

To the one who has suffered much
anguish and inattention during
the writing of this study, it is
dedicated -- to my wife, Louise.

**BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY**
HATFIELD, PA. ~~1940~~

24290

T 4
N 9
1883

THE USE OF SCRIPTURE AS A BASIS FOR AUTHORITY
IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY
ENGLISH REFORMATION

By
Ellis Herbert Nygren
A.B., Taylor University

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N.Y.
January, 1954

**BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY**
HATFIELD, PA.

24296

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Gift of the Author

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	viii
A. The Problem Stated and Justified	viii
B. Delimitation of the Study and Method of Procedure	ix
C. Sources of Data	x
 I. JOHN WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLARD MOVEMENT AS THE PRECURSORS TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY REFORMATION	1
A. Introduction	1
B. Early Life of Wycliffe Showing the Rise of His Convictions	2
1. As Student	2
2. As Potential Reformer	2
C. The Work of Wycliffe Showing the Rise of His Con- ception of the Authority of the Scripture.	3
1. As Preacher	3
a. On Doctrinal Questions	3
b. On Political Questions	4
2. As Writer of Tracts	6
a. His View of the Absolute Supremacy and Inspiration of the Bible	6
b. The Relation of this View to Existing Traditions	10
c. The Relation of this View to His Doctrinal Positions	10
d. His Apologetic for the View	12
3. As Translator of the Scripture into the "Vulgar" Tongue	14
a. The Existing Conception of the Scripture.	14
b. The Basis for Wycliffe's Translation.	15
c. Wycliffe's Translation.	16
d. The Effect of Wycliffe's Translation.	16
4. As the Organizer of a Movement	18
5. Summary of the Work of John Wycliffe	18
D. The Work of the "Pore Priests" in Continuing the Work of John Wycliffe	20
1. The Organization of the "Pore Priests"	20
a. Ordained Clergymen	20
b. The Laymen	21

32482

May 1954

Chapter	Page
2. The Labor of the "Pore Priests" or "Evangelical Men"	21
a. Their Itineracy	21
b. Their Biblical Preaching	21
c. The Original Purpose to Supplement the Church	22
3. The Effect of the Work of the "Pore Preachers"	22
a. On the People as a Whole.	22
b. On the Organized Church of the Day.	23
4. John Wycliffe's Support of His "Pore Priests".	24
a. Charges Against Them Answered	24
b. Tracts for Their Use Prepared	24
5. Summary of the Work of the "Pore "Priests"	25
E. The Lollard Movement as a Continuation of the Work of John Wycliffe and the "Pore Preachers".	26
1. The Distinction of the Lollards as Followers of Wycliffe	26
a. Two Types of Classification	26
b. The Second Group as an Organization	26
2. The Testimony of Contemporaries Regarding its Organization.	27
3. The Teachings of the Lollards	28
a. Based on the Scripture	28
b. The Movement Expanded by the Traveling Ministry.	29
4. Typical Work of Early Lollards in Setting Forth Scriptural Authority.	30
a. Sir John Oldcastle	30
b. Richard Wicke, A Parish Priest	32
5. The Decline of Lollardy	33
a. Inner Deterioration	33
(1) A Lack of Real Leadership	33
(2) A Variety of Positions Regarding Scriptural Interpretation	34
b. Pressure from the Church	34
(1) Writers Against the Lollards.	34
(a) Thomas of Walden	34
(b) Bishop Reginald Pecock	36
(2) Violence Against the Lollards	36
6. Summary of the Lollard Movement	38
F. Summary	38

Chapter	Page
II. THE OXFORD REFORMATION: AN ATTEMPT FOR REFORMATION WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE CHURCH	41
A. Introduction	41
B. The Basis for the Movement.	42
1. Corruption in the Church	42
2. Neglect of the Scriptures by the Clergy.	42
C. The Movement as Espoused by Its Greatest Exponents. . .	43
1. John Colet	44
a. As Student	44
b. As Teacher of Scripture	45
c. As Interpreter of Scripture	46
d. As Advocate of Scriptural Authority	49
e. As Founder of St. Paul's	50
f. Summary of Colet's Influence and Contribution	51
2. Desiderius Erasmus	52
a. As Reformer Within the Church	52
b. As Interpreter of Biblical Authority.	54
(1) Infallibility of the Church and Pope	
Repudiated	54
(2) Human Element in the Scripture Allowed.	55
(3) His Concept of Authority Not Dogmatic .	56
(4) His Desire that All Should Read the	
Scripture for Themselves.	57
c. As Translator of New Testament Into Greek . .	58
d. Summary of Erasmus' Influence and Contribu-	
tions	59
3. Sir Thomas More	59
a. As Opponent of the Lollards	59
b. As Student	60
c. As Interpreter of the Authority of the	
Scripture	61
d. Summary of More's Influence and Contributions	62
D. Summary	62
III. THE CAMBRIDGE REFORMATION: THE RISE OF PROTESTANTISM TO- GETHER WITH THE ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH	65
A. Introduction	65
B. The Basis for Authority Made Available by Translation of the Scripture	66

Chapter	Page
1. The Work of William Tyndale	66
a. His Early Life	66
b. His Translation of the Bible	67
(1) The Attack Upon Current Conditions Which Led to Translation	67
(2) The Effect of the Translation	69
c. His Teachings Concerning the Authority of Scripture	70
(1) Used to Refute Error	70
(2) Used to Establish Truth.	71
(3) Used As a Valid Historical Record.	72
d. His Persecution	72
2. The Work of Miles Coverdale.	73
a. His Early Life	73
b. His Translation of the Bible.	74
c. His Teachings Concerning Authority of Scripture	76
d. His Persecution	78
C. Sermonic Exposition Used to Propagate the Authority of the Scripture.	78
1. The Work of Thomas Bilney	79
a. His Early Days and Conversion Through the Scripture	79
b. His Work in Propagating this New Faith.	80
c. His Death at the Stake	81
2. The Work of Hugh Latimer	81
a. His Early Life and Conversion	81
b. His Preaching Using the Authority of Scripture	82
(1) Denouncing the Evils of the Church	82
(2) Positive Teachings from Scripture	83
c. His Trial and Death	84
3. The Work of Nicholas Ridley	85
a. His Early Life and Rise to Prominence	85
b. His Attacks on the Church Based on Scriptural Authority	85
c. His Death at the Stake	87
D. Interpretation of Scriptural Authority in Doctrine by Thomas Cranmer	87
1. His Early Life	87
2. His Rise to Prominence	88
3. His Work as Archbishop of Canterbury	89
a. Advancement of the Use of the Scripture	89
b. Use of Scripture as Authority	90
(1) Attack on the Church of Rome	90
(2) Positive Teachings	91

Chapter	Page
4. His Apparent Triumph in Cause of Protest- antism	92
5. His Persecution and Death Under Queen Mary	93
E. The Consummation of the Reformation	94
F. Summary	95
CONCLUSION	98
A. Summary	98
B. Evaluation	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	105

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Stated and Justified

In a world in which rival political powers struggle for mastery over temporal things, ecclesiastical bodies have long been struggling over spiritual things, and occasionally they too have entered into the area of things temporal. Whenever one wants to assert himself and his views, he naturally wants a basis of authority by which to stand and through which to justify his assertions.

The major cleavage in Christendom today stems from two different conceptions of authority.¹ The Roman Catholic tradition has always been that "after the Sacraments, which are the unfailing instruments of divine grace and the authentic means of holiness. . . reading the Holy Scripture (is). . . the most effective means for approaching God. . ." ² In other words, the Scripture is authoritative only because it has received its authority from the Holy Church of Rome. On the other hand, traditional and historic Protestantism has negated this attempt of the Church to legislate concerning the interpretation of the Scripture, and the real core of its independent spirit has been the insistence upon the right of men to interpret for

.

1. The term "authority" as used in this paper will be understood to be defined as that which is "appealed to in support of opinions, actions, measures, etc." This definition is according to Webster.
2. The Holy Bible, The Heritage of Catholic Family Life, p. 4. (This booklet "aims to point out afresh for Catholics what the Bible is. . .") p. 2.

themselves the message of God as it comes to them through the pages of Holy Writ.

The authority of the Scripture as opposed to the authority of the Church is then the basis of the Protestant Reformation, and it will be the purpose of this study to show that this concept of Scriptural authority was crucial in the English Reformation.

B. Delimitation of the Study and Method of Procedure

The real Protestant Reformation took place concurrently on the continent of Europe and on the islands of Great Britain in the sixteenth century. The present study will deal with the growth of the belief in Scriptural authority in England, and therefore must of necessity be an historical study, attempting to use both original writings of the men who were involved in the controversy and commentaries on them by leading authorities of the past and present.

The present study must necessarily go back into the fourteenth century to get the background which leads into the sixteenth century, with its Protestant break from Roman authority. The study will then proceed from the birth of Wycliffe to the final overthrow of Romanism during and following the reign of Henry VIII. To get a complete picture, it will be necessary to go beyond the reign of Henry into the era of persecution of the Protestants by Queen Mary. Only after this attempt to destroy the infant movement was halted can one say that a Protestant England was finally established.

Although much could be included that might cast additional light upon the Reformation, the purpose of this study will be to stress

the use of the Scripture in establishing the faith of men, as opposed to the legislation of the Church.

C. Sources of Data

Some of the more significant books in the bibliography which have been used freely are for the first chapter, Workman's John Wyclif, Leckler's John Wycliffe and His English Precursors, and James Gairdner's four volume set on the Lollards and the Reformation in England. In addition, two collections of the writings of John Wycliffe have been used, which also contain some of the writings of others of his followers. These have been invaluable in getting the words of the Reformer himself. In the second chapter reference has been made to Frederic Seebohm's book, The Oxford Reformers of 1498. However, in both the second and third chapters most of the stress has been placed upon the writings of the various men referred to therein. These writings have come from two series of publications. The Parker Society's vast supply of publications have been extremely valuable in securing the statements of the various reformers. The Religious Tract Society also has a series of well-edited collections of original writings that proved especially helpful because of the editorial comments which aided in casting light upon the meanings of some of the more obscure writings. One little book which has proved to be most valuable throughout this study is a volume by Beckett entitled The English Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.

There has been no dirth of material, and the author wishes to express heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the kind assistance of the Seminary library in completing the bibliography.

CHAPTER I
JOHN WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLARD MOVEMENT
AS THE PRECURSORS
TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY REFORMATION

CHAPTER I
JOHN WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLARD MOVEMENT
AS THE PRECURSORS
TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY REFORMATION

A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to trace the rise of dependence upon the Scripture as an authoritative guide for living and for ecclesiastical polity from the days of John Wycliffe¹ and on through the period of his direct influence into the sixteenth century.

The policy of Wycliffe will be studied as it was formulated against the hierarchy, and it will be observed how his followers continued to promulgate his teaching, which became their teaching, in the face of persecution to death by the Roman Catholic authorities.

These were the days when one could barely see the dawn breaking with its light. John Wycliffe has been called the "Morning Star of the Reformation," and following his extinction, many smaller stars arose in the heavens to keep the midnight of absolute ecclesiastical authority from returning, until finally, the sun itself broke forth in the sixteenth century.

.

1. Religious Tract Society, Editors, Writings of John Wycliffe, D.D., p. 9., Footnote reads: "The name of the Reformer has been spelled in sixteen different ways. Wiclif is adopted by Lewis and Baker, and it is used in the oldest document in which the name appears -- his appointment to the embassy to the pope in 1371. Wycliffe is adopted by Vaughan, and appears to be most correct."

B. Early Life of Wycliffe Showing the Rise of His Convictions

1. As Student

John De. Wycliffe was born in Hupswell, Yorkshire. The generally accepted date has been 1324,¹ but some scholars believe that possibly it was later.² He attended Balliol College, Oxford, and became Master, receiving recognition as "the most able theologian on the faculty."³

While at the University he vehemently opposed all interference by ecclesiastical authorities, especially that of the pope, in politics, and he protested bitterly against the wealth of the Church and its dignitaries.⁴

2. As Potential Reformer

Even in these early days, one can notice ideas of reformation forming in the mind of this brilliant young scholar. He was very firmly opposed to all forms of usurpation of power by the Church of Rome. This opposition was close to heresy in that day. He went so far as to say that the Church actually was the whole company of the elect, with Christ alone as its Head.⁵ Professor May writes:

He believed that the Scriptures were a sufficient rule of life apart from the canon law, and that every man, whether clergyman or layman, had the right to examine the Bible for himself.⁶

.

1. Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. VI, p. 315.
2. Herbert Gordon May, Our English Bible in the Making, p. 16.
3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

Leckler asserts:

. . . we have seen Wycliffe laying down the principle that in preaching, God's Word must be taught before everything else, because it is the indispensable bread of life, the seed of regeneration and conversion.¹

C. The Work of Wycliffe Showing the Rise of His Conception of the Authority of the Scripture

1. As Preacher

a. On Doctrinal Questions

Philip Schaff writes:

With the year 1378 Wycliffe's distinctive career as a doctrinal reformer opens. He had defended English rights against foreign encroachment. He now assailed, at a number of points, the theological structure the Schoolmen and the mediaeval popes had laboriously reared, and the abuses that had crept into the church. The spectacle of Christendom divided by two papal courts, each fulminating anathemas against the other, was enough to shake confidence in the divine origin of the papacy. In sermons, tracts, and larger writings, Wycliffe brought Scripture and common sense to bear.²

It was then just three years later, in 1381, that Wycliffe declared that the doctrine of the Church was not only misleading, but also unscriptural. This was the first time since the doctrine of "Transubstantiation" had been promulgated by the Fourth Lateran that any doctrine was to any degree called into question by a theological expert.³ Schaff calls to mind that at this time John Wycliffe was already developing a lower sense of values for the Sacraments. He observes that Wycliffe felt that "the preaching of the Word is a more

.

1. Gotthard Leckler, Trans. by Professor Lorimer, John Wycliffe and English Precursors, p. 202.
2. Schaff, Op. Cit., pp. 318, 319.
3. Ibid., p. 320.

precious occupation than the ministration of the sacraments."¹

He was convinced that it was the great duty of the priesthood to preach and expound the Word. His emphasis upon the Bible is demonstrated in these phrases drawn from his sermons:

Our belief of Christ's life is needful to all Christian men. And therefore men should know the gospel, for it telleth the belief of Christ.²

. . . this Word of Christ's is truth, it showeth openly that Christ is God.³

Each Word of the new law that speaketh of the virtues of Christ, and the charity of his church, should be taken according to the letter.⁴

There is little directly concerning doctrinal reformation in the sermons of Wycliffe, but the external polity of the Church was often called in question. However, one will see that whatever was mentioned, it was always taught on the basis of what the Scripture said.

b. On Political Questions

Since for Wycliffe the Bible was the ". . . source of all law, divine and human, and kings ought to study it in order to grow rightly,"⁵ he used Scriptural authority in his denunciations of the political maneuvering of the hierarchy of the day.

It was following his appointment to a commission authorized by the king to negotiate peace with France and to work with the agents of the pope regarding ecclesiastical appointments in England that he

.

1. Ibid., p. 329.

2. Writings of Wycliffe, p. 207.

3. Ibid., p. 210.

4. Ibid., p. 222.

5. James Gairdner, Lollardy and the Reformation in England, Vol. I, p. 11.

began to speak forth as a religious reformer in England. He styled the bishop of Rome as "the antiChrist, the proud, worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of clippers and cutpurses. . . (maintaining that he) has no more power in binding and loosing than any priest."¹

Wycliffe himself said, in a sermon entitled "The Priesthood of Christ":

. . . Bishops of the old law were better, and more worthy than these emperor's bishops; for they served and figured Christ by authority of God; but these emperor's bishops now serve the figure antiChrist; and their authority is taken of the fiend against Christ.²

After he became cognizant of the unethical politics within the hierarchy of the Church, he began to speak out against the obvious corruption and misuse of powers that could be easily observed. One can see that this is closely related to his doctrinal reformation tendencies as mentioned previously.³

Philip Schaff observes:

The struggles of previous centuries against the encroachment of Rome upon the temporalities of the English Church was maintained in this period. . . The evident support which the pope gave to France in her wars with England and the scandals of the Avignon residence were favorable to the crown's assertion of authority. . . Wycliffe frequently complained that the pope and cardinals were 'in league with the enemies of the English Kingdom.'⁴

Wycliffe found fault with the morals of the existing Church, and like his criticisms of the Church's interfering in politics and of its doctrinal discrepancies, he also used the Scripture as his basis

.

1. Schaff, op. cit., p. 316.
2. Writings of Wycliffe, op. cit., p. 205.
3. Ante, p. 3.
4. Schaff, op. cit., p. 309.

for authority. Schaff writes that Wycliffe believed that it was unethical and "contrary to the Scripture for ecclesiastics to hold temporal possessions."¹

One can thus recognize that, even in these early days, the authority of the Scripture began to evolve in the thinking of John Wycliffe. He began to use the Scripture as his basis for authority rather than the dogmas promulgated by the Church.

2. As Writer of Tracts

a. His View of the Absolute Supremacy and Inspiration of the Bible

During a crusade in support of Pope Urban VI against the pope of Avignon, Clement VII, Urban had promised a plenary indulgence for one year to all who would join the army.² "Wycliffe declared the crusade an expedition for worldly mastery."³ During this period, says Schaff, the most important of Wycliffe's theological treatises was written, The Triologues. He says concerning this writing:

It lays down the principle that, where the Bible and the Church do not agree, we must obey the Bible, and, where conscience and human authority are in conflict, we must follow conscience.⁴

"In these writings," says Workman, "there is a rambling but uncompromising defence of the absolute inspiration and authority of the Bible."⁵

At this point, one can hardly do better than to quote at

.

1. Ibid., p. 321.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 322.

3. Ibid., p. 322.

4. Ibid., pp. 322, 323.

5. Herbert B. Workman, John Wyclif, A Study of the English Medieval Church, Vol. II, p. 5.

length from this tract of John Wycliffe's, for it best speaks for itself.

. . . That the Holy Scriptures may be more duly estimated, every truth which is not manifest to the Christian from the simple evidence of his senses, should be deduced from the Scriptures, at least if the faithful are to place credence in it. And then the Scriptures would be held in reverence and the papal bulls superseded, as they ought to be, and then the veneration of men for the laws of the papacy, as well as for the doctrines of our modern doctors. . . would be kept within due bounds. . . In this view, those upstart doctors are to be accounted as especially worthy of all detestation, who endeavor to maintain, that Holy Writ, of all writings or sayings, is the most false, and especially the words of Christ in the gospel of John, which they think they can clearly demonstrate by their logic. In truth, of all heretical doctrines, I know of none more damnable than this, of none more fit for the purposes of antiChrist, none more hurtful to the faith of Christ.¹

In this tirade, one can see implied a two-fold emphasis. First, there is the stress on the fact that the Scripture alone is worthy of consideration as the final authority. Secondly, the Scripture, as it then stood, was to be considered as the Inspired Word of God, and man had no right to tamper with this "Holy Writ."

In another tract, entitled AntiChrist's Labour to Destroy Holy Writ, one finds this series of promulgations against the pope of Rome:

As our Lord Jesus Christ ordained by the writing of the four evangelists, to make his gospel surely known, and maintained against heretics, and men out of faith; so the devil, even Satan, devised by antiChrist and his worldly false clerks, to destroy Holy Writ, and Christian men's beliefs by four accursed ways, or false reasons. . .²

.

1. Robert Vaughan, Editor, Tracts and Treatises of John De Wycliffe, p. 129. (Italics mine)
2. Writings of Wycliffe, op. cit., p. 172.

The first accursed ground -- The Church is of more authority and credence than the gospel. . . . They would make their life and teachings to be the gospel and belief of Christian men. . . . But certainly the church might not have put away the gospels, and have accepted. . . others; for then it had done against the will of God, and against the truth of Jesus Christ, and against charity of the Holy Ghost, to put away these witnesses. . . .¹

The second wheel in this devil's wain. (Footnote, 'wagon') They bear upon Augustine that he saith thus: that he would not believe the gospel unless the church said it. . . . But he (actually) said to this intent, that unless Christ, head of the holy church and saints in heaven, and the apostles of Christ that are holy church, said and approved this gospel, he would not believe thereto. . . . Christians should stand to the death for maintaining Christ's gospel and true understanding thereof. . . .²

The third wheel of Satan's car -- No man knows which is the gospel, but by the approving and confirming of the church. . . . Jesus Christ. . . is our God and our best Master, ever ready to teach true men all things that are profitable, and needful to their souls, and this teaching may not fail, but for inability of him that should receive this teaching. . . .³

The fourth wheel of Belial's cart. . . .⁴

If men say that they believe this is the gospel of Matthew or John, they ask, why believest thou that this is the gospel? as though they would say, there is no course but that the church confirmeth and teacheth it.⁵

But Christian men take their faith of God, by his gracious gift, when he giveth it to them; knowing and understanding truths needful to save men's souls, by grace to assent in their hearts to such truths.⁶

These excerpts from this tract demonstrate in the words of Wycliffe himself his attitude toward the authority of the Church, over against the authority of the Scripture. To him, it was satan-inspired

.

1. Ibid., pp. 172-174.
2. Ibid., pp. 174, 175.
3. Ibid., p. 176.
4. Ibid., p. 176.
5. Ibid., p. 172.
6. Ibid., p. 177.

to think of the Church as being of greater authority than the "Holy Writ."

Workman summarizes his general attitude by saying that Wycliffe felt that "at every command of the pope we must enquire whether his orders are in conformity with the Bible."¹ It was for this reason, Workman declares, that Wycliffe wanted every Catholic to know the sacred Scripture. He wrote: "The life, and the teaching of Christ are the best glass, by looking into which we can discern the true believer and the heretic."² Wycliffe had now reached the place where he was not afraid to express his uncompromising attitude in writing -- the conviction that all laws of men, including those of the pope, ought to be tested by the Scripture, which is of more basic authority.

Gairdner is of the opinion that the Church was not wholly opposed to the use of the vernacular translation, but that it did not want it to be used except as a commentary. He writes:

That which made Wycliffe's translation so objectionable in the eyes of his contemporaries was not corrupt renderings or anything liable to censure in the text, but simply the fact that it was composed for the general use of the laity, who were encouraged to interpret it in their own way without reference to their spiritual directors.³

The real dispute that arose between Wycliffe and the Church developed when he insisted upon the submission to the authority and interpretation of the Scripture not merely as a rule of faith, but also as a guide for all conduct according to individual judgment, as the Spirit gave understanding.

.

1. Workman, op. cit., p. 12.
2. Ibid.
3. Gairdner, op. cit., Vol I, p. 117.

b. The Relation of This View to Existing Traditions

In sharp contrast to this attitude of Wycliffe and his followers, Schaff recalls that it was with one accord that the Schoolmen limited the authority of the Scripture by coordinating with its contents tradition, that is, the teachings of the Church.¹ He further writes that this man Wycliffe, "with unexcelled precision and cogency affirmed. . . (the Scriptures') final jurisdiction, as the law of God, above all authorities, papal, decretist, or patristic."²

Philip Schaff quotes Buddenseig as having said:

The call to honor the Scriptures as the Word of God and to study and diligently obey them runs through Wycliffe's writings like a scarlet thread. Without knowing it, he departed diametrically from Augustine when he declared that the Scriptures do not depend for their authority upon the judgment of the Church, but upon Christ.³

It might be said that as he continued his studies of the Scripture, a conviction was forced upon him which was in contradiction to the distinctively mediaeval system of theology. He stood opposed to the traditions of the Church, basing his thinking upon the authority of the Bible.

c. The Relation of This View to His Doctrinal Positions

Poole writes that the main principles of Wycliffe's life were: first, the political aim to free the Church from any connection that it had with temporal affairs; and secondly, to set up a system of doctrinal reform based on the substitution of the "law of the gospel" for the tradition of the Church.⁴

.

1. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 338.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp. 345, 346.

4. Cf. Reginald Lane Poole, Wycliffe and Movements for Reform, p. 113

To this Philip Schaff adds:

There is, in fact, only one sense of Scriptures, the one God himself has placed in it as the book of life for the way-faring man. Heresy is the contradiction of Scripture. As for himself, Wycliffe said, he was ready to follow its teachings, even to martyrdom, if necessary.¹

John Wycliffe was forever condemning as false all teachings which are not taught in the Scripture. "To Wycliffe the Scriptures are the authority for every Catholic tenet. . . They are the Catholic faith, the Christian faith. . ." ² Schaff continues:

This book is the whole truth which every Christian should study. . . The Scriptures never change. They stand to eternity. . . . As for the philosophy of the pagan world, whatever it offers that is in accord with the Scriptures is true.³

This would indicate his belief that all theological and philosophical teachings, both present-day, scholastic and traditional, are to be placed side by side to the Scripture for comparison. If they agree favorably with the Scripture, then they may be considered as having value. Otherwise, they are to be cast aside in favor of the eternal, never-changing Scripture.

John Wycliffe himself wrote: "We should look to the law of God, especially to the decalogue and the gospels, and be observant of them through life, in word and deed."⁴

He was consistently upholding the worth of the commandments in the Bible as against the sophistry of the day:

.

1. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 340.
2. Ibid., p. 340.
3. Ibid., p. 339.
4. Vaughan, op. cit., p. 112.

All their (pope's and bishops') sophistries shall not serve them at the last; if they be not found keeping, and in full will keep, these commandments of God; for all other ceremonies, without keeping these commandments, are nothing worth. . .¹

d. His Apologetic for the View

The major apologetic that he expressed was the Scripture itself. As one reads through his sermons, one is immediately struck by the countless numbers of times that he used phrases such as: "For holy writ saith. . ." or "For Holy Scripture saith. . ." or "Job" or "Paul saith. . ." He was ever quoting the Scripture to prove the Scripture, and using the statements of the characters in the Bible as words of authority.² Perhaps the best summary of his position is given by Philip Schaff who writes:

The supreme authority of the Scriptures appears from their contents, the beneficent aim they have in view, and from the witness borne to them by Christ. God speaks in all the books. They are the one great Word of God. Every syllable of the two testaments is true, and the authors were nothing more than scribes or heralds. If any error seem to be found in them, the error is due to human ignorance and perverseness. Nothing is to be believed that is not founded upon this book, and to its teachings nothing is to be added.³

The editor of The Writings of Wycliffe and Others also says that Wycliffe's faith was derived entirely from the Scripture, which he considered a divine revelation, containing a sufficient and perfect rule for the Christian life. The authority of the Scripture was esteemed higher than that of any other writing, or of any tradition. Only the canonical books were truly inspired. In these books one finds

.

1. Writings of Wycliffe, op. cit., p. 60.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 106.
3. Schaff, VI, op. cit., p. 340.

all truth, and no conclusion can be allowed unless it is sanctioned by these sacred records.¹

The basis of Wycliffe's apologetic seems to be found in these, his words:

We do not sincerely believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, or we should hold the authority of the Scriptures, and especially that of the evangelists, as of infinitely greater weight than any other.²

To this Workman has appended these very terse words about Wycliffe:

A growing consciousness of opposition is seen in his protest against the silencing of evangelical truth; 'nowadays,' he complains, 'the man who defends the truth of Scripture suffers contumelies and persecutions.'³

These statements may be summarized by saying that Wycliffe actually based his whole argument for the authority of the Scripture on the Scripture itself. He went back to the records of the Christ, about whom the Scripture was written, and then used Christ's words and His expressed divinity as a proof of the validity of the Scripture. Actually, one could accuse Wycliffe of breaking the rules of formal logic in arguing in circular form. However, since he did go beyond mere logic in his thinking, one feels that he thought it valid to go beyond logic in the conception of Scripture. That is to say, he had such a faith in the living Christ that he felt within himself the urgency of proclaiming the authority of Scripture.

Beckett well epitomizes the position of Wycliffe: "His recognition of the supreme authority of the Scriptures is seen in his

.

1. Cf. Writings of Wycliffe, op. cit., p. 39.

2. Vaughan, op. cit., p. 129.

3. Workman, op. cit., p. 5.

constant appeals to its teaching and his zeal for his translation."¹

3. As Translator of the Scripture into the "Vulgar" Tongue

Schaff writes: "Wycliffe occupies a distinguished place as an Oxford schoolman, a patriot, a champion of theological and practical reforms and the translator of the Scriptures into English."²

He continues by saying:

Wycliffe's chief service for his people, next to the legacy of his own personality, was his assertion of the supreme authority of the Bible for the clergy and laymen alike and his gift to them of the Bible in their own tongue. His statements setting forth Scriptures as the clear and sufficient manual of salvation and insisting that the literal sense gives their plain meaning, were. . . positive and unmistakable. . .³

a. The Existing Conception of the Scripture

"The feeling was that Scripture was a thing too sacred to be handled by any but a sacred order of men trained to use it properly,"⁴ to quote James Gairdner. He also says that the clergy of the day were bound, according to their views of ecclesiastical duty, to see that what was read was completely wholesome. One must conceive of the clergy's considering themselves to be a self-governing body that had a divine commission to guide, to direct, and even to control the laity in all things concerning the welfare of their souls. This included the expounding of Scripture to them according to their needs. To allow the use of the Scripture to get out of their control, when it

.

1. W.H. Beckett, *The English Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 74.
2. Schaff, VI, op. cit., pp. 315, 316.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 338.
4. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 101.

was really quite easy to keep it under their supervision, would be for them a manifest dereliction of their duty as priests.¹

b. The Basis for Wycliffe's Translation

It is generally accepted that Wycliffe was the first to give the Bible to his people in their own tongue. His version, it seems, was actually the outgrowth of his own burning desire to make his countrymen, and the English Church, more religious and more Christian.

Wycliffe began with his principle that God's Word should be preached to all the people. This principle was then expanded to include the idea that the Scripture itself must become the common property of all. It was to this end that he worked in translating the Scriptures into the language of the people.²

So one has to say that Wycliffe was driven by the logic of the theological foundations he held to the work of translating the Word into the vernacular.

As Miss Margaret Deansley has said in The Lollard Bible:

(Wycliffe). . .taught that all dominion, power, or ownership, came from God, and that every man was His tenant-in-chief, owing no vassalage to any mesne tenant. . .(This) led logically to the demand for a translated Bible. If all men were in immediate relationship to God, and owed Him a righteousness and obedience to His law for which they themselves were responsible, they needed to study His law personally, to satisfy themselves that they were keeping it; and to the Wyclifites the Bible was pre-eminently and characteristically 'Goddis Lawe'. . . Thus the need and usefulness of an English Bible was not the foundation stone of Wyclif's teaching, or of that of his followers, but it was the necessary and inevitable corollary of his doctrine of dominion by grace, and the immediate responsibility of every Christian for following the life of Christ.³

.

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 105, 106.

2. Cf. Leckler, op. cit., p. 203.

3. Quoted by C.W. Dugmore, *The Interpretation of the Bible*, pp. 52, 53.

c. Wycliffe's Translation

Workman holds that Wycliffe's first intention was "the translation 'sentence by sentence' of parts specially used in the services of the Church. This," he says, "will explain. . . the cramped, harsh English of the first version. . ." ¹

This work, he writes, was not actually done by Wycliffe, but was the moving spirit of the band of "many good fellows and cunning (who) contributed their share." ² The inspiration, however, came from Wycliffe, Professor May is certain. ³

The New Testament was first completed about the year 1382. It was not until two years later, about 1384, that the whole Bible was available for the people. This "Wycliffe Bible" included the Apocryphal Books, in good Catholic tradition, and was a translation, not from the original languages, but from the Vulgate, the official Latin version of the Church. ⁴ Professor May also writes:

Following the death of Wycliffe, a revision of the translation was made. . . The reviser was probably John Purvey, who had been Wycliffe's secretary at Lutterworth. . . They are all manuscripts written by hand. . . (and) Judging by the costly appearance of many of these manuscripts, they were often bought by the wealthier people. Wycliffe's Bible remained the popular Bible, despite strong opposition to it, until Tyndal's translation appeared in the 16th century. ⁵

d. The Effect of Wycliffe's Translation

Workman observes that one ought to be cautious in any discussion about the "condemnation or otherwise" of Wycliffe's version. ⁶

.

1. Workman, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 157.
2. Ibid., p. 160.
3. May, op. cit., p. 17.
4. Ibid., p. 17.
5. Ibid., pp. 17, 18.
6. Workman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 192.

He believes that the statements regarding the powerful measures taken to suppress the version, including the burning and destruction of manuscripts, should be received with reservation. The reason for this is the fact that previous to 1407 there was no fixed rule in the English Church regarding such work as Wycliffe had done. He does point out, nevertheless, that the absence of official condemnation did not prevent unofficial persecution, especially by the friars.¹ However, in 1408, the Oxford Synod passed the "Ominous Act, that upon pain of greater excommunication, no man, by his own authority, should translate into English (the Scripture). . . until. . . approved by the bishop."²

Philip Schaff also quotes Archbishop Arundel, who denounced

that pestilent wretch of damnable memory, yea, the forerunner and disciple of anti-Christ, who, as the complement of his wickedness, invented a new translation of the Scriptures into his mother tongue.³

In 1414, the reading of the Scripture in the English language was forbidden "upon pain of forfeiture of land, cattle, life and goods from their heirs forever."⁴ Yet, it was not until after his death, that the hatred of the Church against the Reformer was felt in its bitterest form. By the decree of the Council of Constance, the remains of the Reformer were taken from their resting place and burnt to ashes, which were cast into the Swift, a neighboring brook. This brook, as Fuller says, "'conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of

.

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 192-194.
2. Schaff, op. cit., p. 344.
3. Ibid., p. 344.
4. Ibid., p. 344.

Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed the world over.¹

One notices then, that the reaction of the Church was at first slow, for it was not prepared to cope with such a situation. But when the fact that its authority was being challenged finally struck the ecclesiastical hierarchy with full impact, they were quick to think of the vilest persecution against Wycliffe's followers.

4. As Organizer of a Movement

To quote once again from Philip Schaff:

The reformer of the 14th century (John Wycliffe) was more than a scholar and publicist. . . he had a practical bent of mind, and. . . he attempted to provide England with a new proclamation of the pure gospel. . . He conceived the idea of developing and sending forth a body of itinerant evangelists. These 'pore priests,' as they were called. . . made a sensation. . . Clad in long russet gowns of one pattern, they went on foot.²

John Wycliffe realized that the work which he considered needful could not be done by himself. He, therefore, began to organize this group of itinerant preachers to go forth to expound his views to whomever would listen.

5. Summary of the Work of John Wycliffe

Wycliffe's character might be summarized as follows: on his own confession he was passionate, and like other passionate men, was prone to speaking vehemently without first thinking, in spite of an intellectual outlook and training. This characteristic, however, is

.

1. Quoted by Erl. B. Hulbert, *The English Reformation and Puritanism*, p. 49.

2. Schaff, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 319.

responsible for his forceful, nervous style of writing, which has given him a prominent place among early writers. He had a fearless courage which equaled that of Martin Luther, without having the warm emotions of the German Reformer.

His proposed reformation was not successful, partly because others who were interested in reform did not share his earnestness; often they were more interested in politics and greed. Wycliffe, one may say, was a powerful, but isolated force.

Then too, England was not yet ready for the Reformation, And Wycliffe's revolt was too negative, because he abolished the existing Church government without devising any other to take its place. His teaching lacked definiteness of logical and systematic theology; but in his assertion of the supreme authority of the Scripture, he did lay the foundation upon which English religious life was later to be built.¹

Perhaps no better conclusion to this writing about the work of John Wycliffe could be used than these penetrating words of the historian, Schaff:

In looking over the career and opinions of John Wycliffe, it becomes evident that in almost every doctrinal particular did this man anticipate the Reformers. The more his utterances are studied, the stronger becomes this conviction. He exalted preaching; he insisted upon the circulation of the Scriptures among the laity; he demanded purity and fidelity of the clergy; he denied infallibility to the papal utterances, and went so far as to declare that the papacy is not essential to the being of the church. He defined the Church as the congregation of the elect; he showed the unscriptural and unreasonable character of transubstantiation; he pronounced

.

1. Cf. Workman, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 322-324.

priestly absolution a declarative act. He dissented from the common notion about pilgrimages; he justified marriage on biblical grounds as honorable among all men; he appealed for liberty for the monk to renounce his vow, and to betake himself to some useful work.¹

D. The Work of the "Pore Priests" in Continuing the Work of John Wycliffe

1. The Organization of the "Pore Priests"

These "pore priests" were established to carry the message of Wycliffe to the people. Beckett points out that these were "one in belief in the simple sufficiency of the Scriptures as a guide to Salvation"² They taught what may be regarded as fundamental principles of Protestantism -- the "right to private judgment, with its corresponding responsibilities and the one Lord of all."³

a. Ordained Clergymen

Leckler points out that one can readily see that Wycliffe had begun, while still in Oxford, to train younger men to the priestly office:

I have not a moment's doubt that while he was still in Oxford Wycliffe sent out as voluntary itinerant preachers young men belonging to this circle, who had attached themselves so closely to his person, and had embraced his theological views and convictions as well as his practical church principles.⁴

He believes that the sending forth of these itinerant preachers was a measure passing through several stages of development. In the first stage, those sent from Oxford seem to have been men who had

.

1. Schaff, Vol. VI. op. cit., p. 346.
2. Beckett, op. cit., p. 96.
3. Ibid., p. 78.
4. Leckler, op. cit., p. 192.

already taken orders. This he feels justified in claiming, since Wycliffe often referred to them as "priests."¹

b. The Laymen

This was probably the second stage. As Leckler shows, it was far more than an accidental circumstance that Wycliffe, in his sermons delivered in later years, should refer to his itinerants not as "pore priests," but as "evangelical men," or "apostolic men." He is certain that this demonstrates that he was intentionally avoiding the term "priest," since it was no longer applicable to this ministry.²

2. The Work of the "Pore Priests" or "Evangelical Men"

a. Their Itineracy

These men wandered from village to village, from town to town, preaching, teaching, warning, wherever they could find willing hearers. As Beckett writes:

They were constantly moving from place to place preaching in town and country, wherever they could find an audience. . . . The influence of their teaching was soon felt throughout the country; they stirred up the minds of the people to religious inquiry, and so secured their cooperation in the work of reform.³

b. Their Biblical Preaching

Leckler says: "Their sermons were, before everything else, full of Bible truth."⁴ He continues to say that this was to be expected, for they had come out from under the teaching of Wycliffe, and had been feasting on his principles. Therefore, they were preachers after the model he had set up. His Biblical preaching was their example.⁵

.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 194.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 195.

3. Beckett, op. cit., p. 69.

4. Leckler, op. cit., p. 197.

5. Cf. Ibid.

Because of the difficulty in understanding the Scripture, there had always been considerable argument against its use. It was just this fact that Wycliffe considered reason enough for its study and exposition.¹ This conviction of their master the "pore priests" followed as they went their way trying to open the secrets of the hidden Scripture to the people of England.

c. The Original Purpose to Supplement the Church

Wycliffe sent these men out with the intention of supplementing the work of the Church. Poole says, "The services of the Church. . . held. . . in a language not understood of the people, tended to become a lifeless formality. . ."² Interestingly enough, he also points out that Wycliffe had just been continuing a tendency of his age, for the courts of law and Parliament had begun to use English.³

Wycliffe desired that the people of England should hear the truths of the Scripture read in their own language and explained to them simply. This the Church did not do; so he felt obligated to send forth these itinerant preachers to do this work.

3. The Effect of the Work of the "Pore Preachers"

a. On the People as a Whole

Most of the people were overjoyed at the message that came to them from these men. It was something for which they had waited many years, and they took advantage of every opportunity to hear what these strange men had to say to them. To quote from Poole's study

.

1. Cf. Workman, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 210.
2. Poole, op. cit., p. 102.
3. Cf. Ibid.

of this movement:

The influence of. . .(Wycliffe's) preachers was quickly felt throughout the country. The common people were rejoiced by the simple and homely doctrine which dwelt chiefly on the plain truths of the gospel, while the pungent invective which accompanied it added zest to their discontent at the heedless pastors whom they saw too generally around them.¹

b. On the Organized Church of the Day

The hierarchy was offended to the uttermost. Leckler says:

Slanders were spread about the preachers to the effect that the only thing they were able to do was to abuse the prelates behind their backs; that they were undermining the whole frame of the church, and were serpents casting forth deadly poison.²

Courtney called them, "'Wolves in sheep's clothing,'" and said that they, ". . .'went over all England seducing nobles and great lords,' and that in consequence in Leicester, 'every second man was a. . .(Wycliffite).'"³

The friars maintained that, "'Wycliffe's simple priests' were 'heretical idiots who know not the sense of Scripture, since the treasure of the Lord is hidden with the friars. . ..' The bishop too tried to stamp them out by insistence on their license."⁴

Vaughan quotes a paper written about them to show that the ecclesiastical feeling against them was also transferred into the political and secular thought:

Forasmuch as it is openly known that there are divers evil persons within the realm, going from country to country. . . in certain habits, under dissimulation of great holiness, and

.

1. Ibid., p. 103.
2. Leckler, op. cit., p. 199.
3. Workman, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 204.
4. Ibid.

without the license. . .preaching daily, not only in churches and churchyards, but also in markets. . .divers sermons containing heresies. . .to the destruction of the laws of the Church. . .; which preachers. . .will not obey. . .their summons. . .nor for the censures of the holy church, but expressly despise them. . . It is, therefore, ordained. . .that the king's commissions be made and directed to the sheriffs . . .to arrest all such preachers. . .¹

4. John Wycliffe's Support of His "Pore Priests"

a. Charges Against Them Answered

John Wycliffe resisted all the devices described above as weapons of the "father of lies."² His ideal was a priest in every parish. "Such priest should need no bishop's license, for preaching was their chief duty. . .of more value than 'to say matins and mass and evensong by Salisbury use.'"³

Leckler says that it was in a tract entitled The Deceits of Satan and His Priests that Wycliffe defended his followers most vehemently. The following paraphrasing of this tract expresses the feeling of Wycliffe:

Almighty God, who is full of love, gave commandment to His prophets to cry aloud, to spare not, and to show to the people their transgressions. The sin of the common people is great, the sin of the lords, the mighty, the wise, is greater, but the greatest of all is the sin of the prelates, and the most blinding to the people. Therefore are true men by God's commandment bound to cry out the loudest against the sin of the prelates, because it is in itself the greatest, and of the greatest mischief to the people.⁴

b. Tracts for Their Use Prepared

Leckler is under the impression that, among many other writings,

.

1. Vaughan, op. cit., pp. lxxvii, lxxviii.
2. Workman, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 204.
3. Ibid., p. 208.
4. Leckler, op. cit., p. 199.

a small book entitled The Six Yokes was especially written to the preachers themselves. He quotes from it: "'In order that unlearned and simple preachers, who are burning with zeal for souls, may have materials for preaching,' etc."¹ He believes, "(This would). . . lead us to conjecture that these. . .were composed by Wycliffe, in part, at least, for the benefit of the itinerants of his school, as helps and guides, and furnishing materials for preaching."²

At all events, the fact is certain that no inconsiderable part of the literary labours of Wycliffe. . .was designed to be serviceable to the preachers, either by defending them from attack, or assisting them in their work.³

5. Summary of the Work of the "Pore Preachers"

It has been shown that the "Pore Preachers" were organized by John Wycliffe to aid him in promulgating his doctrines over the English countryside. They must have been quite successful, for they raised such a furor that many measures were taken to put a halt to their work.

Like their master, they based all their teachings upon the Holy Writ, refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Church when it seemed to them to be contrary to the teachings of the Scripture. In this way, especially, one finds that they, together with Wycliffe, were part of the Precursors to the English Reformation.

.

1. Ibid., pp. 200, 201.
2. Ibid., p. 201.
3. Ibid., p. 201.

E. The Lollard Movement as a Continuation of the Work of John Wycliffe and the "Pore Preachers"

1. The Distinction of the Lollards as Followers of Wycliffe

a. Two Types of Classification

The followers of the Reformer could generally be classed in one of two categories. The first would include the many who were at odds with the usurpations of the papacy and the vices of the Roman priesthood; while on the other hand they cared little for the doctrinal errors that were in the teachings of the Church, even though it was quite obvious that their opposition to Scripture could be detected. In fact, many realized that even "common-sense" was against the teaching of the Church -- but they cared little.

There was also the other class who attached themselves to the doctrines of John Wycliffe in a more spiritual sense, who felt the evil of sin and desired to live new lives. This group, however, was far less numerous than the former.¹ It is this class with which this study is concerned.

b. The Second Group as an Organization

Leckler says, "It was in the year succeeding the death of Wycliffe (1385) that the name of Lollards² came into general use as a designation of his followers."³ And Philip Schaff points out, "(It) was emphatically a movement of laymen though professed by many clerics."⁴

.

1. Cf. Writings of Wycliffe, Part II, op. cit., pp. 1, 2.
2. Workman writes in Appendix A that the "original meaning (of the word Lollard) appears to be a wandering ('praise-God,' 'chanter,' or 'canter. . .') The probable derivation is from old Dutch, lollers or lullen, to sing."
3. Leckler, op. cit., p. 437.
4. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 358.

Leckler also demonstrates that the use of the name by the hierarchy to characterize the followers of Wycliffe is a proof that the "Wycliffites had become an independent sect, large enough to attract public attention, and formidable enough to arouse ecclesiastical animosity."¹ Poole elaborates this by saying:

A Wycliffite or Lollard comes to indicate one who opposes the hierarchical organization and the temporal endowments of the Church, together with a number of specific doctrines among which that of transubstantiation is the most prominent; who maintains the duty of public preaching as paramount among the obligations of the Christian minister, and the duty of reading the Bible as necessary for the layman and Clergyman.²

2. The Testimony of Contemporaries Regarding Its Organization

The adherents of Wycliffe had become so numerous during the period between his death and the close of the century that according to the testimony of opponents "at least one half of the population had ranged themselves on the side of the Lollards. 'You could scarcely meet two persons on the road, but one of them would be a disciple of Wycliffe.'"³

To this, however, Poole takes exception, feeling that this view of Knyghton, as quoted above by Leckler, was doubtless an exaggeration, a literary device. But he does say, "It cannot be questioned that the Lollards formed a considerable part of the population."⁴

The observation made at the outset of this section of the study⁵ concerning the two types of followers of Wycliffe might well

.

1. Leckler, loc. cit.,
2. Poole, op. cit., p. 113.
3. Leckler, op. cit., p. 440.
4. Poole, op. cit., p. 115.
5. Ante, p. 26.

offer an explanation for this slight discrepancy. Nevertheless, one can feel certain with Hulbert:

All England was permeated with. . . (Wycliffe's) doctrines and spirit. (Perhaps) the Reformation might have come then if the times had been ripe. But his teachings were in advance of his age.¹

3. The Teachings of the Lollards

a. Based on the Scripture

Lollardy rested upon the advancement and popularization of the New Testament. The Lollards proclaimed, as did Wycliffe, that the Old and New Testaments were sufficient for man's salvation.² For example, when tried before Archbishop Arundel in 1353, William Thorp protested:

'I believe that all the Old Law and the New Law, given and ordained by the counsel of these three Persons in the Trinity, were given and ordained to the salvation of mankind; and I believe that these laws are sufficient for man's salvation. I submit me (not to holy Church) to be reconciled to be buxom and obedient unto these Laws of God, and to every article of them.'³

The guiding principle for these men was the same as that held by Wycliffe and his "pore priests," that the Bible was basic to faith. One of their devotional books, apparently composed not long after the death of Wycliffe, entitled "The Lantern of Light" borrows its title from the words of the Psalmist who wrote, "Thy word is a Light unto my feet." The preface to the devotional guide closes with this prayer:

When Thou, O Lord, didst die on the cross, Thou didst put the spirit of life in Thy Word, and gavest it power to make alive, through thine own dear blood, as Thou Thyself sayest, 'The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and life.'⁴

.

1. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 419.

2. Cf. Dugmore, op. cit., p. 55.

3. Ibid.

4. Cunningham Geikie, The English Reformation, p. 51.

The entire religious life of the members of the Lollard movement centered in their study of the vernacular Scripture and in their dependence upon it as their authority. It was said that "they went to great risks to obtain and circulate the treasured and diminishing portions of the sacred writing."¹ After a time their beloved books were confiscated by the religious and secular authorities combined, and they were very difficult to replace.

b. The Movement Expanded by the Traveling Ministry

Since vernacular Scripture was the basis for their preaching, the preaching itself was also in the vernacular. The preachers were mainly of the same class as their hearers, and "their homely exposition of Scripture went home to the heart."²

At the same time as they taught from the Scripture, they also exposed the prevailing sins, evils, and luxuries of the day. "They called by their right names the misdeeds of the clergy, while for themselves they sought nothing."³

Parker makes an interesting and apparently accurate observation in saying that by this time Lollardy had become a somewhat amorphous movement, whose adherents formed their opinions largely through private study of the Scripture. By and large, they held to no definite corpus of doctrine, even changing and contradicting themselves as they went on. This can readily be understood when one realizes that they were for the most part unlearned men.⁴

.

1. E.G. Rupp, *The English Protestant Tradition*, p. 4.

2. Leckler, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Cf. T.M. Parker, *The English Reformation to 1558*, p. 20.

They were not known for their systematic theology but "by a striving after holiness, a zeal for the spread of Scriptural truth, for the uprooting of prevelant error, and for Church reform."¹

Leckler seems to summarize their teaching and their work very clearly in a few terse words when he says:

Great stress was laid upon the exposition of (the Bible's) . . . content by preaching. Staff in hand, the preachers journeyed on foot from place to place, and paused² whenever they could obtain a hearing from gentle or simple.

To this Hulbert adds:

Lollardism was doing its subtle and effectual work in many English hearts. . . making known the truth and spirit of the Word of God. . . and in many ways preparing the nation's conscience for that revolution which forever broke England's thralldom to the papal throne. When at last the Reformation came, thousands of hearts were ready for it -- made ready through Lollard influence.³

4. Typical Work of Early Lollards in Setting Forth Scriptural Authority

a. Sir John Oldcastle

The influence of a powerful knight and nobleman leaning towards "heresy" was a serious matter for the officials. Having disobeyed several ecclesiastical orders, he was finally summoned before the Archbishop to defend himself. There he was given an opportunity to recant.⁴ The following are excerpts from his defence, showing that he was a follower of the Lollard movement. In these one can see the truth of an observation made by Gairdner, who says that Oldcastle

.

1. Leckler, op. cit., p. 443.

2. Ibid, p. 444.

3. Hulbert, op. cit., pp. 50, 51.

4. Cf. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 66-97.

aimed at nothing for which he could not find plausible warrant in his Master's teaching.¹

There are those in purgatory "if any such (place) there be by the Scriptures."²

The priests should "be occupied in preaching and teaching the Scriptures purely. . ."³

"This is my faith. . . that God will require no more of a Christian believer in this life, than to obey the precepts of that (Scriptural) most blessed law."⁴

I believe particularly. . . all that God hath left in his holy Scriptures that I should believe. . . If it be proved otherwise, then let it be utterly condemned; provided always, that I am taught a better belief by the Word of God, and I shall most reverently, at all times, obey thereunto.⁵

Having refused to return to the unity of the Church, he was declared excommunicated and was handed over to the secular power for execution. However, on a later date he was once again given a hearing before Archbishop Arundel. At this time, he knelt before God and said:

Lo, good people, lo; for the breaking of God's law, and HIS great commandment, they (the popish ecclesiastics) never yet cursed me; but, for their own laws and traditions. . .⁶

My belief is. . . that all the Scriptures of the sacred Bible are true. All that is grounded upon them I believe thoroughly. . . but in your lordly laws and idle determinations have I no belief. . .⁷

Then as he was brought out to his execution he stood up, and when he beheld the multitude, he exhorted them to "follow the laws of

.

1. Ibid., p. 88.
2. Writings of Wycliffe, Part II, p. 113.
3. Ibid., p. 113.
4. Ibid., p. 114.
5. Ibid., p. 115.
6. Ibid., p. 121.
7. Ibid., p. 124.

God, written in the Scriptures, and in anywise to beware of such teachers as they see contrary to Christ. . ."¹

He was hanged by chains of iron and consumed alive in the fire, praising the name of God as long as his life lasted. He was hated by the Archbishop, first, because he was a pupil of the Reformer, Wycliffe; secondly, because he had been a protector of the harried Lollards; and finally, because he was a student of the Scriptures, drawing from them a condemnation of many of the teachings of the Church.²

To demonstrate the contempt for a man like Oldcastle, the words of the following poem seem to have been addressed to him:

Hit is unkyndly for a knight,
 That shuld a Kynges castel kepe,
 To babel the Bibel day and night
 In restung tyme when he shuld slepe;
 And carefoly away to crepe,
 For alle the chief of chivalrie,
 We aught hym to wail and wepe
 That suyche lust hath in Lollardie.³

b. Richard Wicke, a Parish Priest

Another prominent Lollard was Richard Wicke. He too had been accused by the Archbishop of preaching false doctrine and was brought before him to testify. Asked if he believed the Eucharist to be material bread, Gairdner noted that he said, "Scripture did not call it material bread, and therefore he could not believe it be so as an article of faith."⁴ Here again one sees a man who stands upon what

.

1. Ibid., p. 136.

2. Cf. Geikie, op. cit., p. 59.

3. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 87.

4. Ibid., p. 173.

he is able to read in the pages of Holy Writ, rather than in the pages of papal encyclicals. Wicke insisted that he was not bound to obey anyone, except to the end that it was consonant with the law of God. In all of this, he too was following traditional Wycliffite and Lollard belief, that any law or command to be authoritative must be in keeping with the Scripture.

At last, after repeated appearances and discussions, the Bishop's chancellor pronounced sentence of excommunication against him as a heretic. Wicke did not take this patiently, but is reported to have cried out, "For what am I a heretic? I said nothing but the law of our God."¹ Nevertheless, he was taken to prison. After a number of years, with various trials and some recantations, he was burned as a heretic on the 17th June, 1440, together with his servant.

Men and women went by night to the place where he had suffered and prayed there as they would have prayed to a saint, kissing the ground and carrying away his ashes. Many believed him to be a saint who had been maliciously put to death. He was another in a long list of men who stood for the Scripture as authority, rather than the Church.²

5. The Decline of Lollardy

a. Inner Deterioration

(1) A Lack of Real Leadership

Rupp is one who cites this as a definite problem within the ranks of the infant movement. He says, "Apart from the Biblical writings

.

1. Ibid., p. 179.

2. Cf. Ibid, pp. 171-185.

there is evidence of a real lack of theological leadership."¹ This lack of formal theological leadership and the failure of the movement to produce a living theology was the actual cause of its decline. These faults made Lollardy distinctive from the later reformation when the stress was upon formulating beliefs systematically.

(2) A Variety of Positions Regarding Scriptural Interpretation

As Gairdner points out, Lollardy ". . . arose from that sense of 'sweetness' in Holy Writ which many not untruly. . . called the witness of the Holy Ghost within us to his own work in past times."² He also observes that within the movement was the obvious danger that private and individual interpretations would arise contrary to one another.³ This is exactly what history says did happen.

The opponents of Lollardy accused somewhat rightly the Lollard Movement of taking "slavish views of the literal sense of Scripture, and that when arguments failed them, they were quite ready to call in secular aid. . ."⁴ The spirit of independence perhaps was too strong, for lacking a sense of real unity, the movement began to collapse at its very seams, because of this bickering over minor interpretations.

b. Pressure from the Church

(1) Writers Against the Lollards

(a) Thomas of Walden

To counteract the influences of the Wycliffites or Lollards

.

1. Rupp, op. cit., p. 5.
2. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 227.
3. Cf. Ibid.
4. Ibid, p. 65.

Walden set down ten of their contentions,¹ of which only the first two will be mentioned, since they alone are relevant to the topic under immediate consideration. First, he says;

that whatever Pope, or the Church says is to be condemned if they do not prove it from the Holy Scripture, (And second): that holy Scripture is the sole rule of faith, and whatever the Church at large or the Fathers have taught is to be despised, even what holy councils have decreed." etc.²

It is against these so-called "sophistries of Wycliffe"³ that are supposedly scattered throughout all writings that Walden sets out to write his vituperation.

Walden promulgates the belief that "besides the Scripture it is necessary to ponder the sayings of the Fathers;"⁴ and in general holds to the traditional Roman views on various doctrines. The main interest here is not the content of his argument but its effect. There is demonstrated in this work the thoroughness of the doctrine as examined by the Church and defended against Wycliffe. "The work was authoritative, and no reply to it was ever so much as attempted."⁵

The great problem in Lollardy, as noted above,⁶ was its lack of real theological thinkers who were able to establish their views in a formal and systematic way. As a result, the group was unable to meet the formal attacks of the Church. Thinkers like Walden were successful in turning many back into Romanism.

.

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 188-202.
2. Ibid., p. 190.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 193.
5. Ibid., p. 200.
6. Ante, p. 34.

(b) Bishop Reginald Pecock

The views of Pecock can be summarized by saying that he thought that the authority of Scripture could not "be exalted over that of logic."¹ He was not hesitant in expounding his own view.

He declared:

(The) . . . only purpose that God ordained the Scriptures was to serve as a foundation for articles of faith, and also to bear witness to those moral truths which were already founded in the law of mind.²

He believed that the Scripture itself was the foundation only of articles of faith, some of which were not laws at all. From this he insisted that no man could fitly understand Scripture where it appealed to moral virtues if he was not versed in moral philosophy.

Opposing this view, much as they opposed the view that the Scripture was to be understood in light of the teachings of the Church, the Lollards insisted that the Bible could be understood as being authoritative by persons who lacked special learning. Their view was that the same Spirit who directed men to write would also direct the hearts of men as they attempted to interpret the writings in the present day.

(2) Violence Against the Lollards

In addition to the power of the pen, physical exertion was also used with tremendous effect against the Lollards. Bishop Arundel, especially, had an unrelenting severity against the Lollards, and their ranks were thinned considerably by many forced recantations.³

.

1. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 211.

2. Ibid, p. 212.

3. Cf. Beckett, op. cit. p. 81.

From the year 1401, Lollardy was considered a capital offence on the basis of the infamous statute, De haeretico Comburendo.¹ Here it seems that one can hardly improve upon the excellent summary of the times as given by the historian Beckett:

The triumph of the Church over the Lollards was when the revolution of 1399 deposed Richard II and put Henry IV on the throne: then the Church and State combined to crush the Lollards; a statute was passed for their suppression, prefaced by the statement that 'False and perverse people of a certain new sect perversely and maliciously preach and teach divers new doctrines and wicked, heretical, and erroneous opinions, and the ways of the Church, do utterly condemn and despise.' It was enacted that no one should preach without license, or anything preach, hold, teach, or instruct openly, or privily, or make or write any book, contrary to the Catholic faith or determination of Holy Church.²

Because of the effectiveness of this statute, De haeretico Comburendo, Poole observes that in a generation the Lollards "ceased to be counted among the parties of English life."³ At the same time, long before the enactment of this statute, he concedes that the Lollards outside of Oxford had lost all the influence and position they had once possessed.⁴

The utter and complete extermination of the movement was fiercely sought. And the Wycliffite teaching continued to be denounced and prosecuted persistently until the Reformation.⁵ Nevertheless, men who held to the views of the early Reformer and shared his spirit were hidden away where they could meet secretly for fellowship and prayer, and secretly transcribe and circulate their books.

.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 79.

2. Beckett, op. cit., p. 79.

3. Poole, op. cit., p. 117.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 118.

5. Cf. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 14.

All along, their hiding places were discovered; their writings were destroyed; and their bodies were rendered to ashes.¹

6. Summary of the Lollard Movement

No matter how hard the organized Church strived, they could never completely extinguish the spark that had been lighted by John Wycliffe and his "pore preachers," which continued through the Lollard movement. The spark stayed alive on into the sixteenth century, when the flame of reform really burst forth into full brilliance.

How true are the words of Rupp when he says that "any due assessment of the causes and consequences of the English Reformation must take into account the survival of Lollardy."²

F. Summary

The writer has attempted to demonstrate the early movement for reform in the Church, which began with John Wycliffe's insistence that the Scripture ought to be authoritative rather than the statutes promulgated by the Church. This concept of getting one's authority from the Scripture was then the causative idea which led him to translate the Scripture into the vernacular or "vulgar" tongue, so that all would have the opportunity to read for themselves. This infuriated the clergy, who claimed exclusive rights to interpret the Scripture.

John Wycliffe sensed the need of evangelism and secured a band of followers, both clerical and lay, who itinerated over the

.

1. Cf. Hulbert, p. 49.

2. Rupp, op. cit., p. 1.

countryside, proclaiming their master's doctrine. Following his death, the movement apparently grew to larger proportions, and his disciples were called "Lollards" by the authorities. The faith of these men survived much persecution which nearly thinned their ranks to the vanishing point, and the influence of Wycliffe could still be felt when the sixteenth century was at hand. John Wycliffe and his followers, both the "pore priests" and the Lollards, were really the first precursors to the English Reformation.

CHAPTER II

THE OXFORD REFORMATION:

AN ATTEMPT FOR REFORMATION WITHIN THE
BOUNDS OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER II

THE OXFORD REFORMATION:

AN ATTEMPT FOR REFORMATION WITHIN THE

BOUNDS OF THE CHURCH

A. Introduction

While the Lollards were forced to hold secretly their meetings for Bible-reading and mutual exhortation, often in the huts of the peasants or in concealed fields, a fresh and independent movement for reform had arisen in Oxford. Scholars were there who, having returned from periods of study in Italy, were in support of a newly awakened interest in learning.¹

Aspirations for knowledge were quickened, and men, in the words of Beckett, ". . . began to look with bewilderment and disgust upon the childish fables and impostures of the Church which they had so long tolerated."² This movement felt that ignorance and superstition and immorality and irreligion ought to be done away with, but that neither organic change nor the disturbing of established institutions was required. On the other hand, the Lollards had felt that any reformation ought to extend to a complete destruction of the whole existing religious system and the exclusion of anything which could not be justified by the Holy Scriptures. Hulbert says that when one speaks broadly, one could say: "The. . . (Oxford Reformers) were educational or literary

.

1. Cf. Beckett, op. cit., p. 101.

2. Ibid., p. 101.

reformers; the Lollards were doctrinal or scriptural reformers. . . . Both classes . . . each in its own way -- were getting the English nation ready for the impending revolution."¹ Although there was no similarity in their work, each movement was alike in that there was no sharply defined party. The leaders of the Oxford movement, who would have been reformers, certainly would have refused to be set apart or differentiated from other Catholics on the basis of principles.²

As this chapter proceeds, the views of John Colet, Desiderus Erasmus, and Sir Thomas More, the chief exponents of the reform movement within the Church, will be studied for their contribution to the conception of the use of the Scripture as authority for bringing about reformation.

B. The Basis for the Movement

1. Corruption in the Church

Perhaps the words of Perry best describe the situation as it then existed:

The vexations of the Church courts: their processes, where scarce even the semblance of justice was presumed; the heavy fines inflicted by them, and the inordinate use of the weapon of excommunication; the immunities of the clergy, . . . the absorption of almost all valuable state offices by Churchmen. . . while the country was covered with gibbets bearing the bodies of poor wretches executed simply for the crime of begging -- all these tended to produce a hatred of Churchmen. . .

And besides these more vulgar complainants, there was a knot of superior men, not desiring a change of religion, nor even caring much about an improvement in Papal relations, but profoundly impressed with the gross ignorance which prevailed among the clergy, and earnestly desiring at almost any cost a reformation in learning.³

.

1. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 64.

2. Cf. Parker, op. cit., p. 32.

3. George G. Perry, History of the Reformation in England, pp. 5, 6.

These men could see the evils within the existing Church and wanted to have them removed. However, it must be emphasized again that this effort at reform was not intended to break in any way from the organized Church. For the most part, these men adhered to the basic doctrines of the Church.

2. Neglect of the Scriptures by the Clergy

In addition to criticizing the evils in the Church, which were quite evident, these men, because of the influence from the reformers on the continent, had developed a new sense of values for the Scripture. They began to realize that the Church in England had long neglected the Scripture.

John Colet was the first to begin with his lectures on the Epistles of St. Paul. He then influenced Erasmus and More until they too developed a strong attachment to the Scripture. It was obvious that as these men studied the Scripture and expounded and exegeted it, they would see some inconsistencies within the Church. One will see that as they noticed these inconsistencies, they considered the Scripture as basic and appealed to it as final authority.

C. The Movement as Espoused by Its Greatest Exponents

Those who began to seek for the reform were scholars. Each of them knew the Church, and each one knew the Scripture. From this joint knowledge, they were able to establish a comparison by means of which they urged a change in the movement of contemporary religion.

1. John Colet

a. As Student

Beckett writes that in his early years, following the completion of his course of study at Magdalen College, Oxford, John Colet traveled to Italy, and then returned to his university with a new enthusiasm, not only for the revival of literature, but also for a reformation of the religion of the day. Mr. Beckett also adds: "We know him as a man of deep and fervent piety, of self-sacrificing ways, of great ability, and of varied learning."¹

The reason for his new enthusiasm was that he had met Savonarola, the Italian Reformer. Concerning this meeting, Sidney Dark writes:

It seems quite clear that Savonarola had a great and fundamental effect on Colet at a most impressionable time in his life, and through him on his fellows of the pre-reformation humanist movement.²

Marriott quotes from Hudson Shaw, who wrote:

He was Savonarola's spiritual disciple. You cannot read the sermons of the two men without being struck by their close and intimate resemblance. Their principles are identical -- reform without revolution, loyalty to the idea of the Catholic Church, unrelenting warfare alike against worldly ecclesiastics and selfish, ambitious tyrants, devotion to the Scriptures, Puritan morality.³

While young Colet sat in the Church of San Marco, ". . . he hung spellbound on the lips of Savonarola."⁴ At the same time, in the Platonic Academy, he began to study the Greek language of the New Testament.⁵ The Greek language was then to furnish him a key with which to unlock the Word

.

1. Beckett, op. cit., p. 101.

2. Sidney Dark, Five Deans, p. 25.

3. Sir John Arthur Monsome Marriott, The Life of John Colet, p. 27.

4. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 60.

5. Ibid., pp. 159, 160.

of God. He made himself proficient in the knowledge of this language and studied the New Testament writings, going to the most original sources that were available. There he learned with joy and awe what Christianity really was and returned to his homeland to revive the study of the Greek language.

The results of his study enabled him to draw crowds into his lecture rooms, where he filled their minds with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. It was here that Colet gave place and supremacy to the religion of the New Testament, as opposed to the folly of the present-day teaching.

In this context, Hulbert quotes him as having said: "I admire the writings of the apostles, but I forget them almost when I contemplate the wonderful majesty of Jesus."¹ Commenting upon this, Hulbert says:

His regenerate soul, in vital union with the living Head, discarded totally and forever the ecclesiastical and scholastic system in which he had been reared, rejected utterly the traditional dogmas and corruptions of the schoolmen which opposed the historical and grammatical sense of the Biblical text.²

However, it seems to the writer, as evidence contained in the section on his teachings regarding the Scripture will show, that he was not so staunch a rebuker of the traditional as Hulbert would have one believe.³ His student days did, nevertheless, stimulate his thinking.

b. As Teacher of Scripture

Colet was the first to bring the thoughts of a new learning to England. Beckett writes that upon his return he began a course of

.

1. Ibid., p. 60.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Post., p. 48.

expository lectures on the Epistle to the Romans. He says:

Setting aside the allegorical and mystical interpretations of the scholastic commentators, the young expositor-lecturer. . . sought to explain the book as a whole. . . His enthusiasm for the Scriptures, especially for the writings of St. Paul, and their literal interpretation, was intense. 'Keep firmly to the Bible and the Apostle's Creed, and let divines, if they like, dispute about the rest,' was his advice to the young men.¹

These lectures took the listeners back to the Scripture itself and produced a profound impression upon them. He changed the direction of studies and also produced a fresh interest in the New Testament.

"This was an event of no small significance and novelty," writes Seebohm, "because the Scriptures for some generations had rarely been expounded at all at the universities. . ."² To this Knight adds:

It is plain that the publick Lectureres, both in the Universities and in the Cathedral Churches, took the Liberty of reading upon any Book rather than upon the holy Scriptures, till D. Colet reformed that practice.³

Their Readings were usher'd in with a Text, or rather a Sentence of Scotus and Aquinas: And the Explanation was not trying it by the Word of God; but by the Voice of other Scholastick Interpreters. . .⁴

c. As Interpreter of Scripture

Colet's letters show that he regarded the first chapter of Genesis as containing poetical rather than scientific truth. He did not hold to the theory of uniform, verbal inspiration of the Scripture, which ignored the human element in Scripture.⁵ He said:

.

1. Beckett, op. cit., p. 102
2. Frederick Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers of 1498*, p. 1.
3. Samuel Knight, *The Life of Dr. John Colet*, p. 67.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51.
5. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 67; cf also John Colet, *Letters to Rudolphus*, pp. 1-28.

Moses. . . had to speak, not according to his own power of comprehension, but according to the comprehension of the multitude. . . .Moses endeavored, by this most honest and pious poetic figure, at once to feed them and to draw them on to the worship of God.¹

When Colet approached the writings of the New Testament, especially those of St. Paul, he sought to impress upon his hearers the truth that in the Epistles there is a man who is writing at a particular moment in world history to people living in a particular city, who are confronted with certain personal problems relevant to their situation alone. This contrasts with earlier views, in which the Bible had become an arsenal of texts, regarded as detached weapons to be legitimately used in theological warfare for any purpose to which the words might be made to apply, without reference to their original meaning or context. This was one of the faults with Lollardy.²

Even though the tendency for Colet was to stress the historical context of Scripture, in his Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans his analysis tends to be quite literal. The words of St. Paul are an authority, and on the basis of his studies of Paul he makes certain dogmatic statements and epigrammatic phrases of spiritual truth. For example, he says: "Irreligion and neglect of God is the source of all evils. True religion, through Jesus Christ, is the root of all good."³

Lupton, in his translation and analysis of the Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, says, "This exposition is sober and scriptural."⁴

.

1. Quoted by Seebohm, *Ibid.*, p. 35.
2. Cf. Marriott, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
3. John Colet, *Letters to Rudolphus*, p. 55.
4. John Colet, *An Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Translated with an introduction by Joseph Hirst Lupton, p. xxxix.

There is a distinct attempt on the part of Colet to interpret the writings of Paul so as to keep their authority for the contemporary age, and yet not forget the historical context.

In the midst of his studies, he was confident that scholarship and criticism could only tend to bring into clearer light the unique character of Christ and emphasize the significance of the lessons he came to teach. He was not a critic for the sake of criticism, but spoke that he might teach men the truths of Christ. Dark writes:

In the spirit in which he interpreted the Old Testament, Colet was returning to tradition. . . The Bible was to Colet the textbook of religion. . . To Colet the mission of the Church was to help men to lead good lives, and therefore be (sic) hotly denounced the lax living of the bishops and priests.¹

When Colet searched the Scripture, he did so that he might discover the meaning of the message which the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus had to deliver to mankind. His attitude towards the Scripture is well summarized in his own words:

The chanting of Psalms, and reading of the canonical scriptures from the sacred volume, neither can nor ought to be wanting to the celebration of the mysteries of the Church. For in them is contained all wisdom and goodness, all natural science, all metaphysical speculation, all instruction in good manners, the record of all the past dealings of God, the anticipation of all things to come; in a word, all belief and love for the true and good; so that there is nothing left, but what should be read and listened to and impressed on the ears of men.²

Colet had discovered in the New Testament a simple record of the facts concerning the life of Christ and a few Apostolic letters to the early churches. It had brought him not an endless series of propositions which must be accepted and by which he must guide his life, but

.

1. Dark, op. cit., p. 30. cf. also Ante, p. 45.

2. John Colet, Two Treatises on the Hierarchy of Dionysius, p. 87.

rather had brought him to a person whom to love, upon whom to trust, and for whom to work.¹

d. As Advocate of Scriptural Authority

John Colet said: "Holy Scripture is the mistress of life and the rule of truth."² The method that he used to interpret the Scripture brought it out into a new light, and invested in it a sense of sacredness which pressed it close to the heart.³ Actually, the position of Colet is a middle-of-the-road one in reference to the relation of Scriptural and ecclesiastical authority. He said:

Holy Scripture teaches us that the human priesthood has within it from above a divine wisdom and operation. In this human priesthood are all those who are consecrated to God in Christ. The sense of Holy Scripture is entirely spiritual; which sense was fully shewn by Jesus to his disciples. And from this source we must believe that by the appointment of the apostles there₄ grew up in the growing church sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies.

However, Colet did believe that the Church would be far better if she insisted upon only a minimum of dogma.⁵ He revolted so strongly from the Schoolmen, who were responsible for much of ecclesiastical teaching, because he felt that what they had done was to ". . . fill up the blanks in theology by indulging in Hypotheses."⁶ He turned his thought to the New Testament, and afterward, to the earliest fathers of the Christian Church.

One gets tremendous insight into his conception of Scriptural authority in his Letters to Rudolphus and his Two Treatises. His

.

1. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 52.
2. Colet, Two Treatises. . . , p. 85.
3. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 20.
4. Colet, Two Treatises. . . , p. 85.
5. Cf. Marriott, op. cit., p. 91.
6. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 57.

"Treatise on Celestial Hierarchy" is filled with quotations from the Scripture. From its use in the writings one can see that he understood the Scripture as a worthy basis for both fact and truth. Writing concerning heavenly spirits, he says that from the authority of Scripture itself one learns all that one can know concerning them.¹ He also says that man has ". . . knowledge drawn from Scripture, ministered to us by angels."²

Seebohm records the details of a visit Colet had from a parish priest who asked him for a discussion on truths in the book of Romans. He and Colet sat down together and on the basis of one chapter developed pages of truths, which, according to Colet, was only a small part of what was there.³ For Colet, there was an authority in Scripture that needed to be reckoned with.

e. As Founder of St. Paul's

John Colet founded the celebrated school of St. Paul's in which 153 selected youth were taught the Greek and Latin classics, with great stress upon the Scripture.⁴ Regarding the founding of the school, he wrote: "The chaplyn. . . shall teache the children the Catechism and instruction of the Articles of faythe and the ten commandments in Englishe."⁵ Marriott quotes Erasmus, who said: "At St. Paul's he expounded the Scriptures not by retail, but by wholesale; running over sometimes a whole epistle, sometimes a whole gospel, the Creed or the Lord's Prayer."⁶

.

1. Colet, Two Treatises. . . , p. 19.
2. Colet, Letters to Rudolphus, p. 69.
3. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., pp. 21-24.
4. Cf. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 62.
5. John Colet, Statutes of Dean Colet, pp. 8, 9.
6. Marriott, op. cit., p. 120.

While working with the school he continued his work in the pulpit as the Dean of St. Paul's. Seebohm writes that although he was far from being a Lollard, yet those whose leanings were toward that view came to hear him, because they found in his simple teaching what they felt to be the food for which they had long sought.¹

f. Summary of Colet's Influence and Contribution

The influence of John Colet was important in preparing the way for many changes soon to follow. Among those influenced at Oxford were Desiderius Erasmus and Sir Thomas More. Erasmus, frail but keen, and Colet, staid and devout, were of about the same age. But the intellectual development of Colet was so great that Erasmus became his pupil. In the course of events, the pupil accomplished more than his master.

More was at this time a young man of seventeen preparing for a future in law. Upon this young mind the earnestness of Colet produced impressions which led to an enduring friendship and a discipleship to both Colet and Erasmus.

Beckett also believes that it will not be incorrect to say that Colet's teaching affected another young student, William Tyndale, who was to become the translator of the Scripture.² Seebohm is also of this view, writing that even though he might have been unknown to Colet, yet young Tyndale was pouring over the Scriptures, learning slowly. The leaven of Colet was silently and slowly affecting the surrounding mass.³

.

1. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 222.
2. Cf. Beckett, op. cit., pp. 102, 103.
3. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., pp. 80, 81.

Knight writes concerning Dean Colet:

Whom though, I cannot call a Protestant; yet certainly he did great Service towards the Reformation, and what he suffer'd by doing his duty, and speaking his Mind freely, sufficiently testifies his Sincerity.¹

John Colet stood for learning, piety, and the Catholic faith. He urged the adoption of radical reforms within the Church; but as Marriott points out, "(he) . . . failed to effect reform. . . within the Church. . ."2

In summarizing his attitude toward the Scripture, it is best to let Colet speak for himself as he wrote in his Letters to Rudolphus:

. . . How simple was the mode of citation followed by the Apostles, when they quoted any passage from the Old Testament. This way of ours, which is now in vogue, both with modern theologians and lawyers, of citing authorities from every quarter so minutely by the chapter, had its origin in the ignorance of men who mistrusted themselves and their own learning; and who feared that otherwise credence would not be given them, losing their case. . . unless propped up by supports of this kind. . .

But the one who is conscious of his own real knowledge, and can rely on himself. . . proceeds in a bolder and more dignified way. His quotations from other sources . . . are both fewer and simpler, and. . . he uses them without self-display. . . This is what is done by St. Paul.³

This is to say in effect, that Dean Colet was opposed to the chapter-verse support of Scriptures as used by Lollardy. Instead, he employed an analytical method to get the basic truths which he used as his authority.

2. Desiderius Erasmus

a. As Reformer Within the Church

Perhaps no words are so striking and sharp as these of Geikie

.

1. Knight, op. cit., p. 3.
2. Marriott, op. cit., p. 5.
3. Colet, Letters to Rudolphus, p. 63.

as he speaks of Erasmus and his judgment of the times:

No one ridiculed and condemned more bitterly the superstitions of the day -- the indulgences, the worship of relics, the lying miracles, the monstrous legends, the idolatry of saints and images which prevailed. No one scourged the friars and monks more fiercely, or was so bitterly hated by them. He mocked the scholastic theologians as men who affected to be able to define everything: who boasted of knowing questions on which St. Paul was ignorant; could talk of science as if they had been consulted when the world was made; would give the dimensions of heaven as if they had been there and had measured it with a plumb and line -- claimants of universal knowledge, who yet, had never read the gospels or the epistles.¹

Erasmus found that the Church was faulty by an obvious and absolute neglect of ordinary morality. Froude points out that as a student, ". . . he found that he might be drunk as often and as openly as he pleased, but study was a forbidden indulgence."² He also recognized the tendency to substitute for obedience to the Ten Commandments an extravagant superstition built chiefly upon fiction.³

His actual feud was not with one particular error of the Church, as was that of Martin Luther, who fought the pope and the system of Indulgences. Rather, he was appalled by the mass of ignorance which spread over all of Europe. He felt that there would be hope for mankind only if the knowledge of the New Testament was spread abroad. For this reason, his condemnation of the times is his translation of the Scripture. Here, in the words of Froude, "Erasmus opens with a complaint of the neglect of the Scripture, of a priesthood who thought more of the offering plates than of parchments, and more of gold than of books."⁴

Erasmus thought that it would be far better to strive for a purification of the Church than to effect a rupture in its body. What

.

1. Geikie, op. cit., p. 91.

2. James Anthony Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, p. 19.

3. Cf. *Ibid*, pp. 212, 213.

4. *Ibid*, p. 128.

he and others with him wished was that superstition be corrected and the Scripture made the rule of faith and practice. He had no wish to touch the Church or to diminish any of its splendor. As Erasmus wrote to Cardinal Wolsey, "Erasmus will always be found on the side of the Roman See . . ." ¹

The strength of Erasmus' influence is demonstrated by the invitation extended to him by the young king, Henry VIII, to come to England and there be the King's personal adviser on intended reform. ²

b. As Interpreter of Biblical Authority

(1) Infallibility of the Church and Pope Repudiated

Although Erasmus was never for rebellion, he seemed to have an insight which enabled him to know just how much he could say with confidence that he would have support. He had studied the New Testament, and he had studied the writings of the early Church Fathers. From these he could demonstrate a distinct contrast between the past and present.

The translation of the Scripture, which involved an inherent rejection of the Latin copies then in existence, was in essence a rejection of the authority of the Church. As Binns shows, it was only ". . . next in authority to the original Scriptures Erasmus placed the great Fathers." ³

Actually, Erasmus agreed far more with the Reform Movement than he did with the Papal Church, even though he never set up his own opinions against the Church in any formal scheme. In regard to the pope,

.

1. Ibid., p. 217.

2. Cf. Ibid, p. 100.

3. Leonard Elliot Binns, Erasmus the Reformer, p. 77.

Erasmus would never come out and bluntly reject him as the vicar of Christ, but there are many indications that he questioned the notion. For example, he notes that in the Gospel account, Peter said, "Lo we have left all, and followed thee," and then observes that ". . . the popes speak of St. Peter's partrimony, as consisting of lords, towns, tributes, customs, lordships; for which, when their zeal for Christ is stirred, they fight with fire and sword. . ."¹

(2) Human Element in the Scripture Allowed

Erasmus did not confuse inspiration with supernatural infallibility in details. He allowed for the human element in the Scripture. None of the Oxford Reformers held any theory of verbal inspiration.²

Erasmus wrote:

It will not weaken the authority of the Scriptures or theologians if certain passages hitherto considered corrupt are henceforth read in an emended form, or if passages are more correctly understood on which up till now the mass of theologians have entertained delusions: no it will give greater weight to their authority, the more genuine their understanding of the Scriptures.³

He further said:

Here not long ago someone complained tearfully before the people. . . that it was all over with the Scriptures and the theologians who had hitherto upheld the Christian faith on their shoulders, now that men had arisen to emend the Holy Gospel. . . Just as if I was rebuking Matthew or Luke instead of those whose ignorance had corrupted what they wrote correctly.⁴

Erasmus thought that the only possible way to restore the position of the Bible as a living Word was to use the same method, as commonsense applied to all other books. He advocated the adoption of

.

1. Quoted by Seebohm, op. cit., p. 202.

2. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 331.

3. Quoted by J. Huizinga, Erasmus of Rotterdam, p. 220.

4. Ibid.

the historical method of interpreting the Scripture, which then made it possible to rest one's faith on its own evidences, rather than upon dogmatic authority of the Church. Erasmus recognized the fallibility of such authority and could not rest wholly upon it.¹

Moreover, Erasmus refused to accept a wholly literal interpretation of the writings. His attitude is summarized by Preserved Smith as he writes:

. . . Erasmus' treatment of the Bible was the most rational possible in the light of the then available knowledge. If a passage yielded a clear historical or plain moral meaning as it stood, he took it literally. Only if it were repugnant either to reason or to ethics in its literal sense was a figurative interpretation employed.²

The thought of Erasmus on this subject is well demonstrated by his own words as quoted by Drummond, who writes that this passage demonstrates how far he is from accepting a hard literal method of interpreting the Bible.

To speak first of the Old Testament, if you do not look deeper than the mere historical clothing, and read how Adam was made of clay (etc.). . . is there no danger lest you may suppose all this to be a fable forged in the workshop of Homer? Yet under these external wrappings, what splendid wisdom lies hid. The parable of the Gospel might well be supposed to be the work of some illiterate peasant if you consider only the outside shell. But crack the nut, and you will not fail to find that ancient and truly divine wisdom, the very counterpart of Christ himself.³

(3) His Concept of Authority not Dogmatic

Erasmus writes, "It would be well for us if we thought less of our dogmas and more about the Gospel." He rests his belief not upon the dogmatic authority of certain texts, as was common in the Lollard

.

1. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 447.
2. Preserved Smith, Erasmus, p. 169.
3. Robert Blackly Drummond, Erasmus, His Life and Character, Vol. I, pp. 293, 4.

movement, but rather upon the evidence of facts. For example, to demonstrate that Christ was a man, he does not look for a particular verse, but rather shows the various facts alluded to: -- he called himself the Son of man; he grew through the usual stages of life; he slept; he ate; he had pity and passion.¹

His mistrust in definite authoritative verses is further demonstrated by the writing of paraphrases on the New Testament. These were intended to make more understandable what would otherwise be confusing. In this, one must recognize that there was no mechanical theory regarding the meaning of a certain word on paper. In the words of Smith: "His was no longer a crabbed, pedantic, artificial interpretation of the text, but something to tell men, for the first time in that new age, what the Bible really said and meant."²

(4) His Desire that All Should Read the Scripture for Themselves

Erasmus proclaimed that even the unlearned should have for themselves the privilege of reading the message of the Gospel. He writes very strongly in his introduction to his Greek Text:

I would have the weakest woman read the Gospels and Epistles of St. Paul. . . . I would have those words translated into all languages, so that not only Scots and Irish, but Turks and Saracens too might read them. I long for the plough-boy to sing them to himself as he follows his plough, the weaver to hum them to the tune of his shuttle, the traveller to beguile with them the dulness of his journey. . . . Other studies we may regret to have undertaken, but happy is the man upon whom death comes when he is engaged in these. These sacred words give you the very image of Christ speaking, healing, dying, rising again, and makes you so present, that were he before your very eyes you would not more truly see him.³

.

1. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., pp. 450, 451.
2. Smith, op. cit., p. 187.
3. W.E. Campbell, Erasmus, Tyndale & More, pp. 73, 74.

c. As Translator of New Testament into Greek

Coleman writes that his edition of the Greek Testament was by far his most important contribution to the Reformation. It liberated the minds of men from stunted ecclesiasticism.¹

The very method of Erasmus was based on the single principle -- a principle which must ever be in the mind of the historian -- to return to the original authorities. He demanded that theology and all religion should be so founded, that it ought not to depend upon what had been said by the Schoolmen, but upon what had been originally in the Scripture itself, in so far as the exact meaning could be discovered. It was here that he postulated a return to the Scripture in its original language.²

Erasmus had written to Colet: ". . . without Greek one can do nothing in any brand of study; for it is one thing to conjecture, and quite another thing to judge. . ."3

Smith points out the value of the project of the Greek Text by Erasmus as he writes:

. . . the most important service of the Greek New Testament . . . (was that) it was the fountain and source from which flowed the new translations into the vernacular which like rivers irrigated the dry lands of the mediaeval Church and made them blossom into a more enlightened and lovely form of religion.⁴

The effects of this project are demonstrated by the reactions of his contemporaries. Thomas More wrote: "What Erasmus had done for Holy Scripture speaks for him."⁵ John Colet wrote to Erasmus: "I so love your work and so clasp to my heart this new edition of yours that

.

1. A.M. Coleman, *Six Liberal Thinkers*, p. 74.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
3. Seebohm, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
4. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
5. Froude, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

it excites mingled feelings."¹ "By many your labours are received with approval and admiration. There are a few, also, who disapprove, and carp at them. . ."²

In his widening the knowledge of the Scripture, Erasmus advanced far the cause of the Reformation. In fact, Rupp has written: "(The Greek Testament). . . was to the Cambridge Reformers what the Wycliffite Scriptures had been to the Lollards."³

d. Summary of Erasmus' Influence and Contribution

The Reformation of Erasmus was one by the way of amendment. He wanted to retain from the past all that was edifying, but was at the same time bitterly opposed to its abuses and superstitions. He tried to hold a middle course between the extreme Papist and the extreme Protestant. In the one case he accepted the Catholic Church and the less extravagant of the Papal claims; and in the other he appealed to the authority of the Holy Scripture. However, in the Scripture he did not seek for an infallible standard of doctrinal truth. Rather, he sought for a life and a general teaching. Where else should he go for the teachings of Christ, if not to those who were nearest to him in their relations? The books of the Scripture brought him closest to the life of Jesus, and therefore were worthy to be used as authority.

3. Sir Thomas More

a. As Opponent of the Lollards

The Lollards in some instances reached the place where they

.

1. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 395.

2. Ibid., p. 395.

3. Rupp, op. cit., p. 17.

set up their own infallibility as interpreters of Holy Writ. There was on occasion a sort of Biblical superstition that the written Word was over human reason and Church authority alike. Against such an attitude one finds Sir Thomas More. He was firmly convinced that the Church, and even the Papacy, was inherently right and good, even though there was great corruption in the system of the day.¹

Workman writes that Wycliffe's conception of the Scripture as a final authority led him and his followers to treat their translations with the utmost reverence. On the other hand, "Sir Thomas More . . . took it for granted that any Bible translated by Lollards would be a partisan Bible 'purposely corrupted. . . so as to serve to the proof of such heresies as he went about to sow.'"²

b. As Student

More was greatly enthralled by the personality and message of John Colet. Even after leaving Oxford he was a diligent listener to Colet's sermons when the latter was appointed to the Deanery of St. Paul's.³ In addition, he had a form of hero-worship for the Italian, Pico della Mirandola. His life told how, suddenly checked, the proud believer in universal knowledge had been transformed into a humble student of the Bible.⁴ Pico in turn had been a disciple of Savonarola,⁵ under whom Colet had studied. On this basis one can see the direct connection between the Oxford Reformers and that little band of pious and earnest Christian men in Italy of which Savonarola was most conspicuous.

.

1. Cf. Gairdner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 516.
2. Workman, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 185.
3. Cf. Seebohm, op. cit., p. 121.
4. Ibid, p. 152.
5. Cf. Ibid, p. 158.

More had translated a book from Italy by Pico. This book took the same views as Colet, being against the Schoolmen and strongly in favor of the study of the Scripture.¹ Pico had written:

. . . What thou shalt pray for thou shalt find matter enough in the reading of Holy Scripture, which that thou wouldst now. . . take ever in thine hand I heartily pray thee. . . There lieth in them a certain heavenly strength quick and effectual, which with marvelous power transformeth and changeth the reader's mind into the 'love of God, if they be clean and lowly entreated.'²

c. As Interpreter of the Authority of the Scripture

Froude records that Sir Thomas More wrote concerning a sermon he had listened to during the Lenten season:

He did not, I understand, preach on a text from Scripture. He took some absurd English proverb, and at this most sacred season of the year, in the presence of a vast assembly. . . he turned a Lent sermon into a bachanalian farce.

What must have been the feeling of his hearers when they saw their preacher grinning like an ape, and instead of receiving the word of God from him, received only an onslaught upon learning.³

More was always grieved to the heart by the propagation of doctrines other than those expressly commanded in the Scripture.⁴ He wrote, "The knowledge of God can be gathered only out of Scripture -- Scripture and the early Catholic Fathers."⁵

More never made any formal statement regarding his conception of Scriptural authority, for he was not a priest of the Church, but in legal service with the government. He was quite explicit, however, in the thought that the Bible must be studied and revered, but the Church must not be overthrown. He wrote: "The church cannot . . . misunderstand the

.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 121.

2. Ibid., pp. 154, 155.

3. Froude, op. cit., p. 148.

4. Cf. Gairdner, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 535.

5. Froude, op. cit., p. 149.

the Scripture. (This) . . . is one of the surest rules that can be found for the right interpretation of Scripture."¹

d. Summary of More's Influence and Contribution

More was perhaps the closest adherent to the organized Church of the three outstanding leaders in the Oxford Reformation. He would not under any circumstances repudiate the powers of the Church, although he accepted the validity of Scriptural authority, which to a certain extent was under the domain of the Church. Still, he was a strong believer in the views of Colet and Erasmus that the Scriptures should be freed from their secrecy and opened for all to read.

D. Summary

The Oxford Reformers, Colet, Erasmus, and More, like many other great men, sought for reform within the Church. Scholars of this type are the last men to form a party or to agree upon a program of action. All would have welcomed practical reform, but none wished to establish a new system. The influence of these men, often called "The Humanists," was of supreme value for the future of the Reformation. Like many of the early Reformers, they had no conception of the magnitude of the impending changes. They attempted to revive the old, and in so doing they paved the way for the new.

The writer has attempted to show in this chapter the ideals of the Oxford Reformation movement and the contribution made by its leaders in the ever-moving sweep of the adherence to the Bible as authority for the faith of men. The Lollard movement failed because no

.

1. Sir. Thomas More, The English Works of Sir Thomas More, Vol. II, p. 175.

doctrine was set up; the Oxford Movement failed because it did not get to the heart of the problem and continued to accept both ecclesiastical and scriptural authority.

The Cambridge Reformers shall next be investigated for their ideals, and for their real accomplishments and successes in reformation.

CHAPTER III

THE CAMBRIDGE REFORMATION:

THE RISE OF PROTESTANTISM TOGETHER WITH
THE ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER III

THE CAMBRIDGE REFORMATION:

THE RISE OF PROTESTANTISM TOGETHER WITH

THE ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

A. Introduction

Lollardy had been in hiding for several centuries, not daring to come out under the Oxford Reforming banner. But now it was to spring up again with an increasing vigour. The books of Wycliffe were again passed out, and the preachers of his doctrines were once more being heard.

The band of Oxford Reformers, conscious of the evils within the Church, wished for and advocated a reformation of manners. They had never attempted to define their doctrine. The Oxford group would probably have tolerated the largest liberty of thought that could have been allowed within the pale of the Roman Church. In this their position differed drastically from that of the Cambridge Reformers about to be studied. They had been under the influence of the Continental reformers, who were reformers of doctrine and had attacked the very roots of the corruption in the Church. In this respect it may be held that the Reformation under the Cambridge Reformers was not a continuation of that under the Oxford Reformers. However, when the study is made, it will be sensed that there is a vital connection between these two groups. It was the Erasmus Greek translation that did more for the Reformation than any one volume. Erasmus had in turn been influenced by Dean Colet, who had been the first of the Oxford Reformers. The entire

movement then reaches back two centuries to the time of Wycliffe, who was the real pre-cursor of the English Reformation.

The study of the force which caused the severance from the Roman See by the Church in England must be limited to the influence of the leaders of the movement which opened a breach between Rome and England during the reign of Henry VIII. This movement was to be widened under Edward VI, barely kept alive during the purges under Mary, and finally it separated the Roman and English churches during the time of Elizabeth. The influence of the following leaders will be noted in the order of their appearance: William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, Thomas Bilney, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, and Thomas Cranmer.

B. The Basis for Authority Made Available by Translation of the Scripture

1. The Work of William Tyndale

a. His Early Life

William Tyndale was born about the year 1494 in Gloucestershire.¹ He was educated first at Oxford; he then moved to Cambridge, attracted by the fame of Erasmus, who was to become his spiritual ideal. In this environment he began also to warm his hands at the fiercer fires of Martin Luther.

When Tyndale left Cambridge, he became a schoolmaster to the children of the Knight of Gloucestershire, Sire John Walsh. While in his presence, he came into contact with many church leaders, with whom, Professor May writes, "He loved to argue theology, and by whom he came

.

1. Cf. May op. cit., p. 20.

to be considered heretical. He protested against ignorant priests who knew no more of Latin than they read in their partresses and missales."¹

Very likely it was in this environment that he became convinced of the need of a translation into English from the original tongues. In the words of Demaus, "He seems to have subjected all his religious beliefs to a searching examination, and to have applied to them with rigorous logic the standards he found in Holy Scripture."²

Tyndale swore ". . . that if God spared his life he would make the boy who drove the plow know more about the Scriptures than did Erasmus."³

b. His Translation of the Bible

(1) The Attack Upon Current Conditions Which Led to Translation

Tyndale wrote: "Bishops and priests that preach not, or that preach ought save God's word, are none of Christ's, nor of his anointing. . ."⁴ Using as his text, "Ye be salt of the earth: but if the salt be waxen unsavory, what can be salted therewith?" he prepared this tirade against the evil of that day:

The office of an apostle and true preacher is to salt. . . Some say, a man might preach long. . . without persecution, yea and get favour too, if he would not meddle with the pope, bishops, prelates, and holy ghostly people that live in contemplation. . . I answer, true preaching is salting, and all that is corrupt must be salted. . .

The pope's pardons must be rebuked, the abuse of the mass, of the sacraments, and of all the ceremonies must be rebuked and salted. And selling of merits and of prayers must be salted. The abuse of fasting and of pilgrimage must be salted. Etc."⁵

.

1. Ibid., pp. 21, 22.
2. Quoted by Campbell, op. cit., p. 101.
3. May, op. cit., p. 21.
4. William Tyndale, Doctrinal Treatises, Ed. Henry Walter, p. 236.
5. Writings of Tindal, Frith, and Barnes, pp. 154, 155.

The attitude of Tyndale toward the evils of his day may well be summarized by these, his words:

If any man build thereon 'timber, hay, or stubble,' (which are all one, and signify doctrine of man's imagination, traditions, and fantasies, which stand not with Christ when they are judged and examined by the scripture,) he shall suffer damage.¹

These conditions, Tyndale felt had arisen out of a false sense of values. He wrote concerning the priests of the day:

Whatsoever they read in Aristotle, that must be first true; and to maintain that, they read and tear the scriptures with their distinctions. . . wherefore I have taken in hand. . . to bring scripture unto the right sense.² (i.e., the vernacular.)

Tyndale sensed that the clerics of the day were themselves ignorant of the Scripture, and that what little they did know they distorted before the people. He believed that, "God hath appointed in the Scripture how we should serve him and please him."³ On this basis, he would then ask, "How. . . can we put in practice, use and exercise (God's Word) upon our children and household when we are violently kept from it and know it not?"⁴

He said that "We must apply the medicine of the scripture, every man to his own sores."⁵ He openly accused the religious leaders of keeping the scriptures hidden, so that the sores of men would not be healed, so that people would follow them in blindness for the aid they hoped for but failed to receive. In speaking against the papists he wrote:

A 1000 books had they rather to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrines, than that the scripture should come to light. For as long as they may keep that down, they will

.

1. Tyndale, Treatises, p. 115.
2. Ibid., p. 46.
3. Ibid., p. 337.
4. Ibid., p. 145.
5. Writings of Tindal, op. cit., p. 275.

so darken the right way with the mist of their sophistry. . . .
 And with wresting the scripture unto their own purpose, clean contrary unto the process, order, and meaning of the text. . . .
 which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because I had perceived by experience that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the scriptures were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue.¹

(2) The Effect of the Translation

Professor May writes that in 1525 or 1526 the first printed New Testament in England appeared. These copies were secretly transported to England by being placed in cases of merchandise. The common people received it gladly, while it was bitterly attacked by the ecclesiastical authorities.²

Sir Thomas More was authorized to read this translation, and the other works of Tyndale, and to write an answer. This was forthcoming in 1528. The main objection raised by More seems to be that the translation was not authorized. This, however, was not true of all the ecclesiastical organization, for there were many opposed to the translation because it would enlighten the minds of people now in subjection.³

The difference between More and Tyndale here is shown. More was not ready to abandon the authority of the Church completely.⁴ He agreed as to the pre-eminence, necessity, and profit of the Scriptures; but he also insisted that the Church taught many things not in writing that are valid. Herein lay the real distinction between the Oxford and the Cambridge Reform Movements -- the acceptance of a partial or an absolute authority of the Scripture.

.

1. Ibid., p. 3.
2. Cf. May, op. cit., p. 22.
3. Cf. Campbell, op. cit., p. 110.
4. Ante, p. 61.

c. His Teachings Concerning the Authority of Scripture

The authority of the Scripture was the basis of his entire message. In his preface to the "Five Books of Moses," Tyndale wrote:

I submit this book, and all other that I have either made or translated, or shall in time to come. . . unto all them that submit themselves unto the Word of God, to be corrected of them. . .¹

In another instance, having completed an argument against the ceremonial sacraments of the Church, he wrote: "If any can say better, or improve this with God's word, no man shall be better content therewith than I."² Not only did he submit the teachings of others to the scrutiny of the Scripture, but his own as well.

(1) Used to Refute Error

In the "Prologue to Genesis" Tyndale writes:

The Scripture is a light, and sheweth us the true way, both what to do and what to hope for; and a defence from all error. . . Seek therefore in the scripture as thou readest it, first the law, what God commandeth us to do; and secondly, the promises, which God promiseth us again. . . Then seek ensamples. . .³

The editor of the Treatises of Tyndale writes that, "M. Tyndale, answering by Scriptures, maintained the truth, and reproveth . . . false opinions."⁴ Tyndale himself also wrote: "What is the cause that we damn some of Origen's works, and allow some? . . . How know we that St. Augustine. . . wrote many things amiss at the beginning? . . . Verily by the Scriptures."⁵ On the basis of what was recorded in Scripture, Tyndale was assured that he had a valid right to refute

.

1. Tyndale, Treatises, op. cit., p. 396, 397.
2. Ibid., p. 285.
3. Ibid., p. 399.
4. Ibid., p. xvii.
5. Ibid., p. 154.

the earlier teachings of the Church. He had established a dicotomy of dogma: that of the world, and that of God. On this basis he wrote:

" (The) pope's doctrine is not of God. . . (because it) is so agreeable unto the world."¹

He wrote:

We are bound to look in the scripture, whether our fathers have done right or wrong, and ought to believe nothing without a reason of the scripture and authority of God's word.²

The Scripture is the touchstone that trieth all doctrines, and by that we know the false from the true.³ (In fact, it is) the nature of God's word. . . to fight against hypocrites.⁴

(2) Used to Establish Truth

Throughout the treatises and various writings of Tyndale, one notices the repeated use of such phrases as "scripture speaketh," "the scripture saith," or "God wills." He wrote: "Seek the word of God in all things, and without the word of God do nothing, though it appear ever so glorious, Whatever is done without the word of God, that count idolatry."⁵

Tyndale used the Scripture as his authority in promulgating various doctrines. His writings on the doctrine of sin are typical of his use of the Scripture as the basis for his argument.

Sin defined on (the) basis of scripture is not that outward work only committed by the body, but all the whole business, and whatsoever accompanieth, moveth, or stirreth unto the outward deed. . . The scriptures looked singularly unto the heart, and unto the root and original fountain of all sin; which is unbelief in the bottom of the heart.⁶

.

1. Ibid., p. 131.

2. Ibid., p. 330.

3. Ibid., p. 398.

4. Ibid., p. 133.

5. Writings of Tyndale, p. 62.

6. Tyndale, Treatises, op. cit., p. 489.

Testifieth the scripture, and it is true, that we are by inheritance heirs of damnation.¹ (But yet) If any man have sinned . . . if he repent and believe the promise, we are sure by God's Word that he is loosed and forgiven in Christ.²

(3) Used as a Valid Historical Record

There was no doubt whatsoever in the mind of Tyndale that the historical sections of the Bible were authoritative and authentic. He constantly used events and characters as illustrations for his teaching, and remarks, ". . . of like testimonies is all the Scriptures full."³

In his "Prologue to the Prophet Jonas," he said:

The Scripture containeth three things in it: first, the law, to condemn all flesh; secondarily, the gospel, that is to say, promise of mercy. .⁴., and thirdly, the stories and lives of . . . scholars. . .

In speaking of the historic validity of the Scripture, one notes that Tyndale very clearly asserted that he found no basis in the Scripture for the notion that Peter was the first pope. That doctrine is to ". . . abuse the scriptures, and to mock with God's word."⁵

d. His Persecution

William Tyndale even considered the Scripture a basis for understanding his persecution while in the service of God. In a sermon, he said: "The Jews also. . . slew Stephen of a good zeal; because he proved by the Scripture, that God dwells not in churches or in temples made with hands."⁶ He used this as an analogy that men were killed during his own day because they were convinced of a truth on the basis

.

1. Ibid,,p. 64.
2. Ibid,,p. 220. (Italics mine)
3. Ibid,,p. 139.
4. Ibid,,p. 449.
5. Ibid,,p. 208. cf. pp. 208-216.
6. Tyndale, Writings, op. cit., p. 65.

of Scripture that the religious leaders would not heed.

His testimony to the authority and value of the Scripture cannot be more beautifully and typically summarized than by these words:

He that is not ready to give his life for the maintainance of Christ's doctrine against hypocrites, with whatsoever name or title they be disguised, the same is not worthy of Christ, nor can he be Christ's disciple. . . Nevertheless we must use wisdom . . . in defending the word of God.¹

2. The Work of Miles Coverdale

a. His Early Life

Miles Coverdale was born in about 1488 in the district of Coverdale, Yorkshire. He attended Cambridge and was admitted to the priesthood in 1514, entering the monastery of the Austin Fathers at Cambridge. After a short while Coverdale gave up his monastic habit to devote himself to evangelistic preaching. As a reformer he was less virulent than Tyndale, and did not arouse as much antagonism. At the same time he had many powerful friends, under whose patronage he did much work.²

Many potential Reformers were to be persecuted in the reign of Henry. The first to be condemned was Dr. Barnes. After several years in prison, he made his way to Antwerp, where he was later joined by Coverdale. At this time copies of Tyndale's New Testament were being smuggled into England, although they were being suppressed as far as possible. James Moffat writes:

That learned politician, Cuthbert Tunstall, now bishop of London, denounced the 'many children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness wandering from

.

1. Ibid., p. 160.

2. Cf. May, op. cit., p. 32.

the way of truth and catholic faith,' who, 'craftily have translated the New Testament into our English tongue.'¹

There is actually little data concerning Coverdale's eleven-year exile. There is great likelihood that he met Tyndale who was also on the continent, and perhaps it was from him that he received the inspiration to go on into further work with the Scripture.

b. His Translation of the Bible

In 1535 Coverdale had published his translation -- the first edition of the whole Bible in English.² The work of Coverdale was largely second-hand, from the Vulgate and other Latin and earlier English versions of the Scripture, since he knew little or nothing about the original languages of the Bible. Tyndale, on the other hand, had translated the New Testament from its original language. Moffat quotes Coverdale as having said: "I have with a clear conscience. . . purely and faithfully translated this out of five sundry interpreters."³

In the introduction to his Bible, Coverdale wrote that the pope feared that if the people became acquainted with Scripture, his authority would be usurped. He said:

(The pope keepeth the word of faith secret) lest his owne decretales and Decrees, his owne lawes and constitucions shulde come to none effecte: lest his intollerable exactions and usurpacions shulde lose theyr strengthe: lest it shulde be knowen what a thefe and murtherer he is in the cause of Christ, and how haynous a traytoure to God and man in defraudyng all Christen kynges and prynces of theyr due obedience. . .⁴

In order to give the people the knowledge they needed to combat the lies of the papacy, Coverdale had made his translation available to them.

.

1. James Moffat, Church History, Vol. V, No. 2, June 1936, p. 114.
2. Cf. Miles Coverdale, Memorials, p. 50.
3. Moffat, op. cit., p. 117; cf. also Gairdner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 248.
4. Coverdale, Memorials, op. cit., p. 52.

As was customary in that day, copies of the Bible were sent to the king for his approval. Whenever books were sent to him, he would give them to his advisors to read, and after hearing their opinions he would make his own decision regarding the worth of the book.

J.F. Mozley, in his recent study of the Coverdale Bible, cites a story told by William Fulke in 1583 concerning pressure brought upon the king regarding publication of the Bible. The advisors who had been given the Bible were called in, and were asked by the king what was their judgment of the translation. They answered that there were many faults therein.

'Well,' said the king, 'but are there any heresies maintained thereby?' They answered there were no heresies that they could find maintained thereby. 'If there be no heresies,' said the king, 'then in God's name let it go abroad among our people.'¹

It was not, however, until further translations were available in England that distribution became widespread. When the "Matthew Bible" appeared in England, Cromwell ordered every abbey to secure six copies and place them in convenient places.² He wrote: "Admonish each man to read it as the very Word of God, and the spiritual food of every man's soul."³

The editor of the Memorials of Coverdale has made this observation concerning the times:

. . . with the reading of the Bible, reformed opinions began to spread. Men naturally expected to find, in the commands of the

.

1. J.F. Mozley Coverdale and His Bibles, p. 113.
2. Cf. Ibid, p. 128.
3. William Dallman, Miles Coverdale, pp. 54, 55.

sacred writ, an authority for every part of that religion in which they had been brought up; and when on the contrary, they found many important ceremonies and tenets, which were not only un-sanctioned by, but as the opinion of some went, were perfectly contrary to the spirit of the Scriptures, they at first murmured, and then openly questioned the propriety of their observing them any longer.¹

As the Bible was made available, the people began to judge for themselves what was commanded by God and what was not, and acted accordingly.

c. His Teachings Concerning the Authority of Scriptures

Coverdale wrote that "The Scripture and worde of God is truly to every Christe man of lyke worthynesse and authorite, in what language so ever the holy goost speaketh it."² In his Prologue to the Bible, he instructed his readers to ". . . sit down at the Lord's feet and read his words. . . and. . . fashion. . . life and conversation according to the doctrine. . . therein."³

His method of using the Bible as an authority was the Historical-Grammatical Method. In his prologue he wrote:

. . . Whosoever thou art that readest scripture, if thou find ought therein that thou understandest not, or that appeareth to be repugnant, give no temerarious nor hast judgement thereof; but ascribe it to thine own ignorance, not to the scriptures. . . Again, it shall greatly help thee to understand scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and unto whom, with what words, at what time, to what intent, with what circumstance, considering what goeth before and what followeth after.⁴

He was attempting to get men to see the spiritual impact of the Scripture as a whole, rather than as a collection of "proof texts." Men were exhorted to earnestly study and to practice what was found in the Bible.

.

1. Coverdale, Memorials, op. cit., by the Editor, p. 110.
2. Ibid., p. 97.
3. Writings of John Fox, Bale, and Coverdale, p. 11.
4. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

To Coverdale, it was ". . . damnable to teach. . . against the express word of God. . ." ¹

Since he regarded the Scripture as authoritative, one can readily see that he used it as a basis for his teachings. For Coverdale, all scripture was written for doctrine and example, and must be heeded.

In a negative vein, Coverdale cited the Bible as his source of authority in denouncing many of the practices of the Church of his day. He wrote:

We have now the abomination of the pope's power of pardon, of masses for the dead and quick, of merits, power and intercession of saints in heaven, of worshipping their bones upon earth, of idols, and vain ornaments, pomp and pride of the Church, of hired singing and praying in the temple, and of the whole swarm of idle religious. All which things. . . are nothing but new alterations, pervertings, and contrary to all old ordinances, having no ground in God's word. . . ²

Specifically, he cited the prohibition of clerical marriage, abstinence of meats, as heresies that ". . . craftily crept into the Church." ³ Transubstantiation was a doctrine that ". . . had no foundation at all in the Scriptures. . ." ⁴ In regard to the sacrifice of the mass, he wrote: "By the institution of Christ we are not commanded to offer a sacrifice, but to take and eat the thing that is already offered and sacrificed." ⁵

On a more positive note, Coverdale used the Scriptures as his authority concerning the teachings about prayer. He wrote: "The Holy Scripture teacheth us, in all manner of necessities, as well

.

1. Ibid., p. 17.
2. Writings and Translations of Miles Coverdale, Edited by George Pearson, p. 82.
3. W.J. Heaton, The Bible of the Reformation, pp, 178-179.
4. Coverdale, Writings and Translations, op. cit., p. 454.
5. Ibid., p. 452.

bodily and ghostly, to call upon God, and to flee upon him."¹ And, even as Christ prayed for his disciples, ". . . thus ought we to pray for the ministers of the word. . . that they, being rooted. . . in love, be not vanquished nor overcome of the pleasures or threatenings of this world."² The Scripture, for Miles Coverdale, was the source of authority for all his teaching, both positive and negative.

d. His Persecution.

A summary of the attitude of Coverdale to the Bible may be drawn from these, his words:

. . . for so moch as all the scripture is wrytten for thy doctryne and ensample, it shal be necessary for the, to take hold upon it, whyle it is offred the, yee and with ten handes thankfully to receive it."³

Finally, under the reign of Mary, when he had been imprisoned for his "heretical leanings," Miles Coverdale affirmed with a final stand his conception of the worth of the Scripture over the authority of the Roman Church.

You shall see in us that we preached no lies, nor tales of tubs, but even the true word of God, for which we. . . will willingly, joyfully give our blood to be shed for confirmation of the same."⁴

C. Sermonic Exposition Used to Propagate the Authority of the Scripture

The translators of the Scripture were often not the same men who strove to propagate the message of the Bible by means of the spoken message. Neither Tyndale nor Coverdale were renowned men of the pulpit.

.

1. Ibid., p. 166.

2. Ibid., p. 251.

3. Coverdale, Memorials, op. cit., p. 65.

4. Writings of Coverdale, et al., op. cit., p. 3.

Nevertheless, the age was not devoid of men who held the populace enthralled by their messages. Hugh Latimer was the greatest of the public speakers of the age. He, together with Thomas Bilney who was responsible for his conversion, and Nicholas Ridley, his companion, will be studied in this respect.

1. The Work of Thomas Bilney

a. His Early Days and Conversion Through the Scripture

Thomas Bilney was born about the year 1500 in Cambridge where he was reared. He was noted for his physical frailty, but at the same time was conspicuous for his ability, energy, and devotion.¹ Geikie writes that he had found peace of mind unattainable by the monkish austerities in repute, but at last he came to a place of real conversion.²

Bilney wrote:

I heard speak of Jesus even then, when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus. I bought it, being allured rather by the Latin than by the word of God, for at that time I knew not what it meant; and at the first reading, as I well remember, I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul: 'It is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal.' This one sentence, through God's construction and inward working, did so exhilarate my heart, before wounded with the guilt of my sins and almost in despair, that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leaped for joy.³

Following this conversion experience, the religious life of Bilney was changed. His own words again speak best:

After this, the Scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey or the honeycomb; wherein I learned that all my

.

1. Lives of the British Reformers, p. 74.
2. Geikie, op. cit., p. 126.
3. Ibid.

labours, all my fasting and watching, all the redemption of masses and pardons, being done without truth in Christ, who alone saveth his people from their sins; these. . . I learned to be nothing else, but even. . . a hasty. . . running out of the right way.¹

Thomas Bilney had reached the place where he too realized that the religion of the day was antagonistic to the Scripture and for this reason was to be refuted.

b. His Work in Propagating This New Faith

Bilney's work was not in the eye of the public; most of it was of private nature. He was not the type of personality to take a foremost place.² Yet, to his efforts under God the Protestant Reformation owes the conversion of Hugh Latimer in 1524, who became one of the outstanding spokesmen of the reforming movement.

Until this time, Latimer was a strenuous supporter of the old system and zealously denounced all study of Scripture. But as Geikie forcefully writes:

Bilney intentionally selected him as his confessor, and insisting on his accepting the duty, threw such a flood of light on his honest heart as changed him from a stubborn Romanist to a hearty friend of the new opinions.³

The words of Hugh Latimer best describe the work of Bilney in this respect:

I was as obstinate a papist as any in England, insomuch that, when I should be made bishop of Durham, my whole oration went against Philip Melancthon and against his opinions. Bilney heard me at that time, and he perceived that I was zealous without knowledge; and he came to me afterward. . . and desired me. . . to hear his confession. I did so; and to say the truth, by his confession I learned more than before in many years. So from that time forward

.

1. Lives of British Reformers, op. cit., pp. 77, 78.
2. Cf. Geikie, Loc. cit.
3. Ibid, pp. 126, 127. cf. also Hulbert, op. cit., pp. 74, 75.

I began to smell the Word of God, and forsook the school doctors and such fooleries.¹

c. His Death at the Stake

Thomas Bilney was burnt on 10 March 1531, his heresy being that he preached against the pomp and pride of the clergy, and against images, pilgrimages, and the praying to saints as mediators.² Bilney was guilty of "insubordination to Church authority."³ In this respect, his burning helped to light the way towards the final liberation of the minds of men from the authority of the Roman Church.

2. The Work of Hugh Latimer

a. His Early Life and Conversion

Hugh Latimer was born about 1490, according to his own testimony, of the yeoman class, of a family that was struggling near poverty. He entered Cambridge in about 1505 where he was noted for scholarship.⁴

After completing his studies, he became a zealous worker in the present-day religious system, until his conversion through the influence of Bilney. Hugh Latimer wrote:

Master Bilney. . . was the instrument whereby God called me to knowledge; for I may thank him, next to God, for that knowledge that I have in the word of God.⁵

Latimer then became an earnest preacher of the faith he had once despised, instructing both student and public in the truths of the gospel. To him, many papish things came to be mere inventions of man to be opposed with all his might. Men ought to have the Holy Scripture for their rule of

.

1. Gairdner, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 395.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 393.

3. Ibid., p. 404.

4. R.M. Carlyle & A.J. Carlyle, Hugh Latimer, p. 4.

5. Sermons by Hugh Latimer, Edited by George E. Carrie, Vol. I, p. 334.

faith, not the promulgations of a demonic papacy.¹

In 1529, Latimer preached two sermons known as the "Sermons on the Card," in which he proposed to explain how his hearers could play with Christ's cards so as to be winners. His preaching caused such a stir that he was summoned to preach before the King. Immediately royal favor was his, and in the following year he was made one of the royal chaplains.² He used the influence of this position in the cause of reform, going so far as to write to the King protesting an order that the New Testament be burned. This letter, filled with exhortations based on the Scripture, contained these words: "I must show forth such things as I have read and learned in Scripture, or else be of those who provoke the wrath of God. ."³ The grandeur of his writings so influenced Henry, that not only was there no disfavor, but even the Scripture began to have greater freedom. Finally, in 1534, through the influence of Cranmer and Queen Anne, he was elevated to the Bishopric.⁴

b. His Preaching Using the Authority of Scripture

Buchland writes concerning his preaching:

The simple expositions of Holy Scripture which so often supplies the substance of Latimer's sermons came to hearers of the period with a freshness it could not have for. . . audiences today. But at Latimer's lips such an exposition was never dull and never impractical.⁵

(1) Denouncing the Evils of the Church

Latimer denounced purgatory, the abuse of the images, relics, ceremonies, and masses. He urged instead a practical godliness based on

.

1. The Works of Nicholas Ridley, Edited by Henry Christmas, p. 113.
2. Cf. Beckett, op. cit., pp. 129, 130.
3. Select Sermons and Letters of Hugh Latimer, Edited by William M. Engles p. 303.
4. Cf. Geikie, op. cit., pp. 230-232.
5. Selected Sermons of Hugh Latimer, Edited by Augustus Robert Buchland, op. cit., p. vii.

the study of Scripture.¹ He said: "By continual study of Scripture. . . God hath delivered me (from superstition.)" And again, "In God's Word we should stand fast, but not in popery."²

Demaus writes that what Latimer tried to show was that many of the theological dogmas of the Church belonged to a category of "voluntary things." He considered these dogmas to be of far less importance than the plain duties which God had commanded in Holy Scripture.³ For example, in his study of purgatory, he had gathered together a number of passages from the Fathers that demonstrated the fact that there was great diversity of opinion among them. He concluded from this evidence that he had better use the Scripture, and not the Fathers, in formulating his belief concerning this "dogma." In fact, Demaus says that he soon reached the place where he began to wonder if purgatory was not merely a device ". . . to pick men's purses and totally devoid of Scriptural sanction."⁴

(2) Positive Teachings from Scripture

The attitude of Hugh Latimer to the Scripture is well demonstrated in the words of his first sermon before King Edward VI:

The excellency of this word is so great, and of so high dignity, that there is no earthly thing to be compared unto it. The author thereof is great, that is, God himself, eternal, almighty, everlasting. The Scripture, because of him, is also great, eternal, most mighty and holy. There is no king, emperor, magistrate, and ruler, of what state soever they be, but are bound to obey this God, and to give credence unto his holy word.⁵

The following words from the sermons of Hugh Latimer give an insight into his conception of the authority of the Scripture:

.

1. Cf. Geikie, op. cit., p. 281.
2. Sermons by Hugh Latimer, Vol. II, p. 482.
3. Cf. Robert Demaus, Hugh Latimer, pp. 119-121.
4. Ibid., p. 127., cf. also Carlyle, op. cit., p. 92.
5. Sermons by Hugh Latimer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 85.

All things written in God's book are most certain, true, and profitable for all men. . .¹ All things that are written in God's book, in the Bible book, in the book of the holy Scripture, are written to be our doctrine.²

Therefore:

Let us keep ourselves within the hedges of God's holy word, so that all our doings may be agreeable unto the same; and then, if when we agree with God's word, the world will needs be offended with us, let us not care for that, for they hurt not us, but themselves.³

c. His Trial and Death

During most of Latimer's life, there had been no conflict with the crucial Roman tenet concerning the real presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament. Later, however, he had changed toward the spiritual view. Under Queen Mary, this was the decisive question in the heresy trials. When he, together with Ridley and Cranmer, had been imprisoned in the tower, awaiting formal trial in regard to this doctrine, he further substantiated his view. In the words of Carlyle:

They spent great part of their time in carefully re-reading the New Testament, searching for any proofs of the Romish doctrine of the corporal presence, 'but after all, they could find no presence but a spiritual, nor that the Mass was any sacrifice for sin.'⁴

At his trial, Latimer affirmed his long study, seeking for the truth from the Scripture by saying:

I have read over of late the New Testament three or four times deliberately; yet can I not find there neither the popish consecration, nor yet their transubstantiation, nor their oblation, nor their adoration, which be the very sinew and marrow bones of the mass.⁵

.

1. Ibid, p. 87.
2. Ibid, p. 59.
3. Ibid, p. 78.
4. Carlyle, op. cit., p. 156.
5. Ridley, op. cit., p. 112.

The popish ecclesiastics exhorted him to recant, but he refused, saying: "I would rather live than die; but seeing they be directly against God's word, I will obey God more than man, and so embrace the stake."¹ When taken to the stake, Latimer demonstrated his courage and faith with these never to-be-forgotten words addressed to Ridley, the fulfillment of which was nearer than he thought: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."²

3. The Work of Nicholas Ridley

a. His Early Life and Rise to Prominence

Dr. Nicholas Ridley was born in the early part of the sixteenth century; the exact date is uncertain. He attended Cambridge where he had an exceedingly successful college career. He spent some time studying in Paris before becoming a parish priest, in which capacity he attracted large multitudes.³ Ridley was later to become Bishop of Rochester and then of London. Beckett writes that ". . . so far as scholarship may best a man, he was the greatest of the Reformers," being a Greek scholar, a theologian, and a preacher of persuasive power.⁴

b. His Attacks on the Church Based on Scriptural Authority

Ridley's main attack was on the idea of the mass and the doctrine of transubstantiation. His basic tenet was always this: ". . . My doctrine . . . (is) grounded not upon man's imagination and decrees, but upon the infallible truth of Christ's gospel."⁵ Bishop Ridley was fully persuaded

.

1. Demaus, op. cit., p. 423.
2. Ridley, op. cit., p. 297.
3. Cf. Ibid, pp. i-iii.
4. Beckett, op. cit., p. 210.
5. Ridley, op. cit., p. 261.

that his beliefs were founded upon the Word of God, and for him that was basis enough.

When confronted with the doctrine he would answer: "I have plain answers, grounded upon God's word. . . (to) confound this fantastical invention. . ." ¹ He uses the authority of Acts 2, and Acts 20, to show that the Lord's supper was the breaking of bread. While concerning the Romish Mass ". . . which is used at this day, or the lively sacrifice thereof, propitiatory and available for the sins of the quick and the dead, the holy Scripture hath not so much as one syllable." ² Concerning the corporeal presence, he said, "Transubstantiation is clean against the words of the Scripture." ³

Ridley also maintained that "God's Scripture in no place commands the use of images, but in a great number of places doth disallow and condemn them." ⁴ He said further:

God's holy word is blotted and razed out of Churches, and sticks and stones are set up in place thereof. God commanded his word to be so ordered, that it might be had in continual remembrance at all times, and in every place; and on the other side he forbad images and idols. . . ⁵

Ridley held that "there ought no doctrine to be established in the Church of God which dissented from the Word of God." ⁶ With this thought as his basis, he taught that the Scripture was the only valid source of authority for all men.

.

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 207.
3. Ibid., p. 171.
4. Ibid., p. 85.
5. Ibid., p. 52.
6. Ibid., p. 197.

c. His Death at the Stake

The editor of his sermons writes that as he thought of his impending death, he used as his strength the words from Matthew, Luke, Paul, and Peter.¹ While at the stake, he said: "I will never deny my Lord Christ, and his known truth: God's will be done in me."²

Concerning both Latimer and Ridley (which could also be said about Bilney), Christmas has well written:

They. . . have joyously finished their course, testifying with their blood God's eternal truth unto the world: testifying. . . the mighty power, the sufficiency and sincerity of God's written word, and the comfort exhibited by the same to all faithful.³

D. Interpretation of Scriptural Authority in Doctrine
by Thomas Cranmer

1. His Early Life

Thomas Cranmer was born in 1489, the son of a gentleman, at Aplacton, in Nottinghamshire. Little is known concerning his boyhood, except that following his father's death, which occurred when Thomas was fourteen years old, he was sent to Cambridge. There he stayed until he was twenty-two years of age, beginning then to study the writings of Erasmus and Luther. The editor of his Writings has said:

The writings of Erasmus removed blind reverence for papal authority, and those of Luther pointed out the doctrines of the gospels. His scriptural studies made him wise unto salvation, and showed him the necessity of trying the opinions of men by the standard of divine truth, while his acquaintance with the early fathers enabled him to meet, and to overcome the papists with their own weapons.⁴

.

1. Cf. Ibid, pp. 419-421.

2. Ibid., p. 295.

3. Ibid., p. 149.

4. Writings of the Rev. Thomas Cranmer, p. 2 (Editor's Comment)

While still in school, after studying the great controversies of religion, ". . . he perceived he could not rightly judge in such weighty matters without the knowledge of the Holy Scripture, before he was influenced with any man's opinions or errors."¹

Cranmer was later appointed examiner for the men going into the work of the Church. He would question the candidates out of the Scripture, and would not allow them to pass if he found they were ignorant in them.² As early as this, one can see the growth of respect for the authority of Scripture in the thinking of this young man.

2. His Rise to Prominence

While Henry VIII was in a quandry concerning his divorce proceedings, Cranmer, from his post at Cambridge, had pointed out to the king that there was serious question as to whether the marriage was valid at its inception, since there was doubt concerning the pope's power to remove the impediment by dispensation, for Henry's marriage to his brother's wife was prohibited by Church law. Now Cranmer was suggesting that all canonists agreed that the pope could not dispense with divine law, and therefore the marriage could be annulled, since it was never actually consummated in the eyes of God.³ The editor of his writings expresses it this way:

Cranmer took his stand upon Scripture ground, and founded his conclusions on the principle that the bishop of Rome had no authority to dispense with the Word of God. . . . The Word of God was referred to as the supreme authority.⁴

.

1. Lives of the Reformers, op. cit., pp. 120-121.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 122.
3. Cf. Henry Offley Wakeman, An Introduction to the History of the Church of England, pp. 210, 211.
4. Writings of Cranmer, op. cit., pp. 9, 10.

Even in the scandalous proceedings of a divorce case, Cranmer based his decision upon the validity of the Word of God as a higher authority than the word of the pope. The usurped power of the pope was, to him, something directly against the law of God. Actually, as Wakeman points out, the divorce suit of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon was not the cause, but merely the occasion of the break between England and Rome.¹

Now when Warham, the aged archbishop of Canterbury, died in 1532, Henry began to press his divorce suit to a conclusion by seeking a new archbishop who should be on his side. There was one man who was noted for his service and quality of mind for the post, Thomas Cranmer. On March 30, 1533, he was elevated to the primacy without having taken the customary oath to the pope.² In the words of LeBas: "From that moment, the chain which bound England to the chariot wheels of the Papacy, was, virtually, snapped asunder."³

3. His Work as Archbishop of Canterbury

a. Advancement of the Use of the Scripture

Following the break with Rome, Cranmer felt free to have the Scripture translated into the English language.⁴ In the Preface to the Bible which he had printed and sent to the churches, one finds these words:

. . . The Word of God is light - Thy Word is a lantern to my feet. It is food -- man shall not live by bread only, but by

.

1. Cf. Wakeman, op. cit., p. 197.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 210-211.

3. Charles Webb LeBas, The Life of Archbishop Cranmer, Vol. I, p. 65.

4. Writings of Cranmer, op. cit., p. 14.

every word of God. It is fire -- I am come to send fire on the earth, and what is my desire but that it be kindled.¹

He was strongly against a strict subjective approach to the study of the Scripture. Yet, he refused to accept the authority of the Church as the only interpreter of the Bible. Rather, he believed that the Holy Spirit would speak to man as he searched the Scripture. He writes:

Peradventure they will say unto me, How and if we understand not that we read which is contained in the books? What then? Suppose thou understandest not the deep and profound mysteries of scripture, yet can it not be but that much fruit and holiness must come and grow unto thee by the reading, for it cannot be that thou shouldst be ignorant in all things alike. For the Holy Ghost hath so ordered, and tempered the Scriptures that in them as well publicans, fishers, and shepherds, may find their edification, as great doctors their erudition. . . . The apostles and prophets wrote their books so that their special intent and purpose might be understood and perceived by every reader. . . . (and) God seeing thy diligence and readiness. . . . will himself vouchsafe with his Holy Spirit to illuminate thee, and to open unto thee that which was locked from thee.²

b. Use of Scripture as Authority

(1) Attack on the Church of Rome

In an early sermon Cranmer said: "I impugn not the true catholic faith which was taught by Christ and his apostles. . . . but I impugn the false papistical faith, invented, devised, and imagined by antiChrist, and his ministers."³ In the words of LeBas:

It is clear, therefore, that Cranmer considered the supremacy of the pope as nothing more than a mere human institution; an institution, therefore, which might justly be abolished, when once it was proved to be destitute of all sanction from the Word of God.⁴

.

1. Quoted by Heaton, op. cit., p. 233.
2. Writings of Cranmer, op. cit., pp. 77, 78.
3. Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer, Edited by John Edmund Cox, Vol. I, p. 10.
4. LeBas, op. cit., (Vol. II) p. 251.

Cranmer makes special attack on the use of idols and images in the churches. On the basis of Scripture, he makes the observation that: ". . . (The pope and his prelates) as though they were wiser than God, will teach men to worship him with images, although the same be utterly forbidden by God throughout the whole course of his holy scriptures."¹

As was true with the other reformers, so for Cranmer, the crucial point of dispute came to be in regard to the Mass and the doctrine of the Corporeal Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. He felt that he had received light from the Holy Word regarding communion which had forced him to reject the doctrine of the Roman Church.² He said: "For as I have taught. . . so learned I the same of the holy scripture; . . .so was it universally taught. . . until the see of Rome. . . corrupted all together. . ."³

Cranmer said further:

The gross error of the papists is, of the carnal eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood with our mouths.

For they say that 'whosoever eat and drink of the sacrament of bread and wine, do eat and drink also with their mouths Christ's very flesh and blood, be they never so ungodly and wicked persons.' But Christ himself taught clean contrary in the sixth of John, that we eat him not carnally with our mouths, but spiritually with our faith. . .⁴

(2) Positive Teachings

He felt that it was the duty of every Christian to cleave steadfastly to the gospel, ". . . diligently to study and learn the word of God, and. . . abide by the same."⁵

.

1. Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer, op. cit., Vol. ii, p. 9.
2. Cf. Le Bas, op. cit., pp. 47,8, 147.
3. Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 12.
4. Ibid., p. 207.
5. Writings of Cranmer, op. cit., p. 200.

He said further:

In all matters of our Christian faith, written in holy Scripture, for our instruction and doctrine, how far soever they seem discrepant from reason, we must repress our imaginations, and consider God's pleasure and will, and yield thereto, believing him to be omnipotent; and that by his omnipotent power, such things are verily so as holy scripture teacheth.¹

4. His Apparent Triumph in Cause of Protestantism

After the death of Henry, when Edward VI had ascended the throne, it seemed that in its most radical form yet, Protestantism had triumphed. As Demaus put it: "Under Edward, Cranmer was the prime-mover towards perfecting the Reformation of the Church in England."² All who had the cure of souls as their work, were rapidly declaring an end of the power attributed to the bishop of Rome. Instead of acknowledging his power, they were appealing to the word of Scripture. Once each quarter year Cranmer ordered a sermon to be preached which would condemn the old superstitions as image-worship and would raise the glory of the Scripture for all to note.³

During this period the Church as an institution played a very small part, for actually a church with power was antagonistic to the inherent beliefs of Protestantism. As Parker has written:

. . . . if doctrine could be sufficiently derived by each believer from the reading of a self-authenticating Scripture, and if the sacraments did not confer grace, but were rather means of strengthening and confirming saving faith, then there was no need of a church as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture or as the dispenser of sacramental grace.⁴

.

1. Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 34.

2. Demaus, op. cit., p. 353.

3. Cf. Perry, op. cit., pp. 62, 63.

4. Parker, op. cit., p. 119.

However, time was working against the Reformers, for the life of Edward was in danger. As the king's health weakened, the problem of succession became acute. Mary was, by Henry's disposition, the next heir, and she was devoted to Romanism.

5. His Persecution and Death under Queen Mary

The blackest day in the life of Cranmer as a reformer came when he yielded to Mary and recanted his Protestant leanings. However, his recantation had not kept him from prison, since the Queen was bitter against the archbishop for his treatment of her mother. He, together with Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, had been condemned as heretics, and were imprisoned in the tower. There they encouraged each other and studied the Scripture anew.¹

Popery was once again in possession of the land. While in prison, Cranmer wrote to Mary asking permission to substantiate his beliefs; saying, ". . . by God's laws all Christian people be bounden diligently to learn his work, that they may know how to believe and live accordingly. ."²

At his trial, Cranmer was asked to subscribe to the Corporeal Presence, the transubstantiation of the elements, and the propriety and virtue of the Mass. He replied, "These were all false, and at variance with the Scripture."³

Although the archbishop had once recanted his "heretical" leanings, at the end he repented his recantation. His execution day be-

.

1. Cf. ante, p. 84.

2. LeBas, op. cit., II, p. 283.

3. Ibid., p. 169.

came then the shining day of his career as he said, "I refuse (the pope) as Christ's enemy and antiChrist, with all his false doctrine."¹ Because he had recanted his early faith in writing, Cranmer now repented so deeply that he thrust his hand into the flame first that it might be consumed before the rest of his body. The editor of his writings said: ". . . when the wood was kindled, and the fire began to burn near him, stretching out his arm, he put his right hand into the flame."²

E. The Consumation of the Reformation

In 1558, when Mary died, there was no certainty about which way religious matters would turn, even though there was great celebration in Protestant circles. The new queen had conformed under Mary, but at the same time was known not to share in her half-sister's rigid Catholicism.³ Protestantism was in the definite minority, with many of those who had at one time expressed their beliefs in the Reformation having returned to Romanism under the persecutions of Mary. Even though Protestantism was in the minority, in the words of Geikie, ". . . the future of England belonged to it, for it meant freedom as opposed to slavish submission; the independence of the intellect and conscience, as opposed to the rule of a ghostly despotism over both."⁴ Geikie further says:

There was, in fact, an irreconcilable opposition between Romanism and Protestantism. . . The Romanist believed in the authority of the church; the Protestant in the right of private judgement: the one yielded his conscience absolutely to the priest, the other subordinated his to God alone. . . (For the Protestant) the one supreme

.

1. Writings of Cranmer, op. cit., p. 67.
2. Ibid., p. 67.
3. Cf. Parker, op. cit., p. 172.
4. Geikie, op. cit., p. 484.

depository of truth. . . was, not the priesthood, but the Bible. . . The Romanist, satisfied with the teaching of the Church, was contented to leave the Bible to the learned; the Protestant held that it was to be diligently and reverently studied by all, as the Word of God.¹

Within a few months of Elizabeth's accession, a group of religious leaders was authorized to revise the Prayer Book to remove the alterations made by Mary. On March 13, 1558, the Supremacy Bill was again passed and Elizabeth and her successors were declared the leaders of the Church in England. The pope was finally and forever dethroned in England. To demonstrate the length and breath of the reforming spirit, the acts against heresy were changed to the effect that heresy must be condemned by Scripture to be considered as such.²

F. Summary

The Cambridge Reformers were studied in three divisions: The new translators of the Scripture -- William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale; the expounders of the new faith -- Thomas Bilney, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley; and the ecclesiastical reformer, Thomas Cranmer. These men stood for the final and unequivocal authority of the Scripture. In the advancement of the great work of reformation, one can readily see that the movement was not one that depended upon the thinking of one man, but instead was a form of eclectic gathering of opinion, all of which, however, rested in the Word of God as its authority.

The writer has attempted to demonstrate that when the leaders of a movement were not only willing to set up doctrine, but were also willing to overthrow existing ecclesiastical law, only then was reformation

.

1. Ibid., pp. 484, 485.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 487-492.

possible. Perhaps the words of Cranmer addressed to John Calvin best speak for the entire Cambridge reform effort which succeeded in the overthrow of ecclesiastical authority in favor of Scriptural authority; he wrote: "We shall reform the Anglican Church to the utmost of our power, and take care to correct her doctrines and usages in accordance with the rule of Scripture."¹

.

1. G. Constant, *The Reformation in England*, p. 175.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

A. Summary

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate by means of the authority of their own words the English Reformers' use of the Scripture as the basis for their disagreements with the existing Holy Catholic Church, as governed by the Holy See of Rome.

This study began with an investigation into the thinking of John Wycliffe, upon whom much of the later rise of reforming spirit depended. In the midst of the darkness and corruption of the Papal Church, this man arose as a spark of light. He firmly held to the belief that were the pope and all his clerks to disappear from the face of the earth, his faith would not fail, for the truth of Christianity was to be found not in the words of a "Satan - inspired"¹ papacy, but upon the pages of Holy Writ.

John Wycliffe believed, as did the "Pore Priests" and Lollards who carried on his tradition, in the paramount and permanent value of the Bible and in its unconditional and absolutely binding authority. The teaching of the Church was not binding, nor were the traditions of the fathers or the creeds of the councils. The all-sufficient standard of appeals for the faith of the Christian was the inspired Word.

The Wycliffite movement, however, never formulated a system of belief. As a result, inner dissention, coupled with pressure from the ecclesiastical authorities, soon made the movement of little effect in

.....

1. Cf. Ante, p. 8.

the life of England. Although it cannot be questioned that there continued a Wycliffite tradition without a real break until the sixteenth century, it was so slight and attenuated that it exercised but little influence upon the later religious history of the country. Thus the tree of the reformation which had been growing for some years seemed to gradually wither away, leaving alive only its root which was embedded in the soil of the Scripture where it was to remain an entire century, before it was again to spring forth with new life.

Men of the sixteenth century began to realize that there was some discrepancy between certain of the teachings of the Church and the teachings of the Bible. In such a setting both the Oxford and the Cambridge Reforming movements sprang forth. The Oxford movement, led by Colet, Erasmus, and More, tried to correct the evils within the Church on the basis of Scriptural teaching, without violating the tenet of ecclesiastical authority. The processes of the church courts where scarcely a semblance of justice was preserved, the inordinate use of the weapon of excommunication, and the ignorance and corruption of the priesthood, were the causes for the rise of the Oxford movement towards reform. There was, however, no desire to change doctrine. Its leaders wanted both the Scripture and the Church to occupy places of honor and esteem as bases of authority in the religious life of the country.

In the labors of William Tyndale, the first of the Cambridge Reformers, the Lollard spirit was revived with new fervor. To him the English speaking world owes a debt of gratitude for his clear translation of the Scripture which became the foundation for the growth of the Reform movement. Here again was a return to the conception that

the Scripture alone was regarded as the touchstone of doctrine, and was in no way dependent upon the Church or upon secular wisdom for its interpretation. Tyndale's object was the putting of the source and fountain of all truth within easy reach of even the least educated readers, in order that they might form their own views of the gospel independently. The publishing of his edition of the Bible was the supreme event of the century, which watered the roots of the Wycliffe or Lollard movement, quickening the tree of the reformation which was soon to spring forth into full blossom.

Others of the Cambridge Reforming movement -- Coverdale, Bilney, Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer - continued to expound the Scripture until finally the crack which had been made between England and Rome under Henry VIII became an ever widening breach that was never again to be completely fused together.

In contrast to the reforming movement on the continent of Europe where there was one master-intellect whose thought moulded the form of religious belief, the English Reformers were many and in their eclecticism did not at first attempt to set up a creed. Archbishop Cranmer was the first to assert with a voice of authority that the main article of the charter of Protestantism was that the whole of God's Word was contained in the Scripture, and that tradition was of lesser value, for the fathers could never speak with the same authority as could the Scripture.

Following the death of Henry VIII, under whom the schism was made, it seemed that Protestantism in its most radical form was to triumph in England. Time, however, was working against the Reformers, for the young king, Edward VI, was never strong. As the king's health

weakened, the problems of succession became acute, for Mary, devoted to Romanism, was, by Henry's disposition, the next heir. When Mary ascended the throne, it was to be discovered that the fears of the Reformers had not been groundless. In her desire to return the land to the rule of the Roman Pontiff, the blood of many of the defenders of Protestantism was spilt.

Following Mary's reign of misery and disgrace, England was at last to reap the reward of her endurance. The accession of Elizabeth filled the nation with joy, as the people realized that England was once more free from the dark tyranny of Rome. The new queen claimed the right of the English Church to alter her own services, to modify her own organization, and to restate her own formularies, apart from the consent of the pope. Under Elizabeth the principle of reform that had been kept alive since the day of Wycliffe, the setting of the Scripture to its rightful place of authority, was again the rule of the Church. The Church of England was freed from Roman rule forever.

Protestantism exalted the Scripture as the supreme rule of faith and practice and made it accessible to all men, that they might interpret its teaching for themselves. It professed that salvation was not dependent upon human mediation or upon priestly acts, but flowed directly from the self-revelation of God in his Word.

B. Evaluation

In this study in which the rise of the English Protestant Reformation has been shown to have depended upon the authority of the Scripture, one will readily note that three possible conceptions of authority of Scripture have been demonstrated; two of which were doomed

to fail, and third was to succeed.

The Wycliffite movement was built upon the basis of a "chapter-verse" type of authority, which very often led to the individual's doing nothing more than citing a particular verse as a ground for his assertion. This type of teaching naturally became stilted and dissension could easily arise which caused the collapse of the movement. There was no attempt to establish a unified basis for the use of the Scripture as an authority for man's beliefs, and members of the movement often proved one another wrong on the basis of the same Bible.

The second attitude toward the Scripture is illustrated by the Oxford Reformers. They differed from the Wycliffites in that they accepted Scriptural authority only on a par with ecclesiastical authority. In so doing, not enough importance was placed upon the value of the Word of God, and the movement was not able to overcome the abuses of the Church. The failure here was due to a refusal to give an absolute authority to the Bible. These Reformers had a tendency to allow the Church the right to establish the dogmas by which they were to live. Because of this "middle-of-the-road" attitude toward the Scripture as authority, the movement disappeared into the darkness, leaving only its impression upon the Cambridge Reformers who came into the light after them.

It was under the Cambridge Reformers that a successful concept of Scriptural authority was voiced. Among these Reformers, there was not the tendency to go only part of the way as had been true of the Oxford Reformers, nor was there the individualistic approach of the Lollards by whom no set formulation of a creed was attempted.

Here, one will notice, the authority of the Bible was basic, and all to give way before its teachings. However, there was not much of the "chapter-verse" type of adherence as had been true before. The practice was rather to go through the Scripture seeking all reference to a certain topic or doctrine to discover the entire teaching, and then proclaim it as a valid belief for men.

This was the concept of the authority of the Scripture which was finally effective in establishing the Protestant Reformation in England -- the taking of the truths concerning a particular item from all parts of the Bible, and then formulating them together in relation to each other and the whole as the "true teaching of the Bible." To this concept and to the Reformers who promulgated it, Protestantism is greatly indebted.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

- Colet, John, An Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, (Translated with Introduction by Joseph Hirst Lupton), London, Bell & Daldy, 1873.
- Letters to Rudolphus (Translated by Joseph Hirst Lupton), London, George Bell & Sons, 1876.
- Statutes of Dean Colet, London, Whalebone Court, 1816?.
- Two Treatises on the Hierarchy of Dionysius, (Translated by Joseph Hirst Lupton), London, Bell & Daldy, 1869.
- Coverdale, Miles (Myles), Memorials of the Right Reverend Father in God, Myles Coverdale, London, Samuel Bagster, 1838.
- Writings and Translations of Miles Coverdale, (Edited for Parker Society by the Rev. George Pearson), Cambridge, University Press, 1844.
- Writings of John Fox, Bale, and Coverdale, London, Religious Tract Society, (no date).
- Cranmer, Thomas, Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer, (Edited for Parker Society by Rev. John Edmund Cox), Vol. I, Cambridge, University Press, 1844.
- Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, (Edited for Parker Society by Rev. John Edmund Cox), Vol. II, Cambridge, University Press, 1846.
- Writings of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Cranmer, London, Religious Tract Society, (no date).
- Erasmus, Desiderius, Selected Letters, Published in Huizinga, J., Erasmus of Rotterdam, N.Y., Phaidon Books, 1952.
- Latimer, Hugh, Select Sermons and Letters of Dr. Hugh Latimer, (Edited by William M. Engles), Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1842.
- Sermons by Hugh Latimer, Two Volumes, (Edited for Parker Society by Rev. George Elmer Carrière), Cambridge, University Press, 1844.
- More, Thomas, The English Works of Sir Thomas More, Vol. II, (Edited by W.E. Campbell), New York, Lincoln Macveggh, 1931.

- Ridley, Nicholas, *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, (Edited for Parker Society by Rev. Henry Christmas), Cambridge, University Press, 1843.
- Tindal (Tyndale) William, *Writings of Tindal, et al.*, London, Religious Tract Society, (no date).
- Tyndale, William, *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scripture by William Tyndale*, (Edited for Parker Society by Rev. Henry Walter), Cambridge, University Press, 1848.
- Wickliff (Wycliffe) John, *Writings of John Wickliff*, London, Religious Tract Society, (no date).
- Wycliffe, John De, *Tracts and Treatises of John De Wycliffe*, (Edited for the Wycliffe Society by Rev. Robert Vaughan), London, Blackburn and Pardon, 1845.

B. Secondary Sources

- Beckett, W.H., *The English Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, London, Religious Tract Society, 1890.
- Binns, Leonard Elliot, *Erasmus the Reformer*, London, Methuen & Co., 1923.
- Campbell, W.E., *Erasmus, Tyndale & More*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949.
- Carlyle, R.M., and Carlyle, A.J., *Hugh Latimer*, London, Methuen & Co., 1899.
- Coleman, A.M., *Six Liberal Thinkers*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1836.
- Constant, G., (Translated by Watkin, E.I.) *The Reformation in England*, N.Y., Sheed & Ward, 1942.
- Dallman, William, *Miles Coverdale*, St. Louis, Concordia, 1925.
- Dark, Sidney, *Five Deans*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1928.
- Demaus, Robert, *Hugh Latimer*, London, Religious Tract Society, 1869.
- Drummond, Robert Blackly, (Vol. I), *Erasmus, His Life and Character*, London, Smith, Elder and Company, 1873.
- Dugmor, C.W. (Editor), *The Interpretation of the Bible*, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1946.

- Froude, James Anthony, *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1895.
- Gairdner, James, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, (in four volumes), London, MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1908.
- Geikie, Cunningham, *The English Reformation*, New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1879.
- Heaton, W.J., *The Bible of the Reformation*, Second Edition, London, Francis Griffiths.
- The Holy Bible, The Heritage of Catholic Family Life*, Washington, Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1952.
- Huizinga, J., *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, N.Y., Phaidon, 1952.
- Hulbert, Eri B., *The English Reformation and Puritanism*, Chicago, University Press, 1908.
- Knight, Samuel, *The Life of Dr. John Colet*, London, J. Dawning, 1724.
- LeBas, Charles Webb, *The Life of Archbishop Cranmer*, London, Rivington, 1833.
- Leckler, Professor, *John Wycliffe and His English Precursors*, London, Religious Tract Society, 1878.
- Lives of British Reformers*, London, Religious Tract Society, (no date).
- Marriott, Sir John Arthur Monsome, *The Life of John Colet*, London, Methuen and Company, 1933.
- May, Herbert Gordon, *Our English Bible in the Making*, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1952.
- Moffat, James, *Church History*, Vol. V, No. 2, June 1936.
- Mozley, J.F., *Coverdale and His Bibles*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1953.
- Parker, T.M., *The English Reformation to 1558*, London, Oxford Press, 1950.
- Perry, George G., *History of the Reformation in England*, New York, Randolph, (no date).
- Poole, Reginald Cane, *Wycliffe and Movements for Reform*, New York, Randolph, 1888.

Rupp, E.G., *The English Protestant Tradition*, Cambridge, University Press, 1947.

Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VI, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1949.

Seebohm, Frederic, *The Oxford Reformers of 1498*, London, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1867.

Smith, Preserved, *Erasmus*, New York and London, Harper, 1923.

Wakeman, Henry Offley, (Revised by Oblard, Sidney Leslie) *An Introduction to the History of the Church of England*, London, Rivington's, 1927.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield, G. & C. Merriam Co., 1949.

Workman, Herbert B., *John Wycliffe*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1926.