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The Forerunners of the Protestant Reformation

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THE FORERUNNERS OF THE
PROTESTANT REFORMATION

A Research Paper
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by
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APPROVED BY:

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Cooperative Readers

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is a study based mainly on the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation in Western Europe from 910 to 1498 A.D. Some consideration is given to the earlier history of the Church, to show the cause for the reforms to follow.

Sources used for the research of this paper are listed in the bibliography. Since this research is historical it has relied on the works of others who have written on the history of the Christian Church. No effort is made to give a history of theology but to discover why the reforms were needed.

This study lists five main chapters:

- I. Introduction.
- II. Major Reform Movements in the Church. 910-1300 A.D.
- III. Lay Reforming Movements in the Church. 910-1300 A.D.
- IV. Attempts at Internal Reform in the Church. 1300-1498 A.D.
- V. Conclusion and Bibliography.

The summary account of this research is the following: The early period of the Church known as the Persecuted Church, remained pure and grew through the persecutions.

After the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.) the Church was influenced by pagan ideas, and as a result of this syncretism, individuals started movements to react against the un-Christian influences. This same trend continued until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Monasticism developed as a reaction against the corruption of Christian faith. The monasteries became centers of learning and training of some leaders of reform in the Church. The Convent of Cluny, in 910 A.D.,

The Albigenses and Waldenses, considered heretical groups by the Roman Catholic Church, believed that the Scriptures were the only basis for Christian faith and practice.

John Wyclif, 1324-1384 A.D., a professor at Oxford University in England believed that the Scriptures were the sole authority of Christian faith, and that each believer should have a copy for study and devotions. His followers were known as the Lollards.

Jerome of Prague, a scholar and traveler, brought copies of Wyclif's writings and gave them to John Hus, a professor in the University of Prague. Wyclif's writings influenced John Hus to a great extent. All three men believed in the authority of the Scriptures for Christian faith and life. They attacked the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church, and made attempts to reform the Church through their testimonies, writings and preaching; they also faced strong opposition.

Girolamo Savonarola, 1452-1498 A.D., was a Dominican monk as well as an ordained Catholic priest. He denounced the sins of the Church and preached against the corruption of society; he also preached messages on faith in God, living holy lives and the authority of the Bible as the basis of Christian faith and life.

The reform movements and individuals made efforts to purify the Church to a higher spiritual level. They stressed the importance of the authority of the Scriptures. They wanted Biblical faith to be observed in the life of the Church. Some of the reformers and movements were extreme in some of their ideas and methods to bring about reform, but their motives were valid. They gave their lives in order that the ideal kind of Christianity could be practised by Christians with the Bible as its basic foundation.

was known as a model monastery and became influential in reforming other monastic orders and the Catholic Church also.

Some of the Church leaders during this time were not good Christian examples and this caused other Church leaders to work toward reforming the Church and to bring about true Christian faith and principles.

Emperor Henry III of Germany, during the eleventh century, was called upon to settle a dispute in the Church among rival popes. Pope Gregory VII was a graduate of the Convent of Cluny and became a great papal reformer; he introduced celibacy for the clergy as a higher form of spiritual life. He also cleansed the Church from the practice of simony and freed the secular powers of lay investiture. He worked closely with the monastic movements for the reforming of the Church. Emperor Henry IV of Germany challenged Pope Gregory VII's extreme claims of being the head over secular rulers of the world. This challenge resulted in the Emperor driving the Pope into exile.

The Crusades were basically religious and employed military means to deliver the Holy Land of Palestine from the hands of the Moslems and Turks, to check the spread of Islam in Europe, and to heal the schism of the Eastern and Western Churches. The Crusades failed to accomplish these objectives, but were a blessing in disguise. The Crusades resulted in the contact of Western culture with Eastern culture, and this promoted learning in the West and new products were introduced with the increase of trade.

The Cistercian Movement, under the leadership of Bernard of Clairvaux, promoted the reform idea of the adoration of Jesus. The Franciscan and Dominican Friars of the twelfth century promoted reforms in the monasteries and in the Churches. They believed in religious education and ministered to the people in their communities.

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Chapter I.

INTRODUCTION

The word "Reformation" is a broad term used to denote a religious movement in Western Christendom which arose about the tenth century and culminated around the mid-seventeenth century, with direct reference going back to the Carolingian Reform. Although conditioned by political, economic, social and intellectual factors, the course of events and the writings of the Reformers themselves reveal that it was above all else a religious revival which had as its goal Christian renewal.

The Reformation occurred against a vast backdrop of unrest and change in Europe. Politically the most salient feature of the era was the emergence of national states which challenged the old order, including traditional papal prerogatives and the medieval concept of higher loyalties. In the economic realm it was a time of mounting discontent among the exploited peasantry as well as a period of revival of trade, the return of money economy, and the growth of cities. These developments brought into existence a virile new socioeconomic class. This upset medieval social arrangements and led to increasing political tensions, because of the rising of the middle class. The Renaissance in the fourteenth century produced a new era of cultural achievement and expression, as well as widespread intellectual unrest. Moreover, a high moral sentiment, the desire for a restoration of past greatness, and growing racial and ethnic pride are common themes in the pre-Reformation literature of discontent. But most important of all was the troubled state of the Western Church on the eve of the Reformation. It was an age of decline for a Church faced with

corruption and a cry for reform. The Waldenses in the Alps, John Wyclif and the Lollards in England and John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia, and the preaching of Girolamo Savonarola in Italy. The loss of papal credibility resulting from the years of the "Babylonian Captivity" in Avignon, the Great Schism which followed, and a secularized Renaissance papacy; the widespread clerical ignorance and abuse; and the unrelenting insistence of the Christian humanists that the Church be reformed, produced the need for the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century: nurtured in the soil of discontent at nearly every level of human existence.

PURPOSE

This paper intends to report the major reforms that changed the relationship of the Church and the state and prepared the way for the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

This report is a sketch and does not intend to be comprehensive, but notes the important points of these reforms in the life of the Church in the Pre-Reformation period.

The writer is concerned to investigate the state of the Church and its leaders during the Middle Ages from 910 - 1498 A.D. and to see the conditions of the time and how the western Church ministered to its people; how the Church corrected its errors and sought to further its mission; to report and to evaluate the main conclusions of these reforms. The methods of these reforms were significant; it must also be observed that they did their best in the age in which they lived. The Church and its leaders must not be judged by the standards of our day. One needs to project oneself into their time and think with them as they faced their problems. This attitude will help one to be thankful for what the reformers did in their day and to sympathize with them for their human errors.

A good exercise will be to note the condition of the Church in our time and compare it with that of the Dark Ages. It is significant to note that there are similarities in the concepts that were held in that general period and concepts evident in some of the movements of the Church of the twentieth century.

However, this paper is very limited in scope and gives only an over-all report.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The basic problem of this study was to investigate the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation in the history of the Church. This investigation studied reformers and movements from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. Included in this time span are: (a) the Carolingian Reforms of the ninth and tenth centuries which helped rid the Church of shortcomings and depravities and helped strengthen the morals and inner life of the Church; (b) the Cluniac Reform of the eleventh and twelfth centuries which was primarily a reform of monastic life that led to the Gregorian Reform of the Church and clergy and the influence of the Crusades in the life of the Church. The Gregorian reform was to guide the Christian world in political matters. (c) The study of the European Reformers of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, such as John Wyclif of England, John Huss and Jerome of Prague, in Bohemia, and Girolamo Savonarola in Italy. These forerunners stressed the authority of Scripture over the authority of the papacy.

From a consideration of these selected reform movements and reformers the writer endeavored to come to some conclusions. What stirred the reformers to want to bring about a reformation in the Church, and what led to the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century?

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

There is a lack of understanding of the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation. This lack calls for some clarification of what and who laid the foundation of the Protestant Reformation. A historical study of the reforms leading to the Protestant Reformation will help give a better understanding why the Protestant Reformation was a success.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The materials used in this study are gathered from the sources listed in the bibliography.

Chapter two contains a historic survey from the Jerusalem Church to the Crusades. It deals with the rise of Monasticism, the Cluniac reforms in the monasteries and its spread to the churches and the papacy, Pope Gregory VII and his reforms of the clergy and introducing celibacy, and the cause and influence of the Crusades of the West.

Chapter three gives an account of the lay reforming movements in the Church, listing these movements and what efforts they made trying to bring reform to the life of the Church. The movements are the Cistercian movements, the Franciscan Friars, the Dominican Friars, the Albigenses, the Waldenses and the results of these movements.

Chapter four deals with the internal reforms in the Church, the rise of the European states and the influence of the reformers, John Wyclif in England, John Huss in Bohemia and Girolamo Savonarola in Italy.

Chapter five provides the summary, conclusions and general considerations of this study.

Chapter II
MAJOR REFORM MOVEMENTS IN THE CHURCH
(910 - 1300 A.D.)

Chapter II

MAJOR REFORM MOVEMENTS IN THE CHURCH, (910-1300 A.D.)

Turning Points in Christianity

The New Testament Church was born in 33 A.D. on the Day of Pentecost. Since then the Church continued to grow inwardly in knowledge of the truth and in spiritual strength. The Church also grew in extent and in numbers.

B.K. Kuiper suggests the following four turning points in the history of the Church.

1. When the Church issued forth from Jerusalem it took the first turn down the long road of its history.

2. When the Church went forth to carry the knowledge of the only true God out of little Jewish Palestine into the great pagan world it took the second turn on the road of its eventful history.

3. "The Edict of Milan" (313 A.D.) marks the third and very decisive turning point in the history of the Church.

4. The fourth turning point in Church history was the Germanizing of the Church in the West.¹

The Church grew in strength and in numbers through many persecutions and in many countries. Millions of Christians were killed for their faith in Jesus Christ during the early history of the Church. The pagan cultures of the day could not tolerate Christians and their philosophy of life. Many pagans were converted to Christianity and became zealous in their testimony for their Lord. The law of many lands was against Christianity,

¹B.K. Kuiper, The Church in History (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1954) p. 117.

and the Christians had to keep their faith secret because if the authorities would find out they were Christians they would be tried in court and asked to recant their faith in Christ. If the believer refused to do so, he was sentenced to torture and eventually death.

The Church stayed pure throughout the period of persecution and grew in spite of the persecutions and the dangers the Christians faced during the time of Imperial Rome in the zenith of its power.

After the "Edict of Milan" (313 A.D.) Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity together with other religions in the state of Rome. This act caused the persecution to lessen to a considerable degree until there was very little against Christians. This caused many Christians to become less effective in their faith and in living the Christian life. Some believers became influenced by pagan ideas and began to syncretize their belief in other pagan gods. The Church began to experience deterioration of spiritual life, and the influence of pagans seemed to corrupt the Church in morals. As a result this caused disgust to many Christians who preferred to live the holy Christian life.

As a result of the pagan corruption that poured into the life of the Church, individuals and movements of Christians reacted against this threat and sought a way out of the wicked environment of the pagan world.

Monasticism

One movement that reacted against the world in the Church was called "Monasticism".² This movement was started by Anthony of Thebes about the year 270 A.D. Many followed his example into the monastic order.

²Kuiper, op. cit.; p. 87-88.

Monasticism spread rapidly over the entire East. Athanasius introduced Monasticism into the West. Ambrose, Jerome and St. Augustine did much to promote Monasticism, which was to become one of the most outstanding features of the Church in the Middle Ages. Men and women who wanted to live holy Christian lives joined the monastic orders or lived in a monastery to escape the evil influence of the pagan world.

The monastic orders were made up of men and in some cases of women and children. But corruption soon set in and the monastic orders became more worldly than the world from which they tried to escape.

After the decay of the monastic discipline during the ninth and tenth centuries, a reformation proceeded from the Convent of Cluny in Burgundy and affected the whole Church. Cluny was founded by William Duke of Aquitaine.

"Monasteries established on the pagan frontier or in heathen territory became centers of missionary activities. The Church owed her signal victory over the barbarians mainly to the zeal and devotion of the monks. Many of the monasteries remained as farming, charitable and ascetic institutions and became centers of agricultural development, of works in arts and crafts, and of Christian hospitality. A small number of monasteries gradually accumulated libraries and became celebrated for their literary and intellectual activity. These houses or monasteries have been called 'the publishing houses of the Middle Ages', because the monks copied and transmitted manuscripts and preserved books. Some of the monasteries became centers of learning, and the monastic schools became teaching institutions of first importance. The monks became the chroniclers of the events of their own times, and posterity is indebted to them for a great part of its knowledge of the early Medieval centuries. The development of the convents for women was another achievement of monasticism. The monasteries helped to establish Latin - the medium expression of Graeco-Roman civilization - as the language of the Church. Unity³ of language made for greater unity in culture and religion."

³Qualben, Lars P. A History of the Christian Church. (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons. 1968. pp. 148-149.

"Count Bruno (927 A.D.) was the first abbot of Cluny and he introduced severe discipline. His successor, Odo (927-941), first a soldier then a clergyman of learning, wisdom and saintly character, became a reformer of several Benedictine convents.⁴

The first step in the Cluny reform was to adapt an interpretation of the Benedictine rule which decreased the emphasis on manual labor and physical hardships, and allowed more time for intellectual activity. At the same time they insisted on strict discipline and high moral standards. Cluny soon became known as a model monastery, and monks of Cluny were called in often by lay leaders or rulers to reform other houses or monasteries.

"Cluny was the centre of the reformed Benedictine convents, it gave to the Church many eminent bishops and three popes (Gregory VII, Urban II, and Pascal II). In the time of its height or highest prosperity it ruled over two thousand monastic establishments.⁵

During this reform in the monastery of the secular world of that time became very corrupt and hopeless. Society was decadent and life was uncertain. As the tenth century was nearing the eleventh, there was a deep-seated belief in the people that it would be the last year of time.

Disorder in Society and in the Church

It seemed as if all the signs in heaven and in earth indicate so. There was almost universal anarchy, no law, no government, no safety anywhere. There were wars and rumors of wars. Sin was prevalent. There were awful famines, followed by pestilence and death. The land was left untilled. There was no motive to plant and to harvest. The people did not even repair their houses, but let them decay, since the end was at hand.

⁴Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. Vol. IV. (New York, Charles Scribners and Sons. 1887) pp. 368-369.

⁵Ibid. p. 369

The condition of society became quite unendurable. Robbers frequented every wood: in strong bands they ravaged villages and even walled towns. As all were consuming, and few were producing, provisions soon disappeared. Despair gave loose to every passion. In many places the famine was so severe, that, when even rats and mice could no longer be procured, human flesh was sold in the markets; women and children were actually killed and roasted.

But while many were thus stimulated to awful depravity others, inspired by Christian principles, were impelled to prayer and devotion to God in the monasteries.⁶

The Roman Church needed reform; it seemed that the city of Rome (1049-54) had always been unmanageable for emperors or popes to have under control. The Roman people saw the weakness and wickedness of the popes and saw the Church as a collection agency for European revenue to be spent by the popes for pleasures and crimes.

Henry III, Emperor of Germany, entered the Abbey of St. Vanne as a monk. The holy father in charge, who was truly a saint, received the German emperor reluctantly, after giving the emperor the monastic oath by which he vowed implicit obedience to his superiors.

The monk said to the emperor, 'you are now under my orders: you have taken a solemn oath to obey me. I command you to retire immediately from the convent, and to resume the septre. Fulfill the duties of the kingly state to which God has called you. Go forth a monk of the Abbey of St. Vanne; but resume your responsibilities as Emperor of Germany.' The emperor obeyed with simplicity and trust, and nobility of character, which have commanded the respect of all subsequent ages.⁷

After much contention, corruption and crime in the papacy, among popes, ladies, clergy and soldiers, the practice of buying church office, called "simony" was prevalent. The papacy had three persons contending to be the true pope and the successor of St. Peter. The confusion was too

⁶John S.C. Abbott, The History of Christianity. (Portland, Maine George Stinson and Co. 1885.) p. 403.

⁷Abbott, *Ibid.* 403.

much to handle for the clergy, so they sent for the German Emperor Henry III, to come and help them choose the right person for the office of pope in Rome. The three persons contending for the papacy were the following: Sylvester, Benedict and Gregory.

The Italian clergy (1045-46), appealed to Emperor Henry III, to come to Rome and end this disgrace; he came to Sutri, near Rome, and convened an ecclesiastical council; it imprisoned Sylvester, accepted Benedict's resignation and deposed Gregory for admittedly buying the papacy. Henry persuaded the Council that only a foreign pope, protected by the emperor could terminate the debasement of the Church.⁸

Three internal problems agitated the Church at this time: Simony in the papacy and the episcopacy, marriage or concubinage in the secular clergy, and sporadic incontinence among the monks. The great majority of the European clergy lived decent moral lives; and all through the Middle Ages, history reports that many of the clergy in Europe lived saintly lives of priests and bishops toward God and their people.

The Church was considered to be a divine institution, but it was also believed that the Empire was a divinely appointed institution to rule and control men. The Empire and the papacy were regarded as the two arms of God in governing the world. God had set the Emperor over the temporal affairs of the world and the Pope over the spiritual affairs or interests of the world.

The state deals with man's outward life on earth; with order, justice and peace. The Church deals with man's inner life and his preparation for life hereafter; with conscience, reverence and the heart of man. Theology studies about God and philosophy studies about the universe.

⁸Will Durant, The Story of Civilization, Vol. IV. (New York: Simon Schuster, 1950) p. 540.

"Henceforth Teutonic-Latin civilizations recognized two divine and co-ordinated institutions, the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Church, each supreme within its own sphere. The history of these two powers, their struggle with each other for supremacy, and their relations to the rulers and the people of Europe, make up a large part of Medieval History.⁹

In summary, God allowed persecution to purge the Church; He used the monastery to preserve the life of the Church and secular rulers to bring order to the Church, so as to continue to function with order and dignity. When the Church is corrupt, the state becomes corrupt. When the Church is pure, then morality prevails in the state.

The Church on Celibacy

The Church had long since opposed clerical marriage on the ground that a married priest, consciously or not, would give his loyalty to his wife and children above his devotion to the Church; that for their sakes he would be tempted to accumulate money or property; that he would try to transmit or pass on his office to his sons and that a hereditary ecclesiastical caste might, in this way, develop in Europe as in India; and that the combined economic power of such a propertied priesthood would be too great for the papacy to control. The priest should be totally devoted to God, the Church, and his fellow men; his moral standard must be higher than that of the people, and must confer upon him the prestige necessary to public confidence and reverence. Several Church councils had demanded the celibacy of the clergy.

"Celibacy. In the East the lower clergy were always allowed to marry, and only a second marriage is forbidden. In the West celibacy was the prescribed rule, but most clergymen lived either with lawful wives or with concubines. In Milan

⁹Qualben, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

all the priests and deacons were married in the middle of the eleventh century, but to the disgust of severe moralists of the time.

Hadrian II, was married before he became pope, and had a daughter who was murdered by her husband, together with the pope's wife, Stephanian (868). The wicked pope Benedict IX, sued for the daughter of his cousin, who consented on condition that he resign from the papacy (1033). The Hildebrandian popes, Leo IX and Nicholas II made attempts to enforce clerical celibacy all over the West. They identified the interests of clerical morality and influence with clerical celibacy, and endeavored to destroy natural immorality by enforcing unnatural immorality.¹⁰

The purity and happiness of the home life depended on the position of the wife or mother who is the beating heart of the household. Female degradation was one of the weakest spots in the old Greek and Roman world. The Church, in counteracting the prevailing evil, ran into the opposite extreme of ascetic excess as a radical cure. Instead of concentrating her strength on the purification and elevation of the family, the Church recommended lonely celibacy as a higher degree of holiness and a safer way to heaven.

In the second century, Marcion, a religious leader of a sect of Christianity, stressed celibacy as a form of a higher life. The Gnostics and the Montanist movement stressed celibacy also. This influence must have influenced the Church to adopt celibacy as a means to a higher life.¹¹

POPE GREGORY VII, HILDEBRAND THE PAPAL REFORMER

His Training

Hildebrand is a German name and suggests a lineage; Gregory's contemporaries interpreted it to mean Hellbrand, pure flame. He was born

¹⁰Schaff. op. cit. pp. 332-333.

¹¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity. New York Harper & Row, Publishers. 1953. p. 129.

of lowly parentage in the village of Sovano in the marshes of Tuscany in 1023 A.D. He was educated in the Convent of St. Mary on the Aventine at Rome, and entered the Benedictine Order of which his maternal uncle was abbot. He was educated with Romans of the higher families. He exercised himself in severe self discipline and in austerity and rigor he remained a monk all his life. At the age of twenty five he accompanied Pope Gregory VI, who was deposed and banished to Germany. Hildebrand was chaplain to the banished pope.¹²

During his year in Cologne, Germany he learned much about the country that helped him later to deal with Henry IV. Soon after his return to Rome he was made a cardinal subdeacon by Leo IX, and was appointed administrator of the Papal States and at the same time legate to France. He acquired experience in political and diplomatic ability.

After the death of the banished pope Gregory VI at Cologne (1048) Hildebrand went to the Monastery of Cluny and zealously gave himself to ascetic exercises and ecclesiastical studies under the excellent Abbott Hugo, and became prior of the convent.¹³

He often said that he would prefer to spend the rest of his life in the Convent of Cluny.

History records of Hildebrand that he was a man of small stature, homely of feature, keen of eye, proud of spirit, strong of will, sure of the truth, and confident of victory. He knew how to combine monastic simplicity with papal dignity and splendor. He was believed to work

¹²Schaff. op. cit. p.11 of Vol.V

¹³Schaff. op. cit. p. 12.

miracles wherever he went, and to possess magic powers over birds and beasts.¹⁴

His Office as Pope

In 1073, after serving eight popes for twenty five years, Hildebrand himself was raised to the papacy. He resisted, preferring to rule behind the throne; but cardinals, clergy and the people cried out that St. Peter wills Hildebrand to be Pope. He was ordained priest, was consecrated Pope and he took the name of Gregory VII.

Despite his feverish protests of unworthiness, the impropriety of the manner of election, and the inopportuneness of the time, Hildebrand was constrained to accept the papal office, the people themselves insisting that he who exerted the power should hold responsibility in the name for all that he did. Consequently, presumably on the very day Alexander II was buried, Hildebrand was seized by the mob, carried into the Church of Saint Peter in chains, and installed in his new office by coercion. One month later to the day (May 22, 1073), he was ordained priest, and on June 30th, he was properly consecrated a bishop and enthroned in the papal splendor in Saint Peter's. Hildebrand took the name of Gregory VII.¹⁵

Pope Gregory VII was now determined to continue his course of action toward the reformation of Christendom. This expressed itself in two major concerns: first, the internal cleansing of the Church of "simony" among the clergy; and second, the release of the Church from the secular power by freeing its sees, parishes and other institutions from lay investiture - that is, from the selection and appointment of bishops, priests and abbots by kings and nobles within whose domain or on whose property these clerics serve.

¹⁴Schaff. op. cit. p. 13.

¹⁵William Ragsdale Cannon, History of Christianity in the Middle Ages. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. p. 160.

The chief allies of Pope Gregory VII were the monastic orders. Chief of these orders were: (1) the Abbey of Vallombrosa, near Florence in Italy, (2) the Hirschau Monastery in Germany, (3) the Carthusian Order near Grenoble in France.¹⁶

Pope Gregory VII established good relations with Denmark, instructing the king to defend widows, orphans, and the poor; and he encouraged Norway to have sons of nobility educated in Rome. Fearlessly he excommunicated Boleslaus II for murdering with his own hands Bishop Stanislaus of Cracow, Poland. In Bohemia and Hungary he cemented the ties between those nations and the papacy, helping the latter to end a civil war.

In Spain he upheld the sacredness of marriage among laity as well as celibacy among the clergy and encouraged the fight against Islam. He sent missionaries to Dalmatia, which he enticed away from the Eastern Empire and Church; sent doctrinal counsel to distant Armenia; staged a mission to expand the faith in Islamic principality of Africa, and even conceived of an expedition to fight the heathen Turks in the Holy Land.¹⁷

The highest ideal of Pope Gregory VII was derived from St. Augustine's book "City of God". That ideal was the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Hildebrand believed that the divinely prepared and appointed agency for the realization of this ideal was the Church. He furthermore believed that the head of the Church on earth was the pope as Christ's vicar or representative, above princes, kings and emperors. Everyone was subject to him. The pope himself was answerable only to God.

For the realization of these ideals Hildebrand had already been working for more than twenty years as the power behind the papal throne of six popes. Now that he himself had become pope he continued to use all his marvelous energies and powers in working for the realization of his ideals and ideas.

¹⁶Cannon. op. cit. p. 161.

¹⁷Ibid. p. 161-162.

In doing this he was not moved by self-interest. Money had no attraction for him. He could not be bribed or bought as could many bishops and other Church dignitaries of his day. Hildebrand was not moved by ambition or vainglory. No doubt his motives were not always pure. Sometimes he was unscrupulous in the means he used; he was determined to gain his end even if he had to employ a wrong method in order to accomplish what he believed to be a good thing. It can also be observed that he loved to rule; it was in his blood. However, he was moved by a sincere and strong desire to serve God and the Church, and so promote the cause of God's Kingdom in this world.

The popes have vast treasures at their disposal. Hildebrand could have lived a life of self indulgence, luxury and idleness as some of the popes before and after him did. Instead, he was always immersed in hard and fatiguing labors. He lived very simply and was a real ascetic.

If Hildebrand had wished he could have become pope sooner, but he had declined many times to do so. At last the people of Rome thrust the papal office upon him by surprise, but even then he took his seat upon the papal chair only reluctantly. And no wonder, for the times were difficult, he saw that his duty might involve him in severe struggles.

Hildebrand and Henry IV

During Pope Gregory VII's office in the papal chair, King Henry IV of Germany maintained friendly relations with him, on the surface. This was because rebellious nobles caused him great difficulties and made the position of King of Germany very weak. Hildebrand saw this weakness in King Henry IV and decided to take advantage of the situation. The Pope again decreed on lay investiture, which reached King Henry IV, just as his fortunes were taking a turn for the better. He was celebrating a

great victory over the Saxons and, for the moment, the young king was supreme in Germany. He was not ready to accept an attack on his authority. Henry was displeased with the tone of the Pope's letter.

Bishop Gregory, servant of the servants of God, greeting and apostolic benediction: that is, if he be obedient to the apostolic throne as befits a Christian king. Considering ... with what strict judgement we shall have to render account for the ministry entrusted to us by St. Peter, chief of the Apostles, it is with hesitation that we have sent unto thee the apostolic benediction." The Pope went on to describe Henry's sins, and to remind him that he was wholly under the authority of St. Peter and St. Peter's successor, the Pope. Henry was warned not to imitate Saul in boasting of a victory won only by the grace of God.¹⁸

Henry IV, in anger replied in a letter to the Pope that the Pope was exercising wrongful authority over his kingdom in Germany; that the Pope was not worthy of the papal throne; to step down and let another pope who is just rule; that the Pope was a false monk and practised violence under the cloak of religion.¹⁹ This is not the sound doctrine of St. Peter.

Henry further forced the bishops present at his court to refuse to recognize Gregory as Pope. Several of them were already under the papal ban, and all were so dependent on the King that they had to follow his policy.

At the same time Pope Gregory VII sought the support of the bishops and nobles of Germany. Many of them were glad to aid the Pope. Henry IV was then deserted by almost all of his followers. His position was a desperate one to save his throne. The Pope had promised to take no action in his case until the German princes had been consulted, and it was fairly certain that they would insist on deposing Henry. But there was one weakness in this arrangement; the Pope as a Christian priest could not refuse

¹⁸Joseph R. Strayer and Dana C. Munro, The Middle Ages. New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc. 1959. p. 213.

¹⁹Strayer and Munro. op. cit. p. 212.

absolution to a sincerely penitent sinner who sought his presence. Henry saw this weakness and took full advantage of it. He escaped from Spire and rushed to Italy to intercept Pope Gregory VII, who was on his way to consult the German princes. Fearing a desperate attack, the Pope retired to the castle of Canossa but Henry IV soon showed that he was not going to add to his sins by an assault on the vicar of God. Instead he so humbled himself that Gregory was forced to forget his political plans and remember only his religious duties. Henry waited for four days, bare feet and bare head in the snow outside the castle of Canossa, to seek absolution and forgiveness for his sins from the Pope. The Pope reluctantly had the castle door opened and had an audience with Henry face to face for the first time. Henry fell down and kissed the right toe of the Pope, begging for mercy and forgiveness and the Pope was compelled by his duties to do so and to remove the ban against Henry. Henry had stooped to conquer.

Henry then went back to Germany; recruited his faithful followers; organized an army and defeated his rival Rudolf, for the throne of Germany. Henry then marched to Italy and recruited another army in Lombardy and laid siege to Rome. He seized a large part of Rome, including St. Peter's and the Pope, Gregory VII, fled to Salerno and pronounced another excommunication against King Henry IV of Germany, but to no avail. The Pope broke down in body and in spirit.

"I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile."²⁰ He was only sixty two years of age but the nervous strain of his bitter controversies had worn him out. He died at Salerno, May 25, 1085.

²⁰Durant. op. cit. Vol. IV. p. 551.

Hildebrand had grasped higher than his reach, but he had for a decade raised the papacy to the greatest height and power that it had yet known.

THE CRUSADES, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL REFORM OF THE WEST
(1095-1291 A.D.)

Pope Gregory VII desired to lead a "Crusade" (Holy War) against the Moslem invasion of the Holy Land, Palestine or Jerusalem, and also to liberate Christian lands that were invaded by the fanatical Moslems.

The act of this accomplishment was left to his successor, Pope Urban II, 1088 to 1099. He was a master of mass psychology; he had the gift of preaching and was a great orator in history.²¹

The Pope preached before a large audience about the Holy Land, where Christ was born, ministered, died and was resurrected, and is now desecrated by the Moslems. He moved the crowd with wild enthusiasm and they shouted, "God wills it! God wills it!"²²

One great central idea and ideal had suddenly seized the imagination of the people of Western Europe. They felt united in one common purpose which seemed to lift the individual above the generally prevailing misery and hopelessness of the poorer classes. Those who owed money were promised to be free from debt if they joined the Crusade. European prisons emptied of all who cared to join the Crusade. Nobles and knights who loved adventure joined the Crusade. Bishops and priests, also monks were preaching to the people to join, for it was promised by the Pope that those who died in the Crusade would surely go to heaven, and joining the Crusade would give them forgiveness for sins.

²¹Kuiper. op. cit. p. 170.

²²Ibid. p. 170.

Thousands of men, women and children joined the Crusade to march to the Holy Land and to free it from the unbelieving Mohammedans.

The first Crusade, numbering 12,000 persons, with only eight knights, set out from France under Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless; another 5,000 were led by the priest Gottschalk of Germany.²³ The recruits were disorderly, unorganized and they brought little provisions. Their inexperienced leaders had made scant provision for feeding them. The children were impatient and continually asking if they had reached Jerusalem.

Food and funds ran out; the pilgrims began to starve and were forced to steal crops from fields and food from homes along their way. They even plundered churches. Many died from starvation, disease, exposure and a small number reached the city of Nicaea. A disciplined force of Turks, all trained bowmen, marched out and almost killed off the first division of the Crusade.

First Crusade

The first Crusade was largely a French enterprise. Other divisions won victories over the Moslems and had gained some territory. This Crusade was made up of two divisions, one of the common people which was mostly destroyed by natural causes and by the enemies. The other division was called "the princes", and had trained soldiers and experienced warriors, and they won victories and portions of land in the Holy City. The Crusade total was over three hundred thousand men.²⁴ The army was reduced to twenty thousand fighting men.

²³Durant. op. cit. p. 589.

²⁴Schaff. op. cit. p. 234-238.

The streets were choked with the bodies of the slain. The Jews were burnt with their synagogues. The greatest slaughter was in the temple enclosure ... the blood of the massacred in the temple area reached to the very knees and bridles of the horses The crusaders proceeded to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and offered up prayers and thanksgivings Such was the piety of the crusaders ... combined self denying asceticism with heartless cruelty to infidels, Jews and heretics. "They cut down with the sword", said William of Tyre, "every one whom they found in Jerusalem, and spared no one. The victors were covered with blood from head to foot."²⁵

Pope Urban II died two weeks after the fall of Jerusalem and before the tidings of the event had time to reach his ears.

Eight days after the capture of the Holy City a permanent government was established, known as the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

On October 2, 1187, Saladin of the Turks, a leader, entered Jerusalem after a brave resistance. The conditions of surrender were without savage butchery as had happened ninety years before by the crusaders. The inhabitants were given their liberty for payment of money. Thus ended the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.²⁶

Second and Third Crusades

The Second Crusade was led by Konrad III and Louis VII of France. A preacher named Bernard preached with great oratory and had a large recruited following to go fight for the Holy City. This Crusade ended in defeat and divisions and contentions among its leaders.

The third crusade was undertaken to regain Jerusalem, which has been lost to Saladin, 1187. It enjoys the distinction of having for its leaders the three most powerful princes of Europe, the emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Philip Augustus, king of France, and the English King Richard I, the Lion-

²⁵Schaff. op. cit. p.p. 239-240.

²⁶Ibid. op. cit. p. 251.

hearted. It brought together the chivalry of the East and the West at the time of its highest development and called forth the heroism of two of the bravest soldiers of any age, Saladin and Richard. It has been more widely celebrated in romance than any of the other crusades. This crusade also ended in complete failure.²⁷

The Children's Crusade, fanned by priestly zeal, broke out among the children of France and Germany in 1212. It was a slaughter of innocents and ended in pitiful disaster. The leader was a boy of twelve years, named Stephen, who calimed to have a vision of Jesus, instructing him to go and rescue the Holy Land. Thirty thousand boys and girls enlisted. The other leader was a boy named Nicholas, aged ten, from Germany. Children of noble families enlisted; good and bad men and women also joined them. Hardship and death took the lives of many and reduced them from twenty thousand to seven thousand. Some of the remaining children settled in the city of Marseilles, some were shipwrecked and the rest were sold as slaves.²⁸

Pope Gregory IX commemorated a service for the children in the Chapel of the New Innocents which he built on St. Pietro.

Pope Innocent III, in summoning Europe to a new crusade, included in his appeal, the spectacle of their sacrifice. "They put us to shame. While they rush to the recovery of the Holy Land, we sleep."²⁹

Fourth Crusade

The Fourth Crusade (1200-1204) was a total disgrace. It destroyed the Christian city of Zara and overthrew the Greek Empire of Constantinople. Its goals were determined by the blind doge, Henry Dandolo of Venice. This Crusade resulted in the establishment of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

²⁷Ibid. p. 257.

²⁸Schaff. op. cit. p. 268.

²⁹Ibid. p. 268.

Most of the acts of this Crusade were against the orders of Pope Innocent III and he wrote letters denouncing the leaders, for the immorality and crimes they had committed against Christendom.

The only party to gain from fourth Crusade was the Venetians. The fourth Crusade was an attempt to heal the wounds of the East and West Church but instead it widened the schism.

Fifth Crusade

The Fifth Crusade reached its goals more by diplomacy than by the sword. Its leader, Frederick II, signed a treaty with Malik-al-Kameel, which was to remain in force ten years and delivered up Jerusalem to the Christians, with the exception of the Mosque of Omar, the Temple area, Bethlehem, Nazareth and the pilgrim route from Acre to Jerusalem.

This act of Frederick II did not please the Pope who excommunicated him for the fifth time. The Pope pronounced Frederick the chief impediment of the Crusade. Much to the disgust of Pope Gregory IX, Frederick II visited the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem without making any protest against its ritual.³⁰

Pope Gregory IX continued to make appeals for more crusade expeditions, one of them led by Richard of Cornwall, afterwards German Emperor elect. The conditions of the Christians in Jerusalem grew worse and ended in defeat in 1244 and Jerusalem was then closed to them.

Sixth and Seventh Crusades

The Sixth and Seventh Crusades were led by Louis IX, King of France. He was brave and religious but lacked the ability to organize an army and to direct a battle. He set out on an expedition to fight for the Holy City

³⁰Schaff. op. cit. p. 280.

Jerusalem; he won some battles but ended in defeat with much loss of men to the Turks. He paid ransom for his troops that were taken prisoners; gave up the lands he had won as a ransom for himself and sailed back home.

He decided to try again for the Holy Land, and went on the Seventh Crusade with sixty thousand men, but contentions in the army, plague which broke out and King Louis IX died with the words, "O Lord, I will worship in thy Holy sanctuary, I will glorify thy Name, O Lord",³¹ caused him to fail.

The Results of the Crusades

The Crusades failed in three respects. The Holy Land was not won. The advance of Islam was not permanently checked. The schism between the East and West was not healed. These were the primary objects of the Crusades.

They were a great cause of evils with the demoralizing influences of war. The vices of the camps were a source of deep shame for Europe. Popes encouraged them and lamented them. The worst evil was the deepening of the contempt and hatred in the minds of the Mohammedans for the Christians and their doctrines. This feeling persists unto this day.

While a new spirit which compares and tolerates thus sprang from the Crusades, the large sphere of new knowledge and experience which they gave brought new material at once for scientific thought and poetic imagination. Not only was geography more studied; the Crusades gave a great impulse to the writing of history, and produced, besides innumerable other works, the greatest historical work of the Middle Ages - the *Historia Transmarina* of William of Tyre. Mathematics received an impulse, largely, it is true, from the Arabs of Spain, but also from the East; Leonardo Fibonacci, the first Christian algebraist, had travelled in Syria and Egypt. The study of the Oriental languages began in connection with the Christian Missions of the East. Raymond Lull, the indefatigable missionary, induced the council of Vienna to decide on the creation of six schools of Oriental languages in Europe (1311). But the

³¹Schaff. op. cit. p. 294.

new field of poetic literature afforded the Crusades is still more striking than this development of science. New poems in abundance dealt with the history of the Crusades, either in a faithful narrative, like that of *Chanson of Ambroise*, which narrates the Third Crusade, or in a free poetical spirit, such as breathes in the *Chanson d' Antioche*. Nor was this all. The Crusades afforded new details which might be inserted into old matters, and a new spirit which might be infused into old subjects; and a crusading complexion thus came to be put into old tales like those of Arthur and Charlemagne. By the side of these greater things it may seem little, and yet just because it is little, it is all the more significant that the Crusades should have familiarized Europe with new plants, new fruits, new manufacturers, new colors, and new fashions in dress. Sugar and maize; lemons, apricots and melons; cotton, muslin and damask; lilac and purple (azure and blues are words derived from the Arabic); the use of powder and glass mirrors, and also of the rosary itself - all these came to Europe from the East and as a result of the Crusades. To this day there are many Arabic words in the vocabulary of the languages of Western Europe which are a standing witness of the Crusades - words relating to trade and sea-faring, like tariff and corvette, or words for musical instruments, like lute or the Elizabethan word 'naker'.

When all is said, the Crusades remain a wonderful and perpetually astonishing act in the great drama of human life. They touch the summits of daring and devotion, if they also sank into the deep abysses of shame. Motives of self interest may have lurked in them - otherworldly motives of buying salvation for a little price, or worldly motives of achieving riches and acquiring lands. Yet it would be treason to the majesty of man's incessant struggle towards an ideal good, if one were to deny that in and through the Crusades men strove for righteousness' sake to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth. Therefore the tears and the blood that were shed were not unavailing; the heroism and chivalry were not wasted. Humanity is the richer for the memory of those millions of men, who followed the pillar of cloud and fire in the sure and certain hope of an eternal reward. The ages were not dark in which Christianity could gather itself together in a common cause, and carry the flag of its faith to the grave of its Redeemer, nor can we but give thanks for their memory, even if for us religion is of the spirit, and Jerusalem in the heart of every man who believes in Christ.³²

The history of the Crusades makes it difficult to write in favor or against the idea of the expeditions. The Crusades must be viewed rather as a chapter in the history of civilization of the West itself. Colonization, trade,

³²Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. VII. 11th Edition. Cambridge, England. University Press. 1910. pp. 548-550.

geography - these are three things closely connected with the history of the Crusades. The development of the art of war, and the growth of a systematic taxation are two debts which Medieval Europe also owed to the Crusades. The Crusaders learned from their enemies. The Crusades had also corrupted the papacy. The Crusades was a means of Western culture coming into contact with Eastern culture, thus broadening the educational perspective of the West.

The Church has learned that it does not accomplish its mission by the sword but by the message of the Gospel of peace, by appeals to the heart and conscience of men, and by teaching the ministries of prayer and devout worship.

Christianity should not seek territories by conquest of the sword but the redemption of the human race, through the Gospel of peace, for Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace, who has come to seek and to save that which is lost. Men must be taught to look to God.

Summary

The history of the Church has many turning points, four are listed in this paper: (1) the Church started in Jerusalem in 33 A.D., (2) the Church began to evangelize the known world, (3) the Germanizing of the Church in the West, (4) the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D.

Monasticism sought to escape the world of evil by seclusion in monasteries and convents for prayer, meditation, study and industry. They were famous for their learning and produced outstanding men in the history of the Church. The Church's greatest reformers came from the monastery. These include Pope Gregory VII or Hildebrand, Martin Luther, Ambrose, Jerome, St. Augustine, Athanasius and many other prominent men. At certain

times the monasteries were the means to bring about reform in the Church, back to the Scriptures, holy living and the practice of a pure faith. Because the monasteries were institutions set up by men they were no perfect but have done much for the life of the Church. They preserved the faith of Christianity through the ages of darkness and sin, they were the light and the salt of the earth for Christianity.

The greatest Pope of Roman history, Hildebrand, was a trained monk. He was able to bring needed reform in the Church though he was extreme in some ways he succeeded in reforming the Church.

The Crusades were bad from the Church point of view in bringing shame upon itself by trying to conquer with the sword and offering salvation to men who would fight for the Holy Land. Educationally, culturally and politically the West gained much from the East through the contacts that were made even during war. The West gained from the experience of the Crusades. The Church must learn.

Chapter III

LAY REFORMING MOVEMENTS IN THE CHURCH

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The Cistercian Movement

In the twelfth century the leadership in creative, vigorous monastic life passed to the Cistercians. This movement began with Robert, a Benedictine monk, who by his zeal for reform and strict observance of the monastic ideal, attracted many followers. They held to the Benedictine rule of poverty; their clothing and food were simple. They gained their living by agriculture and they had a simple form of worship.

The Cisterians grew in popularity and attracted many youths of the time to join the movement by their devotion. In country after country their houses arose in desolate places. Forests were cleared; swamps were drained; lands were cultivated and the necessary monastic buildings were erected.

The Cisterians became more popular under the leadership of Bernard of Clairvaux. He was a mystic and did much to promote a revival of the adoration of Jesus. He was a major force in promoting the Second Crusade. He composed hymns, was eloquent and persuasive as a preacher and orator. He was the author of several books. He was instrumental in healing the schism by the nearly simultaneous election of two popes. In striving to maintain orthodoxy in the Church he sought to win heretics by his preaching. One of his own monks from Clairvaux became Pope. Bernard's popularity attracted thousands to the Cistercian way of life. Largely because of him the Cistercians became active in reforming and elevating the quality of the Church.¹

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity. (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc. 1953, p.p. 422-425.

THE FRIARS

The Friars represented another type of twelfth century reforming monasticism. They took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as did the monks, but instead of living in monastic communities to pray and labor apart from the secular world, they went among the people of the cities to help them and to preach to them in their own language. The monasteries had property and supported themselves by work, but the friars were supported by the alms and gifts that people gave them. They were more directly under the leadership of the Pope than had been the case with orders before the twelfth century. In addition to the more important Franciscan and Dominican Friars the Carmelite and Austin Friars were organized in this period.

The Franciscan Friars

The Franciscan Order was founded by Francis of Assisi who was converted during an illness and left his father's home to consecrate himself to poverty and the service of God. Gathering several young men of like interest around himself, he drew up a rule to govern their lives. This rule involved poverty, chastity and obedience, but obedience to the papacy was emphasized.

As the Order grew it became more centralized under a general who was appointed by the Pope. The Order also had many scholars, such as Roger Bacon, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus and William of Occam.

Bacon became a pioneer in scientific experiment and the ideas of Occam concerning the nature of reality had an influence on the spiritual development of Martin Luther in the fifteenth century and also strengthened the experimental approach to life during the Renaissance.²

²Latourette, op. cit. pp. 427-436

The Dominican Friars

The Dominican Order was started by a Spanish priest of noble birth named Dominic. The followers of this Order stressed education, and to win men by reasoning with them.

The Franciscans were great missionaries, winning men by example and emotional appeal; the Dominicans were scholars who tried to win men from heresy by intellectual persuasion.

The appeal of the Dominicans was to man's head, and the Franciscans appealed to his heart.

The Dominican Order became a highly centralized organization and was approved by the Pope and was placed under a master general who was responsible to the Pope. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Master Eckhart, John Tauler and Girolamo Savonarola the famous Florentine reformer belonged to this Order.

The friars strengthened religion among the people of the parishes by their unselfish service. Their good deeds and preaching in the language of the people were practical lessons of the Church that the people readily understood. Preaching was restored to its proper place in the Roman Church by the Friars.

Directly responsible to the Pope, the friars tended to strengthen the power of the papacy over local bishops and lay rulers. Both orders provided many fine missionaries to all parts of the known world. These orders play an indirect role in the preparation for the Reformation to come.³

The friars made efforts to purify the Church to a higher spiritual level.

³Op. cit. pp. 437-444.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ATTEMPTS TO REFORM THE CHURCH

Other movements than the monks and friars sought for a more thoroughgoing commitment to the Christian faith. Some of them were ardently missionary, seeking to win others from the nominally Christian population. Many remained in the Catholic Church; others were outside it, either by their own choice or because they were expelled for heresies.

Unlike the monks and friars who sought to bring about internal reform, the Albigenses, Waldenses and other sects such as the Petrobrusians, arose as an external revolt to purify the Church doctrines in the late twelfth century. The frequency of corruption in the life and practice of the papal hierarchy and the secular activities of the papacy caused many to react against the lack of spiritual power that they often saw in their parish churches.

More information concerning these Medieval sects has been preserved by their enemies than by their friends, and therefore, accurate information about them is scarce. Both the Albigenses and the Waldenses sought to return to the purer form of religion that they saw in the New Testament.

The Albigenses

The Cathari, or Albigenses used the New Testament as a basis for their ideas, but the heretical ideas they adopted resembled the dualistic and ascetic ideas of the Gnostic and Manichean movement of the early Church. By making the New Testament the authoritative expression of their faith they offered a challenge to the Roman Church, which claimed authority through the line of popes back to St. Peter and Christ Himself. The Albigenses were persecuted by the Roman Church. They had many converts in Northern Italy, Northern Italy, North and South of France and Northern Spain.⁴

⁴Latourette, op. cit. p.p. 453-455.

The Waldenses

The Waldenses was a movement started by Peter Waldo about 1176 A.D. He was a rich merchant who read the New Testament and was so impressed with the claims of Christ, that he gave up all his property except enough to feed the family. He then organized a band known as the "Poor in Spirit". They believed that every man should have the Bible in his own tongue and that it should be the final authority for faith and life.

Following the example of Christ, they went out by two's dressed in simple clothes, to preach to the poor in their own language. They accepted the confessions of the Church, the Lord's Supper, water baptism and lay ordination to preach and minister the sacraments.

Their society had its own clergy, with bishop, priests and deacons. Others known as "Friends", were secret associates of the Waldensian groups, but they were permitted to remain in the Roman Church. The Waldenses anticipated many ideas of the Protestant Reformation to come.⁵

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were marked by movements of internal and external reform. The Cistercian movement, symbolized in the person of Bernard of Clairvaux, and the mendicant movements were attempts to purify the Roman Church by a renewal of spiritual zeal. Laymen who attempted to reinstate the Bible as the authority of the Church found themselves hindered in their attempts by the persecution of the Roman Church, and therefore, set up movements outside it, in order to practice the Christianity that they saw in the Bible.

God used the Roman Church to further His own ends in spite of its failure in many points compared with the true Church depicted in the New Testament.

⁵op. cit. p.p. 451-453.

The Results of the Reform Movements

The Cistercian movement, the Franciscan and Dominican Friars, along with the deemed heretical movements of the Albigenses and the Waldenses, in the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries, had raised the standard of Christian living and succeeded in reaching many converts to a Biblical Christianity. They strove to cleanse the vast body of clergy from the parish priests to the Pope and through this purified hierarchy to reach all who bore the name Christian.

The struggle proved unending. Successes were registered, some of them striking. Many among the bishops and parish priests were exemplary Christians. More and more of the laity were being brought to an intelligent appreciation of the faith and to a disciplined observance of it. The reformers captured the Papacy for a while, yet abuses, even in the hierarchy, were never fully eliminated. Increasingly, individuals and groups were becoming Christian, and many committed to a deeper walk in the Christian faith, and the life of Western Europe was profoundly influenced.

Western Christendom had directed its attention to the problems presented by the Gospel. Theology became a major subject of study, "the queen of the sciences". Some of the ablest minds of that time were engaged in the study of theology.

As order began to reappear in the West after centuries of invasions and cultural decay it was not strange that men applied their minds to the faith which was part of their heritage. They availed themselves of what had been written in the years before the darkness had descended. They addressed themselves to the New Testament, to the scholars of the early Church, and especially to St. Augustine and Gregory the Great.

Chapter IV

ATTEMPTS AT INTERNAL REFORM IN THE CHURCH

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Many people mistakenly think that the return to the Scriptures began with such leaders of the Reformation as Calvin and Martin Luther. On the contrary, there were attempts before the Reformation to halt the decline in papal prestige and power by reforms of various kinds. The problem of a corrupt, extravagant papacy resided in France instead of in Rome. The schism that resulted from the attempts to get the Pope to return to Rome provided the impetus of movements and reformers such as John Wyclif, John Huss and Girolamo Savonarola, and the reform councils of the fourteenth century to seek ways to bring about a revival of spiritual life within the Roman Catholic Church.

Between 1300 and 1400 A.D., the Roman Church began to decline in morals and morale. The hierarchal organization, with its demand for celibacy and absolute obedience to the Pope, and the feudalization of the Roman Church led to a decline in the clergy. Celibacy was opposed both to the natural instincts of man and to the Biblical statements in favor of the married state for man. Many priests took concubines or indulged in illicit love affairs with the female members of their congregations. Some had the problem of caring for children born to these unions and gave more attention to it than to their clerical duties. Others, especially during the Renaissance, enjoyed luxurious living. Feudalism was still a problem because allegiance both to the Pope and to the feudal lord created a division of interest in many cases. The cleric often gave more attention to his secular responsi-

bilities than to his spiritual responsibilities.¹

The Church and the European States, 1300-1400 A.D.

After the death of Pope Boniface VIII, the papacy entered its so-called Babylonian Captivity. For seventy five years the papacy was ruled by the kings of France. Seven successive popes were Frenchmen and they made their home, not at Rome, but at Avignon in France. Their claims to world dominion were not lessened. They still spoke to kings as well as to bishops in the familiar tones of complete authority. But Europe recognized that things were not the same. England and France were soon at war and England was in no mood to receive commands that issued from France.

Germany began to emerge from its chaos, and the efforts of the popes to control the politics of that divided people were without success.

Italy was falling apart into anarchy, yet most of Italy was claimed as papal land. National rivalries were springing up everywhere and to those rivalries the papacy was a party.

Beginning about the thirteenth century, voices were heard in many places, declaring that the popes had gone too far in their claims of power, while other voices began to cry aloud that the whole Church organization was rotten and must be reformed.

The movement of revolt had come from England from the University of Oxford to the University of Prag. It had its beginning with John Wyclif.

The mystics had attempted to personalize religion but reformers such as Wyclif, Huss and Savonarola were more interested in an attempt to return to the ideal of the Church presented in the New Testament. Wyclif and Huss

¹Will Durant, The Story of Civilization. Vol. V. (New York, Simon and Schuster. 1953) pp. 349-372.

were able to capitalize on nationalistic anti-papal sentiment during the period of the Babylonian Captivity when the Pope was resident in Avignon.

The Reformation Early Movements

The Medieval Church had, through her most characteristic institutions, papacy and monasticism, reached the peak in development. The papacy had reached absolute power only to use that very power for selfish interests, allowing abuses which finally undermined it. The Church and the world longed for a moral and spiritual regeneration. A reformation was needed in the head of the Church and among the members, and a general desire for reformation existed during the entire period. This desire found expression in movements which will now be briefly considered.

Early Reform Influences in England

William of Occam was the most influential theologian of this time; he was one of the early forerunners of the English Reformation. He asserted that the Pope was not infallible, that the General Council and not the Pope was the highest authority in matters of faith and life, and that in secular matters the Church and the Pope were subordinate to the State.

Occam exerted a strong influence on John Wyclif and Martin Luther.²

JOHN WYCLIF (1324-1384)

Some men are famous only while they live and are scarcely heard of afterwards. Some who are hardly known while they live become very famous later; and for some of this latter class, the fame is long in coming. Centuries may go by and the world seems to have forgotten them. But at last

²Ibid. p. 363.

some discovery bursts upon a following age and it awakes to find out that a certain man was a hero.

John Wyclif was one of those men whose fame has tarried behind and whose good deeds followed long afterwards. He was not without fame in his own day, but the distinction which he enjoyed was chiefly that of being scorned and hated.

So long as he was known only as a scholar, the world respected him. When at a later period he came forth as a statesman, the world honored him, but when he took up a third character and began to try to make the world a little better than he had found it, the world could not forgive him for being a theologian and a reformer.

For centuries the Church misjudged the Spirit of Wyclif's work, and as the records were mostly from his enemies or the ecclesiastical party, the English Church did little honor to him. It was almost four hundred years after his death before men began to understand his relation to English history, and to do justice to the great-souled leader who supplied the philosophical and Scriptural basis of the Reformation.

Wycliffe was the greatest of the pre-reformers, in moral courage, in comprehension of the vital points at issue, in marking the line to which later workmen might hew. Milton said, "He was honored of God to be the first preacher of a general reformation to all Europe." Of the English Reformation he determined the course and the Spirit, making it the clearest in purpose, the most enduring in its object, the most efficient in final victory.³

Early Life and Training

John Wyclif was born in a little village on the Southern bank of the river Tees, called "Wycliffe Village". The population was less than two hundred people at the time. The exact date of Wyclif's birth is not known but is placed sometime between 1320 and 1325 A.D.⁴

³George S. Innis. Wycliffe: The Morning Star. New York: Eaton and Mains. 1907. pp. 14-15.

⁴Ibid. p. 19.

Young Wyclif had a religious disposition, a philosophical temperament and a devotion to the things of the mind. His own inclination and the wise choice of his parents made him a student.⁵

Wyclif was trained in his early years by his mother and later by the parish priest. He then went to Balliol College to study. He became master of this same college and finally attained to its presidency. Later he gave the leadership of the college to attend Oxford University. Here he studied the "Trivium" which consists of grammar, rhetoric and logic. He then studied the "Quadrivium" which consists of subjects on the advanced level of liberal arts: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. He also studied moral philosophy, metaphysics and theology which was the queen of the sciences of that time.

The priesthood was the highest calling in his day, and occupied the highest offices in the Church and in the state. The ecclesiastical statesmen of that age were leaders in English national life.

Wyclif received his Doctor's Degree in theology which gave him greater intellectual freedom, boldness, influence and the right to lecture on divinity. He also studied civil and canon law to equip himself for a life of intellectual effort.

Wycliffe, by his twenty years' diligent study at Oxford became a deep scholar, a distinguished university professor, with a well stored mind, profoundly devoted to great principles and willing to give his life for them. In his lectures and other writings at Oxford he prepared the substance of his later work, the teaching which he gave to his poor priests, and which they in turn were to give to the people in their sermons. He there acquired, as so many men do, the power to see how things relate themselves to other things, that quality which we call wisdom or judgement, which distinguishes a wise man with plenty of common sense from the chump.⁶

⁵Ibid. p. 20.

⁶Ibid. p.p. 30,31.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were periods of intellectual awakening in Medieval Europe. It was a time of transformation, of the early renaissance, of theological doubts, questions, of political readjustment and the spirit of nationality.

While Wyclif was studying at Oxford many interesting things were happening in the outside world. The study of philosophy and the awakening intelligence of Europe stimulated and directed by the universities and the work of scholars, were leading to doubt about the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and to oppose its government and life. Wyclif was educated in this age and atmosphere and was brought face to face with the great truths then pressing for recognition, and he opened his mind to the challenge.

Teachers' Influence on Wyclif

Wyclif's chief teacher was Marsiglio of Padua who taught his students that the fountain of justice sprang from the people, who were the real rulers in society. He taught that the clergy should be the servants of the people and not masters, and that, from Christ's example, they were not to hold property.

The true Church belongs not to the official body but to the whole number of Christian believers. There could be no absolute ruler anywhere, either in Church or State. Pope, emperor, king, bishop and priest, were all servants of their master the people. The Church is superior to any of its officers, and men must be excommunicated not by the clergy but by the whole body of the faithful. The pope, too, could not absolve the emperor's subjects from obeying the laws of God or free them from their oath of allegiance to their sovereign.⁷

These are the words of Wyclif's teacher Marsiglio; his lesson was learned by Wyclif and practiced in his life's work.

⁷Ibid. p. 51.

Pope Gregory XI, with true instinct, saw that Wyclif in his teaching was the successor of Marsiglio, and was putting into practical application the "damnable doctrines" which the Italian had thought out while at the court of the Emperor of Germany.

Marsiglio also taught that the Pope had no right of supreme judgment over the clergy, but that they had a right to be tried by their peers. The sole privilege of the clergy is their spiritual character; the only final authority is the Word of God, and each man should have the right to interpret it for himself.⁸

Bradwardine, an able theologian, taught the doctrine of the free grace of God. Wyclif confirmed these teachings and built his own system of thought.

Wyclif the Statesman

Wyclif received his doctorate in theology in 1372, and this year marked the end of his life as a student and teacher at Oxford University. The change enabled him to take better care of his parish duties. From that time forward he had the privilege of giving lectures on divinity in the University. As a lecturer Wyclif became very popular and his fame was established firmly in Oxford long before he entered life outside the University.

In the summer of 1374, Wyclif went to Bruges as a member of the commission appointed by the King to negotiate peace with France and to work with the Pope's agents on filling ecclesiastical appointments in England. His name was second on the list of commissioners, following that of Bishop of Bangor. At Bruges, Wyclif developed a friendship with John

⁸Ibid. p. 52.

of Gaunt, King Edward's favorite son; this friendship continued through the years and insured protection from ecclesiastical violence.

Wyclif began to pour his civil and ecclesiastical principles into the political test-tube to observe how the nation and the Church would react to them. His highest hope was to be able to purify the Church by purging it of its worldly dross.

A national spirit in England was developing due to the rise of the House of Commons, the growth of cities and the increase of the wealth and numbers of the middle class. However, England was not faring so well in international affairs. England had a hundred years of war with France and Spain from time to time. All this fighting demanded men and money which the common people had to supply.

The Parliament of 1366 was called to consider the papal demand of a renewal of the payment of the feudal tribute promised by King John when he was humbled by the Pope. This tribute had been in arrears for many years. Edward III had no intention of paying, but he needed the support of Parliament to avoid paying the tribute to the Pope.

The Parliament, inspired by Wyclif's previous opposition, advised against paying the tribute. Wyclif's arguments in opposing the papal demand were: that King John had no right to promise tribute; that King John's promise was constitutionally void because it had not been backed by Parliament; that dominion was the prerogative of the people; that the Pope had not been a respectful vassal of the King and therefore had lost his rights; that the Pope had not served England and should not be paid; that the Pope should be as poor as Christ was; and that respect was due to Christ and not to the Pope.⁹

⁹Ibid. pp. 54-84.

Wyclif spent most of his time preaching in Lutterworth, London and Oxford. He established his fame as a popular preacher.

His journey to Bruges had opened his eyes to the real character of the Catholic hierarchy. Now he began an orderly attack on the entire ecclesiastical order, at first upon its political oppression and later upon its dogma. His dissatisfaction with the papal regime and his disappointment with the Catholic Church coincided with England's dissatisfaction over sending money to Rome.

Wyclif Begins Church Reform

Soon after this Wyclif wrote a tract in which he styled the Bishop of Rome "the anti-Christ, the proud, worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of clippers and cut-purses." He maintained that he has no power in binding and loosing any priest.¹⁰

It was a period of great hardship for the English people. One half of the population had died, exposed to three attacks of Black Death. The unsuccessful war in France was taking its toll of lives and was crushing the survivors under a heavy load of debt and taxes. The shores of England were being ravaged and their commerce destroyed. The people began to reason that the flow of money to the Pope should be turned into the English treasury, and that the clergy should bear their just share of taxes. The action of Parliament in 1376, showed the effect of this reasoning. Members of the royal council were impeached and imprisoned for corruption. The rights to pass unwritten laws, to hold annual sessions of Parliament, and to seize the secular belongings of the Church in case of national need were demanded.

¹⁰Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. Vol. VI. (Grand Rapids, Michigan. Wm.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1952) p. 316.

The members of Parliament, under the reforming influence of the Black Prince and Wyclif, proposed that the Statute of Provisions be enforced; that no money be taken out of England; that no papal agent or collector should be allowed in England and that no Englishman act as a papal collector.

Wyclif began to lecture on civil lordship. He maintained that the Church should have no interest in temporal affairs, that it was sinful for the clergy to hold property, that an unrighteous clergy had no right to dominion and property. These statements of Wyclif stirred the wrath of the clergy against him, and this led to his trial before the English hierarchy led by Courtenay, Bishop of London. The trial was to take place in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on February 19th, 1377. He was charged with heresy. Four Dominican Friars of orthodox faith came to defend him.¹¹

Wyclif and the Papacy

Wyclif had written nineteen theses; they were:

- I. The whole human race concurring, without Christ, have not power absolutely to ordain that Peter and all his money should rule over the world politically forever.
- II. God cannot give civil dominion to any man for himself and his heirs forever.
- III. Many charters of human invention, concerning perpetual civil inheritance, are impossible.
- IV. Everyone being in justifying grace not only hath a right to all the things of God, but hath them in possession.
- V. A man can give dominion to his own or his adopted son only ministerially, whether that dominion be temporal or eternal.
- VI. If God be, temporal lords can lawfully and meritoriously take away property from a delinquent Church.
- VII. It is not possible that the Vicar of Christ, merely by his Bulls or by them with his own will and consent and that of his college of cardinals, can qualify or disqualify any man.

¹¹Innis, op. cit. pp. 85-114.

VIII. It is not possible that a man should be excommunicated to his damage, unless he be excommunicated first and principally by himself.

IX. Nobody ought to excommunicate, suspend, or interdict any, or proceed to punish according to ecclesiastical censure, except in the cause of God.

X. Cursing or excommunication does not bind, except in so far as it is used against an adversary of the law of Christ.

XI. There is no power granted by Christ to His disciples of excommunicating a subject for denying temporalities, but the contrary.

XII. The disciples of Christ have no power coactively to exact temporalities by censure.

XIII. It is not possible by the absolute power of God that if the pope or any other Christian pretend that he bindeth or looseth as he will, he does therefore, actually bind or loose.

XIV. We ought to believe that the Vicar of Christ either binds or looses, only when he obeys the laws of Christ.

XV. Every priest rightly ordained, according to the law of grace, hath a power according to which he may minister all the sacraments, and by consequence may absolve any contrite person confessing to him from any sin.

XVI. It is lawful for kings, in cases limited by law, to take away the temporalities from clergy who habitually abuse them.

XVII. If the Pope, or temporal lords, or any other person, have endowed the Church with temporalities, it is lawful for them to take them away in certain cases: namely, when the act is by way of medicine to cure or prevent certain sins; and that notwithstanding excommunication or any other Church censure, since these endowments were not given but under a condition implied.

XVIII. An ecclesiastic, even the Roman Pontiff himself, may lawfully be rebuked by his subjects for the benefit of the Church, and may be impeached by both clergy and laity.

The nineteenth article is not given ... it is an amplification of the XVIII article given.¹²

Charges against Wyclif had been prepared by the monks at Oxford, and in May, 1377, the Pope issued five bulls against him. Three of these

¹²Emily S. Holt. John De Wycliffe. New York, Robert Carter & Brothers. N.D. p.p. 77-78.

were addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London as papal commissioners, instructing them to inquire into Wyclif's teaching; to seize and imprison him for heresy and to deliver him to the Pope to have him die in a papal prison. The fourth bull was addressed to the King to secure his co-operation, and the fifth bull was addressed to the University of Oxford, blaming it for laxity in allowing tares to be sown among the wheat, and commanding it to seize and deliver Wyclif to the commissioners.

King Edward III died and the bull addressed to him became void. The authorities at Oxford did not want to be disturbed with their liberty of administration, and did not have the power to arrest Wyclif, for half the faculty favored Wyclif.

The papal commissioners understood the temper of the English Parliament and the people, and could not carry out the instructions in the papal bulls addressed to them.

In March, 1378, Pope Gregory XI died, and a few months later the "Papal Schism" divided and weakened the papacy, and the whole authority of the Church. Wyclif resumed the offensive and issued tract after tract on the freedom of the individual, the corruption of the papacy, the clergy and the oppressive measures of the Church on the people, the hypocrisy of the Friars in gaining wealth instead of righteousness.

He denounced the friars for preaching poverty and accumulating collective wealth. He thought some monasteries were "dens of thieves, nests of serpents, houses of living devils". He challenged the theory that the merits of the saints could be applied to the rescue of souls in purgatory; Christ and the Apostles had taught no doctrine of indulgences. Prelates deceive men by feigned indulgences or pardons, and rob them cursedly of their money.... Men be great fools that buy these bulls of pardon so dear. If the pope had power to snatch souls from purgatory, why did he not in Christian charity take them out at once?¹³

¹³Will Durant. The Story of Civilization. Vol. VI. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1957. p. 34.

Wyclif used strong language to denounce the immorality of the priests, and he further alleged that the crimes of the clergy should be punishable by the secular courts. He accused the Church of favoring the rich and despising the poor. He also accused the Church of being more concerned for material gain than the souls of men. He said that "Simony reigns" in all states of the Church.¹⁴

He continued his accusations against the papal schism, the lust for power and material gain:

The scandalous rivalry of the popes (in the schism), their bandying of excommunications their unshamed struggle for power, "Should move men to believe in popes only so far as these follow Christ." A pope or a priest "is a lord, yea, even a king", in matters spiritual; but if he assumes earthly possessions, or political authority, he is unworthy of his office. "Christ had not whereon to rest His head, but men say this pope hath more than half the Empire... Christ was meek... the pope sits on his throne and makes lords to kiss his feet."¹⁵

Wyclif suggested that the Pope was the anti-Christ described in the first Epistle of John.

The solution to the problem, as Wyclif saw it, was the separation of the Church and state. Christ and the Apostles lived in poverty, and so should the clergy live. The friars and monks should observe the rules of poverty, to be content with food, clothing and shelter. He also taught that the King was responsible to God alone and not to the Pope. He believed that the power of the priests lay in the right to administer the sacraments. He believed in public confession as the early Church did, not to a priest. The Historian's History of the World has the following comment:

14. Ibid. p. 34.

15. Ibid. p. 34.

Men began to think. Miracles ceased in the presence of holy relics, and dispensations for sin came to be despised. The preaching of Wycliffe found willing ears....

A general feeling began to spread that the Church dignitaries and the religious orders were more intent upon their own aggrandisement and the gratification of their own luxury, than the upholding of the faith and duties of the Gospel. The mass of people were ignorant of the essentials of religion, though they bowed before its forms.

To such, the covert licentiousness of the monks and the open profligacy of the mendicant orders, was a deep humiliation.¹⁶

At first Wyclif was greatly attracted by the poverty of the Franciscans, for it fit so well with his own views of temporal possessions. He strongly commended the mendicants for their poverty and preaching to the poor in contrast with the worldly-minded clergy. The Dominicans were founded to oppose heresy and to convert the heathen; the Franciscans to restore Christ-like life on earth and to bring salvation to the neglected portions of the earth.

Wyclif and Church Doctrines

Wyclif's writings teem with denials of the doctrinal tenets of his age and indictments against ecclesiastical abuses. He spoke on the nature of the Church, the papacy, the priesthood, the doctrine of transubstantiation and the use of the Scriptures.

He believed (1) that the Church consists of the elect of the body of Christ and that Christ, and not the Pope, is the head of the Church; (2) that clerics who follow Christ are true priests and none other; (3) that transubstantiation is the greatest of all heresies and subversive of logic, grammar and all natural science. He believed that Christ's presence is in the bread and wine, but the elements do not become his actual body and blood.

¹⁶Henry Smith Williams, The Historian's History of the World. New York: The Outlook Company. 1904. p. 484.

The Roman Catholics based their views on the decision of the Council of Trent, which said that

Transubstantiation is (described by the Council of Trent as) the change of the whole substance of bread into the body of Christ; and the whole substance of wine into the blood of Christ, the species of bread and wine remaining unchanged.

It was maintained at the Council of Constance against Wycliffe and was adopted into definition at the Council of Trent.¹⁷

He believed the Scriptures to be the Word of God, the final authority as the rule for faith and morals, that all things necessary for salvation are found in the Scriptures, and that every person has a right to read the Scriptures for himself.

In these denials of the erroneous system of the Medieval Church, Wyclif was far in advance of his own age and anticipated the views of the Protestant Reformation.

Summary of the Tenets of John Wyclif

APPROVED

Supreme authority of Holy Scripture.
 Supreme headship of Christ over His Church.
 Royal supremacy, civil and ecclesiastical.
 Seven sacraments (but the two instituted by Christ pre-eminent).
 Predestination, in the extremest sense.
 Sabbath-keeping.
 Infant baptism.
 Use of sarcasm, in a good cause.

DISAPPROVED

Doctrines

Transubstantiation.	Final perseverance.
Power of the keys.	Assurance
Exclusive priesthood of the clergy	Refusal of clergy to submit
Mariolatry (late in life).	to civil courts.
Image worship	Bishop appointed to heathen
Purgatory.	countries becoming suffragans
Apostolic succession	in England.

¹⁷Sacramentum Mundi, Vol. 6. New York: Herder and Herder.
 232 Madison Avenue. 1006. N.D. p. 293.

Distinction between moral and
venial sins.

Conditional immortality
Socinian view of the Atonement.

Discipline

Monasticism.
Endowments.
Papal Bulls and Decretals.

Tradition.
Auricular confession.
Clerical celibacy.

Religious Practices

Indulgences.
Begging by friars.
Simony, bribes, marriage fees.
Fasting communion.
Letters of fraternity, selling
prayers.
Dying in monk's habit.
Canonization.
Holy Water.

Intoning, and much music of
any kind.
Incense.
Latin services.
Family chaplains.
Costly Churches.
Consecration of places.
Washing feet of poor on Monday
and Thursday
Pilgrimages.

Secular Practices

Drunkenness and greediness.
Dress and luxury.
Amusements, tournaments, archery,
wrestling, plays, chess and
backgammon.
Dinner-parties.
Guilds and societies.

Freemasons.
War
Trade unions.
Government by majorities.
Combinations to keep up prices.

The Lollards

Those who adopted Wyclif's views were known as Wyclifites or Lollards. It was said that one third of England followed his views and became Lollards. Some of them who preached were called Wyclif's "Poor Priests". They used the Bible as the sole source of faith and practice. He sent out his "Poor Priests" to preach from village to village, barefoot, with a long staff and clothes of reddish brown to symbolize poverty and toil.

¹⁸Holt. Ibid. p. 214.

The prelates, priests, abbots and the clergy scorned and hated the "Poor Priests", but the people loved them and flocked around them.

This was the beginning of the Lollard movement which stirred England to its depths for nearly a century and a half, and formed the essential basis of the Protestant Reformation.

The ranks of the Lollards were soon joined by the laity of the Church and some men of nobility joined the movement.

In their sermons, secular priests now freely quoted the Holy Scriptures, in the common tongue; and they looked forward to the work which their great leader Wycliffe, the honoured professor of theology at Oxford was preparing, the translation into English of Christ's Testament.¹⁹

The Lollards had great success among the common people. Their weapon was the Bible and each was a priest to bind and loose as the Pope or bishop; they ordained others to extend their work. By the middle of the fourteenth century the Lollards were at their zenith.

On December 31, 1384, John Wyclif died, but the movement which he founded lived and grew. A few years later the Lollards were numerous in London, Lincoln, Salisbury and Worcester. They later were involved in the economic and political life of the State.

In 1395, doubtless emboldened by the blunt refusal of Parliament to pass the archbishop's bill for the destruction of all Wyclif's translation of the Bible, the Lollards felt themselves sufficiently strong to present a memorial to Parliament and to demand the cooperation of that body in carrying out their reform. The twelve clauses of this memorial were as follows: faith, love, and hope had vanished from the English daughter Church since she had been lost in worldly wealth through her association with her great step-mother of Rome; the Roman Catholic priesthood was not that of Christ; the priestly law of celibacy resulted in unnatural vice; transubstantiation was a feigned miracle and conducted to idolatry; prayers over bread, salt, wine, water, wax and the like were unlawful magic rites; it was contrary to the

¹⁹Williams. Ibid. p. 484

Word of Christ, Matthew 6:24, to have a king, bishop, or prelate and judge in one person; prayers for the dear were ineffectual, pilgrimages and the invocation of images were nearly idolatrous; auricular confession was not essential to salvation, but was a source of priestly arrogance and permission to sin; war was contrary to the New Testament, and death and pillage to the poor; the vows of nuns led to infanticide and unnatural impurity; and art was unnecessary and conducive to luxury and extravagance.²⁰

The Lollards had overestimated their strength, and the King warned them sternly. The decline of Lollardism began. The state declared that the Lollards were heretics and were subject to persecution, torture and death.

The Persecution of the Lollards

In January 1400 A.D., the bishops declared that they were unable to make headway against the heretics. (Lollards)

The first Lollard to be tried and executed under the new provisions of Parliament was W. Sawtre (Chatris), who died at the stake the following month.²¹

Many of the Lollards were tortured to recant or die, other spent their time in prison. They sought support for their struggle for religious and political freedom.

Both the secular and the regular clergy, and especially the friars, were regarded as having long since deserted the principles of their founders and as having persecuted their own brethren, the Fraticelli, the Beghards, and the Lollards, for remaining faithful to the teaching of their fathers.²²

The persecution of the Lollards was severe and forced them to seek refuge in secrecy and obscure hiding places. They grew in number and the persecution continued until the middle of the fifteenth century. The Lollards were later called "Brethren in Christ" or "known men".²³

²⁰Schaff-Herzog. op. cit. Vol.VII. p. 16.

²¹Ibid. p. 16.

²²Ibid. p. 16

²³Ibid. p. 16.

Lollardism, based on the teachings of Wyclif, centered in the Bible, believed in love and trusted in God above all things. They believed that the soul of man, rather than an earthly temple, is the dwelling place of the Lord. They opposed the Roman Catholic doctrines, worldliness, oppression and extravagance.

The basis of these views, the Lollards protested against a series of ecclesiastical requirements which find no authority in the Bible. They rejected the use of images in Churches, pilgrimages to holy places, the right of the clergy to possess land, the orders of the hierarchy, the legislative power of the Pope and bishops above the Bible, the institution of spiritual orders and the priestly mediation, the invocation of saints, the extravagant decoration of Churches, mass and the sacraments, the obligation to take oaths, and the justification of war and the penalty of death. These eleven theses are all derived primarily from Wyclif, and are permeated with the principle common to Wyclif and later to Luther, that the Bible is the sole source of religious truth.²⁴

Lollardy was an anticipation of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and did something in the way of preparing the minds of the English people for that change. Professed by many clerics, it was emphatically a movement of laymen. In the early Reformation period, English Lutherans were at times represented as the immediate followers of Wyclif.

Summary

John Wyclif (1324-1384 A.D.) was an English professor at Oxford University. He was a preacher, lecturer, patriot, writer and critic. He is called the "Morning star of the Reformation". He translated the Bible into English in 1382, and organized groups of traveling lay preachers who explained the Bible to the people. When his followers, called the "Lollards" petitioned the Parliament for a reform of the Church, a severe persecution broke out against them. They lost their influence as a party, but they

²⁴Ibid. p. 16.

continued to meet in secret to read the Gospel together in English. The essential influence of Wyclif and the Lollards was to make the people better acquainted with the contents of the Bible. The Lollards continued to grow and were known until the time of the Reformation.

A Comparison of John Wyclif and Martin Luther

The chief reason why the fame of John Wyclif has been eclipsed by that of Martin Luther is that the one succeeded in achieving the aim of his life far more rapidly and openly than the other. Martin Luther was the more single-minded of the two, and also was more energetic and determined.

To use a hackneyed simile, he had "fewer irons in the fire". He was not hindered by too many intellectual activities as was Wyclif.

Luther set before himself one grand aim and kept after it. He saw that the stream was muddy and he went and cleaned out the fountain.

Wyclif's strength was somewhat distracted by having a greater number of aims, and by trying to purify the stream, if possible, without meddling quite so much with the fountain. It was not possible, and both of them found it out; but had Wyclif made the discovery as early in his career as Luther, it is probable - looking to second causes - that the Reformation would have come two hundred and fifty years sooner than it did. And yet, though Luther has achieved the higher fame, there is a sense in which Wyclif was the greater reformer of the two. His work was of a more difficult character, and he made fewer blunders in pursuing it.

JOHN HUSS, EARLY LIFE AND CAREER

John Huss was the most important Bohemian or Czech religious reformer of his age. His work was transitional between the Medieval and the Reformation periods and anticipated the developed Protestant Reformation by a full century.

John Huss was born about 1370 A.D., at Hussinetz, a village in Bohemia.²⁵ At the age of about thirteen years he entered the elementary Latin school in nearby Prachatice. Five years later he enrolled in the University of Prague, earning his living as a choir boy. His life was hard, and although he looked back on these years with some humor, he frankly admitted that the reason he wanted to become a priest was to secure a good livelihood and dress and be held in esteem by men.

Two years after his graduation in 1396, he received his master's degree and began teaching at the University.²⁶

As a teacher Huss lectured for two years on Aristotle and on Realist Philosophy of the English reformer John Wyclif, whose views were enthusiastically received by the nationalistic Czech University masters.

As a young man, Huss recalled that he had a happy time with good clothes and playing chess, enjoying parties with his friends of which he genuinely repented. He discarded from his mind the foolish fun-making activities, to do the work of the Lord. He was not satisfied with the prevailing state of religion. His soul thirsted for something better than was offered by the Roman Catholic religion. He saw not only that he needed

²⁵London G. Morrish, Lights and Shadows of the Reformation. Paternoster Square. England. N.D. p. 21.

²⁶*Ibid.* p. 21

this better thing for himself, but the people too were perishing for lack of the knowledge of Christian faith and life.

The University of Prague did not pay a salary to masters, but only to a few fulltime professors. Therefore John Huss had to seek some other means of livelihood. He sought ordination for the priesthood and received it, after which he received an appointment as rector and preacher of the large Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. This was the center of a growing national reform movement where sermons were preached in Czech rather than in Latin. (1401)²⁷

In twelve years of preaching he became the popular leader of the reform movement. He became adviser to the young nobleman Zbynek Zajic of Hazmburk when Zbynek was named Archbishop of Prague: a move that helped Huss give the reform movement a firmer foundation. But later the Archbishop became an enemy of John Huss.²⁸

Despite his extensive duties at Bethlehem Chapel, Huss continued to teach in the University of Prague in the faculty of the arts department, and he became a candidate for the doctor's degree in theology. Many figures in the court of the King of Bohemia were listeners of John Huss in the Chapel, and Queen Sophia made him her chaplain. Opponents of Huss accused him of teaching and preaching the works of John Wyclif.

Huss's Reforming Influences

Huss had a friend named Jerome, of Prague, who loved to travel and learn. He brought, from Oxford University in England, copies of several of Wyclif's writings to Prague University in Bohemia in 1398.²⁹

²⁷Morrish, Ibid. p. 21.

²⁸Durant. op. cit. p. 164.

²⁹Morrish, Ibid. p. 22.

The opinions of Wyclif had won such interest in the University of Prague that the administrative clergy of the cathedral submitted to the University masters forty-five excerpts from the writings of Wyclif, and asked whether these doctrines should be barred from the University. Several masters, including John Huss, answered, "No"; but the majority ruled that thereafter no member of the University staff should, either publicly or privately defend or adhere to any of the articles.

Huss ignored this prohibition. The clergy of Prague petitioned Archbishop Zbynek to reprove Huss for preaching Wyclif's views. But when Huss began to express sympathy for Wyclif's views Zbynek excommunicated him and several of his associates. When they persisted in their claims to perform the priestly functions, Zbynek placed all of Prague under an interdict. He ordered all writings of John Wyclif that could be found in Bohemia to be surrendered to him. Many copies of Wyclif's works were brought to him and he burned them in the courtyard of his palace.

John Huss appealed to Pope John XXIII. The Pope summoned him to appear before the papal court but he refused to go.

The government of Bohemia supported John Huss and his followers increased daily. He continued to preach in Bethlehem Chapel and became bolder in his accusations of the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. The Churches of Prague were placed under a ban and the interdict was pronounced, but this was without any result.

The Archbishop was asked by King Wenceslas to lift the interdict, to annul Huss's excommunication and to submit to the King's authority. Archbishop Zbynek did as the King ordered, and he fled to Hungary to seek the protection of King Sigismund. However, it was reported that he died under mysterious circumstances.

During this time (1411) the papal schism was taking place, and Pope John XXIII issued his crusading Bull against King Ladislas of Naples, who was a supporter of the deposed Pope Gregory XII, who had driven John XXIII out of Rome.³⁰

John Huss and Indulgences

Pope John XXIII also ordered a sale of indulgences to finance his campaign against Pope Gregory XII.

Unable to remain silent in the face of Pope John's call to a fratricidal war and trafficking in sacred things, John Huss vigorously denounced the Bull as un-Christian and blasphemous. But in this struggle he lost the support of King Wenceslas, who shared in the proceeds of the sale. The people of Prague rose in revolt against the sale of indulgences and conducted a mock burning of the papal Bulls. The King then called the representatives of the warring camps to his castle, and the royal council ruled that no one was to oppose their sale. About the same time three young men who opposed the sale of indulgences, were brought before the city council. Huss pleaded for them and admitted that his preaching had aroused them; they were condemned and beheaded. Thus the reform movement gained its first martyrs.

The Pope now launched his own excommunication against John Huss. When Huss ignored it the Pope laid an interdict upon any city where Huss might stay. On the advice of the King, Huss left (in 1411) and found refuge in southern Bohemia in the castle of his friends. During the next two years he wrote his major works, some in Latin and some in Czech, nearly all inspired by Wyclif. Some of the writings condemned image worship, auricular confession, the multiplication of ornate religious rites, the taking of fees

³⁰Durant. Vol. VI. p. 164.

by the priests for baptism, confirmation, masses, marriages or burials. He charged some Prague priests with selling consecrated oil; and he adopted Wyclif's view that a priest guilty of simony could not validly administer a sacrament.³¹

Huss in Exile

Huss also continued his preaching, and audiences gathered to hear him in the market places and in the fields and woods. He was protected by his castle friends. Following Wyclif, he insisted upon preaching as the right of the priesthood. He wrote that to cease from preaching, in obedience to the Pope's orders, would be to disobey God and imperil his own salvation. He also kept in communication with the city by visiting it several times and by writing to Bethlehem Chapel, the University and the municipal synod. This correspondence abounds in quotations from the Scriptures. Huss reminds his friends that Christ Himself was excommunicated as a malefactor and was crucified. He wrote that no help could be gained from the saints. Christ's example and His salvation are sufficient sources of consolation and courage. The high priests, scribes, Pharisees, Herod and Pilate condemned the Truth and put Him to death, but He rose from the tomb and gave in His stead twelve other preachers. He insisted that God would do this again and again.

He followed Wyclif into predestinarianism, and agreed with Wyclif, Marsilius and Ockham that the Church should have no worldly goods. Like Calvin, he defined the Church neither as the clergy nor as the whole body of Christians, but as the totality, in heaven or on earth, of the saved. Christ, not the Pope, is the Head of the Church; the Bible, not the Pope should be the Christian guide. The Pope is not infallible, even in faith or morals; the Pope himself may be a hardened sinner or heretic....

Huss concluded, a Pope is to be obeyed only when his commands conform to the law of Christ. To rebel against an erring Pope is to obey Christ.³²

³¹Schaff-Herzog. Vol. V. pp. 415-417.

³²Durant. Vol. VI. p. 165.

In denying the infallibility of the Pope and the visible Church, and in setting aside the sacerdotal power of the priesthood to open and shut the kingdom of heaven, Huss broke with the accepted theory of Western Christendom. He committed the unpardonable sin of the Middle Ages.

These fundamental ideas were not original with the Bohemian reformer. He took them out of Wyclif's writings. He included whole paragraphs of those writings in his pages. Wyclif never had a more devoted student than John Huss. The ideas he got from Wyclif he made thoroughly his own. Huss was not a mere copyist. When he quoted Augustine, Bernard, Jerome and other writers, he mentioned them by name. One can understand why he did not mention Wyclif even though he used whole arguments and entire paragraphs from his writings. It was well known that Wyclif's cause was not fully accepted. He might hinder his own effort for the reform of the Church if it was known they came from Wyclif. Yet, Wyclif's writings were wide open to the eyes of the members of the University faculty. John Huss made no secret of following John Wyclif. He was willing to die for the views that Wyclif taught. He wrote that he was thankful, that under the power of Jesus Christ, Bohemia had received so much good from the blessed land of England.

The Bohemian theologian and scholar was fully imbued with Wyclif's reforming spirit of the Church. The great Council of Constance was about to meet (in 1414) to depose three rival popes, to enact a program of ecclesiastical reform, and to try to reconcile the Hussites with the Church. Emperor Sigismund suggested that Huss should go to Constance and attempt a reconciliation. For this journey he offered Huss a safe conduct, a public hearing before the council and a safe return.

John Huss and the Council of Constance

John Huss replied to King Sigismund that he (Huss) was ready to go to the Council of Constance under the King's promise of safe conduct. A week later the King responded, expressing confidence in John Huss, that his appearance at the Council would eliminate all doubts of heresy from Bohemia.

Many close friends begged Huss not to go but Huss insisted that he must. He was willing to die for the truth of the Scriptures and for Christ.

Huss set out on the journey on October 11, 1414, and reached Constance on November 3rd. He was accompanied by the Bohemian nobles, John of Chlum, Wenzel of Duba and Henry Lacembok.³³

Huss was treated with courtesy on his arrival and greeted by a crowd of people who cheered him. He was allowed to travel about the city for a month. But when an enemy, named Palecz, came he laid charges against Huss. Huss was then called in before the College of Cardinals; they examined him and had him imprisoned in a dungeon of the Dominican Convent.

John of Chlum hastened to inform the Emperor that the safe conduct for John Huss had been violated. The letter read as follows:

Sigismund, by the grace of God, King of the Romans... to all princes, ecclesiastical and lay, and all our other subjects greeting. Of our full affection we recommend to all in general, and to each individually, the honourable lman, Master John Huss, the bearer of these presents, going from Bohemia to the Council of Constance, whom we have taken under our protection and safeguard, and under that of the Empire, requesting when he arrives among you that you will receive him kindly and treat him favorably.... Let him freely and securely pass, sojourn, stop, and return.³⁴

³³Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. Vol. VI. Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1952. p. 372.

³⁴Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church Vol. II. New York, Thomas Y. Crowell and Co. 1899. pp. 444-445.

The Trial and Death of John Huss

In prison Huss suffered for three months. His cell was near the latrines and the stench gave him fever; vomiting set in and it seemed he would likely die in prison. Pope John XXIII sent his physician to attend him. Huss was allowed no books or communication with anyone during his imprisonment.

King Sigismund professed anger on hearing of Huss's imprisonment, but his conscience was soothed by the cardinals. They told him not to interfere with the Church's dealing with a heretic; that to interfere would bring disaster to the Council that was trying to heal the schism in the Church.

Later Huss was allowed to write letters to his friends outside the prison. In his correspondence he expressed the desire to be heard in open Council and to speak with King personally. In the meantime he was accused of heresy by D'Ailly at the head of the examining court. Stephen Paletz, his apostate friend accused him the most. In April 1415, Huss was removed to the fortress on the Rhine River bank; there he was placed in fetters and was so poorly fed that he fell ill again.

Meanwhile his fellow helper, Jerome of Prague, came to Constance, and had nailed to the city gates, to the doors of churches and upon the houses of cardinals, a request that the Emperor and the Council should give him a safe conduct and a public hearing. At the urging of Huss's friends, he left the city to return to Bohemia; but on the way he stopped to preach against the Council's treatment of Huss. He was arrested, brought back to Constance and was imprisoned.

On July 5, 1415, after seven months of imprisonment, Huss was led in chains before the Council and again on the seventh and eighth. He was questioned about the forty-five articles, already condemned in Wyclif's works.

He was asked to recant and be free. He refused.³⁵ He said that he would recant if he could be proven wrong by the Scriptures. (Precisely the position taken by Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms, one hundred years later.)

The Council argued that Scripture must be interpreted, not by free judgment of individuals, but by the heads of the Church. They demanded that Huss retract all the quoted articles without any reservation. Both his friends and accusers pled with him to hield. He refused. After three days of questioning, and the vain efforts of the Emperor and cardinals to force him to recant, Huss was returned to his prison cell. The Council allowed him four weeks to consider the matter to recant. The Emperor sent special advisers to plead with Huss, but he always gave the same reply. He would stand by the Scriptures and no other; only if he could be disproved by the Scriptures would he recant.

On June 29, 1415, Huss wrote his last letters. In a letter to Chlum there is no hesitation or fear. The bitterness of death is overpast; Jesus, at any rate, will keep His promises, nor deceive any by safe conducts.

He who serves Christ, as Gregory has said, will have Christ in the Fatherland of heaven as His servant. 'Blessed is that servant whom his Lord welcometh.... The kings of the earth do not act thus with their servants. They only care for them as long as they are useful to them. Not thus Christ, the King of Glory.... The apostles Peter and Paul have now passed their trials and torments; for them remains the life of rest, without suffering, and bliss without measure. Now they are with the choirs of angels, now they see the King in His beauty. ... May these glorious martyrs, thus united with the King of Glory, deign to intercede for us, that strengthened by their help, we may be partakers in their glory, by patiently suffering whatever God Almighty shall deem best for us.'

On the first day of July, 1415 John Huss was asked to recant by his

³⁵Herbert B. Workman, The Dawn of the Reformation. London, England: Charles H. Kelly, 1902. pp. 326-332.

³⁶Ibid. pp. 326-332.

three friends and four bishops. Huss replied that he would retract if proven wrong by the Scriptures.^f

After seven months of dismal imprisonment and deepening disappointment, on Saturday, July 6, Huss was conducted to the cathedral. It was 6 A.M. and he was kept waiting outside the doors until the celebration of mass was completed. He was conducted into the cathedral, placed on a high stool in the middle of the Church to listen to the sentence pronounced against him.

King Sigismund was praised by the bishops for his efforts to uproot schism and destroy heresy. John Huss was condemned as a heretic, as a disciple of John Wyclif, and sentenced to be burned.

Huss began to speak, he looked at Sigismund, reminding him of his safe conduct. The King turned red but did not speak. Six bishops robed and disrobed John Huss. Then they put a cap, painted with three devils on it, on his head and inscribed the word, "heresiarch" and committed his soul to the devil. With upturned eyes Huss exclaimed, "and I commit myself to the most gracious Lord Jesus".³⁸

It was midday, and Huss's hands were tied behind his back and his neck was bound to the stake by a chain. Straw and wood were heaped around his body to his chin. The offer of life was renewed if he would recant. He refused. Huss replied to the following statements before he died in the flames:

God is my witness that the evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached save with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. In the truth of the gospel I have written, taught, and preached; to-day I will gladly die.³⁹

³⁸Workman. Ibid. p. 331.

³⁹Ibid. 332

They heaped straw and wood around him and poured pitch upon it.

When the flames were lighted, he sang twice with a loud voice:

'Christ, Thou Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me.' When he began the third clause: "Who was conceived of the Virgin Mary", the wind blew the flames in his face. So, as he was praying, moving his lips and head, he died in the Lord.⁴⁰

While John Huss was being burned at the stake, the Council was going on with the transaction of business as if the burning was a common event. Three weeks later, the Council announced that it had done nothing more pleasing to God than to punish the Bohemian heretic.

John Huss had struck at the foundations of the hierarchial system. His concept of the Church, which he drew from Wyclif, contained the kernel of an entirely new system of religious authority. He made the Scriptures the final source of appeal, and exalted the authority of the conscience above the Pope, Council and canon law as an interpreter of truth. He carried out these views in practice by continuing to preach in spite of repeated sentences of excommunication, and attacking the Pope's right to call a Crusade. If the Church by the company of the elect, as Huss maintained, then God rules in His people and they are sovereign. In starting out for Constance, Huss knew well the punishment appointed for heretics. The amazing thing is that he thought that he could clear himself by a public address to the Council.

As for the safe conduct promised by King Sigismund, the King did not keep his word. He acted deceitfully throughout the entire trial. In a very real sense John Huss was a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation to come.

⁴⁰Ibid. p. 332.

It was true, the prophecy was wrongly ascribed to him, "Today you roast a goose - John Huss - but a hundred years from now a swan will arise from my ashes which you shall not roast."⁴¹

Luther was moved by Huss's case, and at Leipzig, Luther said that councils may err, as was done in putting Huss to death at Constance. Luther praised John Huss in the following statement:

In his edition of Huss's letters, printed in 1537, Luther praised Huss's patience and humility under every indignity and his courage before an imposing assembly as a lamb in the midst of wolves and lions. If such a man, he wrote, 'is to be regarded as a heretic, then no person under the sun can be looked upon as a true Christian'.⁴²

Jerome of Prague, Associate of John Huss

Jerome, the faithful friend of John Huss, now imprisoned, in a moment of terror, recanted before the Council the teachings of his friend. Remaining in prison, he gradually regained his courage and asked for a hearing. After a long delay he was led before the Council. Instead of allowing him to speak, the Council had him answer charges of heresy. Jerome said that he made a mistake in recanting, and that John Wyclif and John Huss were correct in their views of the Scriptures. He protested that great injury had been done to Huss who had been promised a passage of safe conduct which had been violated. Jerome was again sent to prison.

On May 30, 1415, Jerome was led to the cathedral. The bishop preached a sermon calling the Council to punish the prisoner.⁴³

Jerome mounted a bench and made a defence:

'What iniquity is this, that I, who have been kept in a foul prison for 340 days, without means of preparing my defence, while my adversaries have always your ears, am now

⁴¹Schaff. Ibid. p. 386.

⁴²Ibid. p. 387

⁴³Schaff. Vol. VI. Ibid. p. 389.

refused an hour to defend myself? Your minds are prejudiced against me as a heretic; you judged me to be wicked before you had any means of knowing what manner of man I was. And yet you are men, not gods; mortals, not eternal; you are liable to error. The more you claim to be held as lights of the world, the more careful you ought to be to prove your justice to all men. I, whose cause you judge, am of no consequence, nor do I speak for myself, for death comes to all; but I would not have so many wise men do an unjust act, which will do more harm by the precedent it gives than by the punishment it inflicts.⁴⁴

The charges were read one by one by the Council to Jerome, and he answered each one without retraction. He was allowed to speak freely. He began to recall from history the persecution of the philosophers from Socrates to Boethius. Then he turned to examples in the Bible; the Jews, Moses, Joseph, Daniel, Susanna, Stephen and others who were put to death by the priests. He pleaded with his enemies not to corrupt the faith, but be open to the truth. He claimed that he was not guilty. He commented that John Huss was a just and holy man, whom they had condemned by burning him to death. He said that John Huss exposed the sins of the Pope, clergy and bishops. Jerome further commented that the wealth of the Church should be spent on the poor, on helping strangers and on buildings for other churches to serve the community. He continued his speech, that it is wrong to spend the Church's money on harlots, banquets, horses, hunting dogs, splendid robes and other things that were unworthy of the religion of Jesus Christ.

He said that he never grieved so much over recanting the doctrines of Wyclif and Huss. He maintained that the bread becomes the real body and the wine the real blood of Christ on the Altar, and in all other matters he agreed with Wyclif and Huss, who were holy, just and good men.

⁴⁴Durant. Vol. VI. op. cit. p. 167.

Sentence was at once pronounced against Jerome as a withered and dry shoot no longer abiding in the vine. A tall paper crown with red painted devils was then brought out and placed on his head.

When Jerome saw it, he threw his cap among the prelates and clasped it, saying: "My Lord Jesus Christ, when about to die for me, wore a crown of thorns on His head. I will gladly bear this for His dear love."⁴⁵

Jerome chanted the creed and litany, took off his clothes, knelt down and clasped the stake to which he should be bound, and prayed. He was then tied to the stake, with wood and straw piled around him. He began to sing a hymn. The executioner prepared to light the fire behind his back so that he might not see it. "Come in the front", he said, "and light it before my face. If I had feared death, I should never have come hither."⁴⁶

When he had finished chanting the hymn, "Salva Festa Dies", "My Beloved Children" he said, speaking to the crowd in German, "as I have chanted, so I believe."⁴⁷

The Bohemian Revolution

The news of John Huss's death reached Bohemia and aroused a national revolt. Five hundred leading Czechs signed a document that Huss was a good and upright Catholic, and they denounced his execution as an insult to his country. They further stated that they would fight to the last drop of their blood to defend the doctrines of Christ against man-made decrees; that they would only obey papal orders that agreed with Scripture. The faculty of the University of Prague praised John Huss and Jerome of Prague as martyrs.

⁴⁵Workman. Ibid. p. 342.

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 343.

⁴⁷Ibid. p. 343.

The University of Prague and the nobles led by Queen Sophia, adopted lay communion in both kinds as a command of Christ, and the chalice became the symbol of the "Utraquist" revolt. The followers of Huss formulated the "Four Articles of Prague" as their basic demands: that the Eucharist should be given in wine as well as bread; that ecclesiastical simony should be promptly punished; that the Word of God should be preached without hindrance as the sole standard of religious truth and practice; and that an end should be made in the ownership of extensive material possessions by priests or monks. They rejected the veneration of relics, capital punishment, purgatory and masses for the dead. All elements of the Protestant Reformation were present in this Hussite revolt.

In the town of Tabor another party of Hussites formed, who held that real Christianity required a communistic organization of life.

Two Hussite parties existed: the Calistines who later reunited with the Roman Catholic Church, and the Taborites who were defeated in the battle of Prague.⁴⁸

Summary

John Huss (1369-1415) was a professor at the University of Prague; he was a follower of John Wyclif and was at the head of a reform movement in Bohemia. He was an eloquent preacher and occupied the most influential pulpit in Prague, Bethlehem Chapel. After 1409, he became the head of the national Bohemian party in the University. The whole nation rallied around him in the cause of Church reform. Huss was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Prague, and then by the Pope. He was summoned before the Council of Constance where he was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake. The

⁴⁸Durant, Vol. VI. Ibid. pp. 167-174.

Emperor Sigismund had promised him safe conduct to and from the Council but failed to keep his promise. Likewise his colleague, Jerome of Prague, was burned at the stake. This event gave rise to the Bohemian revolt. The Hussites were divided into two parties, the Calixtines and the Taborites. The Calixtines were encouraged to join with the Roman Catholic Church, and they did. The Taborites were defeated in the battle of Prague.

GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

Girolamo Savonarola was born in Ferrara on September 21, 1452, two years after the accession to power of Borso d'Este, a natural son of Niccolo III.⁴⁹

He was the third of seven children. His parents wanted him to study medicine, the same profession as his grandfather. At school he found the study of theology to be more absorbing than anatomy, and solitude with books more pleasant than the sports of youth. At school he was disappointed with the discipline, and states:

'To be considered a man here', he wrote, 'you must defile your mouth with the most filthy, brutal, and tremendous blasphemies.... If you study philosophy and the good arts you are considered a dreamer; if you live chastely and modestly, a fool; if you are pious, a hypocrite; if you believe in God, an imbecile.'⁵⁰

He left the University and returned home by a deepening impression of the corruption of society and disappointment at the refusal of the family of Strozzi, living at Ferrara, to give him their daughter in marriage.

⁴⁹Piero Misciatteli, Savonarola. New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1930. p. 1.

⁵⁰Durant, Vol. V. op.cit. p. 144.

He became self conscious, fretted over the thought of hell and sinfulness of men; his earliest known composition was a poem denouncing the vices of Italy, including the popes, and pledging himself to reform his country and his Church. He passed long hours in prayer, and fasted so earnestly that his parents mourned his emaciation. In 1474, he was stirred to even severer piety by the Lenten sermons of Fra Michele, and he rejoiced to see many Ferrarese bringing masks, false hair, playing cards, unseemly pictures, and other worldly apparatus to fling them upon a burning fire in the market place.⁵¹

Decision for the Priesthood

While at Faenza Savonarola went to hear a certain Augustine Friar preach, who so strongly impressed him that the sermons changed the course of his life. He later told friends that one word the friar preached convinced him that God was calling him to the ministry. He left Faenza, returned home and stayed for a year. During that time he decided to leave home for the monastery to become a monk. He grieved above everything to give pain to his dear mother who loved him and would have him always with her. A whole year passed before he could bring himself to tell her that he had decided to take the final step to leave home for the cloister.

Savonarola left his father's house and started on his journey to Bologna. On arriving in the city he went to the monastery of the Dominicans where he asked to see the superior. He then begged to be allowed to enter the Order, even in the most humble capacity, and his request was immediately granted. When alone in his cell his first thought was to write his father a letter explaining why he had left home: "Bologna, April, 25th. 1475. My honoured Father, I am sure you must be grieving over my departure, and especially because I left without saying anything about it to you."⁵²

He continued his letter by explaining why he had left home to become

⁵¹Ibid. p. 144.

⁵²Misciateli, Ibid. p. 19.

a priest; he wanted to escape the corruption of the environment of the world by entering the monastery and cloister; he desired to have a closer walk with God.

'My honoured father, now answer me: Is it not a virtue if a man flees the iniquity and wickedness of this poor world, so that he may live as a rational being, and be not as a beast among the swine? And besides, would it not be the basest ingratitude, having prayed to God to show me the right path... and not to walk in it?'⁵³

Savonarola, continued his letter explaining to his father, that it was not an easy decision to leave home and become a monk. He asked that his father comfort his mother and cease grieving about his departure.

'But I still feel that I am just blood and flesh like yourselves, and the senses fight against reason. I am in a continual conflict, and the devil jumps upon me to tempt me. All of this I have to endure in addition to my thoughts for you.'⁵⁴

He was now determined that nothing would come between him and his God. He lived with only the bare necessities of life in his cell, clean and simple, spending many hours in study, meditation and prayer; he also did some writing.

Ministry in Ferrara

The superiors were so impressed by Savonarola's goodness and intelligence that they made him an instructor to the novices. To this task he devoted himself wholeheartedly. He demonstrated gifts of oratory and teaching. His superiors then sent him to preach in his native city of Ferrara seven years after his departure from home.

He returned to his home city with mixed emotions only to find it had changed very little in habits and customs. There were many rumours of

⁵³Ibid. p. 20.

⁵⁴Ibid. p. 36.

war in the city. Savonarola did his duty and avoided his most intimate friends and visited his parents as seldom as possible, for he was afraid his natural affections were still strong and would tempt him to domestic ties.

Having completed his mission, he was sent by his superiors to Florence, to the Monastery of San Marco. On his journey to San Marco he was traveling in a boat with thirteen soldiers who were rough and abusive, spending their time gambling, and cursing. Savonarola preached Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection to the soldiers. Eleven knelt down, repented, acknowledged their sins and asked for pardon. This harvest of souls encouraged Savonarola in the ministry and work of the Lord.

Ministry in Florence

When Savonarola arrived in Florence, Lorenzo dei Medici was governing the city with political shrewdness, being a corrupt man in his dealings with the people.

The Monastery of San Marco in Florence was now under the charge of Savonarola. Here he continued to live a simple life and he established many charitable institutions in Florence. The people so respected him that as he walked the streets they would kneel in honour of his saintly character.

He felt a deep need of religious reform in Church and State. Art and daily life were becoming more and more corrupt; people were turning from the biblical truths to pagan immorality as a way of life.

The philosophers praised the teachings of the Greeks and the Romans. The poets revived the corrupting verses of Horace, Propertius and Ovid; the artists profaned religious scenes in their paintings and went so far as to portray in the pictures of the Virgin Mary and most of the venerated saints the features of notorious courtesans and their particular mistresses.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Misciateli, Ibid. p. 36.

Savonarola preached against these vanities of his day:

'Carnal and corrupt men have their intellect darkened and clouded, for as their whole being is continually absorbed in the pleasures of the senses they are not able to understand intellectual things, and they become enemies of all learning and art.'⁵⁶

The city of Florence owed the preservation of the most valuable books collected by the Medici to Savonarola. After the expulsion of the Medici family the library was to be sold and dispersed. Savonarola, then Prior of San Marco, acquired it for the Monastery so that the public might use it. On this occasion his love for ancient wisdom was so great, that in order to secure this famous library he not only spent all the money possessed by the Monastery, but even mortgaged its future income for a thousand florins.

Savonarola's sermons in Florence were like the flashes and the reverberations of thunder.⁵⁷ He preached with vivid descriptions of paganism, corruption and immorality of their neighbors. His preaching also lifted the peoples' souls to repentance and hope, and caused them to renew their faith in the truths of the Bible and to trust God.

Savonarola also preached against the insincerity of the clergy:

In these days, prelates and preachers are chained to the earth by the love of earthly things. The care of souls is no longer their concern. They are content with their receipt of revenue. The preachers preach to please princes and to be praised by them. They have done worse. They have not only destroyed the Church of God, they have built up a new Church after their own pattern. Go to Rome and see! In the mansions of the great prelates there is no concern save for poetry and the oratorical art. Go thither and see! Thou shall find them all with the books of the humanities in their hands and telling one another that they can guide mens' souls by means of Virgil, Horace and Cicero... The prelates of former days had fewer gold mitres and chalices and what few they possessed were broken up and given to relieve the needs of the poor. But our prelates, for the sake of obtaining chalices, will

⁵⁶Ibid. p. 37.

⁵⁷Schaff. Vol. VI. Ibid. p. 687.

rob the poor of their sole means of support. Dost thou not know what I would tell thee! What doest thou, O Lord! Arise, and come to deliver thy Church from the hands of devils, from the hands of tyrants, from the hands of iniquitous prelates.⁵⁸

He insisted on the authority of Scripture. "I preach the regeneration of the Church," he said, "taking the Scriptures as my sole guide."⁵⁹ He expressed his concept of the office committed to him, when he said, "The Lord has put me here and has said to me, 'I have placed thee as a watchman in the centre of Italy... that thou mayest hear my words and announce them.' Ezekiel 3:17."⁶⁰

The chief theme of Savonarola's sermons was the purifying and renewing of the Church, and the reconstruction of the whole of society, which had fallen into a frightful state of corruption. He had the gift of prophecy and predicted many events that came to pass:

While possessed by this spirit of prophecy he predicted the imminent death of Innocent VIII, of Lorenzo dei Medici, and of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who was not only young but also in excellent health. All these predictions were fulfilled. Then he announced the expedition of Charles VIII into Italy; the change in the State of Florence, and so many other events, as Landucci says in his diary: 'Fra Girolamo was believed by everybody to be a prophet and a holy man'.⁶¹

Savonarola's enemies were trying to poison the minds of the people against him.

He wrote "The Triumph of the Cross" and "Compendium of Philosophy, of Ethics and of Logic".⁶² He claimed that "truth is always a part of justice". He continued to preach to large crowds of people who came to listen to him preach on judgment, repentance and righteousness.

⁵⁸Schaff. op. cit. p. 688.

⁵⁹Ibid. p. 689.

⁶⁰Ibid. p. 689.

⁶¹Misciateli. p. 54.

⁶²Ibid. pp. 55, 56.

The Turn of Sentiment against Savonarola

During the Lenten season of 1491, Savonarola preached to large crowds. He was now considered the spiritual head of Florence. His strong language in preaching against the princes and priests caused much annoyance to Lorenzo dei Medici, who sent five prominent citizens to persuade Savonarola to moderate his language and quit preaching so strongly. He gave the following reply to the delegation sent to him: "Go, tell Lorenzo dei Medici that although he is a Florintine and the first in the city, and I am only a stranger and a poor friar -- yet he will depart, but I shall remain."⁶³

Lorenzo dei Medici then tried to win Savonarola with flattery and kindness and to bend him to his will by sending rich gifts, but the Friar could not be bought. He replied in a sermon,

'the faithful dog never stops his barking while defending his master's house, and even if a thief comes, and while trying to deceive the guardian throws him a bone, the dog puts it on one side and does not cease to bark and to bite the thief.'⁶⁴

Lorenzo, now finding that neither flattery nor kindness could win Savonarola to his side, determined to try another way which he hoped would destroy the growing authority and influence of the Prior over the Florentines.

Lorenzo befriended Fra Mariano, who hated Savonarola with deep hatred and who was willing to denounce his rival. He preached a sermon with such bitterness that he defeated his purpose and this caused him to lose some of his followers to Savonarola.

As a result of Savonarola's preaching in Florence the city was changed for a time. Its carnivals, balls, and festivities were abolished;

⁶³Ibid. p. 57.

⁶⁴Ibid. p. 59.

its masquerades and unholy diversions ceased; and the people sought the Lord with tears; they exalted Christ as king; they filled the churches; and the city of Florence became to all outward view more nearly a city of God than had been the case of any other city.

Lorenzo was dying and he sent for Savonarola to administer the rites of absolution and extreme unction of the Roman Catholic Church. The dying man wanted to confess his sins and seek forgiveness. Savonarola then proceeded to present three conditions on which Lorenzo's absolution depended. The first was a strong faith in God's mercy, the second was to restore ill gotten wealth; to this the dying Lorenzo consented. The third was to give Florence back her liberties. To this Lorenzo made no response but turned his face to the wall and died.

Savonarola had prophesied that the French King, Charles VIII, would invade Florence. "He will come across the Alps against Italy like Cyrus." He further exclaimed, "Behold the sword has come upon you, behold these hosts are led of the Lord! O Florence... it is time to shed floods of tears for thy sins."⁶⁵

Florence listened to Savonarola; surrendered to the invading King and agreed to pay two hundred thousand florins. Savonarola's speech to Charles VIII caused him to reduce the sum to one hundred and twenty florins. Now Savonarola was involved in politics and he wished to see the city of Florence become a theocracy with Christ at the head. He had great influence and his advice was taken into account. Laws were passed to prevent bloodshed in the city. He pronounced, from the pulpit, the virtue and foundation of a sound government, and democracy as its form.

⁶⁵Schaff, Vol. VI. op. cit. p. 695.

Pope Alexander VI summoned Savonarola to Rome to answer charges in July of 1495.⁶⁶ Savonarola declined the pontiff's summons on grounds of ill health and the dangers that would beset him on the way. His enemies were informing the Pope about him. He was accused of getting involved in politics and was given a ban to stop preaching.

For five months Savonarola stayed in his convent, but on February 17, 1496, he ascended the pulpit and preached Lenten sermons in which he denounced the Pope, corruption of the papacy and its involvement in immorality and simony.⁶⁷ The Pope attempted to bribe Savonarola, offering him a red hat that would make him a cardinal. He refused the offer.

Due to unrest and murder in the city, the Signory had Savonarola and two other monks, Silvestro and Domenico, arrested. The Pope urged that the three monks be sent to Rome for trial but the Signory refused. They resolved that Savonarola should die, for as long as he lived his party would live. Only his death would heal the strife and factions in the city.

The three friars were tortured, hanged and burned to death. People knelt, cried and prayed as they saw the three saints of God being put to death by a corrupt Church and a crooked state. Today a plaque in the pavement marks the site of the most famous crime in Florentine history.

Savonarola was one of the most noteworthy figures that Italy ever produced. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants respect this great man of holiness and preacher of righteousness. He was a prophet in his day. He denounced the sins of the day and made no compromise with flattery or gifts to buy him. He suffered for the cause of righteousness. He was a Protestant

⁶⁶Ibid. p. 696.

⁶⁷Durant, Vol. V. op. cit. p. 159.

before Luther, calling for a reform of the Church. Luther called him a saint.

Savonarola tried to make men righteous, honest, good and just.

Summary

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498 A.D.) chose to study theology instead of medicine. He entered the Dominican Monastery at Bologna where he was trained for a period of seven years. He excelled in studies, teaching and preaching. He was assigned to preach in his home city of Ferrara. He was then transferred to Florence to be the Prior of San Marco Monastery. On his journey he preached to thirteen pagan soldiers, and eleven of them made decisions to become Christians.

On his arrival at Florence the people recognized Savonarola to be a man of God who possessed a saintly character. His preaching was prophetic; he denounced the sins of the day, the prelates and priests for dishonesty and immorality. He even denounced the corrupt papacy and the Pope who loved material gain and had no interest in spiritual things.

He bought and preserved the most valuable books of Medici. He insisted on the authority of the Scriptures, and stressed that the Church needed purifying and renewing. He wrote "The Triumph of the Cross" and "Compendium of Philosophy, of Ethics and of Logic." He claimed that truth is always a part of justice.

Sentiment turned against Savonarola. He was persecuted by Lorenzo dei Medici, who later tried to bribe him, but failed and then became a follower of Savonarola.

Savonarola prophesied the death of many prominent men which prophecies came to pass. He also prophesied the invasion of Italy by the King of France, Charles VIII. This also came to pass. Savonarola became involved in politics for a short time but returned to preaching. He was summoned by

Pope Alexander VI to Rome to answer charges. Savonarola refused to go, instead he denounced the corruption of the papacy. The Signory arrested him with two friars and put them to torture and death by hanging and by burning. He died a saint.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

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In the twelfth century the Cistercian movement was started by Robert, a Benedictine monk. The movement attracted many followers and became popular under the leadership of Bernard of Clairvaux, who won many converts by his preaching. He did much to promote revival in the Church and became active in reforming and elevating the quality of the Church.

The Friars represented another twelfth century reforming influence in the Church. Instead of remaining in the monasteries they went out to preach and minister to the spiritual needs of the people.

The order of the Franciscan Friars was founded by St. Francis of Assisi. He drew up a rule to govern the lives of the monks. This rule involved poverty, chastity and obedience, but obedience to the papacy was emphasized. This movement later influenced Martin Luther in the fifteenth century.

The order of the Dominican Friars was started by a Spanish noble named Dominic. The followers of this order stressed education, and to win men by reasoning with them. Girolamo Savonarola, the Florentine reformer, belonged to this order. The Friars strengthened religion among the people, and provided many fine missionaries to all parts of the known world. They made efforts to purify the Church to a higher spiritual level.

The Albigenses and the Waldenses sought to return to the purer form of religion which they saw in the New Testament.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were marked by movements of internal and external reforms in the life of the Church.

From the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries, the papal headquarters was located in Avignon, France, and this was called the "Babylonian Captivity" of the Church. The "Papal Schism" also took place during this period. The papacy was corrupt, and many voices were crying out for reform in the Church.

John Wyclif (1324-1384) was an English professor at Oxford University in England. He was a preacher, lecturer, patriot, writer and critic. He was called the "Morning Star of the Reformation". He translated the Bible into English in 1382. He organized groups of lay preachers who were called the "Lollards". They grew in number and were later persecuted by Parliament; they persisted until the time of the Protestant Reformation.

John Huss (1369-1415) was a professor at the University of Prague. He was a follower of John Wyclif, and was at the head of the reform movement in Bohemia. He was influential in Church reforms; was condemned by the Council of Constance as a heretic and was burned at the stake. His colleague, Jerome of Prague, was also condemned by the same Council and was also burned at the stake. The followers of John Huss, the Hussites, gave rise to the Bohemian revolt. They were divided into two parties, the Calixtines, who later joined the Catholic Church, and the Taborites who believed in a socialist form of life. John Huss influenced the life of Martin Luther as did John Wyclif.

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) chose to study theology instead of medicine. He joined the Dominican Order and became an outstanding teacher, leader, preacher and reformer. He denounced the papacy, the clergy and prelates for the corruption of society. He stressed the Bible to be the authority of faith. Sentiment turned against him and he was persecuted and finally executed by hanging and burning. Martin Luther called Savonarola a saint.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Church in its history influenced the life of the state and the history of the world in general. The Church has been a source of spiritual strength and inspiration, in particular when it is functioning as the Church and not as a government in charge of secular authority. The Church needed reform because of the following reasons.

1. The Word of God was replaced by the word of man.
2. The Church tried to function in the secular affairs of the state.
3. The Church became highly centralized and organized.
4. The fight for high office in the Church, using carnal means.
5. The Church became rich and self-sufficient in luxury and ease.
6. The cooling off of spiritual fervor and zeal.
7. The missionary function of the Church became stagnated.
8. The spiritual life of the Church became secularized.
9. Immorality and vice were prevalent as a part of life.
10. The Church was influenced and led by the world.
11. The Church became a means of oppression instead of freedom.
12. The Church became an instrument of persecution and murder of the just.

The following steps were taken to reform the Church:

1. The Word of God was stressed as the final authority for faith and practice.
2. The individual freedom of the believer was emphasized to serve God according to Scripture.
3. The Word of God was made available to the people by preaching and in writing.
4. The Reformers preached that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and that the Church is subject to Him.

5. The missionary enterprise became the means for local and international evangelism.
6. Each Church member is a priest and a missionary of Jesus Christ.
7. Care and concern for the needy was practised.
8. Education for all was stressed as a tool for Church missions.
9. Simplicity and industry was stressed as a mark of Christian character.
10. Missions became the life blood of the Church.
11. Persecution was welcomed as a sign of opposition to true Christianity.
12. The love of friends and enemies denotes the true Christian.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The work of the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation caused general upheaval in the life of the people of Western Europe which was partially reconstructed on a different basis and the way was prepared for a transition from the medieval to a modern order of society. Like all great revolutions, it was a cataclysmic outcome of the joint working of many forces through long periods of time. A thorough study of the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation should therefore begin with an examination of those influences. Though they were complicated and interwoven, for purposes of examination they may be distinguished as social, economic, political, intellectual, moral and religious.

Personal Influences

Preeminent among many great forerunners of the Reformation in the Church were Pope Gregory VII, Peter Waldo, John Wyclif, John Huss, Jerome of Prague and Girolamo Savonarola, fellow workers and martyrs. The work of these men had a profound effect on the social and political life of England and Central Europe.

Social Influences and Economic Changes

The social influences and economic changes should be studied in close relationship: the effects of the Crusades on trade and commerce, the growth of cities and city government, the formation of trading guilds and secret societies, the breakdown of feudalism, the decrease of serfdom, the ambitions of the peasantry, the appearance of the free wage earner, the spirit of enterprise, invention, the increase and centralization of wealth, the mingling of people through travel, the dissemination of knowledge among common people by means of the printing press, the growing democratic feeling, the Black Death and millenarianism. The subject cannot be studied thoroughly in this paper, for many historians and writers have referred to these conditions at some length.

Political Developments

The political developments expressed themselves in new groupings and differentiation of the people after the Empire of Charlemagne; new centers of power with a decline of feudalism; the community of race, language, sentiment, and geographical boundaries favoring the establishment of new nations with kings at their heads; opposition to the claims of the German imperial authorities and the Catholic Church; movements toward national control of territorial Churches; the national ambitions of the English, French and Spanish achieved success, while the national spirit of parts of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Scandinavia pressed for recognition in vain for the time. Through these developments the disintegration of the Empire and of the Church allied with it was threatened.

Intellectual Development and Unrest

The intellectual development was characterized by the outburst of new ideas and of a spirit of revolt against traditional science, philosophy,

and religious beliefs in general. The intellectual development followed the Crusades as the life of the East and West contended and mingled. Arabian and Aristotelian philosophy, Greek literature in general, Roman law, the recovery of a knowledge of the Scriptures and their translation into the vernacular of the people created a new mental atmosphere. Modern science was born with Roger Bacon. Universities were founded and swarmed with students, not all of them by any means for the priesthood. Leadership was being transferred from the priests to the laity, asceticism was being discounted, skepticism was extending to the Church's dogmas, knowledge of truth was coming to be esteemed above the possession of sacraments.

Moral and Religious Growth

The new age manifested its character preeminently in a protest against conventional moral standards, practices and religious beliefs. All of the other currents of opposition to the ancient institutions found their focus in the moral - religious revolt that was constantly growing in force. The Church's own training of the conscience of the individual aroused many to a sense of abhorrence of its practice of compounding moral felonies and of its paganism. The shock of Mohammedanism is to be taken into account here. More important is the persistence of the earlier dissent that the Inquisition had failed to uproot. Men were finding it possible to live the higher life without priests or the Church. Faith and pure goodness were displacing trust in ecclesiastical works.

Results of Christian Influence

In the providence of God the Middle Ages played an important part in the history of the world; for during this time most of pagan Europe was converted to Christianity. Since Christianity is the greatest civilizing force in history, it taught Europe lessons on government, agriculture and

industry. Cities, schools, farms, bridges, factories and universities were built after the missionary had led the way and taught the lessons.

The monks were copyists and editors of the time and did their work most faithfully. Students of the Middle Ages have furnished us with many manuscript editions of the Greek and Latin classics, of the Christian Fathers, and of the Holy Scriptures.

The Middle Ages left many problems unsolved in the life of the Church. It also did much good and much evil.

- (1) It left unsolved the restoration of liberty, that is freedom of conscience of the individual in regard to state and Church.
- (2) It left unsolved the restoration of love, left for the Church of today.
- (3) It left unsolved the restoration of the Bible - for the Church came with its dogmas between the Christian and the Scriptures.
- (4) It left unsolved the restoration of Christ, for many cults and the priests tried to take the place of Christ.

The unwillingness of the Medieval Roman Catholic Church to accept reforms suggested by sincere reformers such as John Wyclif, John Huss, Jerome of Prague and Girolamo Savonarola, the leaders of the reforming councils and the Humanists; the emergence of nation states which opposed the papal claim to have universal power; and the rise of a middle class which disliked the drain of wealth to Rome - all these combined to make the Protestant Reformation a certainty.

Principles of the Reformers

The reformers started with the practical question, how can the troubled conscience find pardon and peace, and become sure of personal salvation.

They retained, from the Roman Catholic system, all of the objective doctrines of Christianity concerning the Trinity and the divine human

character and work of Christ, in fact all the articles of faith contained in the Apostles Creed and the ecumenical creeds of the Early Church. They applied the doctrines of justification of the sinner before God, the character of faith, good works, the rights of conscience, the rule of faith and the meaning and number of the sacraments. They taught that the believer can have direct relationship to Christ, setting aside the saintly mediation and intercession. They taught that the believer can go directly to the Word of God for instruction, and to the throne of grace for devotions. The reformers taught the supreme authority of the Scriptures, the abundant grace of Christ, and the general priesthood of the believers.

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