "in perfectione primariae paupertatis."[2])

But if this ideal which Wiclif sought to find in the Bible was different from that of the holy Francis, how far removed was it from the hollow pretension of poverty made by the mass of degenerate Friars whom the Reformer met! This contrast is one of our author's favourite themes.

We have already seen Wiclif objecting to the begging of the mendicants on patriotic grounds. This part of their system also undergoes at his hands a searching examination

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[1]) De Off. Past., cap. 4.

[2]) Hist. Anglicana, II., 52.—It is of interest here to notice the relation of Wiclif's position to that of the spiritual Franciscans. In his theory of poverty he approaches very near to them, and this led him to cherish for them throughout his life a great regard. Like him, they sought a reformation of the Church, they attacked the Hierarchy because of its wealth and power. However, Wiclif is distinguished from them in these two points, where we have seen his ideal differs from that of Francis. The utilitarian element that is characteristic with Wiclif is not so strongly felt by the Spirituals, and their ideal of poverty was more rigid than that of the Reformer. With them poverty is still piety.

on the basis of Scripture.[1]) The policy of begging was a natural growth from an ideal of poverty absolutely rigid, and in that lay hidden a tendency which for the religious purity of the Order was extremely dangerous. Already, in the rules of 1221 and 1223, which, under the direction of the Pope, became the foundation of the Franciscan Order, that tendency makes itself clearly seen. Begging there commences to take a place never ascribed to it in the thought of the founder—it begins to become an end in itself. That development, so early begun, continued rapidly, until at last begging appeared in the central place, the place where originally poverty had stood. It came, in fact, to be regarded as piety. So the Order changed from an "order of poor brethren" into a "begging order." This movement naturally went side by side with the modification of the ideal of rigid poverty. The two are really one. Merit was regarded as lying in begging, rather than in being poor. That allowed the hoarding up of wealth; and similarly, the collection of wealth tended to throw emphasis on begging rather than poverty, as the meritorious factor. It is easily seen that this change of emphasis not merely reduced the poverty of the Franciscans to a mere farce, but by exalting a pernicious custom to the centre of a religious system, it did little less than perpetuate and glorify a pious fraud. It is this that Wiclif relentlessly exposes. He shows clearly that he appreciated this change that had come over the Orders. "Friars say that begging grounds them and puts them in higher degree of all the Church," he complains; while on another occasion he asserts, "they cannot distinguish between begging and poverty."[2]) It is significant, as indicating the changed point of view, that the previously debated question of the absolute poverty of Christ has now entirely given place to the question as to whether Christ begged.

In the discussion of this point, Wiclif to a certain extent

[1]) S. S., I., pp. 65, 379; II., pp. 339, 344; III., pp. 108, 110.
[2]) S. E. W., III., p. 412.

goes back to the position that reflects itself in the Testament of St. Francis.[1]) He insists on the absolute duty of the Friars to labour with their hands, as did Paul, who, he maintains, is in this particular a better example for them to follow than is Christ.[2]) He quotes the authority of the Saint himself for the abolition of begging. In his "Fifty Heresies," he writes: "And to put away this begging, St. Augustine makes two books, that monks ought to work with their hands for their livelihood, and the same teaches Benedict to his monks, and St. Bernard, and so does Francis to Friars."[3]) It is probable that the reference here is to the Testament of the Saint, an English translation of which appears among the Wiclif literature,[4]) with notes added to emphasise this point of view. If this interesting document is not from the pen of the Reformer, but by one of his followers, it is entirely in harmony with Wiclif's position, for he frequently complains of the glozing of the rule of St. Francis by the Franciscans.

Accompanying this insistence on the duty of manual labour, is the attack on begging as a system—as the basis of the Orders. The favourite thesis of the Friars was that the system was founded in Scripture. It was sanctified by the fact that Christ Himself had begged. Wiclif's reply is a careful distinction of what he regards as false begging from the true. The Lord, he admits, did beg, as did the apostles, but His begging was of an entirely different nature from that practised by the mendicants. So the Reformer was led to draw a scholastic distinction between begging "expresse" as did the Friars, and begging "innuitive" as did Jesus and the apostles.[5]) Christ, he points out, never asked for more than He

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[1]) Boehmer, p. 37. Cp. Spec. Perf., p. 147.

[2]) S. E. W., I., p. 178.

[3]) S. E. W., III., p. 371.

[4]) E. W., p. 39.

[5]) S. S., I., p. 65. II., pp. 22, 108, 111, 344. Cf. De Civ. Dom, IV., p. 417. Cp. III., p. 8. Trial., pp. 340-345. S. E. W., III., p. 410.

needed,[1]) nor did He "beg" by word of mouth, but in His own person, for He was poor and needy[2])—*i.e.*, His evident need and not His solicitation was the means of appeal. Thus the Reformer makes a distinction, by no means unimportant, between living on alms and living by begging. He could heartily support the statement in the Franciscan rule of 1221 that Christ "vixit de elemosynis," but that Wiclif saw to be quite a different thing from living as did the Friars. The Reformer is surely correct in insisting on the fact that the whole virtue of living on alms is that such a life is necessarily precarious, and in regarding the clamorous begging of the Friars as nothing better than a lusting after their neighbour's goods and a making of false pretences as to need.[3]) Hence, while living on alms is the apostolic rule, such begging as the Friars practise is absolutely without foundation in the life of Christ, and without basis in the Scriptures. While condemning this system of the Friars, the Reformer zealously supports the apostolic rule, and, in fact, aims at making the whole clergy live this precarious life of dependence on alms. They may possess temporal goods so far as is necessary for their office, but that amount must not be sought for, but must come as voluntary gifts from their flock.[4]) Wiclif will combine poverty, not with a definite system of begging, but with hard labour, and a dependence on alms, not sought but voluntarily given. This surely is one of the points where the Reformer's own ideas were determined or rather modified by his understanding of the errors of the Friars. Such a fine distinction between begging and living on alms could only be made by one who had the evil results of the combination of a vow of poverty with an undefined system of begging actually before his eyes. The position of Wiclif can, indeed,

[1]) S. E. W., III., p. 411.
[2]) S. E. W., III., p. 410.
[3]) S. S., III., pp. 108, 110ff.
[4]) S. E. W., I., p. 283.

in this respect be regarded as the development of the Testament of St. Francis. St. Francis dimly saw evils coming ; his was a look into the future. Wiclif saw those evils developed and living. His was a look at the present, and his position shows all the vividness of such a look.

Not alone in this false poverty and in their "grounding themselves in begging" does Wiclif see the Friars in startling contrast to the apostles, but also in the exercise of their pastoral office. Especially in the matter of preaching do they fall far below the first followers of Christ. They are in spiritual work profitless. "There is no doubt," says Wiclif on one occasion, "that the apostle (*i.e.*, Paul) more profited the Church during his lifetime than do the whole of the Friars, for, from the time when these sects were introduced, the Christian religion has decreased, the love of many has been chilled, and the communities of the faithful have decreased through the artifices of Antichrist."[1])

In any history of preaching in the Middle Ages both the Reformer and the Friars would command an important place. Wiclif placed a large emphasis on it. It is the first duty of a pastor, more important even than the administering of the Sacrament[2]); and the essence of it, to our author, is the declaration of the Word of God, which of itself is sufficient for salvation.[3]) This insistence on the duty of preaching is the counterpart of the translation of the Bible. The people should know the "lex Christi," then can they be expected to keep it. To make the "lex Christi" known—that is preaching. In giving such a high place to this duty of the minister of Christ, Wiclif is but treading in the footsteps of the founders of the Orders, although his conception of what preaching is

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[1]) S. S., III., p. 114.

[2]) De Off. Past., p. 32. O. E., II., p. 35. S. S., IV., p. 30; II., p. 115. S. E. W., III., p. 179. De Ver. Sac. Scrip., II., p. 156.

[3]) De Ver. Sac. Scrip., II., p. 156. S. E. W., III., p. 179. S. S., II., p. 115.

was different from theirs. The Friars began with a burning zeal to publish abroad the Word. They were from their origin the people's preachers, and that they were in Wiclif's day. The Reformer's quarrel with them is not that they neglect their duty of preaching, but rather that in this respect, as in the matter of poverty, their first high-toned zeal has departed and given place to corroding hypocrisy. Wiclif is indeed our best witness to the degeneracy that marked the latter Friars in this particular. Nor is it merely his opinion. We have already quoted some remarks of Langland to the same effect.[1])

The fact that the Friars are the emissaries of the Pope and as such "the disciples of Antichrist," spreading broadcast by their preaching the lies of "their father the Devil," of course condemned them in the eyes of the Reformer and finds a place in his attack ; but it is by no means the characteristic point in his criticism of their preaching. That they are the sowers of heresy sinks here into comparative insignificance before other complaints that he makes concerning them —a consideration of no little significance for estimating Wiclif's position as a reformer. His zeal is not in a negative direction—to attack his enemies. It is positive—to give the people the truth. That the mendicants in their preaching fail in this is the main contention against them. So their preaching is condemned both for its motive and its matter.

As to the motive, that is soiled by the hypocrisy that blackens their whole lives. Our author complains bitterly of their custom of taking up a collection after every sermon, and of canvassing the village for all kinds of worldly goods after delivering a discourse under the shadow of the village church or on the village green. They never set out on a round of visitation, he declares, without taking a Judas with them, to collect at every place whatever temporal goods they may succeed by their sermons in extorting from the simple

[1]) v. above, p. 9.

peasants.[1]) Their aim is neither to edify, nor to teach, nor to admonish ; it is to fill their pockets. "But the Friars, in preaching," he says, "look more to the gain which is to follow than to the salvation of the souls of the people who listen."[2]) Hence the acquisition of temporal goods is the end and cause of their preaching, which is therefore nothing less than 'notoria symonia.'"[3])

The motive determines the matter. The whole content of their sermons, the Reformer maintains, is of a compromising nature. They seek only to please. Instead of preaching the evangel, they fill their discourses with all sorts of ear-tickling stories, jokes, legends of the saints, and medieval fables. This was one of the customs of the age that made Wiclif's anger burn. The Friars were by no means alone in the custom. Such preaching was more the rule than the exception in the fourteenth century. Wiclif's firm faith in the all-sufficiency of the Bible for salvation, and the impression made upon his mind by the colossal ignorance of it displayed by all sections of the community in his day, led him to see in all such preaching not merely wasted opportunity and the most culpable trifling, but a gross prostitution of the most sacred office. He rightly regards it as a weakening of the Church. The sentence he adds when blaming those who offer the people apocryphal stories, viz., "quibus non pascitur anima sed multipliciter infirmatur,"[4]) shows what a deep insight he had gained into human nature, and how well he understood what true preaching is. The taste of the masses had, by the wretched pandering of the Friars, become thoroughly depraved ; and this degeneracy presented one of the greatest difficulties the Reformer and his followers had to face. They had to work on material that had been spoiled by indulgence.

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[1]) P. W., I., p. 369.
[2]) S. S., II., pp. 59, 417. O. E., II., p. 349. P. W., I., p. 370.
[3]) De Off. Past., p. 39. Cp. De Sym., p. 6.
[4]) S. S., III., p. 120.

It is something more than mere *odium theologicum* that makes Wiclif complain—"By their clamorous and ornate sermons they overcome faithful priests who would preach merely the sense of Scripture."[1])

In a line with this temporising attitude of the Friars is their method of treating Scripture. Wiclif asserts that they claim that, whatever sense of Scripture suits them, that is the correct sense.[2]) He frequently charges them with "wresting" Scripture to their own ends, taking what suited their theories and leaving what was against them. "For they dock God's Word," he says, "and tatter it by their rhymes so that the form that Christ gave it is hidden in hypocrisy."[3]) No doubt this "wresting of Scripture" to their own purposes arose largely out of their controversy with Wiclif—for the Reformer based his whole work on the Bible, and naturally the Friars were forced to use the weapon of their adversary against him, especially after the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular, and its dissemination throughout the country. The Friars brought the same as a counter-charge against the Reformer. They denied generally his interpretations of Scripture. It was a case of exegesis against exegesis. But when we contrast the attitude of Wiclif and the Friars—the one trusting the layman with the open Bible, the other representing the narrow medieval view, that Scripture was only to be understood and interpreted by the clergy—we have ground for concluding that the charge was justified when made of their general preaching quite apart from their controversy with Wiclif. The Reformer stands here for an open Bible, and a free exegesis, of the truth of which, even the lay mind can judge. Over against both stand the Friars, who, according to Wiclif's assertion, persecuted true preachers—that is, both poor priests and spiritual Franciscans—and

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[1]) P. W., I., p. 372.
[2]) P. W., I., pp. 370-371.
[3]) S. E. W., III., p. 180. Cp. S. S., II., p. 56.

opposed the translation of the Bible, lest their own hypocrisies and frauds should become known to the people.[1]) The case against their preaching is well summed up in the Trialogus,[2]) where the writer says: "With regard to their preaching, the result shows itself in the tendency to deteriorate the Church, for they give all their attention to ritual, flattery, detraction, and falsehood, rejecting Scripture and neglecting to rebuke sin."

Both in his attack on the false poverty of the Friars and in his criticism of their preaching, the Reformer departs very little from the attitude adopted by the spiritual Franciscans against their degenerate brethren. It is true that he goes beyond them in his translation of the Bible for the laity, and as we have noted his ideal of poverty is not quite identical with theirs,[3]) but, nevertheless, in these two points of poverty and preaching, he regards the Friars as evil mainly because they have fallen from the ideals of their patrons. Their fault lies in their degeneracy. But in the third part of this biblical attack, which we have next to consider, the Reformer takes up an attitude quite foreign to the aims and ideals of the Spirituals, and departs entirely from all previous opponents of the Friars. This position appears in the contrast he unfolds between these various "sects" and the "one pure sect of Christ."

The idea of the "one pure sect of Christ" is the most characteristic and unique note in the whole of the arguments urged by the Reformer against the mendicants. Two things lie at the basis of the idea—a fact and a theory. It was influenced, on the one side, by the schism which shocked the minds of all good men, and as we know made a deep impression upon our author; and on the other, by the Augustinian doctrine of the Church as consisting of the number of the predestinate—a theory which Wiclif had made his own. The effect of the schism was twofold. It directed the thoughts

[1]) Cp. E. W., p. 27.

[2]) p. 365; cp. pp. 368, 445.

[3]) v. above, p. 37n.

of men to the idea of the unity of the Church, and at the same time it tended to destroy the fascination of the theory that such unity was dependent on one Pope as head. Wiclif did not by any means give up the idea of the universal Church. He was at one with the great minds of the period in desiring one Catholic Church, but as the result of the schism he saw that the one-Pope theory was no sufficient basis of unity. Hence the unity he advocates is entirely different from that sought by the promoters of the Councils of Pisa and Constance. His ideal, in fact, leads in a direction the very opposite to the whole development of religious life in the Middle Ages. One of the characteristics of that period of Church history was the formation of hosts of Orders—"sects,"[1]) as Wiclif calls them—Orders of clergy, monks, friars, and laymen, all bound together by their subservience to the Papal Chair as the representative of the Catholic religion. Christendom presented itself to the Reformer as a conglomeration of organisations, whose customs, claims, and to some extent, religion, were as diversified as their modes of dress. These various "sects" were by no means united in spirit. The Reformer himself frequently complains of the rivalry and hatred that existed among the four Orders of Friars the one for the other.[2]) The one Head of the Church was alone the bond of unity in this heterogenous mass. Not the schism so much, but rather these various "sects," are the destroyers of the unity of the Church.[3]) All these Wiclif sought to dissolve

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[1]) It must be borne in mind that Wiclif does not use the term "sect" in the sense in which it is used by modern historians of this period. He is not thinking of the various bodies *outside* the Church, but of parts of the Church itself. The four main "sects" were canons, monks, clergy, and friars. From the point of view of the Church, Wiclif and his followers were a "sect," and these four are the Church. The Reformer reverts the order. He declares these are the "sects," while the Church is comprised of those who belong to the one and only "sect," *i.e.*, "the sect of Christ."

[2]) S. S., II., p. 51; III., p. 261.

[3]) E. W., p. 222.

in the "one pure sect of Christ"—*i.e.*, the body of those who are predestined to salvation. This sect alone is sufficient. This "sect" is the Church. It provides, for all Christians alike, one patron, Jesus Christ, and one rule, the "lex Christi."[1]) All Christians are bound together by this fact and this fact alone, viz., that they belong to the "one sect of Christ." Hence the "sect of Christ" is the basis and guarantee of the unity of the Church. "The order of Christ," says Wiclif, "is a thong to bind men's wills together."[2]) "Christ ordained His one sect," he declares, "to lead to this full oneness."[3]) He maintains that the aim of his inveighing against the "sects" is to lead the Church to this "unitas et concordia."[4])

It will be seen that, here, our author shows no appreciation of the idea of a diversity in unity. A unity of spirit he does not reach. At best his ideal is uniformity. He will have one faith, one "sect." He stands, in fact, here again on the ground of a firm upholder of the State Church, for whose theory the idea of a uniformity which can be prescribed and enforced by the rulers of the land is essential. However, though the Reformer fails to realise the more modern view of a spiritual unity, his teaching here reaches a high spiritual level. What is the precise difference between these various "sects" and the one "sect of Christ"? If none, his logic demands, then let them cease to call themselves "sect of Francis," "sect of Dominic," and take the name of their true founder, Christ. They boast of their patrons and their Orders, of their religion as being the religion *par excellence*—then, declares the Reformer, they blaspheme against Christ, for they assert that their patrons introduced a religion better than that instituted by the Lord Himself. On the other hand, the religion of the "sect of Christ" excels all

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[1]) P. W., I., p. 22.

[2]) S. E. W., I., p. 76.

[3]) *Ibid.*, II., p. 228.

[4]) P. W., I., p. 99.

other, for it has the best patron, Jesus Christ, and the best rule, viz., the Gospel.[1]) Since, then, Christ is truly God and truly man, and since the Scriptures are the basis of all truth, it is arrant blasphemy to extol any "sect" above the "sect of Christ."[2]) But there is, argues Wiclif, a fundamental difference. That difference lies in the freedom of the "sect of Christ" as contrasted with the restrictions and obligations of the other "sects"—a point characteristic of Wiclif's thought.

The history of the Christian religion shows a steady movement from what may be called inward religion, in which religion is regarded as essentially a matter of the soul, towards outer religion, where the emphasis falls on the perfunctory performance of ceremonies—a movement from the freedom of the spirit towards the bondage of the law. Likewise, every reformation may be regarded as an attempt to lead men back to this inward religion. Wiclif's work is no exception. Precisely as the origin of the Franciscans was a spiritual protest against the lifeless form of religion that marked the thirteenth century, so Wiclif's attack on the Friars was a spiritual protest against their religion, which in its turn had become formal and materialised. Thus he regards all the rites and ceremonies with which they bolster up their Orders as a super-addition to the *lex evangelica*, which in itself is perfect.[3]) So the Friars are to be likened to Mohammed,[4]) whose fault was that with the Gospel he mixed the poison of man-made traditions; or to the Pharisees, who cared more for rites and ceremonies than for religion. Their whole religion, he maintains, consists of outward ceremonies, special garments, fabricated stories as to origin, and so forth. To put on the habit of a Franciscan, at death, values more than a good life; to buy one of their

[1]) P. W., I., p. 22.
[2]) Cp. Trial., Cap. XXVII. E. W., pp. 3, 51. O. E., II, p. 356.
[3]) S. S., II., p. 146; III., p. 173. O. E., II., p. 470.
[4]) E. W., p. 301.

letters of fraternity is of more avail than holiness.[1]) Thus the Reformer likens them to one who is fool enough to smear mud over the beautifully-polished walls of a house, or to one who trusts to a clumsy and inaccurate horologe when the sun is full up.[2]) Their binding themselves to obligations that are impossible is nothing less than tempting God. The fault of their religion is that it is outward, formal, ceremonial, and therefore unethical, unspiritual.

All this is in startling contrast to the "sect" of Christ. Wiclif here shows an appreciation of the New Testament doctrine of liberty from the law. Christ brings liberty from the obligations of the Old Testament. To recover this idea of liberty is the Reformer's aim in attacking the "sects." The characteristic of the religion of the "sect of Christ" is that, being freedom, it is essentially inward and spiritual. This spirituality of religion—its inwardness—finds frequent expression. "The sect of Christ," Wiclif asserts, "does not bind to sensible rites but to virtues of the soul and works of love."[3]) In one of his sermons he says, speaking of taking up the Cross of Christ, that instead of consisting of ceremonies, "Forma crucis Christi debet *in mente* incipere."[4]) In a similar strain he continues, "Christ ordained that His order or religion should be founded originally in virtues and in consequent good works. But Antichrist determined that form, rites, visible and worldly ceremonies, should have more weight than 'mentalis religio.'"[5])

Thus Wiclif, having a true view of religion, objects to the rites and ceremonies of the Friars as a materialising of the spiritual, and his attempt to lead men back to the "sect of Christ" is an endeavour to make once more the dead bones

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[1]) Trial., p. 349; S. S., III., p. 357; II., p. 321.

[2]) S. S., II., p. 109.

[3]) P. W., I., p. 304; cf. E. W., p. 299.

[4]) S. S., II., p. 257.

[5]) S. S., II., p. 259.

live, to make religion a matter of the soul and not of form, a thing of mind and heart and not of rites and ceremonies. It is what we may call the anti-ritualistic tendency of the Reformer. He commends to his countrymen a "mentalis religio." His religion is ethical and not formal.

It is in the light of this idea of the "sect of Christ" that the Reformer judges the origin and history of the Friars. His position with regard to St. Francis is particularly interesting. He frequently speaks of him in tones not unfitting a spiritual Franciscan.[1]) In his "Fifty Heresies"[2]) he says: "For if men speak of Francis, he used and taught much meekness, poverty, and penance." It was, indeed, impossible for Wiclif, with his own ideal of poverty, not to admire the rule and mode of life of "the poor man of Assisi." But, on the other hand, while he allows that St. Francis probably did much good and was rightly canonised, he maintains that he, as well as St. Dominic, was completely misguided and in error when he founded his Order. "Dominic and Francis," he says in his Trialogus,[3]) "began to do some things good in their nature, but through the art of the Devil were made to rest on many hypocritical falsehoods." It is true, the Reformer regards the work of both as a sort of reformation of the Church,[4]) but his point of view is that this multiplication and perpetuation of different "sects" brought in more evils than existed before. Thus he argues that what the two great founders of the Orders should have done was to have reformed the primitive "sect of Christ" instead of introducing a new sect,[5])— a point of view not without a touch of humour for the modern historian, who has more opportunity than Wiclif had of discovering how new sects are formed. Our author can scarcely

[1]) cp. De Civ. Dom., III., p. 17.

[2]) S. E. W., III., p. 375.

[3]) p. 361.

[4]) S. S., II., p. 340. S. E. W., III., p. 345. De Civ. Dom., III., p. 18. Cp. Trial., IV., c. XXV. De Apos., p. 20. O. E., II., p. 349.

[5]) S. S., III., p. 126.

be blamed, considering the lack of anything like a historic sense in his age, if he failed to realise that it was as much the aim of the founders of the two great begging Orders to lead men back to the primitive "sect of Christ" as it was his own. Equally lacking in the criticism of the foundation of the Orders is any appreciation of the idea of an organisation's growth as a concession to the needs and demands of a particular age. No such appreciation is to be looked for in Wiclif—for lack of such appreciation is the very rock on which all attempts to renew apostolic conditions have been wrecked.[1]) However, as we shall see, Wiclif, in his poor priests, knew how to organise to meet the demands of the age, even though he showed no understanding of the principle.

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations and defects, it is in this ethical religion of the "sect of Christ" that the Reformer shows himself to be at the parting of the ages. If his ideal of unity remained on the low level of dead uniformity, yet the ideal of an inwardness of religion as the basis of the unity of the Church is a step in the direction of that higher oneness, which, while admitting diversities of creed and form, binds men's hearts together in the unity of the spirit—and which, in the later development, has given its peculiar content to the comprehensive term "evangelical." The unity after which Wiclif groped could only be reached by the recovery of the great doctrine of justification by faith. In spite of his emphasis on the Bible and on the inwardness of religion, the English Reformer remained a man of the Middle Ages. Religion was essentially for him a fulfilling of the law, a matter of "good works." The Bible was still a "lex," not, as with Luther, the declaration of God's forgiveness. Unity he sought to find in a purely negative direction, by the destruc-

[1]) Again and again it has been forgotten that the apostolic Church cannot be renewed unless the apostolic *age* be renewed. The Church in its organisation depends on the conditions of the period.

tion of the various sects. Here he was excelled by his great German follower. Luther began on a positive basis which, once accepted, meant of itself the destruction of the "sects." That is the distinction between the two men. Wiclif's work was at best only a movement towards the light; Luther's was the light, and it is the light itself which has the power. However, if it was not Wiclif's to come to this basis of the unity of the Church, it must be admitted that it is in his ideal of the "sect of Christ," where freedom and inward religion dwell, that he makes his nearest approach to the German Reformer. If he deserves at all the name "Day Star of the Reformation," it is for his attempt to lead men back from the quest of salvation in the observances of rites and ceremonies to seek it in the "mentalis religio" of the "sect of Christ." In this theory of the "sect of Christ," in contrast to the "sects" of the Friars, two figures seem to meet and become one—the matured man criticising and condemning the faith of the past, the little child stretching out "lame hands of faith" to the religion of the future.

The phase of the attack discussed in this chapter is of peculiar interest for the light it throws on the somewhat obscure question of the origin of the "poor priests," who, as wandering evangelists, carried the Reformer's doctrines to the most distant corners of the land, and also in its relation to the translation of the Bible. We have remarked that in this part of the controversy Wiclif really unfolds his own ideal of the true pastor. It has usually been held that that ideal is to be found in the "poor priests"; but it is significant, over against that view, that Wiclif himself was no such wandering evangelist. Had that been his ideal of a pastor, one would have expected that he himself would have followed it. The contrast with St. Francis is in this respect significant. Wiclif remained to the end the shepherd of his little flock at Lutterworth, and it is to his own life rather than to that of his "apostolic men" that we would look for the ideal of the

priestly office that he sought to make universal in England. That he lived there a life of poverty, subsisting on the alms of his people, in accordance with his own teaching, we can readily believe, for we should certainly have heard of it from his enemies had he not been a true ornament of hi own doctrine. His ideal, we believe, was to see the land shepherded by *stationed* priests living the life of poverty—*i.e.*, men leading the life he himself was living at Lutterworth. The apostles were the examples of true pastors, but not so much because of their wandering life. Poverty and preaching rather than wandering was the side of the apostles' example that received emphasis from Wiclif. For the element of wandering in his ideal for his poor priests, we must look elsewhere than to the Bible. Why should he, who complained of the effect of Friars on the parish priest and the parish church, send out a band of itinerant preachers who could become as great an evil for the parish priest as the Friars had proved? Why should he who objects so strongly to any Order save the one "sect of Christ" send out a body of men, clothed in a distinctive dress, and in everything save their vows exactly the counterpart of the Orders he so bitterly denounced? It would seem that this apparent inconsistency was felt at the time, for we find an English tract, written probably by a follower of Wiclif, bearing the interesting headline, "Why poor priests have no benefice."[1])

The solution of the difficulty, it would seem, lies in the fact that, in sending out these "poor priests," Wiclif took a leaf out of the book of the Friars. The institution of the "poor priests" was forced upon him by the existence of the mendicants. It was, indeed, a concession to the needs of the age. The Friars were the representatives of the Hierarchy among the people. Their influence was tremendous. They had become the people's only priests. We have the testimony of both Fitz Ralph of Armagh and of Wiclif to the fact that

[1]) E. W., p. 244.

the influence of the parish priest had diminished almost to vanishing point since the arrival of the Friars. It was to the Friar the people confessed. They took the Sacrament at his portable altar. He was for many of them the only representative of religion. Now this enormous influence was largely due to their wandering. They were here to-day and gone to-morrow. If Wiclif wished to spread his views and bring about his longed-for reform he must break the power of the Friars. To do that he must appeal to the people, the class under the domination of the mendicants. He must attack the Friars in their own stronghold and with their own weapons. He did it by instituting evangelists, who should go where the Friars went and work as they worked. Thus his wandering priests were only a temporary institution, the instruments of the reform he sought; and the idea of the institution came, we maintain, from the Reformer's experience with the mendicants. The "poor priests" were not, as Mr. Matthew thinks, "to supply the defects of the existing parsons,"[1]) but rather to correct the evil influence of the Friars, and carry the Reformer's doctrine to the people. The institution was Wiclif's appeal to the populace. It is thus the Reformer's enforced testimony to the remarkable influence the Friars had won and still possessed.[2])

Not merely the idea of such an institution but also the form it took was determined by the opposition to the mendicants. The very points of view from which Wiclif criticises the Orders

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[1]) E. W., p. xvi.

[2]) Our reasoning here is at variance with the statement of E. Troeltsch in Ar.f.S.S., pp. 627-628, viz., Das Priestertum bliebt wohl bestehend, aber Wiclif verwandelt es in Missionare nach der Vorschrift von Mt. 10, etc. It is perfectly true that Wiclif's theory did destroy the power of the priest, but that was not so much by his sending out of "poor priests" as by his doctrine of the Sacrament. We find no justification for the idea that he sought to destroy the settled priesthood. His poor priests, as we have argued, were not his ideal. The institution was not the logical outcome of his position, but rather due to the special circumstances of the time in which he lived and worked, *i.e.*, to the influence of the mendicants.

are incorporated in the ideal he unfolded for his poor priests. They can be looked upon, indeed, as the *true* Friars. Thus they were to be poor and live entirely from alms, but they were on no account to beg. Their rough, red, woollen garment was to betoken the combination, characteristic of Wiclif's thought, of poverty and labour. They were to be preachers, whose charter was the Scriptures. Wiclif has left us many samples of sermons, such as were to serve as models to his preachers. They are characterised by their solid exegesis, and the absolute exclusion of all fables, jokes, and legends. Lastly, while forming a community, they are to be no "Order." They are bound by no vows, and swear allegiance to no ceremonies, joining without any pledge and departing without hindrance. Perfect freedom is to characterise the band. Thus, while being so close in organisation to the Friars, in all points where Wiclif attacks the mendicants they are separate and distinct. The organisation is, in fact, the Orders of the Friars stripped of all the evils that Wiclif saw attaching to them. Thus we maintain that the final form of this organisation was determined by the Reformer's opposition to the Friars. And hence we conclude the poor priests were later in origin than the commencement of the attack on the Friars.

The relation of the controversy with the Friars to the translation of the Bible is not so easy to determine as that to the institution of the "poor priests," for whereas the latter had its growth in the peculiar circumstances of the time rather than in Wiclif's fundamental position, the former is seen to be the natural product of his point of view. However, the important place his attack on the Friars takes in his life's work, and the great *rôle* played by the Bible in the whole of that attack, suggest that the antagonism to the mendicants was one factor at least influencing the Reformer in his determination to give the people the Word of God in their own tongue. His fundamental position of the poverty of the Church was contained in the Bible—so he believed.

To translate the Bible was, therefore, to spread abroad his principle; and, as we have seen, the Friars were among the bitterest opponents of this theory of poverty. Again, the Reformer attacks the mendicants for their wresting of Scripture and for their false preaching. He will commend his own interpretations of Scripture, his own mode of preaching. How could he do that better than by making the Bible accessible to all, that all could judge for themselves between the two? Further, the mendicants were almost the only preachers whom the common people could understand. Wiclif's translation of the Bible was essentially for the people whose only language was English—*i.e.*, for the very people who stood under the influence of the preaching of the mendicants. What more effective means could he devise for recommending his own point of view over against the teaching of the mendicants than that of translating the Scriptures? What better weapon could he place in the hands of his "poor preachers," with which to attack their most determined foes, the Friars, than the Bible open to all? Hence we conclude that this bitter controversy with the mendicants was not without influence in producing the first English Bible. The book was for the populace. It was, in part at least, a polemical work. The Friars had the influence with the populace, and, as we know from their opposition to it, the new Bible was the most destructive weapon used against them. Is it not likely, then, that, in some measure at least, this motive moved the author to its production?

Chapter IV.

The Date of the Outbreak of the Controversy and the Question of the Eucharist.

We have next to notice the bearing of the above presentation on the question of the date at which the struggle with the Friars began. The date of the outbreak is, of course, bound up with the cause of the controversy. Lechler,[1]) to whom reference has already been made, thought to see the whole cause of the quarrel in Wiclif's doctrine of the Eucharist, and consequently placed the beginning as late as the year 1381. This theory Mr. Matthew[2]) has disposed of, relying mainly on the evidence of the treatise "De Officio Pastorali," which must be dated as early as 1378. This writer, seeking a cause in harmony with the earlier date, suggests that it may be found in Wiclif's experience of the Friars in the exercise of his duties as a parish priest at Lutterworth, or in the conflict between the secular and regular clergy at Oxford, with which the Reformer at the beginning of his activity came into contact. However, neither of these are satisfactory causes, for neither fits the whole facts of the case, and neither is of sufficient importance to give occasion to a struggle so bitter. Were either of these the cause of the quarrel, we should expect it to take a much larger place in the Reformer's controversial

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[1]) Joh. v. Wiclif, II., p. 585; cf. above, p 22.

[2]) E. W., p. xliii. Cp. Trevelyan, p. 363.

writings than either actually does. On the other hand, the important part that Wiclif's earliest and most characteristic position—viz., that of the disendowment of the Church—plays in his attack,[1]) suggests that we are correct in seeking in that the cause and occasion of the controversy. Such a view admirably suits the earlier date, at which Mr. Matthew has shown the controversy broke out.

It is also a part of Lechler's theory that Wiclif, in the early period, attacked only the endowed Orders, while he more or less favoured the mendicants. That idea has not been entirely discarded. Mr. Pollard, in his introduction to the Dialogus,[2]) suggests that there was a period when it was Wiclif's aim and hope to win over the mendicants to his theory of disendowment. This point of view is distinctly stated by the writer of the contemporary "Chronicon Anglie." This author, speaking of Wiclif as he appeared at the Council of London in 1377, declares: "He was there not only eloquent, but a deceiver and a most determined hypocrite, bending all things to one end, viz., that the fame and opinion of him might be spread among men, and he simulated that he spurned temporal goods for the love of eternal things; and on that account he did not link himself with the possessed Orders, but in order that he might the more effectively delude the minds of the people, he adhered to the Orders of the mendicants, approving their poverty, extolling their perfection, that he might more deceive the common people."[3])

Certain considerations, however, considerably detract from the value of this testimony. In the first place, there is absolutely no word in the whole Chronicle of Wiclif's attack on the Friars. On the contrary, the Reformer is portrayed throughout as the firm upholder of their views. This silence is the more remarkable as the author does mention the attack

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[1]) See above, Chap. II.
[2]) p. xviii. ff.
[3]) Chron. Anglie, p. 281.

on the mendicants made by Fitz Ralph of Armagh. In the second place, the writer of the Chronicle is himself as bitter an opponent of the Friars as he is friend of the endowed Orders. Thus, he commends Fitz Ralph for his attack,[1]) while he declares of the mendicants : " But, already envying the possessed Orders, approving the crimes of the great, and supporting in error the common people and commending the sins of both—for the purpose of acquiring possessions, for the purpose of collecting wealth, they who had renounced all possession, they who had sworn to persevere in the state of poverty, say that good is evil, seducing the great by their flattery, the poor by their lies, and dragging both with themselves into the path of error."[2]) More follows to the same effect. Further, the writer is the bitter opponent of John of Gaunt and his party, while he can see absolutely nothing but evil in everything Wiclif did and said. To him, apparently, the attack on the mendicants was a meritorious work ; but so great is his hatred of Wiclif that he will not allow the Reformer even one good point. That would seem to be the natural explanation of such a "glaring perversion of the facts,"[3]) as the Editor of the Chronicle calls this total omission of any reference to Wiclif's attack on the mendicants. The above statement made concerning the Reformer's policy at London, therefore, seems to be in accordance with the writer's general endeavour to make Wiclif appear consistently as the sworn enemy of the endowed Orders and the warm friend of the mendicants. It is this author who is our evidence for the fact that in the above-mentioned assembly the Reformer's defenders were four members of the begging Orders.[4]) It may be this, together with the fact that on that occasion Wiclif's opponent was a Benedictine monk, that

[1]) p. 38.
[2]) p. 312. Cp. Hist. Angl., II., p. 13.
[3]) p. liii.
[4]) p. 118.

aided the writer of the Chronicle to reach this position concerning Wiclif. Hence, it seems to us that, when due allowance is made for the evident bias of the author, the passage contains little warrant for assuming that for any length of time Wiclif either sought or obtained the help of the mendicants for his theory of the poverty of the Church.

In discussing this question, it is necessary to remember that such facts as that the Reformer praises St. Francis, extols the Franciscan rule, or regards the origin of the Orders as a kind of Reformation,[1]) offer absolutely no help whatever in fixing the date of the controversy. As we have noted,[2]) this the Reformer does to the end of his life. It is necessary in the whole discussion to distinguish carefully—as we have endeavoured to do—between Wiclif's attitude to the general body of the Friars, and his attitude to the spiritual Franciscans.

We have already maintained,[3]) in the consideration of the relation of the mendicants to Wiclif's theory of the poverty of the Church, that neither was Wiclif likely to make such an error in judgment as to hope for the support of the Friars for such a theory, nor were the Friars likely to give any such support, and that his earliest position alone meant a break with the mendicants. Certain facts support this view. Loserth has shown that Wiclif's work began not in 1366, as had hitherto been supposed, but ten years later.[4]) Now, the "De Officio Pastorali" shows that already, in 1378, and before the papal schism broke out (for that work refers to Avignon as the seat of the Pope),[5]) Wiclif was in conflict with the Friars. Moreover, in that work the Reformer had already reached a fairly-developed position against them. Taking the English and Latin versions of the treatise together—undoubtedly published about the same time—we find the mendi-

[1]) v. Lechler, Eng. Vss., pp. 321-2.
[2]) cp. above, p. 15.
[3]) cp. Chap. II.
[4]) v. above, p. 13.
[5]) v. E. W., p. 457.

cants attacked for their opposition to the translation of the Bible, for their attack on poor priests,[1]) for their simony in preaching,[2]) for their assertion that Christ begged, for the fact that they are burdensome to the Church,[3]) while they are referred to as "disciples of Antichrist"; and already the characteristic notion of the "sect of Christ" is present.[4]) Evidently some time must be allowed for Wiclif to have reached this developed position, a fact also borne out by the position we have taken up, that the "poor priests" are an organisation later in origin than the break with the Friars, and here already, in 1378, we have the "poor priests" apparently fully organised.[5]) Hence, clearly, between 1377, when Wiclif's ideas began to attract attention, and the time when he took up a position of hostility to the Friars, there is little space for any period in which the Reformer, while attacking the endowed Orders, was sparing the mendicants, in the hope of winning them to his side. The developed position of 1378 is fatal to such a view. The year 1377, then, seems the likely date for fixing the outbreak of the controversy. In that year Wiclif's opinions concerning the poverty of the Church, to which we have seen the Friars strongly objecting, won wide publicity through the proceedings at London, and what is perhaps of even greater importance, in that year his opinions received the solemn condemnation of the Pope.[6])

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[1]) p. 38.

[2]) Latin, pp. 39, 40.

[3]) Latin, pp. 40, 42.

[4]) p. 52.

[5]) Both Mr. Matthew and Mr. Pollard give hints that the "poor priests" were there as early as 1377. E. W., p. 275. Dial., p. xv.

[6]) Loserth, art. on Wiclif, R. E., p. 225, says: "So gewahrt man doch in den letzten Büchern von de Civile Dominio die spuren eines Risses." Cp. De Civ., IV., p. 417; III., pp. 8, 12-13; and especially III., p. 326, against extortion. Wiclif already speaks here of different kinds of begging (IV., p. 417); of new religions being unlawful (III., pp. 14, 30), and he already has the idea of the "one sect of Christ." Here we see the beginnings of the position which Wiclif developed in his antagonism to the Friars. The "spuren eines Risses" are clearly here.

This conclusion is strengthened by certain considerations relating to the Eucharist controversy which raged so furiously between Wiclif and his opponents during the last years of his life, and at the same time it suggests a new point of view with regard to that struggle. Usually, when a man in the Middle Ages presumed to attack the doctrine of the Sacrament, he paid the penalty of having that regarded as the main part of his activity. This was the case with the English Reformer. The attack on this central doctrine of the Church was in reality only a small part of Wiclif's work. In his controversy with the Friars the question does not play nearly so important a *rôle* as, for instance, the matter of the possession of worldly goods. It is entirely of secondary interest. However, certain points are worth noting. It is somewhat surprising that Wiclif regards the Friars as his main opponents in this matter. It is true, he does occasionally link in the other three sects as being heretical on the point, but that is more the exception than the rule. Further, his main contention against the Friars here is that they keep a discreet silence as to their real belief, asserting either that the matter is too subtle for the understanding of the common people,[1]) or declaring generally that they believe as the Holy Church believes.[2]) He objects that they refuse to express their view in writing, a thing he is always ready to do.[3])

The form in which the Eucharist controversy is referred to in the *Historia Anglicana*[4]) suggests the same point of view. There the following are given among the propositions of Wiclif condemned in 1382 : "Preachers who refuse to say what they believe the Sacrament is, are heretics," and "the Friars are ashamed to say what is their faith concerning the Sacrament." Further, Wiclif stoutly maintains that his

[1]) P. W., I., p. 383.

[2]) *Ibid.*

[3]) O. E., II., pp. 44, 414.

[4]) II., p. 54.

own position is the "fides antiqua" of the Catholic Church, the faith long held before the Friars were introduced,[1]) while he says again and again that the Friars are suspect of heresy on the point. On one occasion he asserts "They know well that they vary in belief from the Gospel and the common people."[2]) Thus the Friars are the heretics. These two points taken together—viz., the refusal of the Friars to state their belief, and Wiclif's view that they vary from the common belief of the day—seem to suggest that the controversy concerning the Eucharist, far from being the cause of struggle with the Friars, as Lechler would have it, was itself thrust upon Wiclif by the already irritated and angry mendicants. Mr. Matthew[3]) has shown that Wiclif's characteristic doctrine of the Eucharist occurs in his writings long before he issued his celebrated thesis of 1381. Certainly, by 1380 they are to be found, and probably as early as 1379.[4]) Now, we have seen that Wiclif was already in opposition to the Friars long before the Eucharistic controversy broke out in 1381. What could the Friars more wish than to prove against their enemy the charge of heresy regarding the sacred doctrine of the Host? Is it not likely that they discovered these passages in Wiclif's works and charged their author with heresy? And may not the thesis of 1381 be the Reformer's reply to that charge? If he had his characteristic doctrine of the Eucharist in 1379, it is difficult to see why he left it till 1381 before publishing his thesis, or what was the occasion of that step. But if Wiclif, before the attack on his Eucharistic doctrine by the Friars, regarded himself as orthodox, and saw no reason to state his position, the delay is explicable. His complaint that the Friars refuse to state their position in writing supports this view. They accused him of heresy. He replied by the

[1]) E. W., I., p. 210ff. Cp. III., p. 405.

[2]) S. E. W., I., p. 213.

[3]) Cp. E. W., p. xxiv.

[4]) Intro. to Dial., p. xx.

thesis of 1381. Let them now, he declares, write out their position that men can judge of the two.

This view is distinctly countenanced by at least one passage in Wiclif's works. In the book "De Blasphemia,"[1]) he declares that his opponents attack him for three things :— Firstly, his teaching concerning the perfection of religious states, *i.e.*, his doctrines concerning rites and ceremonies ; secondly, because of his doctrine of the possession of temporalities ; and thirdly, for his doctrine of the Sacrament. Concerning this latter, he says : "Objiciunt illi qui ex prædictis insaniunt quod contradico tamquam hereticus determinacione ecclesie de sacramentis. Sed hoc faciunt indirecte ut infirment priora que odiunt."[2]) Here Wiclif explicitly states that his opponents accused him of heresy because they hated his first-mentioned conclusions. The attack in this matter was "indirecte." Now, the first two reasons here given, as we have seen, were specially directed against the Friars. Hence we gather from the passage that Wiclif was accused of heresy in the matter of the Sacrament because of his previous attack on the mendicants. This being the case, it is obvious that, had it not been for the antagonism of the Friars to Wiclif, we might never have had the thesis of 1381, nor have heard of John Wiclif as the veteran opponent of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

If we are correct, then, in fixing the date of the outbreak of the controversy so early, Wiclif's work of reformation must be regarded as more of a unity than has hitherto been the case. The whole of the work for which he is remembered was accomplished in the short space of eight years. In 1376 he began his work. He did not see the end of 1384. Practically during the whole of these eight years of activity for Church and State he was engaged in his hard struggle with the Friars.

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[1]) pp. 276-287.
[2]) p. 287.

Chapter V.

The Course of the Controversy after Wiclif's Death.

We have seen in the foregoing how large and important a place the attack on the Friars took in Wiclif's work. It remains to consider how far the controversy with the mendicants played a part after the Reformer's death—how far such an attack is to be regarded as an essential factor in Lollardism. Lollardism is not identical with Wiclifism. After the first generation of the Reformer's followers had passed away, Wiclif's doctrines naturally underwent a certain amount of modification. The emphasis was readjusted. Such a readjustment took place in the matter of the controversy with the Friars. As we shall see, the nature of the controversy changed, while the subject ceased to retain that central position which it held in Wiclif's own work. Enough has come down to us to show that for years after the leader of the movement had passed from the scene of action, this question of the Friars remained a living one, and that Wiclif had by no means raised his voice in vain. In many of the cases recorded of men charged with holding Lollard opinions, the attack on the Friars appears among the charges. Thus, the only offence of Henry Crompe, who was charged in 1392, was an attack on the mendicants.[1]) Similar is the charge against William White, condemned at Norwich as late as 1428.[2]) The case of

[1]) Fasc. Ziz., p. lxvii. and p. 343ff.

[2]) *Ibid.*, pp. 381, 431, 432.

Peter Patteshulle[1]) is worth recounting more fully, as giving a typical account of the nature of the quarrel between Friars and Lollards. He was an Augustinian Friar who had been in the service of Walter of Disse, the confessor of the Duke of Lancaster, and the bitter enemy of Wiclif. Led to join himself to the Wiclifites, he did not hesitate to preach publicly and boldly against his brother Friars. In 1387 he wrote out a list of charges against them, which he made public in the usual manner, by affixing it to the door of St. Paul's, London. His charges were three—murder of the brethren, sodomy, and betrayal of the King and realm of England. To win greater credence to his account, he posted up also the actual details of the murders, the names of the victims, and of the places where the events were alleged to have occurred. On another occasion he preached a violent sermon against the Orders in St. Christopher's Church, London. During the discourse he was interrupted by certain Friars who had entered the church for the purpose of creating a disturbance. A wild tumult arose. A free fight followed, the Lollards succeeding in ejecting their opponents, crying loudly as they did so, " Disperdamus homicidas, incendamus sodomitas, suspendamus Regis et Angliæ proditores." Such tumults were at this time frequent. In some cases—as in that of Swinderby,[2]) a remarkable enthusiast who worked in Wiclif's own county and was condemned in 1391—the Friars were the leaders in the persecution. An order from Richard II., in 1399, to the Viscount of Norfolk and Suffolk, shows that in that part of England, at least, the Lollards had gained ground in their attack on the Friars.[3]) The Lollards are to be suppressed, and the only reason given for their suppression is that they preach to the scandal and disgrace of the Friars. While in the case of such prominent Lollards as William Sautre and John Oldcastle, the matter of

[1]) Chron. Anglie, p. 376ff. Also, Hist. Angl., pp. 157-8.

[2]) Fox, Acta et Mon., III., p. 113; Fasc. Ziz., p. 334f; Knighton, II., p. 189.

[3]) Rymer Foedera (orig. ed.), VIII., p. 87.

the attack on the Friars apparently played no important part, yet that the controversy lived on is shown by such a work as Reginal Pecock's book entitled "The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy," which was written as late as 1449. The book is directed against the blaming of the clergy by Lollard preachers. The author sets out to vindicate eleven practices of the clergy, all of which were attacked by the Lollards, but finding the task too great, he confined himself to six. Significant for us here is the fact that, of these six, the institution of religious orders is one.[1]) Evidently at this time it was still a living, if not a burning, question.

That all this preaching of the Lollards had a material effect on the Friars is vouched for by the chroniclers of the time. Even while Wiclif was living, according to the "Continuatio Eulogii,"[2]) "The alms of the Friars were reduced, the mendicants were ordered to labour, were not allowed to preach, and were called 'penny preachers' (denariorum predicatores), and 'penetrators into houses' (domorum penetratores)." Similarly, in the above-mentioned order to the Viscount of Norfolk and Suffolk, it is stated that the Lollards preach "derogationem et de pauperationem manifestam" of the mendicants. Evidently Wiclif's attack on their methods and system of begging had not been spoken in vain. It is significant that in the latter part of Richard II.'s reign the laws against mendicancy were made stricter,[3]) and the law passed in 1482 forbidding children under twelve years of age to be taken into an Order without the consent of their parents suggests the influence of Wiclif's polemic.[4])

Sufficient has been said to show that, during the period

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[1]) Pecock himself attacked the Friars, especially for their style of preaching, but he defends the institution as such. v. D. N. B., XLIV., p. 199. Cp. Repressor, pp. 523, 535ff.

[2]) p. 355.

[3]) Rolls of Parliament, III., p. 558.

[4]) *Ibid.*, III., p. 502.

when Lollardism was a force in the life of the country, the question of the Friars remained a burning one. However, during this period the nature of the controversy changed. An indication of the change is clearly given in the incident of Patteshulle quoted above.[1]) The popular tumult on that occasion, together with the crystallisation of all the accusations against the Friars into the three that then formed the battle-cry, show how, already, the attack had taken a less scholastic and a more popular form. The popular, tumultuous nature of the movement against the Friars is the characteristic of the period of Lollardry. The movement became more popular in two directions. The Lollards in their arguments became less scholastic, and at the same time the movement against the Friars was no longer confined to men of Lollard opinions. Our next task is to trace the development of this movement in the people.

The change in the nature of the controversy is part of the change that came over Lollardry as a whole. The first followers and contemporaries of Wiclif were men trained in the universities, and, like their master, they combined an intense human feeling with sound scholarship. The second generation of Lollards brought the dissolution of this rare combination. They were for the most part men who had not only received no scholastic training, but whose piety excluded all learning save the reading of the Bible and the study of Wiclif's works, and of them, chiefly those written in English.[2]) The inevitable result was that the attack was no longer based on carefully-developed arguments, but rather on statements and charges that readily appealed to the imagination of the populace. The readers of Wiclif's tracts naturally imbibed and gave again those ideas that had most attraction for themselves. Charges of sodomy, murder, and treason took a central position, whereas the spiritual ideas

[1]) v. above, p. 66.

[2]) cp. Jas. Gairdner—Hist. of Eng. Church in Sixteenth Century, p. 59.

that are so prominent in Wiclif's works sank more and more into the background.

The widening of the movement against the Friars into circles beyond those of Lollardry was due partly to the social conditions of the time. We have seen that there was a movement against the Friars on social grounds before Wiclif began his work, and that the Reformer in his polemic greatly emphasised this aspect of the question. Naturally, after the Reformer's death this movement lived on and grew, and was not necessarily confined to men who held distinctively Lollard ideas on religious questions However, the greatest factor in this widening process was the change in the status of the Friars that occurred in the reign of Henry IV. That we must next consider in detail.

Throughout a large part of Henry's reign, the peace of the realm was continually disturbed by petty conspiracies, having for their object the restoration of Richard II. It was asserted that the late King was still living. Now, the nerve of this kind of conspiracy was to be found among the Friars, and particularly among the Franciscans.[1]) Significantly enough, the convent at Leicester was the centre of it. The book called "The Prophecy," attributed to Prior John of Bridlington, was much read and published abroad by the mendicants. Here it was prophesied that Richard would return and make war on Henry. As early as 1402 a Friar of Norfolk had asserted that Richard was alive. A Friar of Aylesbury was executed for a similar statement.[2]) We read of a Friar Minor who, having become angry with his brethren, exposed a large conspiracy in which ten Friars of the convent at Leicester had determined to take part. Eight of these were tried at Westminster, and were found guilty of having asserted that Richard still lived, of having organised a journey

[1]) Cp. Wylie, Hist. of England under Henry IV., p. 266ff., and Hist. Angl., II., pp. 249-250.

[2]) Continuatio Eulogii, III., p. 390.

to Wales to seek him, and of having sent large sums of money to Owen Glendower to aid him in his projected invasion of England. They were all executed at Tyburn.[1]) Two other Friars of Leicester also paid with their lives the penalty of exciting the people to seek the late King in Scotland.[2]) Such events as these naturally brought the whole body of Friars into disrepute, and one of the first results of this disrepute was to alter the attitude of the clergy to the Friars. Wiclif had predicted in his "Trialogus" concerning the alliance which his own work had cemented between clergy and Friars, that it "would not stand, but would come to an end to the hurt of one party or the other."[3]) That prediction was now literally fulfilled, and the severance of the alliance was to the hurt of the mendicants. The clergy were the friends of the new King. Their support had been bought by the statute for the persecution of the Lollards. For a price so great they were prepared to let their old friends the mendicants fall, when the latter became implicated in plots against the new *régime*. Hence, the Friars appear no longer as the chief movers in the persecution of the followers of Wiclif. The clergy play that *rôle* alone. And consequently it was in the eyes of the clergy no longer a crime for any to speak against the disloyal Friars. The result was that the attack on the Friars ceased to take a prominent place in the charges brought against the Lollards, but rather those points in Wiclif's teaching were emphasised which were contrary to the opinions of the clergy—as, for example, the questions of the Eucharist, of pilgrimages, and of the poverty of the clergy.

Not only did the Friars, owing to their political aspirations, become unpopular with the clergy, but much more so with the people. The people welcomed the new reign. The personal popularity of the King, the general dissatisfaction at

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[1]) *Ibid.*, III., p. 391.
[2]) *Ib.d.*, III., pp. 394 and 389.
[3]) p. 375.

the course of events during the years of Richard II.'s government of the land, and the bad social conditions making the time ripe for any change or revolution—all combined to give the masses a genuine enthusiasm for the new sovereign. That enthusiasm naturally found an outlet in the attack on the Friars—hated already for their oppression, and now hated more for their opposition to what the people regarded as an improvement of their lot. Several recorded incidents show how widespread and deep-rooted in the minds of the populace this hatred of the Friars was. In 1405, we read, the soldiery of the Earl of Northumberland maltreated in a humiliating and degrading way Friars of the four Orders, among whom were eighteen Friars Minor.[1]) An interesting legend is told of the year 1402.[2]) While the peasants of the little town of Danbury, in Essex, were gathered together for Divine worship, a violent thunderstorm broke over the district, and the church was struck by lightning. In the midst of the ensuing consternation the Devil appeared, and, indeed, dressed in the garb of a Franciscan ! After capering about with mad antics, jumping three times over the altar and turning black in the face, he left the church in the somewhat undignified manner of diving between the legs of a terrified rustic who stood near the door. The ordinary strong smell of sulphur and the somewhat extraordinary colour of the rustic's legs (which were black as pitch !) vouched for the identity of the unseemly visitor. Such a story has no small value in showing what a position the Friars had at this time taken in the popular imagination. The Devil would never have taken on the habit of a Franciscan a century before. With this story we may combine the note of the "Historia Anglicana,"[3]) which adds, after relating the account of a defeat of the King by Owen Glendower, "There were many who said that this

[1] Cont. Eulog., III., p. 407.
[2]) Hist. Angl., II., p. 249. Cp. Wylie, p. 279.
[3]) II., p. 251.

defeat was due to the adverse art of the Friars Minor"—the reference being to the "black arts," in which the Friars were held to be masters. The unenviable *rôle* given in all this to the Friars Minor is no doubt partly due to the fact that they, so to speak, incorporated most fully the underlying principle of the Orders, and partly to their prominence in the above-mentioned conspiracy. It is significant that every incident testifies to the fact that the Minors were held to be the worst of all.

This outburst of popular feeling against the Friars is reflected in certain poems of the period, which we have next to consider, as giving an indication of the nature of the movement after Wiclif's death. It is not in the educated poets of the time that we are to look for echoes of this peasants' revolt against the Orders. Chaucer and Gower remained uninfluenced by it. What Chaucer has to say of the Friars is Chaucer's own, and bears no trace of the influence of his older contemporary or of this subsequent popular movement. The smaller and anonymous poems, however, are extremely interesting. They reflect the spirit of the time.

We have, first, a poem in the form of a dialogue between Jack Upland, representing the Lollard point of view, and Daw Topias, a Friar.[1]) The poem is held to have been written about the beginning of Henry IV.'s reign. Here the main charges brought against the mendicants are disloyalty to the King and Kingdom, the building of costly houses, the worship of their habit, hatred of preaching, and the hiding of sacred books, and departure from the rule and Testament of St. Francis. Evidently the writer was acquainted with Wiclif's works. The poem is a presentation of many of the minor points urged by the Reformer.

Two other small poems bear the titles "Poem on Friars" and "On the Minorite Friars" respectively.[2]) The

[1]) Wright's Political Songs and Poems, II., p. 16ff.

[2]) *Ibid.*, p. 263. Mon. Franc., p. 603.

author declares himself to have been a Friar, and therefore claims to speak with some authority. Here the hypocrisy of the Friars, their laziness, their immorality, and especially the tricks by which they deceive "fair wives" in their begging, are lashed with a satire as severe as it is clever. Witness the stanza on their begging :—

> Trautes (*i.e.*, tricks) thai can and many a jape (trick),
> For somme can with a pound of sape (soap)
> Gete him a kyrtelle (girdle) and a cape
> And sou what else thereto.

In both poems the author writes against the opposition of the Friars to the clergy, which seems to suggest Henry IV.'s reign as the date of the poem, and also that it was written by one who was no Lollard. It is significant that, save for the catch phrase "Caym's castels," there is nothing in the poem to remind one of Wiclif.

The most important for our purpose of these poems and also the best from a literary point of view is one belonging to the Piers Plowman literature, viz., Piers Plowman's Creed.[1]) It was written towards the end of Richard II.'s reign, and has as its single theme the follies and inconsistencies of the Friars. The author was evidently a follower of Wiclif, to whose work he refers in the lines :—[2])

> Wytnesse on Wiclif that warned hem with trewthe ;
> For he in goodnesse of gost graythliche (= truly) hem warned
> To wayuen her wikednesse and werkes of sin.
> Whou sone this sori men seweden (= pursued) his soul
> And oueral lollede him with heretykes werkes.

The most remarkable feature of the poem is its form, which, although suggested by Langland's greater work, has, nevertheless, enough originality in it to stamp the author as

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[1]) It is worthy of note that both this poem and the "Vision of Piers Plowman" played an important part at the time of the Reformation in England. The "Vision" was printed in 1550 and the "Creed" in 1553. (v. Skeats' Ed. of "Crede," p. i., E. E. T. S.)

[2]) Lines 528-532.

a man of real literary ability. In fact, the satire of the work is more in the form than in the expression. A simple, honest peasant, having already learned his Paternoster and his Ave Maria, sets out to find a religious instructor who will teach him the Creed. He seeks out first those with the reputation as religious instructors, viz., the Friars, and makes his request to a member of each of the four Orders in succession. By way of answer, each attacks some other Order of Friars and none offers to teach the Creed, all rather suggesting that a knowledge of it is useless. Thus the Friar Minor bids him beware of the Carmelites, who are mere jugglers and jesters, betrayers of women, loafers about at fairs, gluttons, and general vagabonds, against whom St. Paul in his lifetime preached. In answer to the question, "Can you teach me the Creed?" the Minor replies with a defence of the Minors, and assures the peasant that he can save him without a knowledge of the Creed. The only condition is that he shall give something to their convent, for which he can have his portrait painted on the west window, and be folded in the cope of St. Francis, who will present him to the Trinity, and pray for his sins. Next the seeker hunts out a Dominican in one of their convents, of which the poem gives a most valuable description. This fat Friar, "with a double chin as big as a goose's egg," delivers a tirade against the Augustinians, exposing their lies as to the foundation of their Order, and showing the antiquity and greatness of the Dominicans. The Augustinian comes next. His pet aversion proves to be the Minors, who are the very soul of hypocrisy. He declares the Augustinians were founded first and dwelt in the wilderness until the Minors invaded the towns, when the Augustinians followed in order to amend them. The demand for a contribution again meets the peasant's request to be taught the Creed. The seeker next tries two Carmelites, who attack the Dominicans as being prouder than Lucifer himself, and likewise make the demand

for money. Finally the peasant meets the Plowman, who delivers a vigorous attack on the Friars in general, and in the end teaches the man the Creed. Such is the plan of the poem. It is a magnificent, artistically conceived satire on the way the Friars give religious instruction to the poor, and a scathing indictment of the frequent quarrelling and mutual jealousies existing between the Orders. Each Friar by his very words shows himself to be worse than the Order he condemns, and indeed worse in the very sin for which he condemns the others. Thus each is condemned out of the mouth of its own representative far more than by its rival.

The attack of the Plowman with which the poem closes bears unmistakable traces of the influence of Wiclif. The Friars are of "Caym's seed," sons of Satan and like to Pharisees. Their founders were good men, who founded them in truth ; but all their founders' intentions have been completely forgotten. The life of the Friars is tested by the Beatitudes, and is found to be entirely at variance with them. The monks are far better than the Friars, though, alas ! they have been led astray by them. All this is in the tone of Wiclif's attack, and the writer of the poem evidently owes much to the Reformer's works.

In all this popular movement we see unmistakable traces of Wiclif's influence, but, nevertheless, the attack has changed. We miss here the characteristic ideas of the Reformer. Even a poem such as the last we have considered, bearing unmistakable evidence of a knowledge of Wiclif's works, has nothing to say concerning Wiclif's characteristic note of the one pure "sect of Christ"—a point all the more remarkable as the poem mentions three times with approval the founders of the Orders. The attack has become entirely popular. The main charges are now those of immorality, necromancy,[1]) and

[1]) These two points are frequently mentioned by Wiclif, but by him they are taken for granted as well known to all. They form no essential part of his attack.

betrayal of the kingdom, *i.e.*, just those parts of Wiclif's attack which appealed most easily to the popular imagination. It was the political and social side of the Reformer's work that made the deepest impression on his followers, and that for the simple reason that that side had a stronger appeal for the poor peasants being made daily poorer by the robbery of the mendicants. The spiritual nature of religion, the idea of the freedom of the "sect of Christ," which finds its clearest expression in the course of Wiclif's attack on the Friars—apparently failed to lay any firm hold on the popular mind. Other interests crushed it into the background, or shall we rather say, that this idea of inward religion, as Wiclif formulated it, had not sufficient strength to maintain itself in face of other absorbing aims.

The history of Martin Luther, which bears such striking resemblance to that of our English Reformer, showed later how difficult it was to prevent attempts at religious revival being swallowed up in an endeavour to rectify social wrongs. This was the fate that awaited Wiclif's work. And this development was furthered not only by the strong social and political feelings of the Reformer himself, but by the fact that already in England, before Wiclif's ideas of religious reform began to make themselves felt, the peasants had learned to appreciate their power, and were already in the struggle for social and political rights. Hence it came about that the attack on the Friars, although originally on the one side at least an attempt at a general revival of religion, lived on not as such but rather as a programme of social reform. It was the popular social movement, already strong in England when Wiclif stepped into the light of publicity, that received an impetus from his activity.

We have seen that the work of Wiclif had telling effect on the position of the Friars in England. The Reformer had aimed at the destruction of the Orders. He had criticised the system as a system, not merely the abuses of which Friars

were guilty. It cannot be said that he succeeded in carrying out this policy of annihilation, or in convincing his contemporaries that the system itself was bad. He dealt a severe blow at the organisation. That is true, but nevertheless it was a blow from which the organisation might have recovered. If it failed to recover, it was because already its inherent strength had turned to weakness. That, to some extent aided by Wiclif's ideas, which were cherished throughout the country like smouldering fires ready to break into flame, now here, now there, accounts for the fact that the mendicants fell the first and the easiest prey to the rapacity of Henry VIII.

Appendix.

The Relation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, to the Friars.

Wiclif frequently refers to an attitude of antagonism to the Friars on the part of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln. For one particular sentence of the Bishop's he has great partiality. It is quoted again and again, forms the subject of a whole English tract,[1]) and altogether does good service in Wiclif's attack. Further, our author mentions Grosseteste along with William of Occam, William of St. Amour, and Richard Fitz Ralph of Armagh, as a forerunner of himself in this part of his work, and, in fact, to some extent shelters himself behind the authority of the Bishop's example.[2]) It is true that Wiclif expresses the opinion that

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[1]) The headline to this tract reads thus:—"Lincolnensis generaliter describit sic claustralem egressum de claustro et sic fratrem. Talis, inquit, est cadaver mortuum de sepulcro egressum, pannis funebribus involutum a diabalo inter homines agitatum" (v. S. E. W., III., p. 230). Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the sentence in Grosseteste's published works, nor do any of the editors of Wiclif's works give any help in the passages where the simile occurs. We learn from Trialogus (p. 336) that the quotation is from one of Grosseteste's sermons. A careful reading of the passages in Wiclif's works suggests that the simile is made "generally" by Grosseteste, and that its special application to the Friars is entirely due to Wiclif. If that be the case, the sentence does not affect the present enquiry. (Cp. Polem. Works, I., p. 15 note.) For other references to Grosseteste cp. S. S., II., p. 84; III., p. 128; S. E. W., III., pp. 60, 230, 470; De Apos., p. 26.

[2]) See above, p. 5.

Grosseteste took up this position of hostility to the Friars only when he was advanced in years, but the frequent references to him suggest to the reader that the Bishop became a confirmed opponent of the mendicants. This view is repeated by Buddensieg, who declares "vor seinem Ende war Grosseteste's Begeisterung für die neuen Religion in Enttäuschung und bittern Hass umgeschlagen."[1]) The question arises whether Wiclif is correct in his suggestion, and whether the Bishop can be placed on a level with Richard Fitz Ralph and William of St. Amour as a forerunner in the attack on the Friars.

Grosseteste lived at the time when the Friars, a newly-formed institution whose splendid enthusiasm appealed to all save those for whom zeal in religion was a rebuke to their own laziness, were beginning that activity in our island which was to lead to an almost complete conquest of the religious life of England. Grosseteste, first as a student, then as a teacher at Oxford, and afterwards as the Bishop of one of the widest and most important dioceses of the country, had necessarily the duty of judging the new organisation. To say that he judged it favourably is to say scarcely half the truth. In his period at Oxford he was completely captured for the newcomers. He became for them a zealous partisan, befriended them on every possible occasion, and was their first "Lector" at the University. How warm a friend of the mendicants he was considered is shown by the statement of Matthew Paris, who declares that his election to the See of Lincoln was "contra omnium opinionem licet, ut dicebatur, ordini minorum obigaretur."[2])

The election to the see made him, if anything, a still more ardent supporter of the Friars. The keynote of Grosse-

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[1]) Johann Wiclif und seine Zeit., p. 67. Buddensieg gives absolutely no reference for his strong statement. Apparently it is a conclusion derived from the writings of Wiclif.

[2]) Matt. Paris, Hist. Anglorum, II., p. 376.

teste's activity as a Bishop was Church reform, *i.e.*, a reform of the existing organisation. The whole machinery of the Church was ineffective. Parish priests were few, and these few were ignorant and lazy. The monasteries were centres of luxurious living, and throughout the whole diocese the flock of God remained truly as sheep without a shepherd. To the task of creating a really effective organisation, effective for producing a real inward religion in the masses of the people, the Bishop directed his whole energies. Both sides of his church activities, viz., his visitations of his diocese and his quarrel with the Pope, were the outcome of this reforming zeal.

Now, in this work of reformation, the policy of the Bishop was nothing less than to use to the full the new organisation of the Friars. They were the men most fitted to take the work of religious instruction and pastoral oversight out of the hands of the indolent parish priests. They could be a better example of religion than the luxury-loving monks. By their wandering life they could supply the demand caused by the scarcity of parish priests, and by their true imitation of Christ could shame both priests and monks out of their worldliness to a life of service after the example of their Master. Such were the sentiments of the Bishop. His aim, therefore, was to instal firmly the Friars as the most effective ministers of religion, as the surest guarantee of a genuine religious revival. That task he accomplished, and its accomplishment must be reckoned as no small part of his life's work. His personal affection for members of the Orders shows his attitude. Again and again we find him making the request that Friars, both Dominicans and Franciscans, might be sent to him and allowed to remain with him. His bosom friends were of the Orders. Adam de Marisco was a Minor, John of St. Giles a Dominican. It was, indeed, Grosseteste's express invitation and exhortation that brought the latter over from Paris to live and work in his fatherland. How far the Bishop believed

he had succeeded in his policy is shown clearly in the praise of the mendicants—at times extravagant—that finds continual repetition in his letters. Thus, to Pope Gregory IX., he wrote :— "Your Holiness may be assured that in England inestimable benefits have been produced by the Friars ; for they illumine the country with the light of their preaching and learning. Their holy conversation excites vehemently to contempt of the world and to voluntary poverty, to the practice of humility in the highest ranks, to obedience of the prelates and the Head of the Church, to patience in tribulation and abstinence in plenty—in a word, to the practice of all the virtues. If your Holiness could see with what devotion and humility the people run to hear the Word of Life from them, for confession and instruction as to daily living, and how much improvement the clergy and the regulars have obtained by imitating, you would indeed say that upon them that dwell in the land of the darkness of death hath the light shined."[1]) In a communication to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, he writes :—"They are indefatigable in causing peace and in illumining the land ; and in this, they supply in great measure the defects of the prelates."[1]) In similar terms is his letter to Cardinal Raynald, afterwards Pope Alexander IV.[3]) Such warm praise could only come from a man who was completely captured for the Orders, and who realised that the success of his plan of reform was due largely to the activities of the mendicants. The praise is that of one who sees the vindication of his policy in the evident results of it, and is an ungrudging tribute to those whose energies were the indispensable condition of success. The Bishop's sentiments find apt expression in his statement to Adam de Marisco, that the Friars were,"to himself and the Church, very necessary."[4])

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[1]) Ep. LVIII., p. 180.

[2]) Ep. XXXIV.

[3]) Ep. LIX., p. 181.

[4]) Ep. XX., p. 69.

So much for the Bishop's praise of the mendicants. But what about the statement of Wiclif concerning an attack upon them ? The only mention of such an attack is preserved by Matthew Paris[1]) in the vivid account he gives of Grosseteste's last days. The aged prelate lay severely stricken at Buckden. His approaching death he felt to be the outlet from the struggle in which he had for some time been engaged—the struggle against the claims of Innocent IV. to have the right to fill English benefices with foreigners. The old Bishop, filled with the cares of the struggle, and weighed down with anxiety for the cause he loved, calls to him, at the last, his bosom friend John of St. Giles, and, "recounting certain deeds of Rome, rebuked him and his brothers severely, and also the Minors, because their Orders were constituted in voluntary poverty, so that they might the more freely and sharply rebuke the sins of the powerful ones. But because they did not rebuke the sins of the great, he held them to be manifest heretics." He then demanded of the said John a definition of heresy, which he failing to give, the Bishop himself supplied. "Heresy," he said, "is an opinion chosen according to human sense and contrary to Scripture, openly taught, strenuously defended." "And then," the chronicler proceeds, "reprehending prelates and especially the Roman prelate, he added, 'To give the cure of souls to a youngster is the opinion of a certain prelate chosen according to human sense. . . . It is contrary to Scripture, which prohibits those to become pastors who are not suitable for killing wolves.'" Whoever, the Bishop argues, knows this, and fails to contradict it, is as great a betrayer and as bad a heretic as the perpetrator of it. He then concludes : "Sed vos fratres maxime obligamini ad oppositionem contra talem, cum habeatis ex officio gratiam prædicandi, et per paupertatem liberiores injustis resistendi. Quia 'Cantabit vacuus coram latrone

[1]) Hist. Anglorum, III., p. 145; cp. pp. 329-30; cp. Chron. Maj., V., p. 400.

viator.'"[1]) Here the Bishop's complaint is that the Friars fail to use that power which their very poverty gave them, of rebuking even the great ones of the earth for actions manifestly contrary to the best interests of religion.

This is the only occasion on which Grosseteste had anything to say derogatory to the Friars, and Matthew Paris, himself an opponent of the mendicants, naturally makes the most of it. In another account[2]) of the same event Grosseteste is also made to object to the practice of the Friars of extorting huge sums of money for Rome by means of their influence in the confessional, their power in making wills, and such like. All this is in close agreement with the attitude that Matthew Paris[3]) himself takes up against the Orders, and it is generally admitted that his account of the last days of Grosseteste is to a considerable extent coloured by his own opinions.[4]) But if even that be granted, it still remains not unlikely that the Bishop did say something on his death-bed against the Friars. That he rebuked them for their failure to rebuke the Pope is most probable. The national phase of Grosseteste's work did not loom so large in his own eyes as did the religious, and his quarrel with the Pope was but the result of his efforts to produce an improved Church organisation. His main objection to the appointment of a young foreigner to an English benefice was the same as that which led him, earlier in life, to give up all his own benefices save one, viz., the religious objection of inability to perform the duties required. Such an opinion it was reasonable to expect the Friars, who had shown such zeal for his ideas of religious reform, would

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[1]) Hist. Angl., IV., p. 145ff.; cp. pp. 329-330.

[2]) Chron. Maj., V., p. 405.

[3]) Chron. Maj., IV., pp. 279-280.

[4]) See "Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln," by F. S. Stevenson, by far the best book on Grosseteste, p. 322. V. p. 59ff. for relation of Grosseteste to the Friars, in which chapter there is no hint of a break with the Friars. The same is to be said of two excellent essays on Grosseteste by Mandel Creighton in "Historical Essays and Addresses," p. 117ff.

share, even though it meant opposition to the Pope. Evidently, however, they were not so ready as was the bold Bishop to go to the length of rebuking the prelate of prelates. Already the Friars had become the emissaries of the Pope, and that on English soil. The Roman Pontiff was to them a benefactor, and, on the other hand, the fact of a foreigner holding an English benefice did not seem in their eyes the calamity it appeared to Grosseteste. Their point of view was not that of a conscientious bishop, however zealous they might be for Church reform. Hence, it seems very probable that while the mendicants supported Grosseteste in his attempts to reorganise his diocese, they lent him no aid when it came to a question of opposing the action of Innocent IV. Consequently, it appears not unlikely that on his death-bed the Bishop warned them against such a position. So far the account given by Matthew Paris would seem to be correct.

The statement of Wiclif that Grosseteste attacked the Friars "when he was more mature" suggests that it is to this death-bed scene that the Reformer refers. But are we justified in assuming from the evidence that Grosseteste had become the confirmed opponent of the mendicants, or indeed had in any way changed his opinions with regard to them? Certain considerations make for the contrary. In the first place, the "attack" of the Bishop is poured into the ear of John of St. Giles, himself a Friar, the bosom friend of Grosseteste, and one who remained so to the end. Again, the words are part of the death-bed instructions of one who has, all his life long, had upon his heart the abuses of the Church, and who has devoted his whole energy to the production of a better organisation and a more inward religion. The complaint against the Friars is, according to the account of Matthew Paris himself, but a section of a general complaint against the Church. In such a case as this, the spirit and tone of the complaint must be taken into the reckoning, and the spirit in this case is the spirit of solicitude—the solicitude

of a dying warrior for the cause for which he has fought. To argue from such a speech, when it stands absolutely alone in a man's life, that he was a confirmed opponent of the Friars, in the sense that Wiclif was, is to build the house upon the sands. A warm supporter of the Friars—the best they ever found on English soil—was Grosseteste throughout his life-time. A warm supporter of them he was at his end. He merely warns the organisation against the dangers consequent on a lack of zeal and an attitude of compromise towards the great ones of the earth—even when those great ones are benefactors. This is surely a case where warning betokens friendship and love rather than hatred and disgust. As to any objection to the Friars as an institution, as to any word of regret at his own action in befriending and introducing the new organisation, that is absolutely wanting. Alongside of William of Occam he might, in some respects, be placed; but to place him by the side of such a man as Fitz Ralph of Armagh is to do injustice to his whole life's work. Still less can he in this particular be compared with Wiclif. He can more justly be compared with such a personality as Bonaventura, who, though a General of the Order, and one of the firmest defenders of the mendicants' position, nevertheless knew how to rebuke the brethren for their shortcomings and warn them of the inevitable consequences.[1]) Significantly enough, according to Matthew Paris himself, it is to none other than members of the Orders that the Bishop's death is miraculously announced.[2]) Evidently—if anything at all can be adduced from such legends—at the time of the Bishop's end, he was not held to be an opponent of the mendicants, but rather the warm friend whose departure meant much for them. Far from being the forerunner of Wiclif in an attack on the Friars, he was the forerunner in the sense that it was he above all men who did the very work which Wiclif a

[1]) Cp. Lea's Inquisition in M. A., I., p. 296.
[2]) Matt. Paris, Chron. Maj., IV., pp. 407-408.

century later set himself to undo. The firm position of the mendicants at Oxford and Leicester—the places where Wiclif met the organisation—was due to no other man than the Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese these two centres lay. The new organisation, when it most needed an influential English prelate and patriot to support and defend it against the older monastic and parochial organisation, and plant it firmly on the new ground, found the man fitted as by Providence for the task. That man was Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln.

Lebenslauf.

Geboren am 22 November, 1884, zu Shepshed in der Grafschaft Leicester, England, als Sohn des Fabrikdirektors William Dakin und der Rebecca, geb. Burton, wurde ich, nach dem gewöhnlichen Bildungsgang auf der Volksschule und der sog. "Grammar School," als "Pupil Teacher" bei dem "Loughborough School Board" angestellt. Im Yahre 1903 bestand ich dann das Immatrikulations-examen der Universität London. Im folgenden Yahre wurde ich in das Predigerseminar der Englischen Baptistenkircke, zu Rawdon, Leeds aufgenommen. Nachdem ich hier Vorlesungen über alle theologischen Fächer gehört hatte, erwarb ich im Sommer 1907 auf der Universität London den Grad B.D. (Baccalaureus der Theologie.) Im nächsten Yahre betrieb ich ebendaselbst weitere Studien und zwar besonders auf dem Gebiete der Kirchengeschichte. Noch im Sommer desselben Yahres erwarb ich ein von der "Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland," gegebenes Stipendium, das zur Weiterführung und Vertiefung theologischen Studien bestimmt ist. Demgemäss besuchte ich im Herbst 1908 die Universität Halle, um dort die kirchengeschichtlichen und dogmengeschichtlichen Vorlesungen des Herrn Prof. F. Loofs zu hören. Seit Sommer 1909 habe ich auf der Universität Heidelberg die Vorlesungen und Uebungen des Herrn Prof. H. von Schubert besucht, unter seiner Auleitung gearbeitet, und ein grosses Interesse für die Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters gewonnen, ein Interesse, dem auch die vorliegende Arbeit ihre Entstehung verdankt.

August, 1910.