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John Wycliffe.

When the Hundred Years War between England and France broke out in 1338, the Popes were at Avignon ; John Wycliffe a lad of fourteen was just entering Oxford ; Chaucer was ten year's old.

"A spirit of Restlessness and discontent was abroad, and rival claimants were competing far and wide for intellectual and social allegiance : Latin Christianity and Neutonic , tradition and Scripture, caninists and legists; realists and nominalists ; authority and con-science ; capital and labor ." Hoare 68

One of the greatfigures of the great conflict, perhaps the great-est was this same John Wycliffe, the last of the schoolmen and the first of the reformers." Wycliffe remained at Oxford , one of the great Schoolmen, until 1366. During that time England had been swept by the Black Death ^{or worse} Three times. 1349-50 -- 1362, and 1367. Very severe had been the disease. and it effect upon social conditions had been very marked. Statutes were passed in 1352 forbidding the laboring man from receiving any higher wage than he received before the Plague. In 1550 Pope Clement VI had enforced a pilgrimage to Rome to raise money through~~t~~ the sale of indulgences to pay the already overburden-some expenses of a spedthrift and licentious papal court. In 1362 Langland's Piers the Plowman came out indicating the state of mind that the people were in.

In 1366 Pope Urban made a demand upon England for certain arrears of tribute. Parliament repudiated his demand, and called John Wycliffe , schoolman , master of Balliol at Oxford for a formal defense of the stand which Parliament took. This intriduces Wycliffe in the political life during which his political treatises were written, quite as radical in character as the doctrines of the later reformation. In 1374 he was appointed one of the Royal Commissioners to meet with delegates from the Papacy in conference over the dis-tribution of ecclesiastical patronage . In 1377 he published his de-fense of the decision of Parliament "De Dominio" in the matter of the demands of Pope Urban .

In January 1377 the Papal Court returns from Avignon to Rome,

In this same year he is cited to appear at St. Paul's. Five papal bulls are ~~sent~~^{issued} against him. In a letter of ~~Pope~~^{Pope} Gregory XI to Archbishop Sudbury, and the Bishop of London, on May 1377, in which the pope calls for proceedings against Wycliffe he writes,--" We have heard forsooth with much grief by the intimation of many credible persons that John Wycliffe, recotr of the Church at Lutterworth in the diocese of Lincoln, prfessor of the sacred page ///does not fear to assert, profess and publicly proclaim certain propositions and conclusions which (albeit with certain change of terms) appear to breathe the perverse opinions and unlearned doctrine of Marsilius od Padua, and John of Jandun, of condemned memory."

But the university of Oxford reports as to the soundness of Wycliffe's Doctrine? Meanwhile Wycliffe sets in operation his order of Poor Priests, who went about the country preaching against the wealthy and overbearing priests, ~~XXXX~~ They proved a very effective agent in accomplishing the desired result. During this same momentous year in 1377 Wycliffe was consulted by Parliament as to whether the Peter's Pence should be paid. The next year he witnessed, (and it was the decisive factor in determining his attitude towards the Papacy,) he witnessed the Great Schism as it has been called, the spectacle of two or even three ~~Popes~~ Popes claiming succession to the Throne of St Peter. From that Moment the Papacy really lost its grip on European life. From now on a new purpose seems to have dominated this powerful man. His energies are not directed against the abuses of the papacy as against the institution itself. He continues organizing his poor Priests, and preparing a translation of the Bible. Against the claims of the Priests, and the Church, he is bringing the Bible to the eyes of the Anglo Saxon, aided and backed by his poor priests, many of whom as John Ball is Witness preached the doctrine of communism. King John was hard pressed for income and resorted to a Poll Tax to be collected by the clergy. The result was the Peasants Revolt. This caused Wycliffe to lose the support of the upper classes. He

He finished his translation of the first Complete English Bible ^{W-3}
in 1382. In 1384 he died.

The Peasants revolt had failed ; The poor priests were without leader,
and apparently all that Wycliffe had worked for was defeated and
dead, for in 1408 a statute was passed for bidding unauthorized Bibles.
In 1389 people in Leischester was compelled to stand in the public
square all day for having read in Wycliffe's Bible, and having held
to his doctrines. One more interesting fact to be noted is this,; that
for the most part the people who were interested in this Bible
Translating were Commons, not upper class folk. Wycliffe had written
in his "De officio Pastoralis" , - "As lords in England have the Bible
in French, so it were not against reason that they hadden the same in
English." Perhaps another point will also suggest the significance of
of this Translation of Wycliffe's John of Trevisa writes, - " So that
now ~~2~~ (1385) in all the Grammar Schools of England, Children leaveth
French and construeth and learneth in "atin. " Hoare 93