

WYCLIF'S DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE  
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIS  
DOCTRINAL AND SOCIAL IDEAS

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PART I

PROLEGOMENA

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

John Wyclif (c. 1330-1384) has been called the "Evangelical Doctor" in Bohemia in the fifteenth century, the "Morning Star of the Reformation" by John Bale, the sixteenth century English Reformer and historian, the "last of the scholastics" by the nineteenth century German scholar G.V. Lechler and "the Evening Star of Scholasticism" by Anthony Kenny.<sup>1</sup> Yet he remains a largely enigmatic figure. Despite the appearance of the critical edition of his writings from 1884 to 1924, the initial enthusiasm for Wyclif, whom the English might have claimed as their own rival to a Calvin or a Luther in the Reformed and Lutheran traditions, quickly waned. There were attempts to belittle his significance during the 1950s and 1960s. Even today, Wyclif still remains untranslated and unknown but to a small circle of academics, most of whom are in England.

This is astonishing, for in the United States Wyclif is revered as a translator. His name has been appropriated by an evangelical missionary

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<sup>1</sup>Gotthard Victor Lechler, John Wiclif and his English Precursors, trans. Peter Lorimer, 2 vols. (London: C. K. Paul, 1878); Anthony Kenny, Wyclif (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

organization. There is high praise for Wyclif among evangelical circles, given the Landmarker legacy, but little understanding of this figure.

Wyclif's De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae,<sup>2</sup> written between late 1377 and mid-1378, represents a mature work of the intermediate stage of his career.<sup>3</sup> The entire work may be thought of as a polemic against the nominalists who dominated the intellectual and ecclesiastical institutions of the England of his day. The work constitutes volume six of Wyclif's massive Summa Theologiae, which extended from 1375 to 1381 in its writing. The Summa Theologiae is a string of political, social, and theological writings. His earlier writings include

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<sup>2</sup>Henceforth abbreviated in the footnotes as Veritate. Because all of Wyclif's works besides his Triialogus have only one printed edition, we will not be giving publication information; the reader is referred to the bibliography for publication details. Most of Wyclif's works appeared in the twenty volume Wyclif Society edition. However, our references will be to the individual work only. References will give book number (not always corresponding to the volume of the work) in the work if applicable, chapter or sermon number, and page.

<sup>3</sup>We might classify Wyclif's early career as up to 1373. In the 1350s Wyclif, while studying in the Arts Faculty at Oxford, is very much attracted to the doctrines of the spiritual Franciscans and of the nominalists. In the early 1360s, Wyclif undergoes a "conversion," which includes a transition from nominalism to Augustinian realism. During the 1360s and early 1370s, Wyclif is mainly concerned with scholastic issues, and finishes his doctorate in theology. The intermediate portion of his career, 1374-9, is when Wyclif is at the height of his political influence, and when he writes his major works on dominion. 1380, the year in which he publishes his treatises on the Eucharist, marks another more polemical stage of his career and his increasing alienation from the ecclesiastical and civil authorities as well as from the mendicant orders and the intellectual establishment at Oxford. Our three-fold division of Wyclif's career coincides with that of S. H. Thomson, "The Philosophical Basis of Wyclif's Theology," Journal of Religion 11 (1930): 92. For convenience, we are providing a brief chronology of Wyclif's life in Appendix A.

his equally massive Summa de Ente; his Summa Logica; Logicae Continuatio; his scriptural commentaries of 1371 to 1376, a series of lectures whose time of composition overlaps that of the Summa Theologiae; his doctoral dissertation, the De Benedicta Incarnatione of 1372; and his De Divino Dominio of 1373-74.

Book I of the Summa Theologiae is the De Mandatis of 1375, which treats of the Decalogue in conflation with the two love commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The nominalist view that law is merely conventional and dependent on God's will is refuted.<sup>4</sup> Book II, the De Statu Innocentiae also of 1375, is a short exercise on the state of human being before the fall. Books III to V are books I to III of Wyclif's De Civili Dominio of 1375-77, a massive treatise that came under condemnation in 1377 by Pope Gregory XI. Book I of the De Civili Dominio is concerned with Scripture as the "law of Christ," dominion, and Christ's poverty, with the following two books dealing with the objections of a "certain Benedictine," disendowment, criticism of the monastic possessioners and many other ecclesiastical and political topics.

After the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif embarks on his ecclesiastical-political trilogy, the De Ecclesia of 1378-79, the De Officio Regis of mid-1379, and the De Potestate Papae of late 1379. Views implicit in the earlier six books of the Summa are laid out with greater precision. The final

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<sup>4</sup>Thus I can not agree with Kenny's assessment, Wyclif, 45, that this work is "non-controversial."

polemical trilogy, De Simonia (early 1380), the De Apostasia (late 1380), and the De Blasphemia (1381), were added to the Summa as an afterthought.

Important late works of Wyclif include his De Eucharistia of 1380, his Confession of 1381, his polemical writings against the mendicants and the Flanders crusade, the Trialogus of 1382, and the exegetical Opus Evangelicum of 1383-84, books III and IV of which constitute books I and II of De Antichristo, Wyclif's last work, left incomplete because of his death.

Wyclif's De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, which runs some one thousand pages in three volumes of the printed edition, is not an easy work to interpret. It does not treat the topics which are normally understood as bibliology or theological prolegomena in a narrow sense. Instead, the reader is exposed to a rambling discourse that touches upon issues such as the infallibility of Scripture, the interpretation of Scripture, the authority of Scripture versus tradition, metaphysics, christology, ecclesiology, dominion and ecclesiastical disendowment by the state, the relation of the two testaments of the Bible, the theology of history, and heresy. Thus in order to interpret Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture as presented in this work, we inevitably find ourselves touching upon the complex of his doctrinal and social ideas.

In this dissertation, we will argue the thesis that Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture, as presented in his De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, stems from his conscious appropriation of Augustinian metaphysical realism in the British

theological tradition of Robert Grosseteste; but it is also in continuity with other forms of later medieval sectarianism.<sup>5</sup> Wyclif's continuity with the social and doctrinal dissent of later medieval sectarians may be discovered in analyzing his views on salvation history, the sufficiency of Scripture, and christology, in all of which academic, metaphysical, and doctrinal concerns are melded with social influences on Wyclif. The order of the presentation is as follows. Part I, which extends from this chapter through chapter IV, considers the prolegomena to Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture. Chapter II deals with the history of scholarship on Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture; chapters III and IV deal with the academic and social Christian sources of Wyclif's thought.

Part II, containing chapters V to IX, is our exposition of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture. First we note that for the most part, Wyclif refers to the two-testament work we call the Bible, the codices or written text. However, this meaning of Scripture, Wyclif tells, is the fifth or least important meaning of Scripture. Wyclif understands "Scripture" to have five different meanings, the primary meaning being Christ as God, and the other meanings related to this meaning by means of what he calls "analogical equivocation." Thus chapter V deals with Wyclif's metaphysical approach to Scripture. We examine Wyclif's fivefold definition of Scripture, and his resulting views of Scripture's infallibility and perspicuity.

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<sup>5</sup>I will be defining "sectarian," along with "curialist," "conciliarist," and "national church movement" in chapter IV.

In chapters VI to IX we shift our attention from the metaphysical aspects of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture in order to take into account social and historical influences on Wyclif's doctrinal views. Chapter VI concerns Wyclif's understanding of the relation of Scripture to history. Wyclif is influenced by sectarian literalist understandings of the state of innocence and the primitive church and their implications for church reform. Like the Waldensians, Franciscans, and conciliarist thinkers before him, Wyclif's understanding of history leads him to criticize the endowment of the church, symbolized by the Donation of Constantine. He applies a modulated apocalyptic rhetoric in criticizing the papacy, not going as far as the millennialist expectations of the instigator of the Peasants' Revolt, John Ball. His use of apocalyptic is thus analogous to Ockham's in relation to the spiritual Franciscans and Provençal Beguines.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter VII treats of Wyclif's doctrine of the "sufficiency of Scripture," or the "Scripture principle." It is argued that Wyclif perpetuates the later medieval "Scripture principle"; the practical, biblical approach to theology at Oxford contrasts with the theoretical, systematic approach to theology on the Continent and coincides with sectarian employment of Scripture both on the Continent and in England in criticizing tradition, the Catholic hierarchy, and sacramental theology. Wyclif appropriates and integrates both the Thomistic

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<sup>6</sup>Parallels might also be drawn to Hus in relation to the Taborites; Luther in relation to Thomas Münzer and the Peasants' War.

and the Franciscan understandings of theology. Against Gordon Leff, I argue that Wyclif does indeed hold to a "Scripture principle"; patristic, creedal, and canon law authorities cited by Wyclif are used in elucidative or eristic roles, rather than as authorities equal to Scripture. Finally, Wyclif's criticism of Catholic ecclesiology and sacramental theology as of the time of his writing the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae in 1378 will be considered as illustrating how they reflect the views of a "national church leader."

Wyclif identifies Christ in his divinity, the Word of God, as the primary meaning of "Scripture." Chapter VIII deals with the social and doctrinal aspects of Wyclif's christology in relation to his doctrine of Scripture. Wyclif's appreciation for the poverty of Christ establishes a basis of criticism of the papacy, much like his conciliarist and sectarian predecessors. It also is the basis of his formulating a dyophysite Augustinian christology in continuity with his Franciscan predecessors; yet, in defending the authority of Scripture, he is sharply critical of the Nestorian tendencies, nominalist scepticism, and "sophistical" speculations arising from the Franciscan christological tradition. The most direct influence of Wyclif's christology on his view of Scripture is that, in defending the impeccability of Christ as the first meaning of Scripture, he defends the infallibility of Scripture. As a consequence, Wyclif's doctrinal formulation of christology, in criticizing the nominalists and defending

Scripture's divine origin, does not entirely escape the Cyrillian tendencies of medieval scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas.

Chapter IX considers Wyclif's later work, the Triologus, which represents a further radicalization of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture. His metaphysical conception of Scripture is simplified. His criticism of the wealth of the church now includes a criticism of the very basis of monastic life. His emphasis on the literal reading of Scripture is continued; the allegorical interpretation is omitted. Wyclif's "Scripture principle," quite apart from metaphysical implications, is the basis for his radical criticism of the medieval Catholic view of the sacraments. The number and nature of sacraments is questioned; the doctrine of transubstantiation is rejected, and hence the sacerdotal power of the church is abolished; lay persons may administer the eucharist.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF WYCLIF SCHOLARSHIP

No monograph has appeared on either Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture per se or on Wyclif's work De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae. However, many general works and articles have appeared which make significant contributions to understanding Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

In the history of the interpretation of the later middle ages, one can hardly ignore the seminal contributions of German scholarship from the late nineteenth century to the First World War, both in doctrinal history and in social history and heresiology. Gotthard Victor Lechler's work<sup>2</sup> provides the only systematic summary of Wyclif's doctrines that as yet exists; like the work of Friedrich Kropatscheck,<sup>3</sup> it seems to have the shortcoming of interpreting Wyclif from the perspective of Luther and the seventeenth century Protestant

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<sup>1</sup>The best general bibliographic survey on the literature on Wyclif up to 1971 is J. A. Tuck, introduction to the reprint edition of England in the Age of Wycliffe by George Trevelyan (London: Longman, 1972), ix-xxxvii. For up to date bibliographical information of fourteenth-century English Theology, William J. Courtenay, Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth Century England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), is indispensable.

<sup>2</sup>Lechler, John Wiclif and his English Precursors.

<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Kropatscheck, Das Schriftprinzip der lutherischen Schriften, vol. 1, Die Vorgeschichte. Das Erbe des Mittelalters (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1904).

scholastics. Kropatscheck gives an excellent survey of the Scripture principle among later medieval sectarians.

Rudolf Buddensieg is the editor of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, which appeared 1905-7 in the Wyclif society series of Wyclif's works. In the introduction to his critical edition, Buddensieg is mainly concerned with showing how Wyclif's Augustinianism leads him to anticipate reformation ideas of Scripture and faith.<sup>4</sup> Johann Loserth's work<sup>5</sup> shows the influence of Wyclif's doctrines on Hus, although a claim for Hus's greater originality is defended by more recent scholars such as Gordon Leff.<sup>6</sup>

As for more general works by German scholars of the period, Harnack's monumental work<sup>7</sup> is notable for his relating the history of doctrine to institutional development and conflict. Harnack interprets the Ritschlian notion of "piety" as embracing both sectarian and monastic reforming concerns, with mysticism being one of the possible consequences of piety. He assumes that

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<sup>4</sup>Rudolf Buddensieg, introduction to Veritate, XV-LIV. See also Rudolf Buddensieg, Johann Wiclif und Seine Zeit (Halle: Verein für Reformationgeschichte, 1885).

<sup>5</sup>Johann Loserth, Wyclif and Hus, trans. M.J. Evans (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884).

<sup>6</sup>Gordon Leff, "Wyclif and Hus: a Doctrinal Comparison," in Wyclif in his Times, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 105-25.

<sup>7</sup>Adolf Harnack, History of Dogma, translated from the third German edition by Neil Buchanan, 7 vols (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958); idem, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, 4th ed., 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1909-10).

the Waldensians, Wyclif, and the Hussite reformation issue into one of the threefold outcomes of the history of dogma, which he calls "Socinianism" (a very misleading term to describe the variety of sectarian movements of the sixteenth century). Harnack notes Wyclif's criticism of the Catholic sacramental theology and of the Catholic hierarchy, and his Augustinianism. Reinhold Seeberg<sup>8</sup> attempts to rehabilitate the place of Scotus and the Protestant Reformed tradition in the doctrinal tradition. Seeberg notes Wyclif's social reform, his "evangelical" understanding of Scripture, and his contribution to the varying eucharistic views of the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> Ernst Troeltsch,<sup>10</sup> on the other hand, is more interested in social than in doctrinal history. He asserts that the "sect" tradition of the Waldensians, Franciscans, Wyclif, and the Hussites was a reaction against the Thomistic social synthesis of "natural law."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Reinhold Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 3 vols. in 1, translated from the first German edition by Charles E. Hay (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1952); idem, Dogmengeschichte, 5 vols., 4th ed. (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1930; reprint Basel: Benno Schawe & Co, 1960); idem, Die Theologie des Johannes Duns Scotus (Leipzig: 1900; reprint, Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1971).

<sup>9</sup>Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 2: 181-85, 206-11.

<sup>10</sup>Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 2 vols., trans. Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931); idem, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 1, Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen (Tübingen: Mohr, 1912).

<sup>11</sup>Troeltsch, Social Teachings, 1:328-82; idem, Soziallehren, 1:358-426. In the second volume of this work, Troeltsch asserts that the Calvinist "church"

Most of the original scholarship on Wyclif since the turn of the century has been carried on by British and some American scholars. In the turn of the century English scholarship, George Trevelyan's England in the age of Wycliffe<sup>12</sup> is a masterful piece of political and social history. It treats of Wyclif in his historical and social context, not primarily as a theologian. Trevelyan considers the Good Parliament, John of Gaunt, the Poll Tax, the Peasant's Revolt, and the history of the Lollard movement. Like McFarlane and Leff, Trevelyan erroneously thinks that Wyclif abandoned his communitarian views in his late period.

Kenneth McFarlane's work on Wyclif<sup>13</sup> has helped shape recent debates. McFarlane goes to the opposite extreme from Wyclif's editors who tended to be hagiographic; instead, he focusses on Wyclif's weaknesses. Further, he attempts to "demythologize" Wyclif's role as a proto-reformer. He denies that Wyclif had any connection to the Lollard movement, a peculiar

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type was more successful than Lutheranism in assimilating the social criticism of the sectarians. For Troeltsch, Luther marks no significant break in the history of Christianity, but remains within the medieval mindset. The eighteenth century Enlightenment is proposed by Troeltsch as the alternative significant break in Christian history.

<sup>12</sup>George Trevelyan, England in the Age of Wycliffe, with an introduction by J. A. Tuck (London: Longman, 1972). The original edition appeared in 1899.

<sup>13</sup>Kenneth Bruce McFarlane, John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity (London: English University Press, 1952).

claim influencing Leff but effectively refuted by Anne Hudson and A. G. Dickens.

William Mallard's doctoral thesis<sup>14</sup> makes a significant contribution to Wyclif's understanding of the importance of Scripture in his preaching, but unfortunately is limited to Wyclif's English writings. Martin Schmidt<sup>15</sup> notes the influence of Augustine's christology on Wyclif and Wyclif's criticism of Catholic ecclesiology.

Wyclif studies have benefited greatly from the explosion of interest in the late medieval period over the last thirty years. The Catholic interpreters George Tavard<sup>16</sup> and Michael Hurley<sup>17</sup> attempt to show the inconsistency of Wyclif's sola scriptura approach to Scripture. A more sympathetic Catholic

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<sup>14</sup>William Mallard, "An Historical Critique of John Wyclif's Role in the Preaching Tradition explicated in Terms of his English Sermons and Their Express Attitudes Toward Biblical Interpretation and the Vernacular Scriptures" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1956). See also idem, "John Wyclif and the Tradition of Biblical Authority," Church History 30 (1961): 50-60.

<sup>15</sup>Martin Schmidt, "John Wyclifs Kirchenbegriff. Der "Christus humilis" Augustins bei Wyclif," in Gedenkschrift für D. Werner Elert, ed. Friedrich Hübner et al. (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), 72-108.

<sup>16</sup>George H. Tavard, "Holy Church or Holy Writ: A Dilemma of the Fourteenth Century," Church History 23 (Summer 1954): 195-204; Holy Writ or Holy Church, (London: Burns & Oates, 1959).

<sup>17</sup>Michael Hurley, SJ, "'Scriptura Sola': Wyclif and his Critics," Traditio 16 (1960): 275-352.

interpretation of Wyclif is made by Paul de Vooght,<sup>18</sup> who denies, however, that Wyclif holds to a distinctive Scripture principle. The late Beryl Smalley has done much to clarify the issues of later medieval scholastic exegesis. She makes us aware that the early scholastics of the twelfth century equated theology quite simply with the Bible, and that this conservative anti-systematic approach persisted in England in the thirteenth century.<sup>19</sup> She notes a shift toward literal interpretation among the scholastics, with William of Auverne in the early thirteenth century being the first scholastic to reject allegorical interpretation.<sup>20</sup> Her work on English Friars in the first half of the fourteenth century demonstrates the combination of humanism, classicism, and nominalism among them, traits that would spread to the humanist movement of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> She is the first to explore Wyclif's

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<sup>18</sup>Paul de Vooght, Les sources de la doctrine chrétienne (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954); idem, "Wyclif et la scriptura sola," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 39 (1963): 50-86.

<sup>19</sup>Beryl Smalley, The Bible in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

<sup>20</sup>Beryl Smalley, "William of Auverne, John of Rochelle, and St. Thomas on the Old Law," in St. Thomas Aquinas: 1274-1974 Commemorative Studies (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 2:11-71; reprinted in Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning from Abelard to Wyclif (London: Hambledon Press, 1981), 121-81.

<sup>21</sup>Beryl Smalley, English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

scriptural commentaries, which still only exist in manuscript form. Her interpretation of Wyclif is that he is metaphysical to the extreme and ahistorical.<sup>22</sup> Besides Smalley's analysis, a monograph by Gustav Benrath<sup>23</sup> also makes significant contributions in examining Wyclif's hermeneutical and theological principles as exercised in his scriptural commentaries.

Heiko Oberman<sup>24</sup> classifies Bradwardine, Wyclif, and Hus under what he calls the "Tradition I" understanding of Scripture, as opposed to the "Tradition II" of Ockham, Constance, and Biel, which permits extra-scriptural sources of authority. This twofold typology is useful, although it does not seem to be inadequate, since it does not distinguish between the juxtaposing of Scripture and tradition by the conciliarists and the subordinating of Scripture to tradition by the curialists. Harnack notes that both curialists and conciliarists

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<sup>22</sup>Beryl Smalley, "Wyclif's Postilla on the Old Testament and his Principium," in Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 253-96; idem, "John Wyclif's Postilla super totam Bibliam," Bodleian Library Record 4 (1953): 186-204; idem, "The Bible and Eternity: John Wyclif's Dilemma," Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 27 (1964): 73-89; reprinted in Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning from Abelard to Wyclif (London: Hambledon Press, 1981), 399-415.

<sup>23</sup>Gustav Adolf Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1966).

<sup>24</sup>Heiko A. Oberman, Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1957); idem, The Harvest of Medieval Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1967).

were present at Trent, and that the curialists would regain the upper hand at Vatican I.<sup>25</sup>

John Robson's<sup>26</sup> treatment of Wyclif's metaphysical views in his Summa de Ente sheds much light on this still relatively unstudied work. Robson illuminates the relation of Wyclif to his contemporaries Uthred of Boldon, John Kenningham, and William Woodford in his metaphysical debates. For the most part, Robson refrains from extrapolating Wyclif's metaphysical views of his early period to making generalizations about Wyclif's developing heterodoxy in his middle and late periods.

A. G. Dickens<sup>27</sup> has attempted to rehabilitate claims for the English roots to the English Reformation. He notes that Lollardy was an "abortive reformation," and that the Lollard movement anticipated all of the Protestant doctrines, except that of justification by faith alone.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Harnack, History of Dogma, 7:3-117; idem, Dogmengeschichte 3: 661-764.

<sup>26</sup>John A. Robson, Wyclif and the Oxford Schools. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

<sup>27</sup>A.G. Dickens, The English Reformation, rev. ed. (London: Collins, 1967); 2d ed. (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1989).

<sup>28</sup>Melanchthon, upon reading Wyclif's Triologus, became aware of this "defect" in Wyclif's doctrine and made this known to Luther. Thoughtful theologians today, however, will not be wondering whether Wyclif anticipates the soteriological views of the Reformation, but instead will want to know how the views of the Reformation are in continuity with the earlier Christian tradition. The case can be made that the interpretation of sola fide as given by Cranmer, the Anabaptists, and Wesley are much more reconcilable with the Christian tradition than that given by Luther or even Calvin.

Gordon Leff's chapter on Wyclif in his work on late medieval heresy<sup>29</sup> gives the most impressive interpretation of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture to date, short as it is. His recognition of the social implications of Christian sectarian movements and their effect on doctrinal development builds on the interpretation of Troeltsch. His interpretation of the fundamentally metaphysical character of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture draws on earlier treatments by S. H. Thomson,<sup>30</sup> Robson, and Smalley. His description of Wyclif's utilization of Scripture to criticize the church and the sacramental order shows an awareness of the impact of FitzRalph and the spiritual Franciscans, although he does not draw out the connections in detail. He is aware of the evolution of christological understanding from the fourteenth century out of the thirteenth century,<sup>31</sup> although he does not examine the implications for Wyclif's christology. He characterizes Wyclif's metaphysical approach as extremist and "fundamentalist," without defining what the latter term means. He shows a clear preference to the "cumulative"-historical

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<sup>29</sup>Gordon Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent, c. 1250 - c. 1450, 2 vols. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 2:494-558.

<sup>30</sup>S. H. Thomson, "The Philosophical Basis of Wyclif's Theology."

<sup>31</sup>Gordon Leff, "The Franciscan Concept of Man," in Prophecy and Millenarianism, Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves, ed. Ann William (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1980), 217-37.

understanding of Scripture as put forward by Ockham.<sup>32</sup> Unlike the German scholars and Hurley, he follows de Vooght in denying that Wyclif holds to a doctrine of sola scriptura; as we shall discuss, this seems to involve a misunderstanding of what the term sola scriptura means. Later Leff retracts his interpretation of Wyclif's realism as "extreme."<sup>33</sup> However, he continues to hold the view that Wyclif's unorthodox views were driven by his metaphysics.

G. R. Evans gives ample consideration of Wyclif in her treatment of the doctrine of Scripture in the later middle ages and the Reformation.<sup>34</sup> She discusses issues such as the divine and human authorship of Scripture, the Scripture principle and the use of tradition, lay access to Scripture, rules of exegesis and the metaphorical literal sense of Scripture, the canon, textual criticism, use of the original biblical languages, translation into the vernacular, scholastic curriculum in lectures on Scripture and Lombard's Sentences, scholastic argument, and preaching.

Like Leff, Anthony Kenny's intellectual biography of Wyclif surveys his doctrines.<sup>35</sup> Kenny discusses Wyclif's view of metaphysics, predestination,

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<sup>32</sup>Gordon Leff, William of Ockham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975).

<sup>33</sup>Gordon Leff, "Wyclif and Hus: a Doctrinal Comparison," in Wyclif in his Times, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 108.

<sup>34</sup>Gillian R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, vol. 2, The Road to Reformation (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>35</sup>Kenny, Wyclif.

Scripture, the church, the eucharist, Wyclif's late phase, and his influence. Addressed to a general audience, Kenny's work is unfortunately far too short.

Anne Hudson's The Premature Reformation<sup>36</sup> rehabilitates the view that Lollardy sprang from Wyclif's views. She examines parallels between Lollardy and the vernacular literature of the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. She has discovered that there was a significant Wycliffite realistic influence at Oxford University until the early fifteenth century persecutions. She shows how the Lollards' theology, ecclesiology, sacramental theory, and social views logically emerged from Wyclif's own beliefs.

In conclusion, we may say that the turn of the century German scholars were able to elucidate broad outlines of interpretation of later medieval doctrinal and social history, without carrying out these interpretations in detail. Most of the scholarship on Wyclif since the turn of the century has been carried out by British scholars, who, although investigating Wyclif's life and doctrine in greater detail, have not carried forth the broad lines of interpretation suggested by the German scholars. Thus in this dissertation on Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture I hope in a modest way to present an interpretation of Wyclif which utilizes the broad lines of interpretation of the late medieval period suggested by the Germans, coupled with interpretive material accumulated by the British scholarship, in order to further illuminate Wyclif's doctrine.

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<sup>36</sup>Anne Hudson, The Premature Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

## CHAPTER III

### WYCLIF'S ACADEMIC SOURCES IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Before we begin our analysis of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture in part II, it is helpful to understand the sources in the Christian tradition with which he is working. In this chapter we are primarily concerned with Wyclif's academic sources from the church fathers up through Wyclif's fourteenth century contemporaries. In the next chapter we will consider social sources in the later middle ages for Wyclif.

Augustine has a profound influence on Wyclif's thought. Although he does not put Augustine above Scripture, he declares that he has never found an error in his writings.<sup>1</sup> Wyclif self-consciously places himself in the Augustinian realist tradition of Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, the Victorines, Robert Grosseteste, Duns Scotus, Bradwardine, and FitzRalph. Augustine's De Consensu Evangelistarum provides Wyclif with ammunition against those who assert discrepancies in the gospel accounts. The notion of the "grammar" and "logic" of Scripture is influenced by the De Doctrina Christiana. Wyclif spends three out of the 32 chapters (16-18) of the De Veritate Sanctae Scripturae

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<sup>1</sup>Veritate 1.2.35-39.

utilizing the De Mendacio and Contra Mendacium in defending the infallibility of Scripture. Wyclif's emphasis on the literal sense of Scripture and on the harmony and perspicuity of Scripture are Augustinian. Other important works of Augustine cited in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae are the gospel commentary on John and the literal commentary on Genesis. Augustine's De Trinitate is a significant source for Wyclif's Trinitarian, Christological, and metaphysical views. The Augustinian element of Wyclif's christology is involved in his criticism of the doctrine of transubstantiation in his later period, based on the session of Christ's humanity in heaven at the right hand of God.

Wyclif refers to other fathers such as Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory the Great, and John Damascene. Like the medieval scholastics, Wyclif calls Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the "four great doctors." His exegetical Opus Evangelicum, written at the end of his life from 1383-84, makes extensive use of the commentaries of Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom.

Beryl Smalley notes the loss of direct knowledge of the Antiochene tradition of christology and scriptural exegesis during the middle ages.<sup>2</sup> However, Wyclif cites the popular works of Chrysostom extensively, and a parallel to the Antiochene tradition of "christology from below" was emerging from the spiritual Franciscan tradition with which Wyclif is in contact. Except for an indirect knowledge of Clement, who was rediscovered by Grosseteste,

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<sup>2</sup>Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 19.

and other references cited from canon law, Wyclif does not show an awareness of any of the ante-Nicene fathers, and his refutation of the doctrine of apokatastasis also shows only an indirect knowledge of Greek fathers such as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>3</sup>

Wyclif has rhetorical reverence for Gregory the Great as one of the "four doctors" of the church. Given Wyclif's literalist bent, however, it would seem difficult for him to defer to Gregory's anti-literalist inclination toward allegory. Nonetheless, in his commentary on Job, Wyclif does utilize Gregory the Great's Moralia, an allegorical interpretation of the book of Job.<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of his career Wyclif becomes increasingly critical of Gregory's expansion of the papacy, his role in the increase of church wealth, and his sending Augustine of Canterbury to England, disrupting the primitive church practices there. It is worth noting that in his Opus Evangelicum, an exegetical work on the gospels written in the last two years before his death, Wyclif utilizes extensively the commentaries of Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom, but makes almost no reference to Gregory's Gospel Homilies.

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<sup>3</sup>Veritate 2.17.54.

<sup>4</sup>Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 13-14.

Wyclif, like many in the tradition of British scholastic theology, approves of Anselm of Canterbury's (c. 1033/4-1109) ontological argument,<sup>5</sup> Augustinian realism and use of Trinitarian analogies. Wyclif's understanding of the compatibility of faith and reason and his confidence in the ability of reason to know naturally discernible truth on topics such as the existence of God, the Trinity, creation in time, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection, follows Anselm much more than the later scholastics. Wyclif's doctrine of the atonement adopts Anselm's understanding of the doctrine of satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Grosseteste (c. 1168-1253) was the first chancellor of Oxford University, lecturer to the Franciscans, and Bishop of Lincoln.<sup>7</sup> Grosseteste was the only theologian of substance to bridge the generations of both the earliest mendicants and Innocent III and the high scholastics of the thirteenth century. Grosseteste was a great ecclesiastical reformer of his diocese from 1235 to his death. He was on favorable terms with the Franciscan spiritual movement, and this may explain the apocalyptic tones of his attack on pope Innocent IV for promoting his nephew in Lincoln's diocese. This outburst

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<sup>5</sup>Aquinas rejects the ontological argument. That God is to be is indeed self evident, but not to us. Scotus utilizes the ontological argument, but asserts that it must be "colored," and is not strictly demonstrative. Ockham and Wyclif's nominalist opponents reject the ontological argument altogether.

<sup>6</sup>Veritate 1.11.260.

<sup>7</sup>On Grosseteste's influence on Wyclif, see R. W. Southern, Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 298-307.

provided ammunition for Wyclif in his attempts to justify church disendowment in the De Civili Dominio.<sup>8</sup> Wyclif also quotes Grosseteste to argue that the pope's power is purely spiritual.<sup>9</sup>

Grosseteste's view of theology as a strictly practical science of the Bible, unlike all other sciences, had an impact on Roger Bacon and Scotus, the Oxford and Franciscan approaches to theology, and Wyclif.<sup>10</sup> Grosseteste's understanding of heresy as being practical and not just creedal<sup>11</sup> is also quite influential on Wyclif. Commentary on Grosseteste's De Cessatione Legalium on the transformation of the legal observances of the Sabbath, circumcision, the taking of blood, and the priesthood, would occupy four chapters of Wyclif's De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae (28-31). Although Wyclif goes well beyond Grosseteste's criticism of ceremonies, the notion that the church not be bound by ceremonies is a foundational one for Wyclif's criticism of tradition and his iconoclasm.

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<sup>8</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.43.284-89.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.19.395-97. See Edith C. Tatnall, "John Wyclif and Ecclesia Anglicana," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 20 (April 1969): 41-43.

<sup>10</sup>R. W. Southern, Robert Grosseteste, 15, 173; Marie-Dominique Chenu, La théologie comme science au XIIIe siècle (Paris: Vrin, 1957), 28. We should not be surprised that Grosseteste's view that the Bible is to theology, what nature is to science, reappears in Charles Hodge, for Grosseteste's view of theology affected the Reformed scholastics through the mediation of Scotus.

<sup>11</sup>Southern, 292-93. In modern terms, we might say that orthodoxy requires orthopraxis.

Grosseteste's view of the Trinity rejects the affirmation of the Filioque by his contemporary Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, showing sympathy to the Eastern view and that of Joachim.<sup>12</sup> To some extent, Wyclif accepts this attempt of Grosseteste to reconcile the Eastern and Western understandings of the Trinity. Grosseteste's metaphysical realism had a profound impact on Wyclif, and Wyclif's fivefold understanding of Scripture is based on Grosseteste's fivefold understanding of being.

The Dominican Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-74) has a significant influence on Wyclif. As far as philosophical issues are concerned, Wyclif utilizes the doctrine of analogy of Thomas (not accepted by Scotus, Ockham, or Wyclif's nominalist opponents) in his understanding of the divine attributes.<sup>13</sup> Wyclif's

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 231-32, 282-84.

<sup>13</sup>De Mandatis 14.138; Veritate 1.12.283. Scholars differ on whether and how to systematize the various meanings of analogy used by Thomas. We may distinguish at least two types used by the scholastics: the analogy of proportion (also known as two-term analogy, analogy of reference, and analogy of attribution), and the analogy of proportionality, or four-term analogy.

The analogy of proportionality is the original type of analogy borrowed from mathematics which is used by Plato and Aristotle. An example would be that sight is to the object seen as intellect is to the object understood. It is identified by Cajetan as the principal type of analogy in Aquinas. Aquinas utilizes the analogy of proportionality with reference to God and creatures in his earlier works the Commentary on the Sentences and the De Veritate. However, by the time of his later works Summa Contra Gentiles and Summa Theologiae, Aquinas shifts away from this use of analogy with reference to God and creatures, perhaps to avoid the implication of composition in God in this type of analogy, contradicting the simplicity of God.

The analogy of proportion is identified by Suarez as the principal type of analogy in Aquinas. In contrast to Cajetan, Suarez understands the analogy of attribution as being intrinsic, i.e. indicating the presence of the quality in the

doctrine of analogy is not strictly Thomistic, however. Aquinas would not conceive of an ens communissimum analogum as an entity distinct from God and the rest of creation. Grosseteste and the pseudo-Dionysius have significant influences on Wyclif's doctrine of analogy,<sup>14</sup> although it may also have original features in its bold realism. Wyclif utilizes the Thomistic distinction between essence and existence, denied by fourteenth century theologians such as Scotus,

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secondary analogates, creatures, as well as in the first analogate, God. Cajetan, on the other hand, understands such attributions to be extrinsic, i.e. existing properly in only the first analogate. One of the classic texts for analogy of proportion is Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 1.13.5. The analogy of proportion is presented as a intermediate type of predication between univocation and pure equivocation. In the case of God and creatures, the analogy is such that one has a proportion to another, just as "healthy" is said of medicine and of an animal, in that medicine is the cause of health which is in an animal. Hence whatever is said of God and creatures, is said because there is some order of the creatures to God, as to their principle and cause. Healthy is said of both medicine and urine, so that both have an order and proportion to the health of an animal, for urine is the sign of health, and medicine is its cause. See Hampus Lyttkens, The Analogy Between God and World. An Investigation of its Background and Interpretation of its Use by Thomas of Aquino (Uppsala: A-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1953); George P. Klubertanz, SJ, St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Joseph Owens, CSSR, "Analogy as a Thomistic Approach to Being," Mediaeval Studies 24 (1962): 303-22.

Analogical predication between God and creatures in Aquinas implies a Neoplatonic ordering of creatures to God as their cause; analogy in this sense is not used by Aristotle or the nominalists. Moreover, under the analogy of proportion, Aquinas also seems to include  $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  multivocal predication of Aristotle. As we will see in chapter V, Wyclif utilizes "analogous equivocation" for the predication of "Scripture," where Christ or God is the primary meaning of Scripture, and all other meanings of Scripture are derived from and refer to this primary meaning.

<sup>14</sup>See De Trinitate 11.118, 125 and De Dominio Divino 1.6.39-41, 2.5.195.

Ockham, and Kenningham.<sup>15</sup> He accepts Thomas's definition of truth as adequation.<sup>16</sup> His anthropology includes a Thomistic intellectualism as well as Franciscan voluntarism.

On theological issues, Wyclif agrees to Aquinas's view of the hierarchical relationship of theology to the other sciences. He quotes Thomas's Summa Theologiae on scriptural infallibility.<sup>17</sup> His understanding of the "parabolic" or metaphorical literal sense of Scripture comes from Aquinas.<sup>18</sup> Wyclif's balance of predestination and free will,<sup>19</sup> and his understanding of conditional necessity<sup>20</sup> seem to follow Thomas and FitzRalph, rather than the more extreme soteriology of Bradwardine.<sup>21</sup> Like Thomas, Wyclif argues that God is the cause of the sinful act, but not of sin, which is but a privation.<sup>22</sup>

Wyclif's christology does not attempt to imitate Aquinas's subtle appropriation of the fifth, sixth, and seventh Greek ecumenical councils, but

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<sup>15</sup>De Universalibus 7.129-30; De Dominio Divino 1.9.56. See Robson, 165-66.

<sup>16</sup>Veritate 1.4.81, 15.392.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 2.16.16.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 1.4.73.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 2.23.223.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 2.19.110, 3.30.219.

<sup>21</sup>De Dominio Divino 1.14.115-25; Veritate 2.18.69. See Robson, 198.

<sup>22</sup>Robson, 215.

rests on a more strictly Augustinian basis. However, as we shall see, Wyclif does not entirely escape the Cyrillian<sup>23</sup> christological tendencies of medieval scholasticism represented by Thomas.

In criticizing the abuses of the clerical hierarchy, Wyclif makes use of the Thomistic doctrine of fraternal correction.<sup>24</sup> The Thomistic view of checks and balances within the church that the laity exercises on the clergy anticipates conciliarist view of the church which Wyclif utilizes, although the tone of Wyclif's writings move from that of a conciliarist to a national church ecclesiology.<sup>25</sup> Towards the end of his career, Wyclif becomes increasingly critical of Aquinas, particularly of his views of indulgences, prayers from the dead, and transubstantiation.

The Franciscan John Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) has a distinct influence on Wyclif.<sup>26</sup> As far as philosophical issues are concerned, Frederick

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<sup>23</sup>Harnack, History of Dogma, 6:188; idem, Lehrgeschichte, 3:533, calls Aquinas's christological views "Monophysite"; this description is somewhat extreme. See James A. Weisheipl, Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Work, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 166-70.

<sup>24</sup>Veritate 3.27.95.

<sup>25</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.41.331, 2.7.63.

<sup>26</sup>On Scotus's theological doctrines, see Reinhold Seeberg, Die Theologie des Johannes Duns Scotus (Leipzig: 1900; reprint, Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1971); idem, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 2:124-65; idem, Dogmengeschichte, 3: 507-58, 635-670; and De Doctrina Ioannis Duns Scoti, vol. 3, Problemata Theologica (Rome: 1968).

Copleston suggests that Wyclif's philosophical views are "Scotistic."<sup>27</sup> Robson notes that Wyclif recognizes that whereas Scotus is a "constant defender of universals," his views anticipate the nominalists in rejecting an overflow of being between God and creation; for his own part, Wyclif embraces a bolder realism than does Scotus.<sup>28</sup> Wyclif shows an affinity to the Augustinian anthropology of the Franciscans as much as it does to the Aristotelian anthropology of Thomas. Wyclif utilizes Scotus's "formal distinction" to avoid the nominalist tendency to call all divine attributes synonymous.<sup>29</sup>

As for theological issues, Scotus's biblical, practical approach to theology affects Wyclif. Scotus's concessions to Olivi's Joachimist Trinitarianism and a more positivistic affirmation of the Filioque (as opposed to Aquinas's rationalist affirmation) show the influence of Grosseteste.<sup>30</sup> His Trinitarian views are appropriated by Wyclif.

The christology of the Franciscans Duns Scotus and William of Ockham may be characterized as Augustinian, Antiochene, or even borderline "Nestorian." In this tradition, the human nature of Christ remains distinct from

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<sup>27</sup>Frederick C. Copleston, A History of Philosophy (Westminster, MD: Newman Bookshop, 1946-75), 3:148.

<sup>28</sup>Robson, 151, 202-4.

<sup>29</sup>See De Dominio Divino 1.16.138.

<sup>30</sup>Southern, 296-97, asserts that Grosseteste's influence on Scotus is slight. Yet compare their Augustinian realism and their views on the biblical nature of theology, the Trinity, and the primacy of Christ.

the divine nature. Scotus is opposed to the "Cyrillian" tendency of Thomas Aquinas, for whom the human nature of Christ is overshadowed by the divine nature. Duns Scotus utilizes the homo assumptus christological view of Augustine in understanding the incarnation; Christ assumed a complete human being. The human nature of Christ, like any other human nature, would have its own personality, distinct from the divine personality; it is personabilis in se; what prevents it from having a personality distinct from the divine nature of Christ, is its relation to the divine personality of Christ.<sup>31</sup> Scotus's emphasis on Christ's humanity is such that he holds that the human nature Christ assumed was in itself peccable, although the fact that Christ was confirmed in beatitude from the moment of the hypostatic union removed all possibility of his sinning.<sup>32</sup> In the De Benedicta Incarnatione, Wyclif accepts the view of Christ's double filiation in both his humanity and divinity, appropriating dyophysite features of Scotus's christology in opposition to the view of single filiation held by Aquinas. However, Wyclif rejects Scotus's suggestion that there are two supposita in Christ, or that his human nature was peccable, views that are taken over by Ockham and the Moderns.

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<sup>31</sup>Seeberg, Die Theologie des Johannes Duns Scotus, 234-7. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus, God and Man, 2d. ed., trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 295.

<sup>32</sup>Allan B. Wolter, OFM, "John Duns Scotus on the Primacy and Personality of Christ," in Franciscan Christology, ed. Damian McElrath (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980), 182.

Scotus is certainly aware of the criticism of sacramental doctrine by Olivi and John of Paris on the issues of the eucharist, baptism, and auricular confession. He utilizes the subjective approach to salvation of the Spirituals to some extent; but in general he shuffles over these issues, adhering to the decrees of the Fourth Lateran council in a "churchly positivism."<sup>33</sup> If the Theoremata is an authentic work of Scotus,<sup>34</sup> it may indicate Scotus's capitulation to Olivi's and the Spiritual Franciscans' fideistic nominalism and criticism of natural theology.

The Augustinian soteriology and anti-mendicant sentiment of Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1300-1349) and Richard FitzRalph (c. 1300-1360) certainly had an influence on Wyclif. From 1339 to 1349, Bradwardine was chaplain and confessor of Edward III. His Summa de Causa Dei was certainly familiar to Wyclif; following Bradwardine, Wyclif rejects the view of Kenningham and the Franciscan tradition, that future events are still possible. By the late phase of his career Wyclif is convinced of the absolute necessity of all events, a position advanced by Bradwardine. Like Bradwardine, Wyclif rejects condign merit.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>"Kirchlicher Positivismus." Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 2:150; idem, Dogmengeschichte 3:651, 669.

<sup>34</sup>On this debate, see Copleston, 2:478-81.

<sup>35</sup>Robson, 167, 177-80, 211-12. See also Oberman, Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, 198-204; idem, The Dawn of the Reformation (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 213-14.

FitzRalph's Summa in Questionibus Armenorum clearly influences Wyclif's scriptural outlook on theology and his views of the Eastern church.<sup>36</sup> We cannot discount FitzRalph's influence on Wyclif for the centrality of Scripture in preaching or for the understanding of the intention on the biblical author.<sup>37</sup> Wyclif cites FitzRalph on the authority of the Bible,<sup>38</sup> its infallibility,<sup>39</sup> and its literal truth.<sup>40</sup> During the middle phase of his career, Wyclif's soteriology follows the moderate views of FitzRalph. FitzRalph is the major source of mediating Thomistic views to Wyclif. His criticisms of the moderns' views, and of annihilation, clearly affect Wyclif.<sup>41</sup> Wyclif's qualified acceptance of the beatific vision of Christ seems to parallel FitzRalph's qualified rejection of John XXII's views.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>For a survey of FitzRalph's life and theological views, see Katherine Walsh, Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon, and Armagh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

<sup>37</sup>See Alistair J. Minnis, " 'Authorial Intention' and 'Literal Sense' in the Exegetical Theories of Richard FitzRalph and John Wyclif: An Essay in the Medieval History of Biblical Hermeneutics," Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 75, section c, no. 1 (1975): 1-30.

<sup>38</sup>Veritate 1.10.217.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 2.18.67.

<sup>40</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.8.58.

<sup>41</sup>Richard FitzRalph De Pauperie Salvatoris, in De Dominio Divino, ed. R. L. Poole (London: Truebner, 1890), 1.14.298. See Robson, 168.

<sup>42</sup>FitzRalph De Pauperie Salvatoris 2.22.364. The speculation of John XXII on this matter was that those in heaven do not enjoy the beatific vision before the final judgment. The christological implication of John XXII's view would

The influence of the scriptural commentaries of the Franciscan spiritual Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1270-1340 or 1349) on Wyclif's own commentaries is pronounced. It was rare in Wyclif's time for theologians to undertake a commentary on the Bible, and Wyclif follows Lyra in this pattern. Wyclif approves of Lyra's literal, historical approach to Scripture.<sup>43</sup> Neither Wyclif nor Lyra denies the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, but both stress the literal interpretation. Like Lyra, Wyclif follows Jerome's criticism of the apocryphal Old Testament books. In christology, Wyclif approves of Lyra's care to distinguish attributes of Christ's divinity from his human attributes.<sup>44</sup> Although joining in the condemnation of John XXII's views on the beatific vision, Lyra follows the earlier Franciscan position of Scotus in asserting the real growth of Christ's human knowledge.

In chapter fourteen of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif admits that he had once been a nominalist. He respects the views of William of Ockham (c. 1285-1347) even though he rejects Ockham's nominalism as well as

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be that Christ in his earthly pilgrimage (as viator) did not enjoy the beatific vision as a human being.

<sup>43</sup>Veritate 1.12.275. Lyra's influence on Wyclif's scriptural commentaries is explored by Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, passim.

<sup>44</sup>Veritate 2.19.100; see 1.5.88-9, where Wyclif states that the miracles of Christ are to be attributed to his divinity, not his humanity.

that of Giles of Rome.<sup>45</sup> Wyclif states that he has read Ockham's Protestatio. Yet Wyclif denies that he is a follower of the "heresy" of Ockham; nor is it clear to him that Ockham is a heretic.<sup>46</sup> Ockham's concessions to the Thomistic view of theology as a speculative as well as a practical science may partly explain why nominalism had great success on the Continent. Ockham was not a sceptic, although he was more interested in logic than in metaphysics, writing a Summa of logic. However, the emphasis of nominalists on the primacy of logical propositions to extra-mental reality is decried by Wyclif.

Ockham's metaphysical, soteriological, theological, ethical, and sacramental views were quite controversial and were censured in Avignon in 1328.<sup>47</sup> His emphasis on God's absolute power,<sup>48</sup> his principle of economy, and use of non-contradiction as the sole criterion for natural theology, set off numerous speculative exercises among the nominalists. His fideistic views made

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<sup>45</sup>On the interpretation of this somewhat cryptic reference to Ockham, see Lechler, 2:26-27, and Robson, 172-73.

<sup>46</sup>Veritate 1.14.346-54. Could Wyclif be referring to Ockham's Epistola ad Fratres Minores, or Tractatus contra Ioannem?

<sup>47</sup>For the text, see Auguste Pelzer, "Les 51 articles de Guillaume d'Ockham censurés en Avignon en 1327," Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique 18 (1922): 240-70. An analysis of the censured articles is given by Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 1:294-307.

<sup>48</sup>On Wyclif's attitude toward's God's absolute power, see Robson, 183-89. Although in certain limited cases Wyclif will permit this deus ex machina of theological argument, in general he does not permit its employment, especially if it used to defend the doctrine of annihilation.

it difficult to maintain traditional realistic approaches to the doctrine of the Trinity, natural theology, and Christ. His emphasis on free will and the possibility of salvation ex puris naturalibus were decried as Pelagian.<sup>49</sup> The positivistic view of Scotus on the second table of the decalogue (which incidentally shows some affinities to the heresy of the Free Spirit), extends to the first table, and thus odium Dei becomes a real possibility. Ockham's theory of annihilation, following Scotus's and Olivi's adduction view of the eucharistic transformation, was also censured.

Ockham's christology follows that of Duns Scotus. The additional difficulty for Ockham is that his nominalist principles lead him to deny the extramental reality of relations. He does posit such a relation in christology as an exceptional case, however. Further, his views on logic led him to assert that both Christ's divinity and his humanity before the assumption are supposita,<sup>50</sup> a possibility that Lombard left open but Aquinas excludes. Thus Ockham must juggle the definition of personality to fit an orthodox christology. A somewhat

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<sup>49</sup>Whether Ockham could be interpreted as a Pelagian is a highly controvertible point. Leff, William of Ockham, 471, argues that Ockham "safeguarded" himself against Pelagianism by his insistence on the divine freedom. Certainly Ockham himself vehemently denied the charge.

<sup>50</sup>William of Ockham Quodlibet 4.7, in Opera Theologica, ed. Gedeon Gal et al. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1967-86), 9:329. On Ockham's christology, see Marilyn Adams, William Ockham (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 2:980-96; Alister E. McGrath, "Homo Assumptus? A Study in the Christology of the Via Moderna, with Particular Reference to William Ockham," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 60 (1984): 283-97.

contrived use of terminology allows him to say that "human being" and "humanity" are not synonymous, so that the Son of God is homo, but not humanitas.<sup>51</sup> Ockham concedes that "humanity" is assumed by God, but not "human being." This is because "human being" is defined as an intellectual nature not sustained by any supposit; thus if human being is sustained or assumed by a divine supposit or person, a logical contradiction would result.<sup>52</sup> In his polemical writings Ockham defends Nestorianism as a position that could be held by a lay person, who did not know of the Chalcedonian formulation, and did not hold this error pertinaciously. The fact that Christ's human nature was limited allows Ockham to refute excessive temporal claims of John XXII and the curialists, along lines similar to those used by John of Paris against Boniface VIII a generation earlier. In the beatific vision controversy surrounding John XXII, however, we see that Ockham rejects the possibility of agnoeticism, or lack of knowledge, of Christ's human nature. Christ as human

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<sup>51</sup>William of Ockham Quodlibet 5.10, in Opera Theologica 9:520.

<sup>52</sup>Ockham Quodlibet 5.10, in Opera Theologica 9:522. See also his Sentences 3.1, in Opera Theologica 6:40-41. On this point Ockham follows Aquinas Summa Theologiae 3.4.1, 3, who argues that Christ assumed human nature, but not a "human being," which would imply a distinct supposit or hypostasis from that of the assuming divine Person.

being was comprehensor, not just viator, enjoying the beatific vision from the moment of his conception.<sup>53</sup>

Two points Ockham makes concerning Christ's peccability show his emphasis on Christ's humanity. Christ, as long as he was a pilgrim, had the fomes peccati, the rebellion of natural acts to his reason and will, so that he suffered hunger, thirst, and need for sleep.<sup>54</sup> Ockham states that it may be conceded that Christ is the adopted son of God, although this statement is denied on account of the heretics, lest an occasion of sinning be given to them. In the same way, if God assumed human nature without certain gifts, and the nature were abandoned to itself, it could sin. Nor is this more inconvenient than the fact that Christ suffers, is beaten, and dies.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ockham De dogmatibus papae Johannis XXII, in De Monarchia, ed. M. Goldast, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: 1614; reprint, 1960), 740. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus, God and Man, 2d ed., trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 333, notes that the possibility of Christ's human nature's ignorance was rejected by Gregory the Great and consequently by the scholastics. The rehabilitation of such an "agnoetic" approach is approved by Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961-76), 5:193-215. Pannenberg's assertion that Christ did not know of his divinity before his resurrection, and his "christology from below" favors an Antiochene, agnoetic approach to christology.

<sup>54</sup>Ockham Sentences 3.5.1, in Opera Theologica 6:151-52.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 3.10, in Opera Theologica 6: 349-50. These two points were the 24th and 36th articles of Ockham which were censured at Avignon; see Pelzer, 262, 265. Compare the borderline Nestorianism of the nominalists to the adoptionist christologies of the "heretics," referred to here by Ockham, i.e. the Free Spirit and Eckhart.

As we shall see in our exposition in chapter VIII, Wyclif's ideas on Christ's poverty and church reform parallel Ockham's, although his christological views decry the speculative, Nestorian tendencies of the nominalist tradition. The reason is that, in defending the truth and infallibility of Scripture, Wyclif rejects nominalist speculation on Christ's peccability.

Wyclif distinguishes Ockham's views from the more extreme tendencies of his followers.<sup>56</sup> Nominalist successors to Ockham at Oxford include Adam Wodeham, OFM; Robert Holcot, OP (d. 1349); Richard Swineshead; Nicolas Aston (c. 1317-c. 1367); and William Hytesbury (d. 1372), who was chancellor of Oxford during Wyclif's lifetime. It is ironic, given Ockham's questionable orthodoxy, that within Ockham's lifetime, and certainly after the plague, Ockham's views had taken such a hold of the intellectual establishment that they had become tests of orthodoxy in Wyclif's time.<sup>57</sup> In his De Universalibus, Wyclif ties the "sin" of denying universals to the sin of the wealth of the church.<sup>58</sup> Thus nominalism of the "moderns" is perceived by Wyclif as not merely an intellectual but an ecclesiastical position.

We may mention three instances of theologians influenced by nominalist ideas in Wyclif's time. Uthred of Boldon (c. 1320-96) was a

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<sup>56</sup>De Universalibus 15.364, 371.

<sup>57</sup>See Robson, 219 and 229. Pierre D'Ailly, in defeating Hus and his realist views, thought that realism had been condemned as heretical.

<sup>58</sup>De Universalibus 3.77. See Kenny, Wyclif, 10-11.

Benedictine Monk, theologian, and political thinker of much influence.<sup>59</sup> He combined nominalist principles with a moderate realism with regard to universals. Perhaps influenced by Wyclif, Boldon rejects the doctrine of annihilation, for which he is censured by Archbishop Longham in 1368.<sup>60</sup> His doctrine of the "clear vision" follows the "Pelagian" tendencies of the nominalists in upholding the possibility of universal salvation, a doctrine attacked by Wyclif,<sup>61</sup> although the view that unbaptized infants may be saved clearly influences Wyclif.<sup>62</sup> Boldon's defense of church endowment and of the superiority of the church and papal power over the king did not please Wyclif. During most of Wyclif's political career in the 1370s, Boldon was in retirement and not active at Oxford.

John Kenningham, O. Carm., (d. 1399) was a nominalist who entered into debate with Wyclif from 1372-74.<sup>63</sup> This debate was influential in forming Wyclif's views of Scripture and Christ during the years 1372-78.

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<sup>59</sup>On Boldon's views, see David Knowles, "The Censured Opinions of Uthred of Boldon," Proceedings of the British Academy 37 (1951): 305-42; idem, The Religious Orders in England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 2:48-54, 83-89; W. A. Pantin, The English Church in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 166-84.

<sup>60</sup>Robson, 187.

<sup>61</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.24.155-57; Triologus 3.25.217.

<sup>62</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.4.235.

<sup>63</sup>Robson, 162-70.

Against Kenningham, Wyclif insists on the impeccability of Christ, the indissolubility of the hypostatic union, and the literal interpretation of Scripture.

William Woodford, OFM, (c. 1330-97) although disagreeing with Wyclif on issues of endowment,<sup>64</sup> retained a cordial relationship with him throughout the 1370s. It is in 1380, when Wyclif's eucharistic views are published, that Wyclif and Woodford part ways. Woodford adheres to the Scotist-nominalist view of transubstantiation in the eucharist, a view bitterly attacked by Wyclif, and which leads Wyclif to condemn the mendicants.<sup>65</sup>

William Courtenay has noted the distinction between nominalists, who deny the divine ideas, and the terminists, who follow Ockham's view of the categories. He points out that in Wyclif's time his opponents were terminists, but not nominalists. However, his judgment that nominalist views were no longer current in England during Wyclif's academic career<sup>66</sup> can not be accepted without qualification. Even though Wyclif concedes that his

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<sup>64</sup>See De Civili Dominio 3.18.351.

<sup>65</sup>Robson, 189-95.

<sup>66</sup>William J. Courtenay, "The Reception of Ockham's Thought in Fourteenth Century England," in From Ockham to Wyclif, eds. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 106-7; idem, Schools & Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England, 216-18.

opponent Kenningham accepts the divine ideas,<sup>67</sup> Wyclif clearly demands a bolder realism than the moderate realism of his opponents. Against the nominalists Wyclif holds to a consistent Augustinian realism on issues of the relation of faith and reason, the ontological argument, the categories, annihilation, and the presence of all things past and future before God. Moreover, Courtenay has restricted his analysis to purely philosophical issues. From Wyclif's criticism of his opponents, it is clear that they had thoroughly adapted Ockham's nominalist views on the synonomous use of divine attributes, the Trinity, Christ, ethics, and the eucharist.<sup>68</sup>

To conclude this chapter, academic influences on Wyclif include Augustine, Anselm, Grosseteste, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Nicholas of Lyra, Bradwardine, and FitzRalph. Wyclif supports a more conservative, realism approach to theology, as opposed to the Oxford nominalists.

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<sup>67</sup>John Wyclif "Alia determinatio contra Kylingham Carmelitum," in Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif, ed. W.W. Shirley (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), 478.

<sup>68</sup>For evidence of nominalism and scepticism in the mid-fourteenth century through the end of the century, see Rev. Leonard A. Kennedy, CSB, "Philosophical Scepticism in England in the Mid-Fourteenth Century," Vivarium 21 (1983): 35-57, and "Late-Fourteenth-Century Philosophical Scepticism at Oxford," Vivarium 23.2 (1985): 124-51.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS AND IMPLICATIONS

I begin with the premise that it is impossible to understand Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture without understanding its social overtones. Any attempt to divorce his doctrine from such a social fabric would inevitably lead to a distorted view of his doctrine. One would not wish to reduce doctrinal expressions and formulations to their social implications; yet one should be aware that doctrinal expressions on salvation history, sacramental theology, and christology, do have social models and implications.

#### Social Patterns of Later Medieval Sectarrians, Literalism, and Doctrinal Significance

It has long been recognized by perceptive scholars such as Ritschl, Troeltsch, and Leff, that the democratic impulses of the Puritan and Separatist movements of the seventeenth century, and of the Pietist and Great Awakening movements of the eighteenth century,<sup>1</sup> are the same impulses that motivated the late medieval/Reformation sectarians such as the Waldensians, the Franciscans, Wyclif, the various reform movements in Moravia, and the

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<sup>1</sup>We might add their continuation in frontier revivalism, abolitionism, the women's temperance movement, Finneyism, Pentecostalism, and the black church movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Calvinist movement and the radical Protestants of the sixteenth century. The late medieval sectarians bore the prophetic germ for social reform in the church. In their biblical literalism and their enthusiastic preaching practices, they carried messages about the just distribution of property, the reform of a degenerate and unproductive clerical hierarchy, the emerging role of women in society, the rights of freedom for the enslaved and the oppressed, and the rejection of war, that were generally unwelcomed by society at large and even by the intellectual establishment represented by the University.

The germ for the doctrinal expression of the sectarian movements may not have reached the scholarly level of the mainline "church" movements such as Calvinism and Thomism, given the sectarians' alienation from the intellectual establishment, but the germ for such doctrinal expression lies latent in these sectarian movement nonetheless. The success of any given "church" or mainline reform movement, such as Thomism or Calvinism, depends on the extent to which the fabric of its respective system can incorporate the social criticism of sectarian impulses. The failure of these mainline "church" movements might be measured by their inability to absorb all of the elements of the radical social criticism. Thus each new phase of church history represents a new social and doctrinal synthesis, by recombining and reintegrating the doctrinal tradition with the possibilities that already exist in non-academic sources, or in the social movements in germ.

The divisions in Christianity that would occur in the sixteenth century may be interpreted as the outcome of the fact that Western Christianity, from the time of the Gregorian Reform, never could claim to be unified; for there existed a plurality of movements from the emergence of the twelfth-century sectarians such as the Cathari and the Waldensians, and this plurality persisted to the end of the late middle ages. Least of all can we speak of a unified Thomistic synthesis in the thirteenth century. For even in the thirteenth century, Western Christianity was divided within itself--between secular clergy and mendicants, between the mendicant orders themselves, and between the entire Catholic church and the sectarians.

### Bernard

The eleventh-century Gregorian Reform established the distinction between the church and state in the Christian West, and established a pattern of social synthesis for the later middle ages.

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) is a significant source of social ideas in the later middle ages. His work against Pope Eugenius, which opposed the secularization of the church and the excessive power of the papacy, was a significant source for conciliarist and nationalist church leaders of the later middle ages. His influence on Grosseteste, John of Paris, Marsilius of Padua, and William of Ockham was quite strong. No less is his influence on Wyclif.

His dictum "the goods of the church belong to the poor,"<sup>2</sup> which drew on patristic social views, was a pivotal one in criticizing and reforming the church. The influence of Bernard continues into the sixteenth century in Calvin and in the English Reformers, who chose to ignore his role in the Crusades. In this sense, then, the traditional monasticism of Bernard showed a measure of similarity with and sympathy to reforming mendicants, conciliarists, national church leaders, and radicals of the later middle ages.

### The Cathari and the Waldensians

The Gregorian Reform did not satisfy all elements of the Christian West, however, and in fact disenfranchised large sections of the lower classes of society. Troeltsch has noted that in the emergence of this protest Scripture plays a central role. The extreme literalism of the sectarians, emphasizing passages in the New Testament such as the Sermon on the Mount, and the demand for the preaching of Scripture in the vernacular bolster and complement their social claims. There was disenchantment over the Crusades (this in spite of the high scholastic concession to the pacifistic impulse, so that clergy may not go to war), clerical laxity and wealth, and the attendant development of the Catholic sacramental system and the doctrines of

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<sup>2</sup>Veritate 1.7.153, 3.26.53. On Wyclif's use of Bernard to criticize the monks, see De Mandatis 28.429-34.

purgatory and indulgences, can be seen in the Waldensian and Cathari movements of the twelfth century.<sup>3</sup>

The Cathari movement had roots in earlier dualist sectarians such as the Paulicians and Bogomils from the East. They were not distinguished by Christian orthodoxy, particularly in respect to Trinitarian and Christological doctrinal standards,<sup>4</sup> until influenced by the Waldensians in the thirteenth century. They held to the gospel as authoritative, but their dualistic outlook rejected the Old Testament. There is a marked tendency toward perfectionism. Infant baptism and sacramental realism are rejected.

The Waldensians similarly understood the Sermon on the Mount as normative. Literalism is emphasized by the Waldensians; no argument based on an allegorical reading of Scripture can be accepted. Their rejection of private penance, use of vernacular translation of Scripture, lay preaching, along with the rejection of the Catholic eucharistic doctrine by the Cathari, were issues addressed by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The poverty of Christ and the doctrine of Christ's "assumption" of his humanity in an Augustinian dyophysite scheme are prominent themes in the twelfth century

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<sup>3</sup>Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 1:328-82; idem, Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen, 1:358-426.

<sup>4</sup>Compare the Free Spirit, the late fifteenth century Czech Minor Unity, and some of the sixteenth century radicals.

Waldensian theologian and apologist Durandus of Osca.<sup>5</sup> Women preachers, communal property, iconoclasm, pacifism, and rejection of capital punishment were known among the Waldensians. The Donation of Constantine is attacked as the illicit origin of the accumulation of clerical wealth. Originally a lay, anti-hierarchical movement, hierarchical tendencies quickly emerged within a generation--not unlike the phenomenon seen in the Methodist movement.<sup>6</sup> The split between the French and Italian Waldensians in the thirteenth century shows that the former were even more radical in implementing the communitarian impulse, whereas the latter had become more accommodationist in outlook.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Cathari, who had died out by the end of the fourteenth century, the Waldensians survived in the Italian Alps and have remained to this day. In the mid-fifteenth century their pacifism influenced the Moravian Brethren. They were eventually forced to take up arms, however, against Catholic inquisitors.

Wyclif does not have any direct knowledge of the Waldensian and Cathari movements, although the attacks on Innocent III and the Fourth

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<sup>5</sup>Durandus of Osca, Liber Antiheresis, in Die ersten Waldenser, ed. Kurt Victor Selge (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), 2:21-32.

<sup>6</sup>John Wesley was outraged when Francis Asbury called himself a bishop after arriving in America. John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley (London: Wesleyan Conference Office), 1872; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), 13:74-75.

<sup>7</sup>Compare the split of the holiness movements from Methodism in the nineteenth century.

Lateran Council during his late period show a fundamental sympathy of outlook.

### Thirteenth Century Mendicants

No "church" reform movement could afford to entirely ignore the claims of the sectarians. In their founders and in the first generation of followers, the Dominicans and Franciscans show a fundamental sympathy of outlook to these sectarian movements, although they took a more decidedly Catholic orientation by the second generation of their existence. The primary function of the Dominican order in the early thirteenth century was to suppress the Catharist movement in Southern France and northern Italy; their weapons were to become a preaching movement themselves and to demand a higher level of biblical scholarship than was presently available in the current institutions of the secular church. Among the Franciscans, a split soon emerged between the "spirituals," who emphasized literal observance of Francis's rule, and the "conventuals," who took a more accommodationist outlook in accordance with papal demands. When John of Parma was deposed in 1257 on suspicions of Joachist sympathies, his successor Bonaventure would adopt a milder form of chiliasm and write a defense of poverty that would unite both spiritual and conventual factions within the order.

### Franciscan Influence on Wyclif

That Wyclif is influenced by the Franciscans is shown by his refusal to condemn Joachim of Fiore (c. 1132-1202).<sup>8</sup> Further, Wyclif must defend himself against the charge that he is a "spiritual."<sup>9</sup> The Franciscan movement itself may be studied as representing the point of mediation between the unstable, classical Catholic synthesis of Thomism on the one hand and the proto-Reformation movements of the Waldensians and Wyclif on the other hand. They are the main representatives of "sectarianism" of his time, since the Waldensians never came to England, and the Free Spirit influence was largely confined to the continent. The Franciscan movement itself was unstable and divided, attempting to incorporate the social criticism of the Waldensians and the millennialism of Joachim on the one hand and to remain within the fabric of Catholic society on the other. Its support for the spiritual superiority of the papacy in carrying out its social reforms reached a breaking point at the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the papacy began to assert enormous temporal claims.

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<sup>8</sup>Veritate 1.7.140-1.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 1.14.347.

## Olivi

Peter John Olivi (c. 1248-98) rekindled the spiritual flame in the Franciscan movement.<sup>10</sup> Olivi is beginning to emerge in the scholarly literature as perhaps one of the most influential but enigmatic figures of the later middle ages. He influenced countless debates on theological and social issues until the sixteenth century.

Olivi's biblical approach to theology is consistent with the Franciscan outlook. He is one of the few "spirituals" with any academic credentials, and he commented both on the Sentences of Lombard and on Scripture. His emphasis on poverty is an important legacy. The missionary and ecumenical impulses of the spiritual Franciscan movement are seen in Olivi's adoption of the Joachimist, Eastern view of the Trinity, with the monarchy of the Father and the distinctiveness of the Persons;<sup>11</sup> this undoubtedly has an influence on Scotus.

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<sup>10</sup>The best study of Olivi is David Burr, The Persecution of Peter Olivi (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976). See also idem, Olivi and Franciscan Poverty (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); and George Marcil, OFM, "Peter John Olivi and the Joachimistic Interpretation of History," in Franciscan Christology, ed. Damian McElrath (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980), 109-38.

<sup>11</sup>For Olivi's Trinitarian views, see Burr, The Persecution of Peter Olivi, 50-52, and Hester Gelber, "Logic and the Trinity: A Clash of Values in Scholastic Thought, 1300-1335" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1974), 63-68.

Olivi's criticism of the sacraments and their number shows a shift in the understanding of salvation from the objectivity of the church's mediatorial role to the subjective conversion experience among the Franciscans, also a common theme among later medieval sectarians and national church leaders. His adductive view of the eucharistic doctrine of transubstantiation, nominalism, and theory of annihilation sowed countless seeds of theological debate until the time of the Reformation.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Olivi's fascination with apocalyptic, the periodization of history, and the impending millennium, would be no less influential among the radical sectarians of ensuing centuries. Olivi's millennialism complemented his emphasis on the need for immediate absolute poverty and shaped his social criticisms of the church. He originated the notion of papal infallibility, establishing a nominalist basis for curialism in the Augustinians Giles of Rome and Augustinus Triumphus.<sup>13</sup> Although Olivi first had great expectations on

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<sup>12</sup>Olivi's interpretation of the eucharist was a continuation of that of the Franciscan Spiritual tradition which was known to Grosseteste. For an excellent survey of thirteenth century Franciscan eucharistic views up to Scotus, see David Burr, Eucharistic Presence and Conversion in Late Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Thought (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984).

<sup>13</sup>The association of God's absolute power with the papacy led Calvin to revile the distinction between the absolute and ordinary powers of God. Jean Calvin, Institutio Christianae religionis 1559, 1.17.2, in Opera Selecta, ed. Peter Barth and William Niesel (Monachii: Kaiser, 1938), 3:205; idem, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. John T. McNeill and trans. Ford Lewis Battles, the Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:214. See Heiko A. Oberman, The Dawn of the Reformation

Boniface VIII's ascension, he then began to wonder whether Boniface was Antichrist and whether papal schism in the church was inevitable--a prophetic impulse seized upon during the ensuing century. The anti-hierarchical impulse is evident among the spirituals' apocalyptic rhetoric. Presumably in the coming millennial age of the Spirit, all distinctions between clerics and laity, between mendicants and secular clergy, between priest, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and pope, would be abolished.

Olivi's views were revolutionary, influencing the Beguines in his native Provence in the early fourteenth century. Clement V and John XXII staked their careers in suppressing his views and writings. No less is the influence of Olivi on Lyra, Ockham, and John Rupescissa. Wyclif is aware of the condemnation of the anthropological views associated with Olivi at Vienne in 1311-12,<sup>14</sup> but he never seems to have direct knowledge of him. However, the influence of Franciscan spiritual ideas on Wyclif, both in a positive sense with regard to poverty and church reform and in a negative sense with regard to nominalism, annihilation, and the eucharist, is evident.

#### Scotus, Ockham, John Rupescissa

Duns Scotus would be able to integrate the Trinitarian speculation and theology of history of Joachism and Olivi into his system. Duns utilizes the

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(Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 255-56.

<sup>14</sup>De Compositione Hominis 9.114

Franciscan spirituals' "scripture principle" in asserting the practical nature of theology, which draws its content from Scripture; however, he balances this with his respect for the recent medieval Catholic tradition of the Fourth Lateran Council in his "churchly positivism," shuffling over many of Olivi's radical views of sacramental theology. He supported Boniface VIII over Philip the Fair; his untimely death in 1308 may have been resulted from political intrigue.

The extent of social synthesis by the Franciscan William of Ockham is remarkable for its comprehensiveness in attempting to reconcile the conflicting claims from the various parties. Ockham's polemical career is distinct from his scholastic career, and so he may be discussed in this context as well as in the previous chapter. Ockham's Dialogus de Imperio et Pontifica Potestate is his magnum opus, where he balances the claims of temporal and ecclesiastical powers between the caesaropapists and the curialists.<sup>15</sup> He balances Dante's understanding of monarchical world government with the democratic ideas of Marsilius's Italian city-state and of the Waldensians. He incorporates the radical criticism and preaching of women among the Waldensians and Beguines by balancing the laity to the clerical hierarchy and insisting that women should be present at a general council. He balances the claim of those who would do away with the entire clerical hierarchy and the papacy

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<sup>15</sup>Guillelmi de Ockham, Dialogus de Imperio et Pontifica Potestate, in De Monarchia, vol. 2, ed. M. Goldast (Frankfurt: 1614; reprint, 1960), 397-957.

(Waldensians, Spiritual Franciscans, Marsilius) against the curialists who want to support papal infallibility and plenitude of power in all matters temporal and spiritual, to arrive at a conciliarist approach. The sectarian scriptural principle is balanced against the curialists' outlandish claims for infallibility of the canon law and papal decrees and subordination of Scripture to tradition, to yield a careful but critical respect for the legal tradition of the church alongside Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

The extext of Ockham's synthesis of these various claims would also indicate its fragility; it could not last for more than a hundred years. As the claims of the curialists and conciliarists would perdure after Ockham, so would the claims of the sectarians, of whom Wyclif becomes a notable example in his late period. To further complicate the picture, the nationalistic impulses of the various European states, mingling with religious fervor, would continue to move in a centrifugal direction away from the unity of the Catholic church in the "national church movements" of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, from Marsilius to Wyclif to Hus to the magisterial Reformers.

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<sup>16</sup>Ockham Dialogus 3.1.3, pp. 819-45. On interpretations of Ockham's view of Scripture and the church, see Hermann Schüssler, Der Primat der Heiligen Schrift als theologisches und kanonistisches Problem im Spätmittelalter (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 109-15.

John of Rupescissa (d. c. 1368) or Rocquetaillade<sup>17</sup> was a French spiritual Franciscan, and an older contemporary of Wyclif.<sup>18</sup> He is an example of the perdurance of the radical spiritual impulse to Wyclif's time. His apocalyptic views kept him in prison for a good portion of his adult lifetime. Rupescissa made liberal use of Joachimite and pseudo-Joachimite literature. He was fascinated with the appearance of Antichrist and the papal schism, expected of a millennial reign of peace, and made prognostications based on the book of Revelation. Calculations are made of the exact date of Antichrist's coming.<sup>19</sup> As was characteristic of the Franciscan Spiritual movement, Rupescissa praised the science of the Scriptures, labeling other sciences, including theology, as diabolic.<sup>20</sup> He expressed French nationalist sentiment against the papacy.<sup>21</sup> Wyclif cites Rupescissa's "Apology of the Birds,"<sup>22</sup> an allegory which criticizes Pope Sylvester and the Donation of

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<sup>17</sup>John Foxe, the Reformation martyrologist, thought Rupescissa and Rocquetaillade to be two distinct individuals among those who belonged to the "true church" down the centuries.

<sup>18</sup>The standard study is Jeanne Bignami-Odier, Etudes sur Jean de Roquetaillade (Paris: Vrin, 1952).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 280-82.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 203-9.

<sup>22</sup>De Civili Dominio 2.1.7.

Constantine.<sup>23</sup> This bird parable seems to have been popular with friars such as the Augustinian Thomas Ashburn, with whom Wyclif was in alliance in 1371 in suggesting to Parliament the disendowment of the possessionate clergy.<sup>24</sup> The later fourteenth century Lollards seem to hold both Rupescissa and Olivi in high esteem.<sup>25</sup>

Although the spiritual Franciscans were suppressed by John XXII in the 1310s, they continued to exist in England in the 1350s when Wyclif was a young scholar of Arts at Oxford. The mendicants had risked their lives by ministering to the multitudes dying of the Black Death in 1347-9; they would be rewarded perhaps too handsomely in the wills of their charges. The spiritual Franciscans in England in the 1350s had greatly influenced Wyclif in his early period<sup>26</sup> in his understanding of Christ's humanity and poverty; they touched off his radicalism in sacramental theology. Wyclif imbibed the nominalist philosophy of the Franciscan William of Ockham during the 1350s

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<sup>23</sup>Bignami-Odier, 181-85, 215; Herbert Workman, John Wyclif (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 2:210; Aubrey Gwynn, The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 213-14.

<sup>24</sup>Michael Wilks, "Royal Patronage and Anti-Papalism from Ockham to Wyclif," in From Ockham to Wyclif, eds. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 160-61. See also Lowrie J. Daly, The Political Theory of John Wyclif (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), 56-57.

<sup>25</sup>Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 349.

<sup>26</sup>Workman, John Wyclif, 2:97-9.

until, with his intellectual "conversion," he embraced an Augustinian philosophical realism in the 1360s.<sup>27</sup>

At this middle phase of his career, Wyclif is appreciative of Francis,<sup>28</sup> understanding his rule as being most like the state of innocence.<sup>29</sup> Wyclif's primitivism and his attempt to restore the pure poverty of the Gospel acknowledges the Franciscans as his source in the De Civili Dominio.<sup>30</sup> Wyclif's alliance with the Franciscans would break off after 1380, the year he published his eucharistic views, and he would turn to a virulent attack on the mendicants. Ironically, Wyclif would turn the apocalyptic Joachist rhetoric of "Antichrist" against the mendicants in his embittered late period.

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<sup>27</sup>On Wyclif's intellectual "conversion," see Beryl Smalley, "The Bible and Eternity: John Wyclif's Dilemma," 405; Robson, 145; Michael Wilks, "The Early Oxford Wyclif: Papalist or Nominalist?," in Studies in Church History, ed. G. J. Cuming (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 5:68-98. Wilks, *ibid.*, 94, dates Wyclif's conversion as occurring in 1365. This date is too late, if Wyclif was writing his strong defense of Augustinian realism as early as 1363. The year 1361 has much to be recommended as Wyclif's conversion date, for it coincides with Wyclif's resignation as master of Balliol college and the beginning of his two-year break in studies at Fillingham, a kind of "Arabian wilderness."

<sup>28</sup>Veritate 2.24.241.

<sup>29</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.7.88-89.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.44.427, 3.17.349. See Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:529-30.

Influence of FitzRalph and the  
De Pauperie Salvatoris

Like Ockham, FitzRalph is a significant source for both the social and theological views of Wyclif. As Aubrey Gwynn notes, FitzRalph's work De Pauperie Salvatoris, appearing in 1350, borrows from Giles of Rome's view of dominion and in turn influences Wyclif's works on dominion in 1375-77.<sup>31</sup> In this understanding of dominion, only Christians in justice and grace may own property or exercise civil rule.<sup>32</sup> In addition, we cannot discount FitzRalph's influence on Wyclif for the centrality of Scripture in preaching.<sup>33</sup> FitzRalph does not hesitate to summon a higher law, of which God is the author, against erroneous human law.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Gwynn, 235.

<sup>32</sup>Giles, FitzRalph, and Wyclif, having drastically different conceptions of the church, have correspondingly different views of who is a Christian or a member of the church. We should note that Ockham resists the view of Giles and John XXII, that only one the state of grace can own property. According to Ockham, unbaptized Christians and pagans may own property: Breviloquium de principatu tyrannico, ed. Richard Scholz (Leipzig: Kiersemann, 1944) 3.2, p. 110; 3.5, pp. 122-23.

<sup>33</sup>See Katherine Walsh, "Preaching, Pastoral Care, and sola scriptura in Later Medieval Ireland: Richard FitzRalph and the Use of the Bible," in The Bible in the Medieval World, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 251-68.

<sup>34</sup>Richard Fitzralph De Pauperie Salvatoris 4.6.444.

### Thomistic Conciliarism

It is through FitzRalph that a Thomistic legacy is imparted to Wyclif. Despite this, Wyclif criticizes Thomas's view of papal supremacy.<sup>35</sup> He agrees with FitzRalph in showing a primacy of honor to the papacy. This view is of course undermined by the time of his De Ecclesia; yet, since Wyclif's criticism of the papacy is rather different from that of Marsilius, we should note FitzRalph's role in shaping Wyclif's views.

### Earlier Papal Legislation-- Nicolas III, John XXII

FitzRalph's De Pauperie Salvatoris is the source of Wyclif's acquaintance with the earlier papal legislation of Nicolas III (1274-77) and John XXII (1316-34). The former pope supported the Franciscan view of poverty in his decretal Exiit qui seminat.<sup>36</sup> This decretal defined the terms "property," "dominion," "use," and "possession," already current in Franciscan usage. These four terms would subsequently be used by Ockham in his Dialogus and by Wyclif in his De Civili Dominio. John XXII's suppression of the Franciscan interpretation of poverty by Nicolas III undermines the

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<sup>35</sup>Veritate 1.4.69.

<sup>36</sup>See De Civili Dominio 3.17.324.

authority of the papacy in Wyclif's eyes<sup>37</sup> and leads Wyclif to criticize the wealth of the possessioner monks.

### Anti-Mendicancy

In Bradwardine and FitzRalph, the previous generation of secular clergy had utilized Augustine against the "Pelagianism" of the mendicants. FitzRalph's debates with the friars in the 1350s are a significant source for Wyclif's criticism of mendicancy as a historical innovation and an intrusion on the prerogatives of the secular clergy. In the De Pauperie Salvatoris, by agreeing with the spirituals on the poverty of Christ's humanity, FitzRalph could preempt many of their claims, at the same time exposing the hypocrisy of the mendicants as they settled into lives of greater ease. By the end of their careers, both FitzRalph and Wyclif come to the conclusion that the church has no need of mendicants.

### Iconoclasm

FitzRalph seems to have also touched off Wyclif's iconoclastic impulses. Wyclif notes in his Scripture commentaries on the Psalms that in 1356 the Archbishop of Armagh had preached against images to Mary in Lincoln, Walsingham and Newark.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 3.17.346-48.

<sup>38</sup>Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 34-35. On Wyclif's iconoclasm, see Helmut Feld, Der Ikonoklasmus des Westens (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 85-89.

Social Conditions in Fourteenth  
Century England

Populist and Apocalyptic Sentiment:  
John Ball

With the burdens of the successive poll taxes in the late 1370s we would expect populist sentiment to be high. Anti-clerical sentiment is clearly evident in Wyclif. Wyclif supports his appeal to Scripture by arguing that the people cry out for the authority of Scripture.<sup>39</sup> Although he was absorbed in his academic world, his thought intersected with the populist sentiment. The goods of the church are by law due to the poor in the church, Wyclif says.<sup>40</sup> Referring to the extra-mural practice of lay preaching, Wyclif objects to the suppression of lay preachers by prelates. The church is disturbed by sin, Wyclif argues, not by the preaching of the gospel.<sup>41</sup>

John Ball (1331-81) of Colchester, was the central figure of populist sentiment during Wyclif's lifetime.<sup>42</sup> A curate priest, Ball seems to have begun his itinerant ministry in the early 1360s, not long after the last major outbreak of the plague. Ball was one of the leading organizers of the populist "Great Society" movement of the late 1370s. He eventually became a leading

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<sup>39</sup>Veritate 1.12.274.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 3.26.53.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 1.14.366-67.

<sup>42</sup>A recent study of Ball is Brian Bird, Rebel Before his Time (Worthing: Churchman Publishing, 1987).

figure of the Peasant's Revolt, for which he was executed. There is no reason to reject the authenticity of Ball's 1381 confession to Courtenay before his execution, linking Ball to Wyclif and to the early Lollard leaders and to Wyclif's eucharistic views.

Apocalyptic overtones clearly rang through the millennialist tone of Ball's preaching. Ball's apocalyptic ideas were influenced by earlier Franciscan spirituals such as John Russel and William Nottingham, by Piers Plowman,<sup>43</sup> possibly by John Erghome, the Augustinian Friar who wrote "The Prophecy of John Bridlington," and by the work Of the Last Age of the Church, a populist tract circulating in England in the 1360s which attacked clerical wealth with apocalyptic overtones.<sup>44</sup>

Earlier historians have tried to discount any religious factors in the Peasant's Revolt of 1381; but research by Norman Cohn and Anne Hudson suggest the depth of religious feeling in the movement.<sup>45</sup> Ball set the tone for other populist religious leader such as the Taborites, Savoranola, and

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<sup>43</sup>See Morton Bloomfield, Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth Century Apocalypse (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 91.

<sup>44</sup>Lechler, 1:87. On Erghome, see W.A. Pantin, The English Church in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 129-38, 235-39.

<sup>45</sup>Normon Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 198-204; Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 66-69.

Thomas Münzer in ensuing centuries. Although Wyclif does not accept all of this populist sentiment, he is clearly influenced by it.

### Treatment of Slavery in the De Civili Dominio

The issue of slavery or the feudal system of villeinage was clearly a contentious one for the populists, as seen in their emancipatory demands put forward during the Peasant's Revolt. One would expect them to be dissatisfied with the then traditional scholastic view that slavery did not exist in the state of innocence, but properly exists after the fall.

Wyclif's extensive treatment of the issue of slavery in his De Civili Dominio, book I, chapters 32 to 34, shows that the issue was not merely of passing interest to him. Wyclif adduces several arguments against slavery. It is not implausible that Wyclif is citing arguments here from John Ball himself, while not fully agreeing with them. Slavery is contrary to the law of nature, for the human being is to serve God. Every human being naturally desires freedom. Slavery is against the golden rule. We ought not force slavery on any one. 1 Corinthians 7:23 says, "Do not be a slave of humans." Perpetual slavery was forbidden to the Hebrews; much more should it be forbidden among Christians.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.32.227-28.

For his part, Wyclif takes a more "moderate" view in defending slavery. One should not be ashamed of being a slave; Christ himself was a slave.<sup>47</sup> One's freedom is ultimately based on a spiritual rebirth in Christ.<sup>48</sup> However, Wyclif adduces scriptural arguments to reject hereditary slavery in chapter 34. One of the reasons Thomas Becket died was that the children of slaves were prevented from promotion to religious orders.<sup>49</sup>

### Women

Wyclif's view of women is quite conventional for his time. He follows the lines of interpretation of Augustine and the scholastic theologians. His views are generally subordinationist, along Thomistic lines.<sup>50</sup> Wyclif assumes that women were excluded from the apostles.<sup>51</sup> He does not take sides on the question, then debated between the Franciscans and Dominicans, whether the woman take an active or passive role in conception.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 1.33.232.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 1.33.236.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 1.34.248.

<sup>50</sup>See, for example, Ibid., 3.20.324; Veritate 1.6.129-31.

<sup>51</sup>Veritate 1.14.371.

<sup>52</sup>On Wyclif's view of the immaculate conception, see Lechler, 2:74. Like FitzRalph, Wyclif declines to take a firm position on this issue. On this fourteenth-century debate in England between Franciscans and Dominicans, see Pantin, 131-32.

Despite these factors, we should note that Wyclif has a charming description of the creation of man and woman. The woman's relation to the man is not one of service; the woman was not created from his foot, to be his inferior; nor out of his head, to be his superior; but out of his side, to be his partner.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the emerging radical Wyclif and the Lollard movement will support women as preachers and as administrators of the sacraments.<sup>54</sup>

#### Nationalism and John of Gaunt

Wyclif lived in a time of emerging nationalist sentiment towards the papacy and the centralized church. In Europe, this came to a head repeatedly--with Henry II and Gregory VII at Canossa; Emperor Frederick and Innocent IV; Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII; Marsilius of Padua, Ockham, and Ludwig of Bavaria against John XXII. England also had long

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<sup>53</sup>De Mandatis 25.364. I do not know the origin of this interpretation.

<sup>54</sup>See Margaret Aston, "Lollard woman priests?" in Lollards and Reformers (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 49-70. Compare the emancipatory role assigned to women by the Lollards, mendicants, mystics, Free Spirit, Marjorie Kemp, and the radical reformers. One of the Wycliffite propositions that inquisitors were instructed by the Council of Constance to ask, is whether one supported lay preachers, both men and women; see Heinrich J.D. Denzinger, The Sources of Catholic Dogma, 30th ed., trans. Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis: Herder, 1957), 218; Heinrich J.D. Denzinger and Adolphus Schönmetzer, Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum, et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum, 34th ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1967), 329. The magisterial Reformers, although acknowledging the equality of man and woman in the state of innocence, assigned woman to a subordinate role and refused them the right of becoming ministers or to baptize. John Knox's misogyny in particular knew no bounds.

been in conflict with the papacy, as seen by the York Tractates, Henry II and the martyrdom of Becket, King John and Innocent III, Grosseteste and Innocent IV, and Edward I and Boniface VIII. Finally, because of the papacy's location in Avignon during the 100 years war between England and France, Edward III perceived the papacy's favoritism toward France; thus he promoted anti-church legislation in the 1350s. The statutes of Provisors (1351) and Praemunire (1353, 1365) limited papal influence in the English church over church property and clerical appointments. Richard II would also promote legislation on clerical appointments in 1393, some two years before the twelve Lollard articles were proposed at Parliament. Thus the second half of the fourteenth century clearly set the legal precedent for Henry VIII's break with Rome in the sixteenth century.

Among Wyclif's theological predecessors in fourteenth century England, the anti-mendicancy of Thomas Bradwardine and of the Irishman Richard FitzRalph could be interpreted as nationalist sentiment.<sup>55</sup> From among the mendicants, whose defense of poverty led them into alliance with political foes of the papacy, in 1338 Ockham wrote his An Princeps pro suo succursu, scilicet guerrae, possit recipere bona ecclesiarum, etiam invito papa,<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>See De Civili Dominio 3.20.414.

<sup>56</sup>Guillelmi de Ockham, Opera Politica, ed. R.F. Bennett and H.S. Offler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1942-72), 1:220-76.

supporting Edward III's appropriation of church property to wage war with France, then seen as in alliance with the papacy in Avignon.

In Wyclif's own time, John of Gaunt (1340-99), the Duke of Lancaster, Edward III's fourth son, Richard II's uncle, and the father of Henry IV of the Lancastrian line, was interested in disendowing the church to support his military ventures in France. Gaunt supported Wyclif until his eucharistic views were known; even in Wyclif's radical phase Gaunt protected Wyclif from the open persecution experienced by his followers. The years 1375-78 were critical ones, as they marked the Good Parliament, the death of the "Black Prince" and of Edward III himself, and the accession to the throne of the child Richard II, son of the Black Prince and grandson of Edward III. Gaunt clearly wished to have a dominant role in English politics at the time.

We cannot discount this theme of state control over the church in Wyclif. During his intermediate period of the 1370s, he would become the supporter of secular claims of the English monarch over the church. In his De Civili Dominio Wyclif argues that the "Anglican" or English church is as much a part of the universal church as is the "Roman."<sup>57</sup> Wyclif answers the accusation that, as Ockham had recourse to Ludwig to Bavaria, he himself

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<sup>57</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.19.404. See Edith Tatnall, "John Wyclif and Ecclesia Anglicana," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 20 (April 1969): 19-21.

requests the secular authority to intervene in ecclesiastical affairs; for it is no sin to appeal to the secular arm to defend Scripture.<sup>58</sup>

Wyclif's national church sentiment is reflected in his support of the secular power's right to disendow the church. Wyclif was politically active in the issue of disendowment as early as 1371, when he was in alliance with two Augustinian mendicants in a campaign to disendow the possessioner monastic orders. Disendowment was a major issue addressed in his De Civili Dominio. Here in chapters 25-27 of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif again argues for the right of the secular power to expropriate property improperly used by the church. Church wealth is so great, Wyclif complains, that the King is only king over two-thirds of his realm.<sup>59</sup> Nationalist church notions continue during Wyclif's later period, even though after the Peasants' Revolt he is alienated from the very civil authorities who would implement such church reform.

### The University

The University was a significant social institution where Wyclif spent most of his career until his expulsion from Oxford in 1381. His expulsion

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<sup>58</sup>Veritate 1.14.350, 353.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 3.25.20.

made him bitter toward the University itself.<sup>60</sup> We should not interpret this to mean that Wyclif was an anti-intellectualist.<sup>61</sup> He merely opposed the dominant intellectual movement of nominalism of his day as being too slothful, heretical, and unconcerned with social issues. Even in the last phase of Wyclif's life, Wyclif defends the notion of the "school of Christ," based on his own realist principles.<sup>62</sup> There is, to be sure, an undeniable current of "anti-intellectualism" in radical Christianity; but one must avoid prejudging its character.<sup>63</sup>

### Scripture Translation

England had not had any scriptural translations since the middle English version of the early eleventh century. There is still some debate on

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<sup>60</sup>Michael Hurley, "'Scriptura Sola': Wyclif and his Critics," Traditio 16 (1960): 306-7.

<sup>61</sup>This is the argument of Pantin, The English Church in the Fourteenth Century, 132-34.

<sup>62</sup>De Antichristo 2.12.325-26.

<sup>63</sup>The nominalism and voluntarism of Olivi and the spiritual Franciscans, and even of mainstream theologians such as Scotus and Ockham, could be interpreted as programmatic anti-intellectualism. Compare the radical reformers' success among the uneducated, non-conformists' antagonism to puritan conformism at Cambridge, pietism as a reaction to Lutheran scholasticism, frontier revivalism in nineteenth-century America as opposed to the clerical elite in the East; and the Bible-school movement, often inspired by pre-millennialism, as a fractious reaction against the modernism and elitism of the mainline denominations in the early twentieth century.

the origins of the Lollard translation and Wyclif's role in it.<sup>64</sup> Scriptural translation of the gospels may have already been undertaken as early as 1375 by Nicolas Hereford.<sup>65</sup> Wyclif's De Mandatis and De Civili Dominio, setting forth his conception of Scripture as the law of Christ, along with Wyclif's populist statements, already laid a theoretical justification for vernacular Scriptural translation, even though no explicit reference to translation is made in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae. Moreover, by the late 1370s Wyclif was preaching sermons in English. In his last years, Wyclif seems to have been too busy in his retirement at Lutterworth with writing other works to be translating Scripture, but he may well have supervised and approved of the early Wycliffite translation.

### Lollardy and Pacifism

Wyclif's relation to Lollardy has been hotly debated in the scholarly literature. Interpreters such as MacFarlane and Leff have denied any connection. Now, with Anne Hudson's work, we can see more clearly Wyclif's

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<sup>64</sup>For the most recent treatments of this subject, see Anne Hudson, "Wyclif and the English Language," in Wyclif in his Times, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 85-103; Margaret Aston, "Wyclif and the Vernacular," in From Ockham to Wyclif, ed. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 281-330; Kenny, Wyclif, 64-66. The classic treatments are Margaret Deanesly, The Lollard Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920) and Workman, John Wyclif, 2:149-200. Deanesly was the first to question Wyclif's role in the actual translation.

<sup>65</sup>Aston, "Wyclif and the Vernacular," 284.

connection with Lollardy, and Lollardy's connection as a social movement with earlier populist sentiment such as expressed by Spiritual Franciscans and the "Great Society." Certainly it may be said that Wyclif identified with the Lollard movement, although not as its ecclesiastical but as its intellectual leader. Such is seen, for example, in his modified pacifism or limited just war convictions. The failed crusade of Bishop Stephen of Norwich in Flanders in late 1382 to 1383 would heighten pacifist sentiment in the Lollard movement. Pacifism, based on the Sermon on the Mount, has always been one strand in the radical Christian tradition;<sup>66</sup> the revolutionary type, based on divine vengeance interpreted from certain Old Testament passages, is another strand.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>See Kenny, 98. Compare the Waldensians, Franciscans, Movavian Brethren, Balthasar Hubmaier, the Mennonites, Quakers, certain Abolitionists, Black Pentecostals, and White Pentecostals before World War II. Martin Luther King Jr.'s theories of non-violence movement may well have drawn from the Black pentecostal Church of God in Christ movement, quite apart from other intellectual influences.

<sup>67</sup>Compare the Peasant's Revolt, the Taborites, the Pesant's War, the Münsterites, non-conformists and the Fifth Monarchy, the American Revolution, and Nat Turner.

## Wyclif and Developments on the Continent

### Marsilius of Padua

Gordon Leff notes that the resemblances between Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275-1342) and Wyclif are "prima facie so striking."<sup>68</sup> This is seen in their common understandings of the exercise of civil authority over the church; denial of the primacy of Peter and of the hierarchical distinction between cardinals, archbishops, and priests; rejection of the temporal claims of the church; insistence on a "poor" clergy based on the pattern of the early church; and emphasis on the sufficiency of Scripture in its literal sense. Georges de Lagarde sees clear evidence of Waldensian and Franciscan influences on Marsilius.<sup>69</sup> Marsilius's suggestion that disputes in the church should be settled by a general council makes a contribution to later conciliar theory.<sup>70</sup> Given his overall ecclesiological concerns, however, one wonders whether Marsilius is serious in making such a suggestion; it seems more appropriate to classify him as a national church leader. Despite the similarity in views between the two figures, there is no evidence that Wyclif had read Marsilius's

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<sup>68</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:413.

<sup>69</sup>Georges de Lagarde, La naissance de l'esprit laïque, 2d ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942-48), 2:119-38.

<sup>70</sup>Brian Tierney, Foundations of the Conciliar Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 7-10.

Defensor Pacis.<sup>71</sup> The doctrines and beliefs of Marsilius were also to be found in the spiritual Franciscans and FitzRalph.

### The Free Spirit and Continental Mysticism

Wyclif's mission to Bruges in 1374 seems to have exposed him to sectarian influences on the Continent.<sup>72</sup> Several times in his De Civili Dominio, not long after the mission, Wyclif mentions the "heresy" of the "Beghards," referring particularly to their extreme emphasis on the speculative life and their perfectionism.<sup>73</sup> By the "Beghards," Wyclif may well have been referring to the Free Spirit movement on the Continent.<sup>74</sup> This movement had been condemned by the Clementine decrees in 1311 for their perfectionism and for refusing to adore the eucharist.<sup>75</sup> We do not know to

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<sup>71</sup>See Workman, John Wyclif, 1:132-34; Willliell R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983), 53.

<sup>72</sup>See Ernest W. McDonnell, The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1954), 566.

<sup>73</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.25.177-84, 43.373; 2.1.4, 12.146; 3.21.428, 26.614.

<sup>74</sup>For treatments of the Free Spirit, see Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 148-86; Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 1:308-407; Robert E. Lerner, The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); and McDonnell, 477-574.

<sup>75</sup>Denzinger, The Sources of Catholic Dogma, 188-89; Denzinger and Schönmetzer, Enchiridion, 282.

what extent this movement could be called an organized heresy existing on the Continent, or the extent to which inquisitorial reports and accusations may be lent credence. However, use of vernacular literature, autotheism, and adoptionist christological views are known to have been attributed to the Free Spirit movement at various times. They were accused of believing that they could become divine and of denigrating Mary and Christ as human beings. They were called "lollards" in the early fourteenth century, quite some time before this appellation was used in England. In the Low Countries, Gerhard Groote attacked the posthumous influence of Matthew of Gouda in the 1370s for his "blasphemies concerning the humanity and divinity of Christ, the sacraments of the Church, and purgatory."<sup>76</sup>

Thus the Free Spirit could well have suggested Wyclif's radical view of the eucharist, apart from purely metaphysical considerations and academic influences. The subjective understanding of grace and anti-clerical spirit parallel Wyclif's Donatistic views. Their rejection of the Catholic sacrament of marriage (for which they were accused, probably unjustly, of libertinism) may have influenced Wyclif,<sup>77</sup> and certainly did parallel the later Lollard views of marriage. There was also a significant Flemish artisan community in London in Wyclif's time, toward which the wrath of the Peasants' Revolt was directed.

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<sup>76</sup>Lerner, 196. See also Cohn, 167-69, 204.

<sup>77</sup>Cf. Veritate 3.25.32. On this charge, see Lerner, 10-34.

By "Beghards," Wyclif may also have been referring to that more orthodox reform movement in the Low Countries, the Brethren of the Common life, founded by the mystic Gerhard Groote. In an autobiographical statement, Wyclif declares that, when he was younger, he used to reject mystical utterances.<sup>78</sup> However, no direct reference is made by Wyclif to mystics such as Marguerite of Porete, Eckhard, Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroeck, or Groote. The alleged projective and auto-theistic or pantheistic tendencies of mystics such as Eckhart, by which female understandings of God were possible, were quietistic and in sharp contrast to the world. Thus although there is a definite affinity in reformist ideals with the fourteenth century Continental mystics, Wyclif is much more practical in outlook and orthodox in theological orientation.<sup>79</sup>

### Bohemia

One generally thinks of the influence of Wyclif and Lollardy on the reformation in Bohemia. However, the influence may also have been in the other direction. Wyclif is known to have had Bohemian students in the 1370s. The University of Prague was established by the emperor Charles IV in 1348. The Bohemian students of Wyclif may have expressed nationalist sentiments,

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<sup>78</sup>Veritate 1.5.100.

<sup>79</sup>The English mystic Margery Kempe of the early fifteenth century may have been inspired by feminist impulses in Lollardy. See Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 435-36.

and informed him of the inquisition carried on by Charles against heretics in Germany and Bohemia. By the time of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, the apocalyptic preacher Jan Milíč (d. 1374) had already passed from the scene. Milíč was an influential Bohemian preacher in Prague for some ten years before his death. He attacked church wealth and abuses, downplayed the importance of excommunication and penance, and called the emperor Charles IV "Antichrist."<sup>80</sup>

### The Papacy and its Alliance with the Moderns

In Boniface VIII at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the papacy would attempt its greatest grasp at temporal power in its history. His failure resulted in the Avignognese papacy and the enervation and sharp decline in its authority for the remainder of the fourteenth century and the early part of the fifteenth, despite the efforts of John XXII two decades after Boniface to crush the reforming ideas of the spiritual Franciscan and Michaelist movements. The problem of Wyclif's relations with the papacy is a complex one.<sup>81</sup> It is possible that Gregory XI (1370-78) refused him a prebend, although it is implausible to attribute Wyclif's disillusionment with the papacy to this event. Wyclif's negative view of Gregory XI is accounted for by Gregory's wordliness and his war on Florence in order to restore the papacy to Rome. After

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<sup>80</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:611-12.

<sup>81</sup>See Lechler, 2:131-40, and Workman, John Wyclif, 2:46-82.

Gregory's death the papal schism, which occurred shortly after the writing of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, did not improve Wyclif's view of the papacy. When writing the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif is still willing to confess the primacy of Rome,<sup>82</sup> although in a conciliarist or a national church sense.<sup>83</sup> However, Wyclif's De Potestate Papae, written only a year later in 1379, goes beyond the conciliarist principles of FitzRalph and effectively denies the possibility of papal primacy. In the early period of the schism, England was allied with Urban VI in Avignon. Wyclif initially supports Urban, but he eventually attacks both rival popes Clement VII (Robert of Geneva) and Urban alike.

Wyclif is critical of the alliance of the moderns in England with the papacy.<sup>84</sup> The voluntaristic stress on divine omnipotence and the distinction between God's absolute and ordinary powers, terminology originally unique to the Franciscans including Olivi, had been taken over by the curialist

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<sup>82</sup>Veritate 1.14.350.

<sup>83</sup>Wyclif would not agree to Ockham's position, that the pope may hold secular power in his own states.

<sup>84</sup>See De Mandatis 28.425; De Officio Regis 8.206. The Benedictine Adam Easton (c. 1325-97), an Englishman who resided at the papal curia and who was influential in the 1377 papal condemnations of Wyclif, might be a notable example. See Pantin, 175-78. It is ironic that the ideology of nominalism, originating with radical Christianity (Olivi) would become that of Conciliarism (Ockham) and of curialism in Wyclif's time. In D'Ailly, Biel, Erasmus, and Trent, nominalism would become the ideology of Catholicism as opposed to the national church movements, led by a realist (Hus) and later by a nominalist (Luther). What a flexible ideology indeed!

Augustinian friars Giles of Rome and Augustinus Triumphus in asserting the extraordinary powers of the papacy under God's absolute power, with the secular arm identified with God's ordinary power.<sup>85</sup> Hence we should read Wyclif's rejection the use of God's absolute power in the theoretical realm as extending to ecclesiological and political affairs as well.

### East and West

Wyclif is convinced that the growth of papal power over the centuries is the cause of schism. This was true not only in the case of Islam,<sup>86</sup> but between the Eastern and the Western churches. Like Joachim and earlier English and Franciscan theologians, Wyclif has some sympathy with the Eastern Trinitarian view of the monarchy of the Father and the generic unity of the Persons,<sup>87</sup> even though he also defends the Filioque on Scotist positivist grounds. Wyclif is aware that the East does not acknowledge papal supremacy, a fact that supports his claims for national churches against the

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<sup>85</sup>William J. Courtenay, "The Dialectic of Omnipotence in the High and Late Middle Ages," in Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence in Medieval Philosophy, ed. Tamar Rudavsky (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985), 258. For Ockham, neither the secular nor the spiritual power is absolute; each may intervene in the other's affairs in the case of gross negligence and only under extraordinary circumstances.

<sup>86</sup>Wyclif apparently holds to a common view of the middle ages, that Islam was originally a Christian heresy. De Antichristo 1.32.119.

<sup>87</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 2.20, 3.47-48. Joachim is the one that points out to Wyclif the tensions between East and West. See De Civili Dominio 1.44.413.

unity of the Roman church. His awareness of doctrinal differences between the East and the West over the mode of baptism and the use of unleavened bread in the eucharist, comes largely through FitzRalph's Summa de Armenorum, a work written to defend Roman theological views against the Eastern views of the Armenians. In his ecclesiastical-political trilogy and in his later period, Wyclif comes to the conviction that the Eastern church is more like the primitive church, unspoiled by the Donation of Constantine and without the medieval innovations of sacramental theology which depart from the Fathers.<sup>88</sup>

### The Emperor

To some extent, Wyclif's view of the Holy Roman Emperor is comparable to that of Ockham, who sought refuge with Ludwig of Bavaria. Wyclif defends the right to appeal over church and pope to the emperor, based on the scriptural precedents of Jeremiah and Paul.<sup>89</sup> Like Ockham, Wyclif argues that the emperor may elect the pope and need not be consecrated by him.<sup>90</sup> Unlike Ockham and Dante, however, Wyclif had no conception of World Monarchy, and insists that England and its common law

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<sup>88</sup>De Ecclesia 2.31; De Antichristo 1.46.173, 62.233.

<sup>89</sup>Veritate 1.14.352.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 3.27.72. Compare Ockham Octo Questiones de Potestate Papae (1340-41) 5-7, in Opera Politica, ed. R. F. Bennet and H. S. Offler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1942 - 1972), 1:155-81.

does not come under the jurisdiction of the Empire and the code of Justinian.<sup>91</sup> Wyclif's nationalism shows a clear preference for English common law over Roman law.<sup>92</sup> During Wyclif's middle political period, Charles IV of Luxemburg (1316-78) was emperor from 1347-78 and a major instigator of the Inquisition. Charles forbade vernacular translation of portions of Scripture by the German mystics and other sectarians.<sup>93</sup> Hence Wyclif would not see the emperor in a positive light.

### The Three Successive Phases of Wyclif's Career

#### A Typology of the later Middle Ages

We may summarize what he have been saying in this chapter on social backgrounds and implications to Wyclif by presenting a "typology" for the later middle ages, within which we interpret the three successive phases of Wyclif's Career. This three-phase analysis was first suggested by S. H. Thomson.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>De Officio Regis 11.250-51, 12.261. See Daly, 133-34, and Edith C. Tatnall, "John Wyclif and Ecclesia Anglicana," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 20 (April 1969): 23-24; "Church and State According to John Wyclif" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Colorado, 1964), 253-61.

<sup>92</sup>De Officio Regis 3.56, 7.193.

<sup>93</sup>Deanesly, The Lollard Bible, 59-83, quoted in G. R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:84.

<sup>94</sup>S.H. Thomson, "The Philosophical Basis of Wyclif's Theology," 92.

In describing the later middle ages and the transition to the sixteenth century, it is desirable to frame terminology that can be extended to movements throughout this period. In using the terms "radical sectarian," "national church movement," and "Catholic," I want to use language that is descriptively neutral, neither pejorative nor hagiographic. With such terminology, I derive a "working hypothesis" from Gordon Leff, whose view of later medieval heresy is based on Troeltsch's analysis and is applied further to doctrinal issues. I hypothesize that doctrinal issues such as the Scripture principle, Bible translation into the vernacular, lay preaching and evangelism, scriptural literalism, salvation history and apocalyptic, christology, ecclesiology, sacramental theology, poverty, anti-hierarchicalism, and the role of women in the church, represent the intersection of social protest and doctrinal dissent throughout the later medieval ages. The proclamations of Innocent III, Boniface VIII, John XXII, and the Council of Constance, therefore, react against the social protests and doctrinal dissent of the radical sectarians and of the national church movements.<sup>95</sup> As one may see from our chart in Appendix B, it is possible to find correlations between this typology and sacramental doctrine, particularly on the eucharist. There are specific

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<sup>95</sup>Thus, it would seem, the lack of agreement within the Protestant movement itself in the sixteenth century is a reflection of the earlier conflicts, and the Reformers differed over the extent to which they were willing to absorb the dissenting social and doctrinal views of the late medieval sectarians in reinterpreting the Catholic doctrinal tradition.

correlative factors on views on the papacy, disendowment of church wealth, the role of the secular arm in reform, and the laity, that allow us to place a given thinker in one of these complexes. Our interpretation does not reject the intrinsic merit of doctrinal views, nor does it deny originality to any given figure or movement.

By "sect," "sectarian," "radical sectarian," "radical," and "dissenter," I refer to what Troeltsch calls the "sect type," including the later medieval heretical movements of the Cathari, Waldensians, Spiritual Franciscans and Joachimism, the Free Spirit, Mystics, Wyclif, and the Lollard movement.<sup>96</sup> The radical sectarians raise the doctrinal and social issues mentioned above, and such issues are subsequently adopted by the national church movements and the Catholic mendicant movements.

By "national church movement," I describe Marsilius of Padua and Wyclif in his middle political phase.<sup>97</sup> "National church movements" might also be called national sectarian movements, since from the Catholic viewpoint they absorb many of the heretical emphases of the radical sectarians. National church movements take a via media, opposing the Catholic view of a centralized church on the one hand, and the radical sectarians on the other.

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<sup>96</sup>For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we could add: the Taborites, Pickharts, Czech Unity Brethren, and the radical Protestant Reformers.

<sup>97</sup>For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we could add: Hus and the Utraquist or Calixtine movement, and the Lutheran, English, and Calvinist reforms.

Within Catholicism, we may distinguish the extreme papalist position of "curialism" from "conciliarism," which takes a more conciliatory view toward the radical sectarians and the national church movements, but attempts to preserve the traditional structures and practices of the medieval Catholic church. The monastic movement in general and the mendicant movements in particular may also be seen as mediating between the concerns of the papacy and Catholic society on the one hand, and of the radical sectarians and national church movements on the other hand. The mendicant movement, as shown in the thought of Aquinas, John of Paris, and Ockham, is a significant source for conciliarist theory.<sup>98</sup> The curialist movement is also inspired by mendicancy around 1300, in the Augustinian Friars Giles of Rome and Augustinus Triumphus.

### Three Successive Phases

We may apply this hypothetical schema of the later middle ages to Wyclif. Wyclif may be interpreted as passing through the stages of a Catholic scholastic, a national church movement leader, and finally a radical sectarian. He is influenced by the Franciscan movement (which itself stands between the Catholic view of Thomas Aquinas and the more radical views of the later

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<sup>98</sup>Many conciliarists, such as Pierre D'Ailly, Biel, the pre-Reformation Luther, and many of the representatives at Trent, were also nominalists. Many humanists, beginning with the English friars of the first half of the fourteenth century up to Erasmus and Thomas Moore of the sixteenth century, were both nominalists and conciliarists.

medieval sectarians) as well as by the secular clerics FitzRalph and Bradwardine, in whom resentment towards the religious orders seems to coincide with the nationalist resistance of mid-fourteenth-century England toward the papacy.

What I have called the "national church movement" aspect of Wyclif has been described as "nationalism" by L.J. Daly, the "landed church" by Michael Wilks,<sup>99</sup> the "abortive reformation" by A.G. Dickens, and "moderate reform" or "the premature reformation" by Anne Hudson. The De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, written in 1378 near the end of Wyclif's political phase, reflects both his scholastic interests and the earlier influence of FitzRalph and the Franciscans, yet also anticipates more extreme views of his radical phase in the years immediately preceding his death in 1384.

At the end of his career, after publication of his eucharistic views, the Peasants' Revolt, and his expulsion from Oxford, Wyclif identifies with the emerging Lollard peasant movement and passes into his radical sectarian phase; he becomes, as Edward Block calls him, a "radical dissenter."<sup>100</sup> Wyclif becomes increasingly alienated from the secular authorities, which suspect him of supporting the Peasants' Revolt; from the mendicants, who no

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<sup>99</sup>Michael Wilks, "Royal Patronage and Anti-Papalism from Ockham to Wyclif," 152.

<sup>100</sup>Edward A. Block, John Wyclif: Radical Dissenter (San Diego: San Diego State College Press, 1962).

longer support him when his eucharistic doctrine become known in 1380; and from the intellectual establishment--he is banned from Oxford in 1381. In Lutterworth, his convictions on the importance of lay access to Scripture lead him to supervise the translation of the Vulgate Bible into English. His thought takes on a more polemical tone; "Antichrist" permeates his thinking, although he does not accept the urgency of Joachist chiliasm in all respects. In his Triologus he will make another statement of his doctrine of Scripture. During the late period his anti-clerical views effectively abolish the distinction between clergy and laity.

In conclusion, social backgrounds to Wyclif's thought are wide and varied. Earlier sectarians, such as the Cathari and the Waldensians, parallel his views but exercise no direct influence. Bernard's reforming ideas are influential. The mendicants, especially the Franciscans and Augustinian friars, are attractive to Wyclif for their social views, even if he is critical of their nominalist ideas. FitzRalph's Thomism and criticism of the mendicants and church wealth are influential on Wyclif, especially in his late phase. Wyclif is not unaware of social movements in England such as Ball and the "Great Society." He absorbs English nationalist views and is critical of both Pope and Emperor. On the Continent, the Free Spirit seem to be a significant negative influence on Wyclif during this period, whereas in his late phase his views will parallel many of the Free Spirit's criticisms of Catholic ecclesiology and

sacramental theology. Wyclif undergoes three phases of his career. He is successively a Catholic philosopher and scholastic theologian; a national church leader; and a radical sectarian.

**PART II**

**EXPOSITION**

## CHAPTER V

### THE METAPHYSICAL APPROACH TO SCRIPTURE

Having surveyed the secondary literature on Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture and his academic and social sources in the Christian tradition, let us now examine Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture. Gordon Leff argues that Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture is "metaphysical," based on his extreme Augustinian realism.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Beryl Smalley states that Wyclif's views on time and eternity go "back past Augustine to Plotinus."<sup>2</sup> It is undeniable that Wyclif has a strongly metaphysical approach to Scripture; let us analyze it in this chapter before we turn to other aspects of his Scripture doctrine in the subsequent chapters. Wyclif identifies five different meanings of Scripture, which are much like Grosseteste's fivefold understanding of being. He follows the Augustinian dictum that all logic and science are contained in Scripture, and postulates a higher "scriptural logic" not limited by the rules of ordinary logic. Against the moderns, Wyclif defends the inspiration, unity, and harmony of Scripture. Scripture is infallible; it is perspicuous like a mirror and accessible even to the laity.

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<sup>1</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:499-500, 513.

<sup>2</sup>Smalley, "The Bible and Eternity: John Wyclif's Dilemma," 73.

### The Five Meanings of Scripture

Much of Wyclif's polemic in defense of his metaphysical view of Scripture dates back to his disputes with Kenningham in 1372 to 1374.<sup>3</sup> In the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, the central passage for understanding Wyclif's "metaphysical" approach to Scripture is chapter six. In answering the objection of scribal errors in the Bible, Wyclif makes no attempt to go back to an original archetype traceable in a historical sense. Instead, he traces the Bible back to an archetypal Scripture in a metaphysical sense. For Wyclif, "Scripture" as a term may refer to five different realities. Scripture is primarily the truths signified by the written Bible, rather than the physical book itself. God's law is more than codices or sensible signs; sacred Scripture is the "truth signified" while the codices are but sensible signs of the truth. Ultimately these truths of the Bible point to Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the divine ideas or exemplars.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Robson, 162-70.

<sup>4</sup>Veritate 1.6.107: "Ulterius arguitur, quod non est inconueniens scripturam sacram esse falsam, cum non sit scriptura nisi codices scriptorum, qui, cum sint plus falsi quam solebant, non est mirum, si opera artis sue sint plus solito falsificata. hic negatur assumptum. nam sicut ostendi alibi, de lege dei est preter codices vel signa sensibilia dare veritatem signatam, que potius est scriptura sacra quam codices."

Wyclif posits five "grades" or meanings of "Scripture."<sup>5</sup> The first meaning of Scripture is the book of life, referred to in the twentieth and twenty-first chapters of the book of Revelation.<sup>6</sup> By "book of life," Wyclif means Christ as the Second Person of the Trinity. This understanding of Scripture seems to come from an unusual reading of John 10:35.<sup>7</sup> What Wyclif calls "Scripture," in its many senses, is what contemporary theologians would call the "Word of God."

The second meaning of Scripture is the truths written in the book of life according to their intelligible existence - that is, the divine ideas. The influence of Augustinian realism on Wyclif is evident here; as in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the divine ideas are identified with the divine essence. Scripture, in both its first and second meanings, is absolutely necessary; as attributes of God, the first two meanings of Scripture do not differ from each

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<sup>5</sup>Hurley, 343, has noted that Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture is inextricably tied to his "exemplarism." Note the parallel between the five meanings of Scripture and the five meanings of the universal noted by S. H. Thomson, "The Philosophical Basis of Wyclif's Theology," 98. Wyclif derives this fivefold division from Grosseteste. See De Universalibus 2.59.

<sup>6</sup>Veritate 1.6.108: "unde solebam ponere quinque gradus scripture sacre: primus est liber vite, de quo Apoc. vicesimo et vicesimo uno."

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 109: "primo modo sumit Cristus scripturam sacratissimam Joh. decimo, quando dicit: non potest solvi scriptura, quem pater sanctificavit et misit in mundum. ex quibus verbis videtur veritatem se ipsam innuere."

other in essence, but according to reason only, as Wyclif mentioned in his earlier treatise of the Summa de Ente, the De Ideis.<sup>8</sup>

The third meaning of Scripture is the aggregate of truths of the law of God which God imposes on humans, or truths to be believed in general, which are written in the book of life according to their actual existence or effect.<sup>9</sup>

The fourth meaning of Scripture is the truth to be believed by the Christian, which is written in the book of human nature, the soul. Some call this Scripture the aggregate of acts and truths referred to in the third meaning of Scripture; some call it a habit in the intellect: some call it a mental thought or notion.<sup>10</sup>

The fifth and final meaning of Scripture is the codices themselves and the signs contained within them. These "signs" of Scripture refers to the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 108: "secundus est veritates libro vite inscripte secundum esse earum intelligibile, et utraque istarum scripturarum est absolute necessaria, non diferens essentialiter, sed secundum rationem, ut dictum est in materia De Ydeis." Unfortunately Wyclif's treatise De Ideis, which is in volume II of his Summa de Ente, has not yet been edited. Wyclif distinguishes the "intelligible existence" of things in the divine mind from their existence in the created world, which may be either universal or particular; see De Universalibus 7.126-28, De Dominio Divino 1.3.21, and Veritate 1.6.114.

<sup>9</sup>Veritate 1.6.108: "tertio sumiter scriptura pro veritatibus credendis in genere, que secundum existenciam vel effectum inscribuntur libro vite."

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.: "quarto sumitur scriptura pro veritate credenda, ut inscribitur libro hominis naturalis ut anima, quam scripturam quidam vocant agregatum ex actibus et veritatibus tercio modo dictis, quidam, quod est habitus intellectivus, et quidam, quod est intencio vel species."

written words of Scripture, which symbolize the meaning intended by God.<sup>11</sup> This sensible Scripture in words or codices is not to be understood as holy Scripture except as an equivocation with regard to its more primary meanings.<sup>12</sup> Wyclif stresses that he does not insist on the infallibility of Scripture in this sense. He recognizes that manuscripts have relative value and that errors occur in the manuscript text of Scripture.<sup>13</sup>

Wyclif identifies this fifth meaning of Scripture, the codices, with what is normally understood as "Scripture," the two-testament work or the text of the Bible. In his Triologus Wyclif states that the text composed from the codices of God's law is what is most notably and commonly called sacred Scripture, although the codices are not sacred, unless the sacred sentence of God is present. Because this meaning of Scripture is most common, he speaks especially of it in respect to its authority and truthfulness.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 108-9: "sed quinto modo sumitur scriptura sacra pro codicibus, vocibus aut aliis artificialibus, que sunt signa memorandi veritatem priorem, quomodo loquitur Augustinus est undequadragesima Ad Paulinum De Videndo Deum. Sed hoc potest multiplicate intelligi, vel personaliter et concretive pro illis signis quomodocunque signaverint, vel simplicitate pro illis, ut signant sensum dei; et sic intelligo ego scripturam sacram sensibilem."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 1.9.190, 195, 11.235. Like many in the later middle ages is sensitive to principle of textual criticism of the Vulgate bible that go back to Augustine. See G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:70-73.

<sup>14</sup>Triologus 3.31.239: "Et tertio modo famosius quo ad vulgus signat aggregatum ex codicibus legis Dei et ex veritate quam Deus ipsis imponit; sed hoc nudum scriptum materiale non didici vocare sententia sacra. Et tunc

Thus Wyclif identifies the codices or the text of Scripture as that thing whose authority and truthfulness he is for the most part defending, although the codices themselves, which may contain scribal errors, are not sacred except to the extent that they refer to the intention of their divine author. It is this sense of "Scripture" that we will interpret in chapters VI, VII, and IX, when we consider the interpretation of Scripture and the theology of history, the Scripture principle, and Wyclif's later doctrine of Scripture in his Triologus. Because Wyclif identifies Christ as the primary meaning of Scripture, in chapter VIII we examine Wyclif's christology in order to examine its implications for Wyclif's view of Scripture in the sense of the Bible or the text.

Wyclif says that the term "Scripture" as used in the Bible itself has five equivocal meanings. He does not mean that the meanings are purely equivocal, so that there is no connection between the Bible we read and the Word of God signified by the Bible. Wyclif's assertion that there are five "grades" or "degrees" of Scripture implies that he believes that there is a hierarchy of being from the primary meaning of Scripture, which is God or Jesus Christ, down to the written codices. All the subsequent meanings of Scripture have an analogical reference to its primary meaning.

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intelligo simpliciter, aggregatum ex illis codibus et sacra sententia ess scripturam sacram. Et quia ista teria significatio est famosior, ideo loquamur specialiter de illa, quanta sit eius auctoritas et firmitas veritatis."

Wyclif gives another indication of the type of equivocation he has in mind by a reference to an example used by Aristotle: "Hence this sensible Scripture in words or codices is not sacred Scripture except equivocally, just as a picture or an imaginary image of a human being is called a human being on account of its similitude to a human being."<sup>15</sup> Thus it is clear that by "equivocation" Wyclif has in mind not pure equivocation, but what Aristotle would call "equivocation by counsel," which Aquinas and Wyclif himself would identify as a form of analogy. Thus Wyclif states that the fact that the parchment or the words and signs signify the Truth of Scripture as Christ indicate an "analogical equivocation."<sup>16</sup>

The analogy or similarity to the primary meaning of Scripture, Jesus Christ, becomes weaker as we progress through the various meanings. Whereas the first three meanings of sacred Scripture are the most notable, sacred Scripture itself makes no or little mention of "Scripture" in its fourth and fifth meanings.<sup>17</sup> However, even the fifth meaning of sacred Scripture

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<sup>15</sup>Veritate 1.6.111: "unde ista scriptura sensibilis in vocibus vel codicibus non est scriptura sacra nisi equivoce, sicut homo pictus vel ymaginatus dicitur homo propter similitudinem ad verum hominem."

<sup>16</sup>Veritate 1.6.114: "unde codex dicitur liber secundum equivocationem analogam ad librum vite, ut patet de libro dato Cristo, Luc. quarto." On the role of analogy in equivocation, see also De Ente Predicamentali 2.15-24.

<sup>17</sup>Veritate 1.6.114: "unde scriptura accipitur famosius pro triplici veritate libro inscripta, de scriptura vero quarto vel quinto modo dictis scriptura sacra facit nullam aut modicam mencionem."

has some reference to Scripture in its primary sense. Wyclif points out that Grosseteste's commentary on pseudo-Dionysius's On the Celestial Hierarchy states that the hierarchy of being is a sacred ordered sequence. We may call something sacred because it signifies a direction toward God as the highest and best end. From this it is inferred, that the "Scriptures" or writing perceived by the senses is called "sacred," to the extent it is an instrument correctly leading to seeing by faith the will and ordination of God, which is the most sacred Scripture.<sup>18</sup>

We may contrast, therefore, the type of "analogy" utilized by Wyclif to refer to Scripture in its first three meanings from its use for the fourth and fifth meanings as the codex or written text. Whereas the analogy between the first three meanings of "Scripture" implies a causal relationship, the analogy between Scripture as Christ or God and the fourth and fifth meanings is much weaker; it is not a pure equivocity, but an equivocity by "design," akin to the

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 115-16: "unde Lincolniensis in De Celesti Ierarchia cap. tercio ita scribit: 'adicit autem Dionisius generi ierarchie hoc adiectivum 'sacra', dicens, quod ierarchia secundum me est ordinacio sacra, pro quo in greco ponitur ieron, . . . opinamur autem, quod ieron, pro quo nos ubique ponimus 'sacrum', signat direccionem in deum tamquam in finem ultimum et optimum, . . .' ex quibus colligitur, quod scriptura sensibilis dicitur sacra, in quantum est medium recte inducens ad videndum per fidem dei voluntatem et ordinacionem, que est scriptura sacratissima."

relationship between a person and a picture of that person.<sup>19</sup> The text of the Bible is not "Scripture" unless the divine intention is also present.

Wyclif's metaphysical outlook on Scripture is confirmed in the eighth chapter of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, where he asserts that just as there are five meanings of Scripture, so there are "five weapons" to be used against the "cunning sophists," or the moderns: first, that Scripture contains the divine ideas; second, that besides signs we must posit universals which exist ex parte rei, for in the creation account of Genesis 1 we see that God created species and genera; third, that the world constitutes a unity of all that is created; fourth, that all things past and future are present with God;<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>The remark of Owens, 305, is particularly appropriate: "Even with the concession that "equivocal by chance" was identified with the purely equivocal by Aristotle, the rich fields of meaning between it and the univocal were not brought by him under the one designation "analogical." At *ibid.*, 320-31, he notes that there are "types of equivocality" between analogy and pure equivocality, for example between being in potency and being in act.

<sup>20</sup>The invariability of Scripture as literally true in all time past, present, and future and in eternity is argued by Wyclif against his opponent Kenningham. See Robson, 168. Wyclif's obsession with the necessity of future events in his treatise De Tempore of his Summa de Ente, and in his Logic. See Kenny, Wyclif, 31-41. In general, we may differentiate two strands in later medieval thought on this issue. The Franciscan-nominalist strand defends the contingency of future events and of what would later be called God's "middle knowledge" of them. The Augustinian strand upholds the determinateness and thus the necessity of all future events. A further distinction in this strand may be made between those who call this necessity hypothetical or conditional only (Aquinas, FitzRalph, perhaps Gregory of Rimini, the early and middle Wyclif) or absolute (Bradwardine, the late Wyclif, and Luther).

fifth, that there is equivocation of the terms used in Scripture.<sup>21</sup>

In assessing Wyclif's metaphysical view of Scripture, we may note that it is odd that Wyclif makes no attempt to make the distinction commonly held since the thirteenth-century scholastics between truths known by faith of the Bible or revelation, and truths known by naked reason alone. Apparently Wyclif makes no distinction between "natural law" or "general revelation" on the one hand, and special or Christian revelation on the other. Presumably Wyclif holds the somewhat naive view that not only all the truths and statements of the Bible are intelligible, but they are even demonstrable.

#### The Logic of Scripture

From Augustine's Epistola Ad Volusianum, Wyclif derives the claim that all science, including all law, philosophy, logic, and ethics, is in Scripture.<sup>22</sup> Scripture has its own grammar and terminology intended by God, which the mature person must learn.<sup>23</sup> Scriptural logic is subtle and distinct from Aristotle's logic.<sup>24</sup> Thus Aristotle is below Scripture in

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<sup>21</sup>Veritate 1.8.167-74. See G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:128-39, and Robson, 227-28.

<sup>22</sup>Veritate 1.2.21-22. See Mallard, "John Wyclif and the Tradition of Biblical Authority," 52-54.

<sup>23</sup>Veritate 1.3.42.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1.4.87-88, 2.18.67-69. Cf. G. R. Evans, "Wyclif's Logic and Wyclif's Exegesis: The Context," in The Bible in the Medieval World, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 296.

authority.<sup>25</sup> Yet the logic of Scripture does not contradict the logic of Aristotle, since God is the author of all truth. It is the measure of philosophical logic rather than vice versa.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the logic of the moderns and the grammar of the schools are unreliable, lasting but twenty years; scriptural logic, on the other hand, is eternal.<sup>27</sup>

There seems to be an ambiguity in Wyclif's view of the relation of Scriptural logic to the logic of Aristotle and of the schools. Does he mean that there are two logics, a higher one of Scripture, and a lower one of philosophy? If so, how do they relate to each other? Or does he hold that there is but one true logic, that of Scripture, in whose light the logic of Aristotle and the moderns must be interpret and corrected, in order that it avoid error? The latter interpretation of Wyclif seems more probable. In the proem of his De Logica, written perhaps in 1360, Wyclif stated "I am moved by some friend of the law of God to compile a certain treatise in order to declare the logic of sacred Scripture."<sup>28</sup> Although in this work (and later in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae) Wyclif draws on Scriptural statements to illustrate logical principles, however, it is clear that he is writing a scholastic

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1.2.29.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1.3.47-48. See also Ibid., 1.11.238.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 1.3.54.

<sup>28</sup>De Logica, proem, 1. On the date of this work, see the introduction, VI-VIII, and W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 4.

treatise on logic. The suggestion Wyclif is making is that there is but one true or perennial logic, which exists in Scripture but can also be articulated in scholastic form.

There is a definite improbability to Wyclif's assertion that Scripture contains its own logic. Historians generally consider Aristotle to be the originator of logic as it developed in the West. Wyclif's interpretation of Augustine's view of logic is somewhat akin to the view of the early church fathers, who held that Plato and other Greek philosophers were originally inspired in their ideas by reading the books of Moses.

#### Authorship and Inspiration of Scripture

Wyclif discusses the authorship of Scripture as evidence of its divine inspiration. Since Scripture consists of the words which Christ himself established, it would be human presumption to correct it.<sup>29</sup> For in Augustine's De Genesi ad literam, it is asserted that the authority of Scripture is greater than the capacity of human thought or ingenuity.<sup>30</sup> Wyclif refutes the moderns' questioning of scriptural authority and inspiration by holding to a threefold authorship of Scripture. The author of Scripture is first God, then

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 1.2.27.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 1.9.192.

Christ's humanity, then the human authors as scribes of divine dictation.<sup>31</sup> As for the divine element in Scripture, the fact that the prophets often say "thus says the Lord" settles the matter.<sup>32</sup> Augustine writes that the authors of Scripture were in submission to the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Wyclif does not deny the human element in Scripture. He recognizes human authorship in Scripture, although he also emphasizes that God is the supreme author. Yet it must be admitted that in his zeal to refute his nominalist opponents, Wyclif's insistence on the divine element of Scripture overshadows any emphasis on the human element, a fact that parallels the Cyrillian tendencies of his christology.

#### Unity and Harmony of Scripture

Another aspect of Wyclif's metaphysical understanding of Scripture is his defense of the unity and harmony of Scripture.<sup>34</sup> According to Augustine's De Consensu Evangelistarum, one part of Scripture explains another. Thus in response to the objection, that Christ is stated as quoting Jeremiah in Matthew 27, where in fact Zechariah is referred to, Wyclif alludes

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 1.15.392, 398. See De Potestate Papae 6.108; Triologus 3.31.239-40; and Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:513-4.

<sup>32</sup>Veritate 1.15.395-96; see Buddensieg's introduction to this work, XXX.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 1.9.201.

<sup>34</sup>G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:117-20.

to Augustine's solution, that a single mouth spoke in all the prophets.<sup>35</sup> There is a concordance between the Old and New Testaments, for God can not fail his church in those things which are necessary for the catholic faith.<sup>36</sup> The entire law of Christ is one perfect word, proceeding from God's mouth, of which the various parts work together to cause the total authority or efficacy of Christ's law.<sup>37</sup> The parts of Scripture agree with each other, so that Scripture explains itself.<sup>38</sup> Thus Wyclif insists that is dangerous and heretical for the moderns to cut up Scripture by taking passages out of context.<sup>39</sup>

### Infallibility and Perspicuity of Scripture

#### Infallibility

Related to Wyclif's metaphysical understanding of Scripture is his conviction of Scripture's infallibility and perspicuity. As is clear from the title of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif defends the truth and infallibility of Scripture.<sup>40</sup> Every word of Scripture is laden with meaning, so that

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<sup>35</sup>Veritate 1.9.196-97.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 1.10.228.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 1.12.268.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 3.31.256-57.

<sup>39</sup>De Antichristo 2.8.313.

<sup>40</sup>Veritate 2.18.67: "et sic infallibilis est scripture sacre autoritas, nedum quia neminem fallit de facto, sed quia neminem potuit fefellisse." Although the term is used in the later middle ages to describe scripture, the papacy, and

Scripture is true in whatever it asserts.<sup>41</sup> Wyclif approves of Augustine's criticism of Jerome, who suggested that the writers of Scripture spoke ironical falsehoods.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Aquinas is quoted as defending scriptural veracity.<sup>43</sup>

For Wyclif, interpretation, not Scripture, errs: whenever we conceive something false in Scripture, this is the result of our own ignorance, whereas

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the church, Wyclif does not use the term "infallible" systematically. "Truth" and "veracity" are the key terms for Wyclif. Another term used systematically is "impeccability," which refers to Christ specifically. "Infallibility" as a term to describe Scripture emerged among the Elizabethan Puritan movement and reached its height in the Westminster Confession of the mid-seventeenth century. Because there are certain affinities between Wyclif and the English non-conformists, the term "infallible" is not entirely inappropriate. The emergence of Wyclif's radical social views would clearly make it inappropriate to describe him as an "inerrantist" of the Princeton or Fundamentalist sort of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for Wyclif's intellectual views alone can not be isolated as anticipating their views. Given the combination of Wyclif's intellectual and social views, the radical evangelical wing of Finney, the black church, abolitionism, Wesleyan holiness, woman's temperance and suffrage, and Pentecostalism, would be in sympathy with his views. On the other hand, Wyclif would find incongruous the Kantian-Barthian distinction between faith and practical knowledge on the one hand and science and theoretical knowledge on the other, so that Scripture is "infallible" in faith and morals but not in history or science. Clearly Wyclif holds to a pre-Kantian integrationist view of knowledge and faith.

<sup>41</sup>Veritate 2.18.69-70.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 1.12.276.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 1.13.330 (Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 2.2.110.3, ad 1): "It is to be said that neither in the gospel nor in canonical scripture it is lawful to say, that it asserts something false nor that the writers said something false in them, because then the certitude of faith would perish, which rests on the authority of sacred Scripture."

Scripture itself remains infallibly (incorrigibiliter) ordered, of supreme authority in all respects.<sup>44</sup> Thus Scripture's truth is tied to its authority; instead of questioning either, we must humbly accept its authority.<sup>45</sup> For its authority is absolute, not a relative or participated authority.<sup>46</sup>

In chapters sixteen through eighteen of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif gives considerable attention to the issue of lying as a part of the doctrine of Scripture. He draws on Augustine, Aquinas, and FitzRalph to defend its truth, while attacking the casuistry of the moderns.

Wyclif responds to several particular criticisms of Scripture's veracity. Some question the truth of Scripture on moral grounds. However, from Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana Wyclif derives his doctrine that there is no falsity or in Scripture, even to the extent that crimes must be interpreted figuratively.<sup>47</sup> There is no falsehood in the prophets Isaiah and Jonah when they prophesied judgments that did not occur, since these prophecies were conditional.<sup>48</sup> It is argued by and opponent of Wyclif that there was no

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<sup>44</sup>Veritate 1.3.61. In his De Civili Dominio 1.43.378, 44.418, Wyclif argues that Scripture is free from error. See Block, 34.

<sup>45</sup>Veritate 1.9.198, 15.375.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 1.15.392; see Buddensieg, introduction, XXXI-XXXII.

<sup>47</sup>Veritate 1.9.200.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 2.18.77, 19.110-11. See G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:139.

correct Hebrew text of the Old Testament, resulting from Ezra's bad compilation of Scripture, so that Daniel is incomplete in the Hebrew; this argument is confirmed by the fact that Jerome was criticized for translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew instead of from the Septuagint.<sup>49</sup> Wyclif's solution to this argument is to follow Jerome in accepting only the Hebrew Old Testament, not the Septuagint, as authoritative. As for the New Testament writings, those of Peter, James, Jude, Paul, Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John are to be accepted as authoritative because they were written by the apostles or by immediate associates of the apostles.<sup>50</sup>

In arguing for the truth of Scripture, Wyclif sees the moderns as corrupters and falsifiers of Scripture.<sup>51</sup> He compares the scepticism of his opponents to the Academic philosophy that Augustine refuted.<sup>52</sup> Against the moderns' way of thinking, it is not possible by God's absolute power that Scripture lie.<sup>53</sup> The moderns are also faulted by Wyclif for accusing the Bible of heresy.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Veritate 1.11.232.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 1.11.246-47.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 1.7.148.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 1.10.208-9.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 2.29.174.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 3.32.284.

Wyclif turns the moderns' criticism of Scripture around by contrasting the infallibility of Scripture to the fallibility of the church.<sup>55</sup> Wyclif rejects, for example, the moderns' view of the temporal punishment of purgatory as a "pious fraud," issued as pious lies and threats.<sup>56</sup> While the curialists do not permit the power of the papacy to be discussed, Christ enjoins us to criticise such persons as ravenous wolves and hypocrites, for by their fruit are they known.<sup>57</sup> The truth is not to be held back; prelates may not restrain preachers of truth.<sup>58</sup>

There seems to be a definite tension in Wyclif's view of the infallibility of Scripture. Having said that Scripture in its primary meaning as God or Christ is infallible but not in its equivocal meaning as the codex or text, Wyclif seems to proceed with defending the infallibility of the scriptural text. Perhaps Wyclif means that the text of Scripture when properly interpreted by his own metaphysical principles is infallible; it is only when Scripture is interpreted falsely that it is fallible.

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<sup>55</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.44.416-17.

<sup>56</sup>Veritate 2.17.56.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.11.262. See De Civili Dominio 2.14.114-26.

<sup>58</sup>Veritate 1.14.334, 341.

## Perspiciuity

In the opening remarks of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif asserts that Scripture is an exemplar, a mirror for examining and putting out any error or heretical depravity.<sup>59</sup> In understanding Scripture as a mirror, Wyclif is convinced of its perspiciuity and clearness. For Wyclif, the doctrine of Scripture's perspiciuity rests on his metaphysical and christological assumptions. The influence of the Augustinian divine ideas is seen in Wyclif's doctrine of scriptural perspiciuity. Scripture is God's exemplar for human speech; thus we should not assign arbitrary meanings to linguistic terms.<sup>60</sup> Christ in his divinity as king is the eternal mirror in respect to the eternal reasons, the exemplar of every creature.<sup>61</sup>

To some extent, however, Wyclif's understanding of Scripture's perspiciuity prescinds from purely metaphysical considerations in that Scripture's clearness also makes it approachable by the laity. According to James 1:21, we are to be doers, not just hearers of the Word when we look

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 1.1.1-2. The ancient source of Wyclif's "mirror" doctrine, besides the biblical allusion to James 1, is the Pseudo-Dionysius: De Trinitate 10.115. See Smalley, "The Bible and Eternity: John Wyclif's Dilemma," 81, who conjectures that Wyclif's mirror doctrine is reminiscent of Plotinus; Heather Phillips, "John Wyclif and the Optics of the Eucharist," in From Ockham to Wyclif, ed. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 249-50; Benrath, Wyclif's Bibelkommentar, 315-26, 345; William Farr, John Wyclif as Legal Reformer (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 20-21.

<sup>60</sup>Veritate 1.9.205.

<sup>61</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.18.358.

into Scripture as a mirror.<sup>62</sup> To some extent Wyclif's insistence on the accessibility of Scripture reflects his anti-hierarchical sentiment. Wyclif refers to Grosseteste's dictum; we preach Christ crucified, an offense to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles . . . but faithful clerics or laity, male or female, find Scripture to be the rule of life.<sup>63</sup> Gazing at the mirror of Scripture, the rule for our life, we should chose to be servants and ministers rather than masters.<sup>64</sup>

Wyclif's metaphysical doctrine of Scripture, then, involves five meanings of Scripture, but which special emphasis on Scripture as Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, and Scripture as the divine ideas. He is no bibliolater. Scripture has its own logic, which is distinct from human logic. It is divinely inspired and constitutes a harmonious unity. Scripture is infallible or "truthful," and perspicuous to all.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 1.33.237-38.

<sup>63</sup>Veritate 1.6.116-17.

<sup>64</sup>De Ecclesia 1.18.

## CHAPTER VI

### SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY

Having examined Wyclif's metaphysical interpretation of Scripture in the previous chapter, in this and the following chapters we shall now examine aspects of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture than have not been given sufficient attention, especially in relation to history; to theology, tradition, the church, and the sacraments; to christology; and his emerging later views of Scripture. In all of these areas, we can trace evidences of sectarian or non-metaphysical influences on Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture along with Wyclif's academic ideas. In this chapter we will consider the role of biblical literalism in Wyclif's principles of scriptural exegesis and theology of history.

Gordon Leff and Beryl Smalley argue that Wyclif's view of Scripture is atemporal and metaphysical to the exclusion of the historical.<sup>1</sup> While I do not disagree with the assertion that Wyclif justified his doctrine of Scripture with his metaphysics, we must not ignore the fact that Wyclif, because of contact with the social ideas of the Franciscans and of views of the national church of

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<sup>1</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:515; Smalley, "The Bible and Eternity: John Wyclif's Dilemma," 410-15. Smalley in particular notes that the fact Wyclif holds to the presence of all things past and future before God nullifies any possible historical outlook.

his time, has a keen sense of history which defines his theological outlook. Indeed, Wyclif's appreciation for the literal sense of Scripture shows his interest in history.

It can hardly be denied that Wyclif, like most medievals, holds a metaphysical view of history in that he believes that all historical events have a divine purpose and fit into a pattern which is interpreted from Scripture. Wyclif is concerned with the theology of history, or salvation history, not mundane or secular history in the sense of a Gibbon or a Hume. Yet we should not automatically assume that his "metaphysical" view of history is entirely dependent on its justification in metaphysical realism, as opposed to the nominalism of the Franciscans. In fact Wyclif has much in common with the theology of history of the Franciscans, even though his justification for his views may depend on principles of metaphysical realism quite alien to the Franciscans.

In this chapter we shall prescind from Wyclif's philosophical views on time,<sup>2</sup> and attempt to show parallels between Wyclif's theology of history in comparison to the Franciscans and other social currents of his time. Like the Franciscans, Wyclif emphasizes the state of innocence before the fall, the poverty of Christ and the apostles, and the primitive church in the history of

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<sup>2</sup>For a treatment of Wyclif's view of time, see Robson, 155-170, Kenny, *Wyclif*, 31-41, and G.R. Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible*, 2: 131-39.

redemption. The historical meaning of the Old and New Covenants comes out in his analysis of Grosseteste's De Cessatione Legalium. The Donation of Constantine, which is assumed to be an authentic document, and the ensuing endowments of the church also have historical significance for Wyclif. The Joachist influence of the Franciscan spirituals leads him to look for different stages of salvation history and of apocalyptic.

### Literalism and the Fourfold Interpretation of Scripture

In order to understand Wyclif's view of the relation of Scripture to history, we must examine Wyclif's principles of scriptural interpretation. For it is the literal sense of Scripture that provides the interpretation of the historical significance of Scripture. In chapter six of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif states that Scripture has four senses: the literal sense has the highest authority, because all other senses are based on this sense. In this Wyclif follows the medieval exegetical tradition as found in Augustine and Thomas.<sup>3</sup>

#### Twofold Literalism

Like the Spiritual Franciscans, Wyclif argues for a literal adherence to apostolic poverty.<sup>4</sup> All of Scripture is literally true. Wyclif, however, like any medieval scholastic, does not hold to any merely wooden literal interpretation.

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<sup>3</sup>Veritate 1.6.119-23.

<sup>4</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.9.137, 19.399.

His views on the correct literal interpretation of Scripture had been challenged in his dispute with Kenningham and are clarified here in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae.

In that dispute, Wyclif had first argued that Scripture is true even de vi vocis. Faced with the criticism of Kenningham that the statement daemonium habes as referring to Christ in John 10 can not be literally true, Wyclif concedes that it is not true de vi vocis, but it is still literally true de virtute sermonis, in the sense that the statement was in fact made about Jesus. Another point of argument is Amos's statement "I am not a prophet." Kenningham argues that this is true, because the gift of prophesy is not permanent. For Wyclif, this statement is problematic, because he holds that logical propositions must be eternally true. Wyclif solves the problem by interpreting Amos to mean "I am not a prophet as you are, Amaziah."<sup>5</sup>

The literal sense of Scripture is twofold, however. Wyclif distinguishes this literal sense (de virtute sermonis) as either the plain, grammatical sense or the parabolic sense.<sup>6</sup> It is Augustine and Thomas who aid him in uncovering

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<sup>5</sup>See Walter Waddington Shirley, ed., Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), 1-42, 453-76 for the texts of the debate, and the discussion by Robson, 169.

<sup>6</sup>Veritate 1.1.3-4, 10-12.

the second, more sophisticated "parabolic" sense.<sup>7</sup> This true literal sense is contained under the plain literal sense. The words signify something figuratively. Hence the literal sense is what is figured. For example, the "arm of God" in its literal sense signifies the "operative power" of God.<sup>8</sup>

Wyclif gives a plainer account of the twofold literal sense in his De Civili Dominio. First, there is the plain sense of grammarians and the laity of some passages of Scripture. Second, there is the spiritual sense of other passages of Scripture, which the Catholic theologian should interpret by the Holy Spirit; this figurative sense is also the literal sense. Although each term in a single passage in Scripture has only one literal sense, the same term may have a different literal sense in another passage of Scripture. The literal sense, then, is not false, as the moderns claim, but is to be taken literally and figuratively.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Augustine in his Confessions and De Genesi ad Litteram allows that the same text may have several literal interpretations. Aquinas does not allow this. The literal sense must be either the plain literal sense or a metaphorical literal sense, not both. Wyclif seems to follow Aquinas on this issue.

<sup>8</sup>Veritate 1.4.73. Cf. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 1.1.10, ad 3.

<sup>9</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.19.403. Thus the term "Scripture" as found in the Bible is threefold and equivocal, variously taking on the meanings of the book of life, the eternal truths in God, and the codices that Scripture is written on. This threefold understanding of Scripture will later be utilized by Wyclif in his Triialogus.

We may note that Wyclif holds that the *Canticle of Canticles* may be read literally in its plain sense as a love song.<sup>10</sup> Thus on this point Wyclif follows the Antiochene tradition. As a medieval, however, Wyclif can not avoid using extensive allegorical interpretation of Scripture. One prominent example of this is when Wyclif, following Chrysostom, traces the woes occurring to King David's union with Bathsheba as an allegory of the church's turbulent history.<sup>11</sup>

#### Authorial Intention

Wyclif's doctrine that the understanding of the literal sense requires some sophistication in interpretation, is related to his understanding of authorial intention, figure, and equivocation. As for authorial intention, we have noted that Wyclif holds that Scripture is not always to be understood in the vulgar or plain grammatical sense; "Dionysius" had pointed out that Scripture is to be interpreted as the author intended its meaning,<sup>12</sup> and Jerome that we must interpret the sense, not the words of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> It is necessary to realize that we must interpret the sense of sacred Scripture that

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<sup>10</sup>Veritate 2.19.114.

<sup>11</sup>De Officio Regis 11.257-59.

<sup>12</sup>Veritate 1.3.43-44. See G.R. Evans, "Wyclif on Literal and Metaphorical," 262-63.

<sup>13</sup>Veritate 1.4.80, 16.19.

the Holy Spirit gave it.<sup>14</sup> The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures teaches the right interpretation of them.<sup>15</sup>

There are certain subjective conditions for proper scriptural interpretation by the believer. These include internal illumination from God, the authority of the senses, and the testimony of historical faith.<sup>16</sup> Thus in interpreting the Scriptures' figurative meaning we must take care lest our interpretation is arbitrary; we must rely on our reason and the fathers.<sup>17</sup> Wyclif concedes that, because Scripture has its own proper logic and grammar, it may require a wise person or a theologian to understand it.<sup>18</sup> The fault of the moderns theologians is that they deny the erroneous grammatical sense of Scripture without understanding the sense of the author, which may be figurative.<sup>19</sup>

Wyclif's insistence on the proper interpretation of the original scriptural writers' intention safeguards against bibliolatry. Hence Wyclif concedes that we are not always slavishly to consider the material element of Scripture in the

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<sup>14</sup>De Eucharistia 7.217.

<sup>15</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.26.622. See Lechler, 2:29-30.

<sup>16</sup>Veritate 1.7.158.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.2.28-29, 35-36, 15.386.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.3.43-44.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.19.107.

parchment, but its intention.<sup>20</sup> The cleric should conceive the meaning of the Scriptures, and not adore the Scriptures themselves.<sup>21</sup>

### Figure

Thus the literal sense intended by the human author of Scripture may be figure or metaphor.<sup>22</sup> According to Aquinas's De Potentia, the figurative or allegorical meaning of Scripture may be allegory proper; parable (parabolic);<sup>23</sup> or fiction as a mystical sense.<sup>24</sup> Thus Wyclif uses the term "figure" or "metaphor" to signify either a secondary literal sense (parable) or the non-literal mystical sense, which includes allegory proper and fiction. According to Thomas, the parabolic sense of some passages of Scripture is the literal and authentic sense.<sup>25</sup> For example, consider the scriptural statement "Christ is a lion." This is not a falsehood, as the moderns claim, but it

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 1.9.189.

<sup>21</sup>De Eucharistia 9.318.

<sup>22</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.44.440. Wyclif conflates Augustine's "figure" with Aquinas's "metaphor."

<sup>23</sup>Wyclif utilizes the definition of John Januensis, OP, of parable as a comparison of things dissimilar in genus: Veritate 1.1.7, 4.74.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1.4.65-67.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1.4.82-83.

symbolizes Christ's kingship and strength.<sup>26</sup> Thus there is no falsehood underlying Scripture when understood metaphorically.<sup>27</sup>

### Equivocation

The fact that the literal sense of Scripture is not always straightforward requires that one recognizes equivocation of the same term found in different passages of Scripture.<sup>28</sup> This then resolves apparent contradictions and refutes charges against Scripture of falsehood.<sup>29</sup> We have already seen in the previous chapter that Wyclif interprets the literal meaning of "Scripture" itself as having five equivocal meanings.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, "lion" is an equivocal figurative term, referring in different passages to either Christ or Satan.<sup>31</sup> Another example of equivocation answers the objection of Kenningham

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1.1.16, 3.40. Ernst Borchert, Der Einfluss des Nominalismus auf die Christologie der Spätscholastik (Münster: Aschendorf, 1940), 86, notes that Adam Wodeham had argued that Christ is not truly a lion, for then he would have four feet.

<sup>27</sup>Veritate 1.4.65, 73; also De Civili Dominio 1.44.423. G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:49, notes that the late medieval inclusion of figurative sense in the literal made it easier for the sixteenth century Reformers to reject allegory. See also her "Wyclif on Literal and Metaphorical," 260-61, 264-66.

<sup>28</sup>Veritate 1.8.174-80; De Civili Dominio 3.21.443. See G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:114-17.

<sup>29</sup>Veritate 1.1.9, 5.94, 97, 8.174

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 1.6.114.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 1.1.15-18.

concerning Amos's statement, "I am not a prophet". Another example would be that "a man is an ass," which of course can not be taken in its plain grammatical sense.<sup>32</sup> A further application of Wyclif's use of figure and equivocation is later used in his De Eucharistia of 1380. Against the sacramental realism of Scotus and the moderns, he asserts that the words of institution, "This is my body," were meant by Christ in a figurative or equivocal sense.<sup>33</sup>

### Mystical Interpretation

For Wyclif, beyond the literal sense of Scripture, the foundation of all its meanings, there is an inner, mystical meaning, reflecting the divine purpose in the historical events narrated in Scripture. Thus besides the literal sense, there are three mystical senses of Scripture. First, on the authority of Galatians 4, Wyclif understands that the Scripture may be allegorically interpreted, in that Old Testament passages foreshadow New Testament events. We should note that Wyclif generally restricts the term "allegory" to refer to the first of the mystical senses. Like Aquinas, Wyclif argues that the allegorical meaning of Scripture is a kind of literal sense, since God caused the

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 2.19.75. Cf. G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:64.

<sup>33</sup>De Eucharistia 5.115-16.

events themselves of the Old Testament to foreshadow the New. The allegorical sense relates to credenda or things to be believed.<sup>34</sup>

Second, there is a tropological or moral sense of Scripture. The moral sense may be derived directly from the literal sense of moral commands in Scripture, just as the virtues may be derived from the literal sense of certain passages. This tropological sense relates to agenda. Finally, the anagogical or eschatological sense of Scripture relates to speranda, those things to be hoped for by the church triumphant. Thus Wyclif holds to the traditional medieval view of the four senses of Scripture, following Augustine on the need for faith, hope, and charity, in reading the literal sense of Scripture.<sup>35</sup>

When are passages to be interpreted literally, and when mystically? Wyclif cites Augustine's dictum that certain passages of Scripture are to be interpreted historically or literally only; certain are to be understood mystically only; certain are to be understood in both ways.<sup>36</sup> Wyclif gives several examples of fourfold interpretation, such as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in its allegorical and tropological interpretation. In this passage's allegorical significance, Isaac signifies Christ.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Veritate 1.1.5, 6.122-23.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 1.6.119-24. This four-fold interpretation of Scripture does not properly begin with Augustine, but with Cassian.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 1.4.76; also 6.123.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 2.17.39-40.

In an autobiographical aside, Wyclif notes that he did not always accept the mystical interpretation of Scripture. "When I was younger," presumably before Wyclif received his doctorate, "I rejected mystical locutions partly on account of my pride, and partly to destroy the vain glory of the sophists. They would rejoice, if they could find an apparent contradiction against their brother."<sup>38</sup> As we shall see, Wyclif's literalist streak will reemerge in his late period.

### The State of Innocence and the Primitive Church

In asserting the literal sense, Wyclif has a keen sense of salvation history; Scripture's literal sense is its historical meaning.<sup>39</sup> Let us look at a few facets of Wyclif's view of Scripture and history.

#### Before the Fall

Wyclif's view of the state of innocence, i.e. of human being before sin, is that there was no civil government, police power, slavery, property,<sup>40</sup> war,<sup>41</sup> falsehood,<sup>42</sup> written law,<sup>43</sup> oaths,<sup>44</sup> or liberal and mechanical arts.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 1.5.100.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 1.6.120.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 2.20.144, 26.60.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 1.4.72, 14.367.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 2.8.73.

His view of the state of innocence does not differ significantly from the scholastic tradition of the Dominicans and Franciscans. He does, however, bring this idea to bear in order to reform society; thus he breaks through the stable monastic social synthesis and states radical social views, much like the Waldensians, Spiritual Franciscans, or the Free Spirit. This view of the state of innocence is fundamental to his view of salvation history.

### Christ and the Apostles

Wyclif further asserts that Christ and the apostles of the primitive church lived most perfectly in accordance with the state of innocence, since the grace of the new covenant is even greater than that of the state of innocence.<sup>46</sup> Because of this, Christ's evangelical law surpasses the Mosaic law and that of Islam.<sup>47</sup> Martyrdom was the characteristic of the primitive church, and should be no less applicable to today's Christian.<sup>48</sup> A Christian

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<sup>43</sup>De Mandatis 6.43; De Statu Innocentiae 4.499.

<sup>44</sup>De Mandatis 17.202; De Officio Regis 9.218.

<sup>45</sup>De Statu Innocentiae 4.495.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.30.204-205, 209.

<sup>47</sup>Veritate 1.11.250-66.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.15.379, 3.29.172-73. See De Civili Dominio 1.44.433. Compare Rupescissa's obsession with the martyrs of the last days who oppose the accommodation of the religious: Bignami-Odier, 89.

is to sacrifice his life for truth.<sup>49</sup> Fear of loss of property, dishonor, and death should be no reason to keep silent in defending the truth.<sup>50</sup>

### The Old and New Testaments

#### Grosseteste's De Cessatione Legalium

In chapters twenty-eight to thirty-one of his De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif takes up the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments along the lines of Grosseteste's De Cessatione Legalium.<sup>51</sup> As in the medieval and patristic Christian writers, the precepts of the Old Testament are divided into moral, ceremonial, and judicial. Only the moral precepts, represented in the decalogue, remain valid under the New Testament or period of the New Law.<sup>52</sup> By contrast, we are no longer to follow ceremonies literally,<sup>53</sup> because Christ is the end of the law, bringing the law of freedom. Hence the Old Testament legal figures are now superfluous and may even

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<sup>49</sup>Veritate 1.13.321.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 1.13.318.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 3.28.104-31.274; also 1.10.228.

<sup>52</sup>Wyclif's understanding of the New Testament as law differs from the Lutheran antithesis of law (Old Testament) and gospel (New Testament), which is derivative of Luther's quietistic solā fide doctrine. Tyndale, perhaps influenced by Lollardy, recognized the New Testament as law reforming politics and society. Even Calvin must concede both a civil and a moral use of the law, the tertius usus legis.

<sup>53</sup>Veritate 3.30.196-97.

place an obstacle to our salvation.<sup>54</sup> Thus Wyclif emphasizes faith, hope, and love over "rites" or figures.<sup>55</sup> Four Old Testament practices are discussed: keeping of the Sabbath, circumcision, abstaining from blood, and the priesthood. Eventually, Wyclif goes much further than the medieval rejection of "ceremonies." His claims that the church should reject its ceremonies, such as pilgrimages, veneration of saints, the eucharistic doctrine of transubstantiation, vestments, and church buildings, come to reflect Wyclif's iconoclasm in his ecclesiastical-political trilogy.<sup>56</sup>

### The De Mandatis

Wyclif treats of the distinction of the Old and New Testaments in De Mandatis Divinis, chapters seven to nine. This treatment shows the Augustinian influence on Wyclif. In the seventh chapter Wyclif states that we must distinguish Old and New Law in substance, giver and mode of giving, and end. In substance, they are the same, with the decalogue corresponding to the

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 3.28.130-31. The understanding of the new law as the "law of freedom" is a common theme among Olivi, the Spiritual Franciscans, and Ockham. See Leff, William of Ockham, 616-17.

<sup>55</sup>To this extent Wyclif anticipates the Reformation notion of "justification by faith," if one means faith vs. the sacraments or ceremonies. See Buddensieg, introduction to Veritate, XXXIX-XLIII; Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 383.

<sup>56</sup>See De Officio Regis 7.174.

two love commands.<sup>57</sup> As for the giver, the Old Testament was promulgated by Moses, whereas the New Testament is the multitude of truths which Christ as a human being taught to rule his people.<sup>58</sup> In mode or manner of giving, they differ in that the Old Law was given in fear at Sinai, the New law in love in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>59</sup> The New Testament is more explicit than the veiled teaching of the Old Testament. For example, we are taught in the New Testament not only not to kill, but we are not to be angry.<sup>60</sup> Finally, there is difference in end; the Old Law promises temporal rewards by fear, the New Law spiritual things by love. The Old Law is for Israel, the New Law for all nations. The Old Law is the door to the New Law; the New Law is the fulfilment of the Old.<sup>61</sup>

In the eighth chapter Wyclif considers the problem of the relative ease of the Old and New Laws. The New Law is more difficult in subtlety, but easier in fatigue, than the Old Law.<sup>62</sup> It has been burdened, however, by

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<sup>57</sup>De Mandatis 7.52-53.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 7.53-54.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 7.57-58.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 7.58.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 7.59.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 8.69.

recent tradition,<sup>63</sup> and when the New Law commands renouncing our wealth, it seems more difficult, but only because of our sin.<sup>64</sup> The decalogue is valid in the time of the law of nature, the time of the Mosaic law, and the time of the law of grace, and is to be interpreted both affirmative and negatively. It is summed up in the two love commands of the New Testament.<sup>65</sup>

### Christological View of the Old Testament; Rejection of the Apocrypha

Wyclif's view of the Old Testament is strongly christological, with the judicial and ceremonial precepts and rites being understood as figures and symbols of Christ.<sup>66</sup> All the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, he asserts, had faith in the coming incarnation of Christ,<sup>67</sup> and they were saved only through it.<sup>68</sup> The temptation of Abraham, his being commanded to sacrifice Isaac, not only had messianic import; it shows that Abraham had faith in Christ.<sup>69</sup> The Christian of the New Covenant, however, having the reality

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 8.65-67. By "recent tradition," Wyclif has in mind ecclesiastical development of the two centuries preceding him.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 8.70.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 10.78-80. Compare Calvin's doctrine of synechdoche.

<sup>66</sup>Veritate 3.28.107, 111-12.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 1.10.228.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 3.28.134-35.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 2.17.34-36.

fulfilled in Christ, is no longer bound by the symbol of the Old Covenant.<sup>70</sup>

Wyclif's interpretation of the Old Testament may be said to be more Augustinian than Antiochene, which would have sharply limited the christological interpretation of the Old Testament. His statements on this subject seem to indicate that his nominalist opponents had adopted a more "Antiochene" approach to interpreting the Old Testament.

Wyclif's conviction of the christological interpretation of the Old Testament is such that he rejects the Old Testament apocrypha, on the grounds that Christ and the New Testament writers make no reference to them.<sup>71</sup> Wyclif is not without criticism of rites for the dead as interpreted in 2 Maccabees, although he does not attack the validity of the book itself.<sup>72</sup> Thus Wyclif theoretically follows Jerome and Nicholas of Lyra in rejecting the validity of the apocrypha, anticipating the view of the Protestants and especially of the Puritan movement. In practice, however, Wyclif continues to quote the apocryphal books into his late phase, and the late fourteenth century Lollard Bible included the apocryphal books.

For Wyclif, as is common for most medieval interpreters of Scripture, the period of the New Testament or New Law does not end with the primitive

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 3.28.115.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 1.10.218; see 1.11.241-42.

<sup>72</sup>De Ecclesia 22.548.

church but refers to the entire history of the church up until the final judgment. Thus significant implications concerning church history and the possibility of reform emerge in his literal interpretation of Scripture.

### The Donation of Constantine and the Corruption of the Church

An important event in church history for Wyclif is the Donation of Constantine.<sup>73</sup> The church, in his view, was not endowed before Constantine.<sup>74</sup> In Wyclif's Latin, the term dotatio usually means "endowment"; but it can also specifically refer to the "Donation." Having empirical evidence of the former, Wyclif could hardly doubt the historical actuality of the latter. Unlike Ockham,<sup>75</sup> therefore, Wyclif does not question the historical factuality of the event. Instead, the Donation is a significant problem to be corrected.

As he writes his ecclesiastical-political trilogy, Wyclif becomes more preoccupied with the historical significance of the Donation. Wyclif is aware that the endowment of the church accumulated over centuries, the Donation

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<sup>73</sup>Veritate 3.26.56. See Smalley, "Wyclif's Postilla and his Principium," 265-66; Farr, 47-60.

<sup>74</sup>Veritate 3.31.232.

<sup>75</sup>William of Ockham Breviloquium de principatu tyrannico 6.4, ed. Richard Scholz (Leipzig: K.W. Kiersemann, 1944), p. 205.

being the first of this long series.<sup>76</sup> The English church, until the time of Pope Gregory and Augustine of Canterbury (about 600), lived in primitive poverty.<sup>77</sup> For Wyclif the eleventh century marked the intensification of the problem of church wealth which continued down to his own day.

### The Wealth of the Church

Wyclif's reforming ideals grow out of his recognition of the historical reality of church endowment as opposed to the poverty of the ancient church. The primitive church supports Wyclif's claims for reform of the clergy.<sup>78</sup> Like the Waldensians, the spiritual Franciscans, Dante, Marsilius, and Ockham, Wyclif argues that Constantine's donation has spoiled the priesthood.<sup>79</sup> The church has neglected its ancient poverty, he says; it has strayed from the

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<sup>76</sup>De Potestate Papae 7.161.

<sup>77</sup>De Ecclesia 15.336; De Officio Regis 7.159-60.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.21.165, 168, 3.26.54. For a survey of this theme in the later middle ages, see Leff, "The Making of the Myth of a True Church in the later Middle Ages," Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 1 (1971): 1-15; *idem*, "The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology," Journal of Theological Studies, n.s., 18 (1967): 58-82.

<sup>79</sup>Veritate 3.26.56. Kenningham, like his humanist-nominalist predecessors Holcot and Ockham, is critical of the wealth brought to the church by the Donation of Constantine. Robson, 168; Smalley, English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century, 194-97. Wyclif assimilates this criticism. See also Leff, "The Making of the Myth of the True Church in the Later Middle Ages," 14.

poverty of the state of innocence by its involvement in secular affairs.<sup>80</sup>

Priests today have lost the primitive church life of community without property, a problem which has grown after the endowment of the church.<sup>81</sup>

Christ's law requires the pastor to share his income with the poor and to live without private property.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, anyone who does not follow Christ in poverty may not call oneself a Christian; this is particularly true of the clergy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>83</sup>

### The Church Hierarchy

With the Donation Wyclif connects the growth of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Before the Donation there was no distinction between priests and bishops, as Jerome's assertions prove, nor did Peter have primacy, except in honor.<sup>84</sup> It is only with Pope Gregory the Great that the papacy began to increase in power. Thus, since the Donation, wealth, civil dominion, coercion

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<sup>80</sup>Veritate 1.11.267, 3.27.83.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 2.24.249.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 1.26.58.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 3.29.166: "tercio patet, quod, quicumque cristiani non sequuntur Cristum in moribus, nedum non sunt cristiani, sed nec pape, episcopi vel alli recti officarii Jesu Cristi. patet ex hoc, quod aliter non habent graciam ad digne percipiendum nomen illius officii."

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 3.31.232; De Officio Regis 4.76; De Potestate Papae 8.166, 12.319.

of tithes, and the counseling of war have increased in the church, in sharp contrast to the primitive church.

Wyclif is aware of the history of monasticism and its successive reformatory efforts as an attempt to preserve the primitive social practices of the church. Bernard is a significant critic of the worldliness of the church.<sup>85</sup> Wyclif argues that in the primitive church, both clergy and laity originally lived without property. Then only priests held to poverty. After the Donation, only monks held to poverty. With the accumulation of monastic wealth, the mendicants claimed to live without property (expropretarie).<sup>86</sup> As Wyclif enters into his late phases, his attacks turn on the friars, and he finds true poverty only among the laity and the "poor priests." The growth of papal power and the accompanying secularization of the church led, in Wyclif's view, to schism, first with Islam,<sup>87</sup> then with the Eastern church, and finally within the Western church itself. This pattern of church history in the period of the New Testament parallels that of Israel in the Old Testament.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Veritate 2.24.250.

<sup>86</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.2.18, 6.81, 16.312.

<sup>87</sup>Veritate 1.6.136.

<sup>88</sup>De Officio Regis 11.257-58. Compare Rupescissa in Bignami-Odier, 81.

## Conflicts between England and Rome

In his Ecclesiastical-Political Trilogy, Wyclif is aware of conflicts between the papacy and England over the extent of papal influence from William I to his own day.<sup>89</sup> Much of Wyclif's information on these conflicts is gleaned from Ranulph Higden's Polychronicon. For Wyclif, these conflicts illustrate the growing rapacity of the church since its endowment.

### Apocalyptic Elements in Wyclif

#### The Periodization of History

In his commentary on the book of Revelation in 1371, Wyclif showed sympathy for a periodization of history in New Testament times from Christ to his own day, following the lines established by the Franciscan Nicolas of Lyra. The primitive church was the time of martyrdom. Then came the period of heresy in the fourth century, the period of the doctors of the church in the fifth century, and so on to Wyclif's own day. These periods correspond to the seven vials of Revelation 4-12.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>De Ecclesia 15.331-32. See Edith C. Tatnall, "Church and State According to John Wyclif" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Colorado, 1964), 248-90; idem, "John Wyclif and Ecclesia Anglicana," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 20 (April 1969): 31-34; Farr, 129-30.

<sup>90</sup>Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 300-9. The seven-fold scheme of New Testament history among the Franciscans is essentially Joachimist. See George Marcil, OFM, "Peter John Olivi and the Joachimistic Interpretation of History," in Franciscan Christology, ed. Damian McElrath (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1980), 120; Delno C. West and Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History

In his De Civili Dominio, Wyclif suggests a fourfold periodization of New Testament history. First, martyrs built up the church. Second, the holy doctors (Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory) defended the church. Third, the plague of simony emerged. Fourth, the clergy broke into violence (Wyclif probably has Gregory XI in mind). At this last stage we have Antichrist's advent.<sup>91</sup>

This notion of periodization continues to influence Wyclif throughout his career. In the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, Wyclif also shows a penchant for periodization. In chapter 31 he considers the five kingdoms of Daniel 2. There are four kingdoms of decline from gold to clay in the history of the church. The Roman Empire is the fourth Kingdom of clay, made unstable and crumbling because of its endowment. The fifth kingdom is the reign of Christ's religion, which is marked by living in accordance with the state of innocence.<sup>92</sup>

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(Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), 21-24.

<sup>91</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.41.326.

<sup>92</sup>Veritate 3.31.239, 262-274. See also De Civili Dominio 2.15.196, De Mandatis 18.211-12, and De Officio Regis 11.251-54. Wyclif borrows this analysis of Daniel from Lyra in his scriptural commentaries. See Smalley, "Wyclif's Postilla on the Old Testament and his Principium," 264-65. See also Wilks, "Royal Patronage and Anti-Papalism," 157. Rupescissa also had a fascination with the Book of Daniel. See Bignami-Odier, 99, 142.

### The Pope as Antichrist

Wyclif had already considered the proposition "whether Antichrist is in Rome" in his Logica of 1373.<sup>93</sup> In the De Civili Dominio, Wyclif uncovers Grosseteste's letter to Innocent IV, which fuels this polemic. In the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae we see references to Antichrist and its identification with the papacy.<sup>94</sup> Unlike Antichrist, Christ's servants live in poverty and humility; with Antichrist's coming, love grows cold and war is stirred up.<sup>95</sup> To distribute endowments for apostate clerics and not for needy believers is the result of Antichrist's madness.<sup>96</sup> It is easy for Wyclif to conflate the Augustinian two cities of God and the devil<sup>97</sup> with the populist, spiritual Franciscan view of the bodies of Christ and Antichrist. However, Wyclif's view of Antichrist does show some sophistication in his belief that there have been many antichrists or false christs since Christ's ascension.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:126.

<sup>94</sup>Veritate 3.31.268.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 1.4.70, 72.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 3.25.17.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 3.28.126.

<sup>98</sup>See De Potestate Papae 12.328. Compare Zwingli's criticism of Luther.

### Millennialist Views

Let us also consider Wyclif's millennialist views, which emerge during the writing of De Ecclesia in late 1378 and are linked with his eucharistic views after 1380. Wyclif basically follows Augustine, with some modifications. The one thousand years is located within salvation history, as with Augustine's amillennial scheme. But whereas for Augustine the millennium is the indefinite period of time from Christ's ascension to his second coming, for Wyclif the 1000 years had its definite termination after the confession "Ego Berengarius" during the reign of pope Nicolas II. Up to this time, the church was basically orthodox, but afterwards, "Satan was unleashed."<sup>99</sup> Wyclif has in mind the passage in Revelation, chapter 21. Then came the error of the eucharist with Innocent III and the emergence of the mendicants. Finally, Boniface VIII was the special example of Antichrist, and the Schism was the final result.

Still later, in his De Antichristo of 1384, Wyclif understands the devil's 1000 year reign as the period from the Donation of Constantine to his own day. This apocalyptic fascination of his late period shows Wyclif's exposure to Joachist literature and responds to popular sentiments of the time in such figures like John Ball.

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<sup>99</sup>De Eucharistia 9.286.

## The Last Days

Wyclif makes allusions that seem to imply that he believed he was living in the last days.<sup>100</sup> Judgment day will vindicate the defenders of Scripture, he says.<sup>101</sup> Wyclif does not accept all the apocalyptic rhetoric of his day, however; as Jesus himself warns, "none knows the day of the coming, except the Father."<sup>102</sup> Thus he refuses to accept the extreme prophetic tendencies of current Joachism. Antichrist, the prince of the synagogue of Satan, exists throughout history, not just at the end of history.<sup>103</sup>

To summarize, Wyclif appreciates history as interpreted from the perspective of Scripture in its literal sense. There are two literal

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<sup>100</sup>See De Civili Dominio 3.23.497.

<sup>101</sup>Veritate 2.17.63-64.

<sup>102</sup>Trialogus 4.40.390; De Antichristo 1.56.205, 58.214-16.

<sup>103</sup>Veritate 1.4.70; De Potestate Papae 12.321. See Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:543. Wyclif's apocalyptic ideas continue to survive after him; indeed populist ideas continue regardless of his influence. Walter Brut was a prominent apocalyptic Lollard later in the fourteenth century. The Taborites had apocalyptic features that were taken over by Thomas Münzer and some of the radical Reformers. In England, there were Lollard millenarians at the end of Henry VIII's reign; Cranmer writes against them in his 42 articles. John Bale and John Foxe were influenced by Wycliffite ideas of the "unleashing of Satan" after the year 1000, and the Pope as Antichrist. Like Wyclif, both were amillennialist in orientation. See Leslie P. Fairfield, John Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1976). The stage was set for further millennialist expectations in ensuing centuries.

interpretations of Scripture: the plain grammatical sense, and the figurative/metaphorical sense. Wyclif's literalism is not such that he rejects mystical interpretation. Wyclif breaks out of the medieval monastic social synthesis and moves toward radicalism when he takes traditional scholastic views on the state of innocence and the primitive church and applies them to reforming the church. In this he is influenced but not fully swayed by Franciscan apocalyptic views.

CHAPTER VII

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE,  
OR THE "SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE"

Wyclif's doctrine of the "sufficiency" of Scripture marks both continuity and discontinuity with the Catholic scholastic view of Scripture, which assumed the harmony of Scripture with reason and the other academic disciplines, as well as with received statements on the developing Catholic tradition of the middle ages up through the Fourth Lateran Council on ecclesiology and sacramentology. In his divergences from the Catholic norm, Wyclif is in continuity with his sectarian predecessors and successors. In this chapter, we examine three aspects of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture as expressed in his De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae. First we attempt to integrate Wyclif's approach to theology, which centers on the Bible and synthesizes both Franciscan and Thomistic elements. Second, we examine Wyclif's understanding of the relation of Scripture to tradition, given his emphasis on the primacy of Scripture as God's law. Although Wyclif utilizes the early Christian tradition in an elucidative manner, he is critical of the more recent medieval tradition. Third, we analyze Wyclif's criticisms of Catholic ecclesiology and sacramental theology as of 1378.

### The Bible and Theology

In Wyclif, who was under the influence of FitzRalph, we see the combination of Thomistic and Franciscan conceptions of the relation of the Bible to theology. Wyclif's concern for the biblical foundation of theology was shown in his commenting on all of the books of the Bible from 1371 to 1376. Equally, the Oxford aversion to systematic theology, going back to Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, is shown by Wyclif's never having written a commentary on the Sentences of Lombard.<sup>1</sup> Wyclif's comments on the nature of theology are found mainly in his Principium, which is his inaugural lecture on the exegesis of Scripture, delivered after receiving the doctorate in divinity;<sup>2</sup> De Dominio Divino; and De Civili Dominio and are repeated here in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae.

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<sup>1</sup>Wyclif's doctoral dissertation, the De Benedicta Incarnatione, is generally thought of as a commentary on Lombard's Sentences. So Edward Harris's preface to the De Benedicta Incarnatione, xx, and Workman, John Wyclif 1:97, 138. If the work is a sententiary treatise, it would be a somewhat unusual one. In the first half of the fourteenth century at Oxford, Sentences Commentaries had been reduced to treating of selected topics, mostly from the first two books of the Sentences (Ockham's work is a notable exception). None of those that we know of dealt with christological topics only. At this point we simply do not have enough information concerning the dissertation requirements at Oxford from 1350-1400, or the effect the Plague had on the curriculum. See Courtenay, Schools and Scholars, 359-61; 364-65; 255-58.

<sup>2</sup>For the text of Wyclif's Principium, see Smalley, "Wyclif's Postilla on the Old Testament and his Principium," 288-92, or Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 338-46. Smalley, 255-56, notes that the Principium was given at Wyclif's inception as a D.D. in 1372 or 1373.

As in the Oxford tradition and the older scholastics of the twelfth century, Wyclif holds that theology should be biblically oriented. The theologian should draw only from Scripture.<sup>3</sup> Wyclif's understanding of the sciences is hierarchical; theology is the supreme science, ruling all others. Theology is the most useful and highest science.<sup>4</sup> Thus in comparison to the "divine science" of theology, human science is not science.<sup>5</sup> Theology is also the directive art in the church for spiritual matters, and its role is not to be usurped by the subaltern arts such as the mechanical arts and the liberal arts, which include logic.<sup>6</sup> Here Wyclif protests the excessive reliance on faddish logical argumentation by the nominalists in theology, and he understands the moderns to be making the divine science a handmaid of the other sciences.<sup>7</sup> Wyclif, on the other hand, holds to a Thomistic view that theology is the supreme science, subordinating all other sciences.

As for the issue whether theology is speculative or practical, we get a clue to Wyclif's position in his opening remarks of the De Dominio Divino of

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<sup>3</sup>Veritate 1.15.380.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 2.20.144. Cf. Farr, 67.

<sup>5</sup>Veritate 2.19.103.

<sup>6</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.17.124.

<sup>7</sup>Veritate 3.28.142.

1373-74. This work may in some respect be considered the prolegomenal work of Wyclif's Summa Theologiae.<sup>8</sup>

Since every Christian, especially the theologian, ought to die virtuous, because (according to the conclusion of St. Augustine in the De Disciplina Christiana) one can not die badly if one lives well, it is time for me for the rest of my life, both speculatively and practically, according to the measure which God shall give, to rely on the virtues, that I might learn to die in a more salutary manner.<sup>9</sup>

Thus Wyclif holds that theology is both speculative and practical, opposing both Aquinas, who holds theology as primarily speculative, and Duns Scotus, who holds that theology is primarily practical. Ironically, Wyclif follows the via media of Ockham. At the same time however, Wyclif certainly decried the excessive speculative tendencies of the nominalist school emerging from Ockham.<sup>10</sup> The practical import of theology is clear when Wyclif argues that Scripture is the bread of life.<sup>11</sup> As for the subject of theology, Wyclif follows Grosseteste, who holds that Christ is more properly the subject of

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<sup>8</sup>W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 39-41.

<sup>9</sup>De Dominio Divino 1, prologue, 1.

<sup>10</sup>Similarly, God's knowledge is both speculative and practical. *Ibid.*, 1.17.158.

<sup>11</sup>Veritate 1.6.128. In his commentary on the Lord's Prayer in the De Mandatis 21.282-84, Wyclif argues that Scripture and Christ are the bread of life.

theology and even of metaphysics,<sup>12</sup> but he concedes that God is the subject of theology.<sup>13</sup> More specifically, the contents of Scripture may be summarized as having to do primarily with God, and thereby with faith and the moral life.<sup>14</sup> As he did in the De Mandatis, Wyclif refers to the position of Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana that the entire intention of Scripture relates to the love of God and neighbor and to the three theological virtues.<sup>15</sup> Thus Wyclif holds that theology has to do not only with God but with matters of belief and moral significance.

Certain practical consequences follow from Wyclif's conception of theology. Wyclif is concerned with the lack of biblical knowledge among the parish clergy. Priests should pass an exam on the Bible before assuming their functions, he says.<sup>16</sup> To facilitate the education of the clergy, Wyclif states that a rector may be absent from his cure to study Scripture in the schools.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>De Dominio Divino 1.6.40-43. Theology and metaphysics are distinct, however, since theology's subject is God, whereas metaphysics' subject is ens communissimum analogum.

<sup>13</sup>De Dominio Divino 1.6.40.

<sup>14</sup>Veritate 3.29.145.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.7.157.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.22.201.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.* 3.26.39. Wyclif must justify his own practice of absenteeism. See De Civili Dominio 3.17.334, and John Stacey, John Wyclif and Reform (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 13-20; Workman, 1:154, 161-63; Tatnall, "Church and State," 59-73.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the Scriptures lessens the hold of the visible church on the believer. The Christian needs only the faith of Scripture and Christ, not pope or bishop, for salvation.<sup>18</sup>

### Faith and Reason

Like Augustine and Anselm, and contrary to the tide of more recent nominalist theologians, Wyclif is confident of the harmony of faith and reason. Like both of them Wyclif quotes Isaiah 7, to the effect that unless one believes one can not understand, whether in earthly pilgrimage or in heaven. Faith is the starting point for all reasoning, not the knowledge of terms, as the moderns assert.<sup>19</sup> At another point he states that theology is metaphysical wisdom.<sup>20</sup> Wyclif assumes that there is no contradiction between Scripture, as containing the Christian faith, and reason; he constantly refers to the faith of Scripture and reason as his authority. The law of Scripture is the law of reason and of Christ and his church, he says.<sup>21</sup> The Christian faith is likened

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<sup>18</sup>De Officio Regis 9.226.

<sup>19</sup>Veritate 1.10.214-15; cf. Triialogus 1.6.55.

<sup>20</sup>De Dominio Divino 1.6.40.

<sup>21</sup>Veritate 3.25.29, 1.3.62. Cf. Farr, 43, and Mallard, "John Wyclif and the Tradition of Biblical Authority," 62.

to a philosophical school. Christ's teaching is the deepest philosophy, above all philosophy, Wyclif proclaims.<sup>22</sup>

Wyclif holds, against the concessions the moderns make to the Averroists, that philosophy and theology do not contradict each other on the doctrines of creation and the Trinity.<sup>23</sup> Wyclif prefers Plato to Aristotle,<sup>24</sup> because of his metaphysical views and the capacity of the Platonist tradition to elucidate the Trinitarian doctrine. Scripture, because it is intrinsically rational, allows free theological research in contrast to the curialist positivism of the moderns, which is likened to the perceived fideism of Islam.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the nominalists, therefore, Wyclif is confident of the ability of the human mind to know the truths of Christian faith. The human mind is guided in its knowledge by divine illumination, a common Augustinian theme. Every human being has the light of nature, which is illuminated by God, Wyclif states.<sup>26</sup> Examples of the ability of reason to prove the truths of faith include the doctrines of the Trinity, creation, the immortality of the soul, and the future resurrection. It may be said that Wyclif clearly holds to a "pre-

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<sup>22</sup>Veritate 1.2.32, 6.127.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 1.2.31.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1.8.176.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1.11.263.

<sup>26</sup>Triologus 1.6.55. See De Dominio Divino 1.11.77-78 and Veritate 1.9.200.

Thomistic" view of the harmony of faith and reason, in that his basic assumptions are reminiscent of Augustine, Anselm, and Grosseteste, rather than the increasingly critical attitude toward the compatibility of faith and Aristotelian reasoning found successively in Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Ockham and the nominalists.

### The Trinity

Wyclif's approach to the doctrine of the Trinity exhibits his confidence in the harmony of faith and reason. Averroes' rejection of the Trinity can be countered, he thinks, by arguments from Augustine.<sup>27</sup> He is certain that Plato, Augustine, Anselm, and Grosseteste have demonstrated this doctrine, based on the trinity in human being of memory or power, knowledge, and love, and the trinity in created being of one, true, and good.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 1.11.259.

<sup>28</sup>Wyclif discusses his doctrine of the Trinity in his work Tractatus de Trinitate, the fourth treatise of the second book of his Summa de Ente. W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 30, dates the work at 1370, although a later date such as 1371 is possible, since there are several allusions to the literal and figurative interpretation of scripture which surface in his debates with Kenningham from 1372-74. A complete treatment of Wyclif's Trinitarian doctrine would require a dissertation in itself; we may merely mention those points which are significant in relating Wyclif to the history of doctrine.

Against the moderns, the divine Trinity is demonstrable from the trinity of the soul and from divine illumination, as in Augustine (chapter 1). Against the moderns, there is no contradiction between faith and reason (as in Averroes' refutation of the Trinitarian doctrine) (chapter 2). Averroes, moreover, is an Aristotelian, and we should follow Augustine's preference for Plato over Aristotle in demonstrating the Trinity (chapter 3). The moderns'

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argument for complete knowledge in patria is no argument against natural knowledge here in via (chapter 4). According to Grosseteste, God speaks eternally in the Word (chapter 5). According to Augustine, God is understood as a Trinity in Measure, Number, and Weight, or in Power, Wisdom, and Benevolence. A concession to the moderns is made, however, in that the terms "Person," "supposit" or "hypostasis" are but conventional terms to explain the ineffable Trinity ad intra (chapter 6).

The moderns refuse to accept any distinction intermediate between that of two things and a nominal distinction (two names for the same thing). Wyclif insists that one must follow Scotus and accept a "subtler" distinction in God as a Trinity. The Prologue to John has been misunderstood by the moderns (chapter 7). The entire Trinity participates in all of God's operations, and there is a mutual penetration of Persons. Sophistical arguments against the number of Persons are rejected by Wyclif. According to Augustine there are but three relations in God, not 1000; furthermore, the Trinity is in Genesis, chapter one, and there is an analogy of God to created being as one, true, and good. Wyclif rejects Joachim's reproach to Lombard that there is a quaternity in God. The plurality of the Trinity testifies to the supreme harmonious society in God, with each Person per se sufficiens (chapter 8).

The moderns are unable to demonstrate the Trinity because of their false philosophical principles; we must instead use Scotus's formal distinction to understand the Trinity in God. The attributes of God are not synonymous; the nominalists' divorce of signs from things signified involve them either in the modalist heresy of Sabellius or in tritheism. (On these contradictory charges, see also De Benedicta Incarnatione 2.20, 13.223.) Boethius's definition of Person as individual substance of a rational nature is preferable to Richard of St. Victor's definition of it as a rational nature incommunicable in essence, because the Person of the Word is communicated in the incarnation (chapter 9).

Against the moderns, it is impossible for someone to know one Person without the others, even though the ancient philosophers may have known the Holy Spirit only confusedly (chapter 10). The work De Eucharistia is proposed to show that accidents can not be separated from a subject (chapter 11). The paralogisms of the moderns involve them in modalism, positing the incarnation in an ass, and asserting the ubiquity of Christ's humanity (chapter 12). Some moderns argue that difference in God implies three Gods. Damascene says, however, that the three Persons differ in number, not nature. The Son is comproducens of the Holy Spirit with the Father. Wyclif concedes that the philosophical belief in the Trinity as expressed in the creeds is not strictly deducible from Scripture; but for many things of which Scripture is

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silent, reason must discuss. "Aliud" in God is taken personally, not essentially (chapter 13).

A concession to the Eastern view and to Joachim is made, in that the Divine essence, not just the First Person, is the cause of the Son (chapter 14). Joachim's argument that Lombard's doctrine involves a quaternity is rejected, and Joachim is criticized for not preserving the unity of the divine essence (chapter 15). However, Lombard's argument against the divine essence as the Father generating seduced the Fourth Lateran Council with Lombard's Parisian logic, and goes against the earlier, more established position of Richard of St. Victor. Scotus's attempt to mediate Joachim's (and Olivi's) view of the Trinity with that of Lombard is recommended as being "very subtle." Augustine, moreover, seems to support the view that substance generates. Like Joachim, Wyclif agrees to a progressive economic communication of the Son and Holy Spirit in history; however, against the moderns, Wyclif argues we must also believe in the Trinity as immanent ad intra (chapter 16).

The Father and Son are the one principle of the Holy Spirit, and the II Council of Lyons (1274) and FitzRalph argue against the Armenian Eastern view. However, the Athanasian creed which includes the Filioque was not actually that of Nicea in 325 or Constantinople in 381. Grosseteste reconciles the view of East and West, and points out that even Damascene and Denys permit the terminology of the Holy Spirit's procession per Filium. Concerning the Trinity, Wyclif concedes that many Catholic truths are taught by the fathers and doctors of the church which are not verbally expressed in scripture. Against the Easterns, however, Wyclif argues that the Holy Spirit is breathed eternally from Christ's divinity, not simply temporally from his humanity. Aquinas's defense of the Filioque is discussed, but Augustine is the decisive source for the position that the Holy Spirit proceeds principally from the Father (chapter 17).

To summarize Wyclif's Trinitarian doctrine, Wyclif insists that the doctrine can be known by human reason and from analogies from human nature. Not to accept the realist tradition of Augustine involves the moderns in heresy with regard to the Trinity. Thus Wyclif would also criticize Luther, whose nominalism leads him to modalistic tendencies, and Erasmus, who combined nominalism and Origenism to approach tritheism. Wyclif's own formulation is influenced by Scotus' doctrine of the formal distinction and by Grosseteste's ecumenical reading of the Eastern fathers with regard to the Filioque. Although he rejects Joachim's argument against the Western understanding of the Trinity, he also rejects Peter Lombard's understanding of the Trinity, following the East in holding that the Substance of the Father generates the Son. He is also sympathetic to the East in permitting a "generic"

### The Contemplative vs. the Active Life

Wyclif's emphasis on the superiority of the contemplative to the active life may seem somewhat surprising, given the Franciscan voluntarist influences on his thought. Wyclif treats this subject in some detail in book I of his De Civili Dominio. Wyclif has quite a broad understanding of the contemplative life, including not only contemplation but preaching, administration of the sacraments, and all the functions of the secular priesthood.<sup>29</sup> Thus, as we have seen in chapter IV, he condemns the understanding of a purely contemplative life in the "Beghards" or Free Spirit movement as heretical. Like Thomas, Wyclif allows the clergy to combine the contemplative with the active lives; clergy, however, are not to enjoy secular pursuits or endowment.<sup>30</sup>

### The Definition of Heresy

Wyclif's understanding of heresy clarifies his conception of theology. Wyclif follows Grosseteste in defining heresy as false opinion, openly taught, contrary to sacred Scripture as God's law, and pertinaciously defended.<sup>31</sup>

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understanding of the unity of the three Persons.

<sup>29</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.23.162-69.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.24.174, 25.179-80, 3.23.505.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.43.393, 2.7.58; Veritate 1.8.160-61, 3.32.218.

Thus Scripture, which contains all truth, is the judge of heresy.<sup>32</sup> The root of heresy is the false interpretation of Scripture and clerical greed which has been abetted by false traditions.<sup>33</sup> Heresy is the product of both of the intellect and of the will,<sup>34</sup> as we have seen in his conflict with the moderns, error in speculative matters such as universals implies sin. On the other hand, heresy cannot be defined simply as lack of conformity to creedal formulations of the church, for speculative theologians are not the only ones to fall into heresy.<sup>35</sup> Thus heresy must also be understood as life contrary to the social and ethical teachings of the church in following Christ's actions.<sup>36</sup> This is particularly true with respect to the injunction for the clergy to follow Christ's poverty and to avoid simony.<sup>37</sup> Wyclif discusses his views of heresy in chapter 32 of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, where he projects his concluding polemical trilogy to the Summa Theologiae, with simony, apostasy, and blasphemy representing various kinds of heresy, especially as practiced by the clergy.

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<sup>32</sup>Veritate 3.32.278.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 1.6.132.

<sup>34</sup>De Civili Dominio 2.7.59.

<sup>35</sup>Veritate 3.32.287. So also Triologus 2.17.188.

<sup>36</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.44.442.

<sup>37</sup>Veritate 3.32.288.

### Anthropological Considerations

Like his scholastic predecessors, Wyclif's view of the Bible and theology rests on anthropological considerations. Aquinas's "intellectualism" led him to posit theology as a speculative science, whereas Duns Scotus's "voluntarism" led him to posit theology as a practical science. In Wyclif there is a combination of Thomistic and Franciscan emphases. In his Principium, De Civili Dominio, and Trialogus, Wyclif balances the intellect with the will, saying that neither power of the soul is primary.<sup>38</sup> Wyclif is concerned with the practical, affective aspect of theology, asserting that both clergy and laity should know the Bible and live rightly; he is also concerned with the theoretical, intellectualist aspect of theology, the Thomistic supremacy of theology to the other sciences, and the harmony of faith and reason. The intellectualist and voluntarist tendencies of the human being are present both in this life and in heaven. Thus Wyclif holds that the future state of glory is both a clear vision and a fruition or consummate love.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>See Principium, in Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 340; Trialogus 2.9.108.

<sup>39</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.13.90.

### Scripture and Tradition

For Wyclif, Scripture as Christ's or God's law is the law of the church,<sup>40</sup> the faith of the church,<sup>41</sup> which is superior to tradition.<sup>42</sup> Scripture is the "charter" of the church.<sup>43</sup> In the earlier books of the Summa Theologiae, Wyclif argued that Christ alone is the abbot of the Christian religion; private religions and traditions are not to be allowed.<sup>44</sup> By "private religions" Wyclif means the possessioner monastics, although eventually he extends the term to all religious, including mendicants, as holding to illicit "rules" or disciplines beyond the pure rule of the New Testament. Wyclif thinks that he himself is confronting the abuses and privileges of tradition much as Christ confronted the Pharisees.<sup>45</sup> Wyclif marvels at the moderns, who magnify their science and traditions as of equal or greater authority with Scripture.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Veritate 1.10.206.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 1.5.100, 6.130, 7.192, 12.285, 15.396.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 2.20.129.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 1.12.282, 14.370. On this analogy to the Magna Carta, see Lechler, 2:22, 38.

<sup>44</sup>De Mandatis 12.113; De Civili Dominio 2.14.179.

<sup>45</sup>Veritate 1.10.221.

<sup>46</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.44.409.

Wyclif argues for the "sufficiency" of Scripture as the per se sufficiens law of human life to rule the church.<sup>47</sup> This is closely tied to his social views; evangelical dominion is also called per se sufficiens.<sup>48</sup> By using the term per se sufficiens, which refers both to the New Testament and to the way of life of the primitive church, Wyclif implies that the church needs to return to the poverty of the primitive apostolic church without recourse to traditions and interpretations that have distorted its understanding of poverty. According to his view, the church prospered with the pure law of Christ, and declined with the accumulation of traditions.<sup>49</sup>

Let us look more closely at Wyclif's attitude toward tradition. He has a much higher view of earlier tradition than later tradition. This should be quite clear from his historical conception of the corruptions brought to the church by Constantine's Donation or endowment, and the further degeneration he sees occurring after Nicolas II, especially in modern scholasticism, canon law, the papacy, and monasticism. Wyclif's view of tradition in relation to Scripture may be described as follows. First, he commends earlier tradition as elucidatory of Scripture. Second, his view of the later tradition of the scholastic theologians, canon law, the papacy, and civil law is much more

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 1.43.395; Veritate 2.20.131; De Officio Regis 9.222.

<sup>48</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.20.409.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 1.44.431. See Lechler, 2:21, 37.

critical. He will utilize the later tradition, but not always to approve of it. Later tradition may be used in an eristic manner to refute his modern opponents, who are the ones that value it highly. However, such tradition has no authority in itself and may in fact be erroneous.

### Earlier Tradition: the Fathers, Creeds and Ecumenical Councils

As for earlier tradition, Wyclif states that reason, sacred Scripture, and the testimony of fathers confirm the truth of Scripture.<sup>50</sup> We have already had occasion to discuss Wyclif's attitudes towards the church fathers as an academic source in chapter III. Wyclif insists, against modern interpretations of Scripture, that we must stick to the consensus of the fathers, whom Wyclif calls "the saints."<sup>51</sup> Wyclif's respect for the fathers, especially Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Chrysostom, is great. This is shown in the extensive use of Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom in his Scriptural commentaries. His use is not uncritical, however; even Augustine is not infallible, and the fathers are to be criticized for their role in permitting the endowment. Gregory the Great also comes under criticism for his role in increasing papal privilege and power. Indeed, as he progresses into his later period, Wyclif even begins to

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<sup>50</sup>Veritate 1.12.277.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 1.15.386.

speculate on whether the fathers had to spend time in purgatory for permitting the endowment of the church.

As for his view of the ancient creeds, Wyclif shows a special appreciation for the "threefold symbol" of the apostles, the church, and Athanasius.<sup>52</sup> In his De Potestate Papae of 1379, Wyclif argues that a Christian need have explicit faith only in the Trinity and the articles of the creed, and implicit faith according to the amount of grace received. Thus we need not believe, as an article of faith or of the creed, that the Roman bishop is the pope, since many of the popes are damned.<sup>53</sup> Later, in his 1380 De Eucharistia, Wyclif will insist that to require belief in transubstantiation would be to add a new article to the creed.<sup>54</sup>

Wyclif supports the Western view of the four ecumenical councils, analogous to the four gospels, which were recommended by Gregory I.<sup>55</sup> This view of the West predominates over the view of seven councils of the East.<sup>56</sup> Note, however, that for Wyclif the church existed before the

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 1.7.142, 12.283.

<sup>53</sup>De Potestate Papae 10.260-61.

<sup>54</sup>De Eucharistia 5.140.

<sup>55</sup>See Ibid., 9.285; De Ecclesia 17.411-12.

<sup>56</sup>This Western view of Gregory the Great, that the four councils are like the four gospels, is pronounced in Anselm, Marsilius, Ockham (see the Dialogus 1-4, ch. 47, p. 496), and Wyclif. It is taken over by Calvin in the Protestant tradition. The preference for the seven ecumenical councils

councils.<sup>57</sup> Thus in opposition to certain modern conciliarist theorists influenced by Ockham, who validate their view of the historical faith by an empirical examination of conciliar decisions through history, Wyclif's view is influenced by the view of the church as always existing since the beginning of creation, a view stemming from his Augustinian realism. Thus unlike the conciliarist understanding, the appeal to the councils, especially after the first four ecumenical councils, have little weight for Wyclif.

Later Tradition: the Scholastic Doctors,  
Canon Law, Papal Law, and Civil Law

We also noted in chapter three Wyclif's indebtedness to the philosophical and theological tradition of medieval scholasticism at the time of his De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae. Yet Wyclif's view of the scholastic doctors becomes increasingly critical as he passes through the middle phase of his career. That Wyclif's use of the scholastics is purely eristic becomes clear in the work which follows the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, the De Ecclesia. On the issue of the priestly character, Wyclif says, "I wish to sustain the interpretation of the fathers in their entirety; but as for the other doctors, I only allege them ad hominem, as I would allege the devil, the father of lies,

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emerges in the West because of Aquinas' christological views, and the anti-iconoclastic aspect of the seventh ecumenical council will cause the Eastern view to prevail at Constance and Trent against the national church movements and radical iconoclasts.

<sup>57</sup>De Ecclesia 5.113.

against a lying speaker."<sup>58</sup> By the doctors, Wyclif means not simply his nominalist opponents, but Bonaventure and Aquinas: "Both hold the character to be altogether indelible . . . but neither of them is authoritative for me, so I only allege them to argue ad hominem."<sup>59</sup> Wyclif's antagonism toward the scholastics is initially directed at the nominalists, both in the fourteenth century and in the earlier nominalist school of Roscelinus, Abelard, and Lombard. Eventually he goes against the high scholastics such as Thomas and Bonaventure as well. This is seen in his criticism of their views of special prayers for the dead, the sacramental character, and the eucharist.

Wyclif is similarly critical of the medieval traditions of canon, papal, and civil law. Wyclif does indeed cite canon law extensively. In the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae he says that church law, as interpreted with the Bible and the fathers, is on his side.<sup>60</sup> His use of church law, however, seems to be for eristic or polemical purposes, not as an authority in itself apart from Scripture. Human and church law have but relative value, he says.<sup>61</sup> If Christ's law on avoiding lying were practiced among us, it would be

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 21.506.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 507.

<sup>60</sup>Veritate 3.27.78. See De Ecclesia 1.25, 23.563-64.

<sup>61</sup>Veritate 1.7.156.

superfluous to have any human law.<sup>62</sup> Since the time of the Decretalists (in the thirteenth century), the honor and defense given to Scripture has diminished, an indication that the way is being prepared for Antichrist.<sup>63</sup> Every part of Scripture is of infinitely greater authority than any decretal letter, since all decretal letters are but human traditions.<sup>64</sup> The decretals are not of equal authority to Scripture, except to the extent that they explain Scripture; for the Scriptural writings were not authenticated because they were the sayings of human beings, but because God instructed the humans to speak.<sup>65</sup>

In the De Officio Regis written in 1379, Wyclif's attack on canon law becomes quite strident. Thus his view of Scripture as the law of the church increasingly comes into tension with the validity of canon and civil law.<sup>66</sup> With respect to canon law and to the civil law of the Empire, Wyclif states, "I quote them to argue ad hominem; for so Holofernes is slain by his own sword."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 2.18.98.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 1.15.383; also 387, 390.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 1.15.395.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 1.15.397.

<sup>66</sup>See De Civili Dominio 1.18.125, 2.14.178.

<sup>67</sup>De Officio Regis 10.237-38.

Papal law, as connected with both the tradition of canon law and the institution of the papacy itself, comes under increasing attack. Wyclif is especially critical of the development of the papacy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Pope can be ignorant of Scripture, misinterpreting it in a sense contrary to Christ because of his greed for money.<sup>68</sup> In Augustine's time, decretal letters of the popes were not called "canonical," because they did not have as great a weight as the Gospel.<sup>69</sup> It is blasphemy to make the Pope, the author of bulls, to be equal to Christ, the author of Scripture.<sup>70</sup> The Pope cannot declare Scripture heretical;<sup>71</sup> the Pope is no Christian if he claims to dispense with Scripture.<sup>72</sup> The Pope has no authority to approve or reprove, except to the extent that he is based on Scripture.<sup>73</sup>

Because of his attempts to reform the church through the aid of the secular arm, Wyclif's attacks on civil law are not so strident, although a criticism of it is an undercurrent of his thought: Human law, if not regulated

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<sup>68</sup>Veritate 1.15.384.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 1.15.404.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 1.15.408. See De Civili Dominio 3.17.328.

<sup>71</sup>Veritate 1.9.185. See De Civili Dominio 3.24.532.

<sup>72</sup>Veritate 1.12.270.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 2.20.135.

by the law of Christ, is false and erroneous.<sup>74</sup> In his De Officio Regis of 1379 the attack on civil and canon law, implicit from the De Mandatis and the De Civili Dominio, become increasingly strident as he passes into his late phase.<sup>75</sup> His attempt to lay down biblical principles for the ruler to reform the church was uncompromising and inflexible.

### Positive or Negative Scripture Principle?

We may ask whether Wyclif's view of Scripture in relation to tradition is a positive or a negative one. It is the characteristic of national church movements such as Marsilius, the Utraquists, the Henrician reformation and Lutheranism, to hold to a positive principle, i.e., if practices of tradition do not directly conflict with Scripture, they may be retained. The magisterial Reformers in particular, interpreting the Scripture principle in a positive sense, frequently have recourse to the early traditions of the fathers, creeds, and ecumenical councils, in responding to the negative Scripture principle of the radical Reformers. The negative Scripture principle of the radical Lollards, Taborites, Moravian Brethren, the Anabaptists, Carlstadt, and Zwingli, on the other hand, is that whatever is not expressly commanded in Scripture is forbidden; hence one commonly finds iconoclasm against church buildings,

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 3.26.48.

<sup>75</sup>De Officio Regis 7.176-94, 10.237. See W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 61.

images, vestments, the real presence of the eucharist, the clerical hierarchy, etc. Appeal to the ancient traditions of the church such as the fathers or the ecumenical councils and creeds tend to have little weight.<sup>76</sup>

In Wyclif, both negative and positive Scripture principles exist in tension from the time of his De Mandatis of 1375, where he considers the second commandment of the decalogue against idolatry. At times he seems to hold to a negative principle. Scripture is complete and does not keep silent on issues such as civil dominion.<sup>77</sup> Nothing can be added or subtracted to or from Christ's law.<sup>78</sup>

At other times Wyclif favors a positive Scripture principle. Human law is not heretical unless it clearly contradicts sacred Scripture;<sup>79</sup> Scripture and the decretals are not at variance with each other.<sup>80</sup> Especially during his middle political phase there in Wyclif moderation of his iconoclastic and pacifistic impulses.

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<sup>76</sup>Calvinism may be seen as an unstable attempt at synthesis of the negative and positive principles of Zwingli and Luther. We should not be surprised if Calvinists in England find themselves on both sides of these issues as the Puritan controversy emerges.

<sup>77</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.5.65; see also De Ecclesia 14.316.

<sup>78</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.17.120; 1.44.429-30.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.42.350.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.15.275; De Ecclesia 2.44.

Wyclif could not have made a more unequivocal statement of the sola scriptura principle, the sufficiency of Scripture. Gordon Leff, however, argues against such an interpretation, given Wyclif's metaphysical preconceptions and his usage of the entire Christian tradition, creeds, and law.<sup>81</sup> Yet Leff's argument seems to rest on a misunderstanding. The principle of sola scriptura does not seem to require historical illiteracy in respect to the Christian tradition. It seems rather odd that Leff is unwilling to posit the existence of a Scripture principle, not only in Wyclif, but in any of the other later medieval sectarian movements as well.<sup>82</sup> But because Wyclif argues for the sufficiency of Scripture, with tradition playing a secondary, elucidating role, we have argued that he does indeed hold to a sola scriptura principle.<sup>83</sup> This Scripture principle emerges as Wyclif rejects high and late medieval tradition

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<sup>81</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:523.

<sup>82</sup>Leff, The Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook: An Essay on Intellectual and Spiritual Change in the Fourteenth Century (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 132.

<sup>83</sup>Anne Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 389, effectively refutes the idea that there is no sola scriptura principle in Wyclif and the Lollard movement: "There is then, I would argue, a coherence in the Lollard creed despite differences of emphasis and of declared inclusiveness. The centre-piece was the primacy of scripture. From this sprang the theology of the eucharist, of confession and absolution, the rejection of clerical temporalities, of the papacy and of all forms of private religion, the doubts about the legality of images, pilgrimages, war and oaths, and the demand that neither civil nor canon law should counter the plain import of scripture." On this point, see also Tatnall, "John Wyclif and Ecclesia Anglicana," 39.

but accepts the earlier tradition of the fathers and the councils as elucidating Scripture but subordinate to it.

Criticism of the Church and  
Sacramental Theology

Criticism of the Church

Gordon Leff has noted that "Wyclif's doctrine of the bible is inseparable from his notion of the church."<sup>84</sup> We concur with this assessment; for Wyclif Scripture is the reforming principle of the church. Wyclif's view of Scripture leads him to his radical views of the church and of the sacraments, and his criticism of tradition leads him to criticize the church of his day in several specific ways. An objector to Wyclif's view of the sufficiency of Scripture as God's law for the church, quotes Augustine's famous dictum, "I would not believe the gospel, unless the authority of the church moved me." To this objection Wyclif replies that the church is the entire body of the predestinate, past, present, and future.<sup>85</sup> Thus the visible church is nullified by the invisible church, and Wyclif effectively denies any "catholic" implication of Augustine's statement, so that the church is of coordinate authority with Scripture; his understanding of "catholicity" rests on his doctrine of predestination. As Harnack points out, one aspect of

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<sup>84</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages 2:516.

<sup>85</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.43.358. See Augustine Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti 5.6.

Augustine's ecclesiology, predestination, is in tension with his affirmation of the visible, unified church against the Donatists or as the locus of sacraments.<sup>86</sup> Wyclif emphasizes the predestination aspect of Augustine's understanding of the church over the other aspects, to support his view of the Scripture principle.

### Bishops and Priests

Wyclif's criticism of the hierarchical structure of the church is tied to his criticism of church wealth: the heresy of the clerical hierarchy is its simony.<sup>87</sup> This criticism is seen not only in his emerging criticism of the papacy, but in his refusal to accept the distinction of bishops from priests. In chapter 22, Wyclif follows Paul's model for the priesthood. Thus like Marsilius and other late medieval sectarians, he rejects the distinction between priest and bishop.<sup>88</sup> Wyclif's criticism of the episcopacy is also based on Jerome, who states that priests and bishops were the same office in the primitive church. His criticism fits well with his understanding of the primitive church and the corruption brought with the Donation of Constantine. In practice, however, Wyclif concedes the utility of having bishops throughout his middle political period, saying only that bishops who fail to correct their clergy

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<sup>86</sup>Harnack, History of Dogma, 2:166; idem, Dogmengeschichte, 3:98-99.

<sup>87</sup>Veritate 3.32.274-310.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 2.22.181.

should be removed.<sup>89</sup> This position of his middle period is parallel to that of the moderate Anglicans of the Reformation era, which is rejected by the Puritans, the non-conformists, and later the Methodists.

### Clerical Marriage

Like the Free Spirit, Wyclif rejects the requirement of clerical celibacy and asserts that priests may marry.<sup>90</sup> This view is supported by his assertion that clerical greed is worse than adultery or fornication.<sup>91</sup> The demand for clerical marriage is a recurring theme among the late medieval radical sectarians and national church movements, although we also have the monastic impulse towards asceticism appearing as well.<sup>92</sup>

### The Laity

Wyclif's criticism of the priesthood is complemented by his emphasis on the laity. In his De Civili Dominio, Wyclif had argued that the church might exist in the laity alone,<sup>93</sup> an argument going back to the Spiritual Franciscans,

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 3.25.24. See De Officio Regis 7.152.

<sup>90</sup>Veritate 2.24.262-63; De Civili Dominio 3.19.385. See Lechler, 2:128-29. Kenny, Wyclif, 106, downplays the parallel between Wyclif and Protestantism on this point.

<sup>91</sup>Veritate 3.25.32. Compare the Free Spirit.

<sup>92</sup>Compare the Cathari and the unmarried Barbs of the Waldensians.

<sup>93</sup>De Civili Dominio 1.43.392; 3.14.258; cf. Block, 30.

John of Paris, and Ockham. Like Ockham and the Franciscan Spirituals, Wyclif argues that the church could exist in one lay person, a woman, as it did in Mary alone at the time of Christ's death.<sup>94</sup> Here in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae he states that the canon laws of the Roman pontiff smack of gain and are detrimental to the laity.<sup>95</sup> All priests, and indeed all Christians, according to the amount of grace they have received, are to beget spiritual gifts in others.<sup>96</sup> A lay person or a woman are better in praying or in merit than a negligent rector.<sup>97</sup>

Wyclif's concern for the role of the laity in the church extends from the lower to the higher classes. As for the former, he states that the gold of Scripture is revealed only to those humbled by repentance.<sup>98</sup> Christ's servants live in poverty and humility.<sup>99</sup> The life of Christ, and the poverty of the apostles and saints, is the best interpreter of Scripture.<sup>100</sup> As for the role of lay rulers, Wyclif utilizes the Thomistic doctrine of fraternal correction to

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 1.43.392.

<sup>95</sup>Veritate 2.21.177. Compare John of Paris and Ockham, Dialogus (ed. M. Goldast), 1.4-1.7, pp. 445-739.

<sup>96</sup>Veritate 2.20.149.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 2.22.172.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 1.3.60.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 1.4.70, 11.252, 261, 266.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 1.7.152-3, 1.14.364.

establish the principle of lay checks on clerical power, particularly as invoked by lay rulers: a lay person is entitled by Scripture to judge a clerical superior.<sup>101</sup> There is a tinge of anti-intellectualism that will emerge more strongly in Wyclif's late phase. Faith is the highest theology; effective preaching does not depend on theological training.<sup>102</sup>

The Lollard view that every Christian should have access to Scripture in the vernacular is implied by Wyclif. Every Christian is to study the Bible, because it is all truth.<sup>103</sup> Every one should be a theologian, having first of all the correct moral disposition, so that truth, showing itself incapable of deception, might flow in.<sup>104</sup> Wyclif follows Grosseteste in asserting that faithful clerics or laity, male or female, find Scripture the rule of life.<sup>105</sup> In the hearing of the faith of Scripture, all those to be saved will be saved.<sup>106</sup> Priests should use the mother tongue in preaching Scripture to their charges.<sup>107</sup> However, Wyclif has not yet reached the point of asserting, as he

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 2.24.247.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 234.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 1.6.109.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 1.15.378; De Civili Dominio 1.44.403. See Amedeo Molnar, "Der alternde Wyclif und die Logik der Heiligen Schrift," Communio Viatorum 28 [No 3-4] (Winter 1985): 171, 176.

<sup>105</sup>Veritate 1.6.116-17.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 2.20.138.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 2.24.242-43.

did in his late period, that the laity may administer the sacraments, thus abolishing the lay/clergy distinction.<sup>108</sup>

### The Role of Theologians

Wyclif's confidence in lay ability to read and interpret scripture is not unqualified, however. In this work Wyclif states that the church should be regulated by theologians<sup>109</sup>; it should not be ruled by canon lawyers.<sup>110</sup> In his subsequent De Officio Regis, Wyclif will insist on the special role of the theologian to interpret Scripture. He will argue that students of theology should be forbidden to take lectures in law.<sup>111</sup> Bishops and pope are obliged to be theologians if they are to guide the people.

### Excommunication

The example of excommunication demonstrates Wyclif's anti-clerical sentiment. Clergy may not excommunicate or use coercion against laity for failure to pay tithes.<sup>112</sup> Rather, it is the duty of the laity to withhold tithes

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<sup>108</sup>Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages 2:520.

<sup>109</sup>Veritate 3.29.159. See De Civili Dominio 1.20.139.

<sup>110</sup>Veritate 1.7.153-54; De Ecclesia 14.321; De Officio Regis 4.77. See Lechler, 2:24.

<sup>111</sup>De Officio Regis 4.72. See Daly, 59-65.

<sup>112</sup>Veritate 3.26.40-42. This theme, a common one from late medieval sectarians to the sixteenth century radicals and the seventeenth century non-conformists, is the basis of the theory of the separation of church and state.

when clergy fail their duties, and to disendow foundations rather than encourage the sloth of the clergy in holding possessions.<sup>113</sup> The pope may not excommunicate, since it is Christ who eternally decrees all that will be saved.<sup>114</sup> Fundamental to Wyclif's view is that only God excommunicates individuals who have committed mortal sin. The visible church can do no more than pronounce the excommunication. Unjust excommunication rebounds to the detriment of the excommunicator, not of the excommunicant.

### Iconoclasm

Wyclif's iconoclastic ideas are set forth in his De Mandatis of 1375,<sup>115</sup> and his Scripture commentaries, where he notes the iconoclastic practices of FitzRalph.<sup>116</sup> The iconoclastic streak in Wyclif surfaces in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae when he interprets Grosseteste's criticism of "ceremonies" in an iconoclastic sense. There are too many human observances in his day, he says, especially in the practice of owning property and exercising secular

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 3.25.3-5.

<sup>114</sup>Veritate 2.17.55. For Wyclif, the use of coercion by the church is a reversion to the Old Testament law of fear rather than the New Testament law of grace. Smalley, "Wyclif's Postilla on the Old Testament and his Principium," 263.

<sup>115</sup>De Mandatis 15.152-67. See Lechler, 2:111-13.

<sup>116</sup>Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 34-36, 337-38.

dominion by the church.<sup>117</sup> Ceremonies should cease when the gospel is fully proclaimed.<sup>118</sup> To some extent Wyclif's iconoclasm reflects the academic influence of Grosseteste and FitzRalph, although we can not discount the influence of populist sentiment. Wyclif's iconoclasm certainly goes far beyond what would be acceptable in the scholastic tradition.

### Predestination and Soteriology

Much attention has focused on Wyclif's views on predestination and soteriology as being the foundation of his criticism of the church. The doctrine of predestination is certainly a feature of this work,<sup>119</sup> as it was in his De Dominio Divino and De Civili Dominio; it will be the dominant theme of his conception of the church in his subsequent De Ecclesia. However, his soteriological views are functionally equivalent to those of the Franciscans, even if they differ in theoretical framework; Wyclif shows some influence of the Franciscan doctrine of the direct presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer.<sup>120</sup> Predestination cannot be said to be "double" in a Lutheran or Calvinist sense. For Wyclif, the issue is whether members of the clerical

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<sup>117</sup>Veritate 3.28.120.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 3.31.241.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 2.23.222.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 1.14.339. Lombard supports this view. Aquinas rejects it. Scotus leaves the issue open. Ockham supports Lombard's view of the Holy Spirit's direct presence. Compare the influence of the Puritans on Wesley.

hierarchy are saved or predestined; if not, they may not exercise their authority. A Donatist tendency is evident here, although Wyclif tries to keep it submerged.

Wyclif's soteriology is quite Augustinian in his emphasis on prevenience, free response, cooperating grace, and final perseverance.<sup>121</sup> Wyclif does not deny the role of free will in salvation.<sup>122</sup> He does not imply, as did the "practical syllogism" of the Reformed tradition, that one can know one's salvation. Unless there is a special revelation, one may only "suppose," as opposed to being certain of, or doubting, one's salvation.<sup>123</sup> Unlike Thomas, for whom this inference is based on participation in the sacraments, for Wyclif it is by virtue of good works, and faith formed by charity.<sup>124</sup> Hence the connection of salvation to the sacramental and ecclesiastical system is severed. Salvation is by the naked faith in Christ with the sacraments of the new law, without the ladder of rites or the servile obedience to the law, Wyclif

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<sup>121</sup>See De Dominio Divino 3.4.224-6.256.

<sup>122</sup>By his late period, however, Wyclif has come to assert the absolute necessity of all events. See W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 219.

<sup>123</sup>Trialogus 3.11.166.

<sup>124</sup>Veritate 2.23.216; see also Trialogus 3.2.133. Anne Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 328, 383, points out that this emphasis on good works remains in the Lollard tradition; Wyclif's emphasis on predestination is not found among all Lollards.

states.<sup>125</sup> This is a common theme in the later medieval sectarians, who turn away from the "objective" sources of salvation in the visible church and the hierarchical structures of society, to the "subjective" conversion experience.

## Criticism of Sacramental Theology

### Preaching vs. the Sacraments

Wyclif's criticism of ecclesiology is also evident in his views on sacramental theology. As in the later medieval radical Christian traditions, there is a decided emphasis on preaching over the sacraments.<sup>126</sup> Lay preaching is clearly understood as a threat to the institutional authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Now the church is disturbed by its sin and its keeping the law of Scripture from being observed, not by the preaching of the gospel.<sup>127</sup> Wyclif argues that preaching should not be restricted or impeded on account of human traditions; because it is not evident, what God binds, and this is often uncertain to those that have authority.<sup>128</sup> It is the duty of bishops and priests to preach the gospel, in order that those who hear it might be saved.<sup>129</sup> Wyclif's criticism of the sacraments is identified with his

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<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 3.28.132-33.

<sup>126</sup>See G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:151-57.

<sup>127</sup>Veritate 1.14.366-67.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 1.14.341.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 2.20.138.

rejection of unnecessary traditions. Paul, rejecting the sacrament of circumcision among the Jewish Christians, teaches of the sufficiency of the Christian faith and sacrament for salvation.<sup>130</sup>

### The Sacramental Character

As for priestly orders, Donatist perfectionist tendencies emerge in Wyclif in connection with his criticism of clerical wealth. For Wyclif, a sinful priest cannot consecrate the eucharist. For unless a Christian is united to Christ by grace, that person does not have Christ as savior and cannot say the sacramental words without falsity. It is necessary for a priest who consecrates the supper to be a member of Christ, and, as the saints say, to be in a certain way Christ himself.<sup>131</sup> Pastors must feed their flock with the clear waters of Scripture.<sup>132</sup> Preaching, not the character of ordination, constitutes a priest.<sup>133</sup> A priest must be ordained by God if ordination by the bishop is to

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 3.29.182. The via media of the magisterial Reformers was to balance "word" and "sacrament," with greater emphasis on "word" than with the Catholics. This compromise, however, did not please the radicals.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 1.12.287.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 2.23.230-31.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 2.24.240-41.

be valid.<sup>134</sup> Wyclif's Donatism parallels that of the Waldensians and of the Spiritual Franciscans.<sup>135</sup>

### The Sacraments

Wyclif makes no criticism in his De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae of baptism, confirmation, extreme unction, or marriage as sacraments. He does criticize the penances established by canon law as arbitrary and not based on Scripture.<sup>136</sup>

Concerning the eucharist, Wyclif expresses concern about its current rite. He asserts that current eucharistic formulas are not found in Scripture.<sup>137</sup> The church has erred, not only in judicial matters, but in other private points concerning the state of the church, as is clear in the the celebration of the Passover meal, in the sacrament of the eucharist, and in many other superfluous matters which are undecided.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, it is more important for the people to receive the word of God than for one person

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<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 253.

<sup>135</sup>See Anne Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 27, 316; Lechler, 2:168-72. In subsequent years, Wyclif attempts to defuse the charge of Donatism against him, with only partial success.

<sup>136</sup>Veritate 2.21.166.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 1.12.285-6.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 1.15.407.

to receive the body of Christ, he says.<sup>139</sup> Metaphysical considerations also enter into view. The nominalist denial of all categories except substance is on Wyclif's mind.<sup>140</sup> The metaphysical implications of the adductive view of transubstantiation had apparently bothered Wyclif even before he took his doctorate.<sup>141</sup> These problems continue to trouble him through the late 1370's. Not long before, in his De Civili Dominio, Wyclif had entertained the notion of remanence of the elements after consecration.<sup>142</sup> His private lectures on 1 Corinthians 11 had already expressed the main outlines of his later eucharistic views.<sup>143</sup> However, Wyclif at this point express no public opposition to the doctrine of transubstantiation in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae.

To summarize, Wyclif does indeed have a "Scripture principle." He combines Franciscan voluntarism and biblicism with Thomist intellectualism, while rejecting speculative elements of systematic theology. He is confident of the harmony of Scripture both with reason and with the ancient church fathers, creeds, and councils; he is much more critical of medieval tradition

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 2.21.156.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 1.14.331.

<sup>141</sup>See Workman, John Wyclif, 2:34, and W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 6, 25, and 31.

<sup>142</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.17.343.

<sup>143</sup>Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 266-71, 369-71.

since the Gregorian reform. During his middle period his Scripture principle is mainly in a positive sense. Criticism of the church and of sacramental theology is already appearing by the time of his 1377-78 De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHRIST AND SCRIPTURE

We have noted that Wyclif's metaphysical approach to Scripture is also christological.<sup>1</sup> Wyclif's insistence on the literal interpretation of Scripture in framing a correct christology in the De Benedicta Incarnatione of 1372 inaugurated the 1372-74 debates with his nominalist opponent John Kenningham.<sup>2</sup> Even in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae of 1378, Wyclif is clearly preoccupied with issues of Christ and Scripture that emerged from these disputes. Therefore, in order to interpret these references to Christ, we must examine Wyclif's christology per se in order to evaluate the implications for Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture.

Wyclif's christology may be interpreted in terms of both academic and non-academic sources. Thus in this chapter we will examine two aspects of

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<sup>1</sup>There is no adequate treatment of Wyclif's christology. One might consult Martin Schmidt, "John Wyclifs Kirchenbegriff. Der "Christus humilis" Augustins bei Wyclif," in Gedenkschrift für D. Werner Elert, ed. Friedrich Hübner et al. (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), 72-108; Lechler, 2:67-76. Harris, preface to the De Benedicta Incarnatione, xx-xxvii notes that Wyclif places emphasis on Christ's humanity; no advance is made by Workman, 1:138-39, or Stacey, 109-10.

<sup>2</sup>I do not agree with McFarlane, 59; this work is of a highly polemical nature.

Wyclif's understanding of Christ. First we will examine the social implications of the "poverty of Christ" as a source of criticism of the papacy and the endowed clergy.

Second we will examine Wyclif's christological doctrine, particularly in comparison with the Scotist and nominalist christological traditions that Wyclif both employs and criticizes. Like Scotus, Wyclif uses the Augustinian language of "assumption." Wyclif's adherence to the fathers leads him to insist that Christ may be called a "creature" because of his human nature. His emphasis on Christ's humanity enables him to give a qualified criticism of the notion that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision while on his earthly pilgrimage. However, Wyclif denies nominalist speculation that the hypostatic union could be dissolved, and more generally he rejects the speculative christological positions of the continental scholastics arising from Lombard's Sentences. Wyclif's insistence on the indissolubility of the hypostatic union is tied to his defense of Christ's impeccability as a human being; the consequence of this is his view of the infallibility of Scripture. His view of the atonement is basically Anselmian, although other eclectic features are present. In the final section, we conclude the chapter by noting that Wyclif did not avoid the Cyrillian tendencies of medieval scholasticism and did not fully integrate his social ideas of Christ's poverty into his doctrinal position with regard to the humanity of Christ and of Scripture.

## The Poverty of Christ

### Doctrinal Considerations

Wyclif quotes Psalm 40:18 and 2 Corinthians 8:9 on Christ's poverty, a theme of the spiritual Franciscans: Christ in his humanity is made a beggar and pauper for us.<sup>3</sup> Christ "assumed" poverty.<sup>4</sup> Thus the doctrinal theme of "assumption" has clear social implications. Christ walked through penal poverty by renouncing the world and its glory, in which he willed his priests especially to follow him, as is clear from the testimony of Scripture and the fathers.<sup>5</sup> Christ and his apostles lived a needy life "without property" (expropriarie, a technical term used to describe the mendicant state).<sup>6</sup> As Grosseteste had said earlier, Christ as God was Lord of the world; but as human being he was poor.<sup>7</sup>

Wyclif, like Augustine and the Franciscans such as Duns Scotus, Ockham, and Nicholas of Lyra, is careful to consider Christ's distinct human nature in its mortal limitation. By so doing he is able to criticize the institutional church of his day. For the authority of the pope and the

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<sup>3</sup>Veritate 1.12.293, 2.19.106, 3.25.18. Compare John of Rupescissa's use of this theme, in Bignami-Odier, 69.

<sup>4</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.10.160.

<sup>5</sup>Veritate 1.6.133, 12.293.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.19.106.

<sup>7</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.8.123.

ecclesiastical hierarchy can extend no further than Christ's humanity and poverty allow. In this he follows the trend of the Waldensians and the Franciscan movement of the thirteenth century, which would have its inevitable outcome in the fourteenth century. Gordon Leff has noted this development in christology,<sup>8</sup> even though he has not applied his analysis to particular thinkers of the fourteenth century.

### Implications for the Papacy

Christ's poverty is used to reject curialist views of the pope's supremacy as "impeccable," if this means that the pope may contravene teachings and practices established by Christ. For Christ's priests ought to live the poor life without property. Thus neither the change of circumstance with time nor a

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<sup>8</sup>Leff, "The Franciscan Concept of Man," 219: "If intellectually the thirteenth century no longer appears as the century of St Thomas Aquinas and of a new equilibrium between theology and philosophy, much the same can be said of its concepts of man. The revived Aristotelian view of man as a citizen in society was matched by a reaffirmation of the ideal of the true christian disciple as one who like Christ had no stake in this world. They were not necessarily exclusive; and in thinkers like Dante, Marsilius of Padua and later Wyclif they can be seen as complementary in demarcating the temporal from the spiritual according to the different criteria appropriate to each. Indeed it is arguable that it was this redefinition of what belonged to ecclesiastical authority and what to secular rulers which by the later thirteenth century accounts for a growing criticism of the church for violating its sacramental role. The prevailing hierocratic view of Christ as king of kings and ruler of the world, in whose name the pope as his representative on earth claimed authority over all mankind, was being challenged by the image of Christ as a pilgrim and way-farer who rendered unto Caesar as well as to God. A purely spiritual was opposed to a juridical conception of Christian authority, with far-reaching implications which became apparent in the fourteenth century."

papal dispensation excuses Christ's priests from this obligation, but rather accuses them if they neglect it.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, by insisting that Christ is a creature, Wyclif refutes John XXII's claims that Christ exercised civil dominion.<sup>10</sup>

As in Aquinas, Christ in his humanity is the head of the church.<sup>11</sup> Yet Wyclif goes further than Aquinas; Christ, the true vine, is the first head of the church of the Old and New Testaments.<sup>12</sup> There is a personal unity of Christ and the church, since Christ was always in his causes, i.e. in the Christian believers who constitute the material aggregate of his body.<sup>13</sup> In his subsequent ecclesiastical-political trilogy of 1378 to 1379, Wyclif's solo Christo principle establishes his reforming ideas in emphasizing Christ's sole authority, as opposed to pope or bishop. His view of the poverty of Christ and his apostles, borrowing from the mendicants, is the central theme for reforming the church. In his De Ecclesia of 1378-79, Wyclif argues that Christ is the sole head of the church, negating the power of the papacy and the clergy. In the De Officio Regis of mid 1379, Wyclif argues that the King is the vicar of God,

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<sup>9</sup>Veritate 1.7.152-53.

<sup>10</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.18.372, 20.419.

<sup>11</sup>Veritate 1.8.168, 10.211. See Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 3.16.8.

<sup>12</sup>Veritate 1.4.69.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 1.8.178.

and the pope is the vicar of Christ, or that the King is the vicar of Christ's divinity as king, the pope vicar of Christ's humanity as priest; thus the King is superior in the church to the pope.<sup>14</sup> In the De Potestate Papae of late 1379, Wyclif denies that the pope is even equal to the powers of Christ's humanity or even to that of Peter, because of his lack of virtue.

### Implications for the Clergy

Wyclif's view of history, the Old and New Testaments, is, as we have seen in chapter VI, christological. We should not be surprised if he uses the idea of Christ's poverty to reform the wealth of the clergy and to support disendowment. According to Grosseteste, evangelical poverty is to be normative for the English clergy.<sup>15</sup> Christ is the supreme pastor; whoever does not follow him by spiritually feeding the people according to his religion is without question not a pastor. Christ is the measure for priests, including Peter and his successors.<sup>16</sup> The clergy are in error concerning the poverty of Christ, saying that he was not supremely poor, but rather had civil property, and consequently, that it is permitted for religious, bishops, and any priests

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<sup>14</sup>This use of Augustine's De Consensu Evangelistarum is also found in the York Tractates of 1100-1. See Ewart Lewis, Medieval Political Ideas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), 2:562-66.

<sup>15</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.8.119-20.

<sup>16</sup>Veritate 2.21.173. Compare Ockham, Opus Nonaginta Dierum 93-94, in Opera Politica, ed. R. F. Bennet and H.S. Offler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1942-74), 2:672-715.

besides friars to be owners of property.<sup>17</sup> Priests are blinded to the fact that Christ is true God and true human being. Like Christ's accusers, they deny Christ's life and law in saying that it is licit and meritorious to possess temporal dominion.<sup>18</sup>

### The Person of Christ

#### Scripture as Christ and as the Word of God

Scripture, in the first of its five meanings, is Christ: Wyclif bases this on an unusual interpretation of the Vulgate version of John 10:35.<sup>19</sup> Wyclif asserts that every part of it is true literally, or by the virtue of the divine utterance (de virtute sermonis divini); this virtue is the Word of God and his Virtue and uncreated Wisdom.<sup>20</sup> The entire sacred Scripture is the one Word of God, and each part of it ought to be incorporated into that one Word, which the blessed in heaven see as the multitude of truths spoken by God.<sup>21</sup> Wisdom is essentially the divine nature and Personally the Word of

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<sup>17</sup>Veritate 3.32.299-300.

<sup>18</sup>De Antichristo 1.5.19.

<sup>19</sup>Veritate 1.6.109: "primo modo sumit Cristus scripturam sacratissimam Joh. decimo, quondo dicit: non potest solvi scriptura, quem pater sactificavit et misit in mundum." Wyclif argues that the quem, which refers to Christ, also has scriptura as its antecedent. See also 2.21.170. Cf. Lechler, 2:10-11, and Block, 34.

<sup>20</sup>Veritate 1.5.103, 10.231.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 2.19.112.

God: it is really the commandments of the decalogue and the law of God.<sup>22</sup>

Thus Wyclif identifies Scripture with Christ as the Second Person of the Trinity.

### Christ's Humanity

Wyclif's approach to christology shows the dyophysite influences of Augustine, Grosseteste, and Duns Scotus, who place emphasis on Christ's humanity. Wyclif follows Augustine in asserting that the three natures of Christ (body, soul, and divinity), are joined in personal unity.<sup>23</sup> He has an Augustinian view of assumption, with the assumed human being meaning the assumed human nature.<sup>24</sup> God is not also assumed, since for a thing to be "assumed" implies that it began to be and at one time was not.<sup>25</sup>

Wyclif's understanding of christology largely follows Duns Scotus's formulation. He agrees with Scotus on the two-fold relation of the assumed nature to the Word, the relation of causation and of obediential power.<sup>26</sup> Wyclif even agrees with Scotus that the grace of union presupposes a pre-

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<sup>22</sup>De Mandatis 16.170.

<sup>23</sup>Veritate 1.7.144.

<sup>24</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 9.144. Aquinas Summa Theologiae 3.4.1, 3 does not find the "assumption" theory congenial; "human nature" is assumed but not a "human being."

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.157.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.185.

existing nature before it is assumed, although with the stipulation that it would be impossible for that humanity not to be assumed.<sup>27</sup> However, the pre-existence of Christ's human nature is understood in a logical, non-temporal sense; like Augustine, he rejects Origen's view of Christ's preexisting merit.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, he rejects the view of Scotus that the assumed human nature is an individual essence before it gains personality.<sup>29</sup> As with Scotus, there is both an eternal and a temporal generation of Christ as divine and human.<sup>30</sup> Like Scotus, Wyclif holds to Christ's double nativity, one of his deity and one of his humanity.<sup>31</sup> However, he modifies Scotus's view, for there is no double filiation in Christ, for this would imply a distinct human personality.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, like Thomas, Wyclif rejects the Scotist-nominalist distinction of supposit from hypostasis or person, a possibility left open by Lombard.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 11.192.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 5.78, 79.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 11.186.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 7.115.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 8.126, 9.156.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 8.132. At other points Wyclif seems to affirm double filiation, 9.156. Because this work was given as a lecture and not edited at a later date, we can not expect a thorough consistency in Wyclif. See also De Dominio Divino 1.8.55; De Ecclesia 2.26. The view that Christ was "double" son in his divinity and humanity, is that of the Eighth-century Spanish adoptionists, who traced their bold dyophysite approach to Augustine. This view was anathema to the East and to Aquinas, but is rehabilitated by Scotus and the nominalists.

<sup>33</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 9.142.

Wyclif is careful to emphasize the distinction between Christ's two natures, divine and human.<sup>34</sup> As a human being, Christ had organs of sight, hearing and speech; Scripture does not say Christ preaches and walks, or that "he prays for us," or was "made obedient," except according to his humanity.<sup>35</sup> Wyclif rejects the view of the nominalists that there can be an equivocal definition of human being that would apply to Christ and to other human beings. As a human being, Christ is literally our brother in an univocal sense.<sup>36</sup> As human being, Christ is not infinitely but finitely good.<sup>37</sup> According to the faith of Scripture, the church, and the fathers, human predicates are to be absolutely conceded of Christ; Lombard's attempts to deny that Christ is a creature are to be discounted.<sup>38</sup> There was growth in Christ's human body from its infant to its adult size.<sup>39</sup> As a human being, Christ really suffered hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, and death.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Veritate 1.5.105-6, 1.8.179.

<sup>35</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 10.180. See Romans 8:24, Philippians 2:8.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.28, 6.92, 101. See chapter III above for Ockham's contrived definition of "human being" as applying to Christ.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.174-75.

<sup>38</sup>Veritate 1.13.303-4.

<sup>39</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 10.179.

<sup>40</sup>Veritate 1.13.306.

Although Wyclif is generally indebted to the Franciscan christology in formulating his own emphasis on Christ's humanity, we should note that on one point he follows the Augustinian-Thomistic view that Christ's humanity is in heaven at the right hand side of God; the Franciscan view of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity is rejected. The Son will reign perpetually with God as a human being, he says.<sup>41</sup> Since this point has relevance to his eucharistic doctrine, we discuss it in the following chapter.

### Christ a Creature

Wyclif's emphasis on Christ's humanity leads him to insist, against Lombard, that Christ is to be called a creature. For Wyclif, the issue whether we should call Christ a creature becomes a conflict between the church fathers and the scholastics since Anselm. Wyclif is convinced that the terminology of the fathers should be definitive. Christ is called creature on the basis of his human nature, as in Augustine's Confessions 7.19.<sup>42</sup> Christ became a creature, taking on the forma servi (Augustine's terminology in his De Trinitate).<sup>43</sup> That Christ is a creature is also asserted by Jerome, Leo I, Damascus, and Grosseteste.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 3.30.225.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 1.7.146-148, 12.284, 290, 13.303-7.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 1.7.143.

<sup>44</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 1.9, 6.96.

The argument of Lombard and of the moderni, that Christ is not to be called a creature in order to avoid Arianism, is rejected.<sup>45</sup> Lombard's error in refusing to call Christ a creature follows that of Abelard.<sup>46</sup> The innovative terminology of the moderns on this subject is not based in Scripture.<sup>47</sup> As for Scotus and Bonaventure, they assert that Christ is a creature, although not merely a creature.<sup>48</sup> Wyclif misinterprets Thomas as supporting his own view that Christ is a creature.<sup>49</sup>

Wyclif dyophysite christological emphases are also evident in his criticism of the scholastics' distinction between Christ assuming human nature and assuming a human being. He notes that the moderns in particular hold that Christ did not receive or assume homo (a human being), but humanitas (human nature), because homo includes formally a negative, namely that there

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<sup>45</sup>Veritate 1.7.148, 13.303; De Benedicta Incarnatione 2.13-28, 6.85-105. Nicolas Oresme, writing in Paris in 1355, follows Lombard in denying that Christ may be called simply a creature. Oresme De Communicatione Idiomatum, in Ernst Borchert, Der Einfluss des Nominalismus auf die Christologie der Spätscholastik (Münster: Aschendorf, 1940), ch. 12, pp. 25\*-26\*.

<sup>46</sup>Veritate 1.13.307. According to Buddensieg's footnote on this page, Wyclif may be referring to Abelard's Sic et Non, ch. 67, where he argues "that Christ or God is not to be called a creature."

<sup>47</sup>Veritate 1.13.309.

<sup>48</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 6.96-97.

<sup>49</sup>Veritate 1.7.145-46. See Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 3.8.1.

is no alien supposition or personality.<sup>50</sup> Wyclif attacks this view and asserts that Christ received human being as well as humanity, according to the Augustine, Jerome, and Anselm.<sup>51</sup>

### The Beatific Knowledge of Christ

A technical question of interest to the scholastics is whether Christ as a human being enjoyed beatific knowledge during his earthly pilgrimage. Influenced by the Eastern Cyrillian tendencies, Aquinas says he did.<sup>52</sup> However, the dyophysite christologies of Duns, John XXII, and FitzRalph do not accept this view without qualification. Wyclif notes that his modern opponents hold that Christ's human knowledge was limited.<sup>53</sup> He himself clearly allows for the growth of human knowledge of Christ as a human being.<sup>54</sup>

In the De Benedicta Incarnatione, Wyclif initially follows Aquinas's view of Christ's beatific vision. Christ from the instant of the union was more

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<sup>50</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 9.146, 10.160. This is Ockham's view, as we saw in chapter III above. Ockham is essentially adopting the view of Aquinas. So also Nicolas Oresme De Communicatione Idiomatum, in Borchert, 15\*.

<sup>51</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 9.152. See 6:88-89.

<sup>52</sup>Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 3.9.2.

<sup>53</sup>De Dominio Divino 1.15.131.

<sup>54</sup>Sermones 4.28.239; quoted in G.R. Evans, The Language and Logic of the Bible, 2:112-13, n. 32.

perfectly blessed in the soul than any other human being. Thus Christ's enjoyment of the beatific vision is for Wyclif a logical consequence of the indissolubility of the hypostatic union and Christ's impeccability.<sup>55</sup> The assumption of a human soul by the Word is no impediment to the soul's enjoyment of the beatific vision and fruition.<sup>56</sup>

However, Wyclif's final position makes a significant concession to Scotus and FitzRalph. Christ's soul was only by anticipation (arraliter) blessed.<sup>57</sup> Thus Christ did not fully enjoy the beatific vision while a human being on earth; he fully enjoyed it only after his resurrection in his glorified humanity in heaven. According to Augustine, the soul of Christ enjoys the beatific vision and fruition in heaven.<sup>58</sup>

In summary, Wyclif follows FitzRalph's qualified criticism of John XXII, who denied the beatific vision of Christ as human being, and of the blessed before the final judgment.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 5.68.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 10.181.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 5.70.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 10.181.

<sup>59</sup>On FitzRalph's views in the beatific vision controversy, see Walsh, Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon, and Armagh, 85-107.

### Criticisms of the Moderns

Wyclif is convinced that excessive speculative tendencies of the moderns will involve them in christological heresy. To set the boundaries of orthodoxy in christology, he quotes Augustine's enumeration of the christological heresies, which include adoptionism, patripassianism, theopaschitism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism.<sup>60</sup> It is sinful for the moderns to use terms arbitrarily, deceiving with signs. Sophistical questions are to be rejected, according to Wyclif, since they were introduced by Lucifer.<sup>61</sup> The nominalist principle of lack of logical contradiction is not a sufficient criterion in discussing christological doctrine. Wyclif sets a more stringent criterion, that of impossibility in fact. Thus in christology, the literal or historical sense of sacred Scripture is to be upheld against the moderns.<sup>62</sup>

Wyclif has several criticisms of the moderns in particular. First, he insists on the unity of human being, so that Christ was a human being in the triduum, the "three days" between crucifixion and resurrection.<sup>63</sup> The

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<sup>60</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 5.80-84, 2.26. "Nestorianism" and "Eutychianism" could not be christological heresies in Augustine's time; this must be a scribal addition.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 6.88-89, 7.116.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 13.229, 231-32.

<sup>63</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 3.29-51, 10.177. Olivi's tri-partite anthropology, condemned in 1311 at the council of Vienne, was adopted by Ockham and the nominalists. Wyclif is aware of this condemnation, De Compositione Hominis 7.114-15, but not of Olivi's association with the view.

moderns' inability to preserve the unity of Christ's human nature is reminiscent of Lombard's nihilianism and the "habitus" theory which was condemned in 1170 and 1177.<sup>64</sup>

Wyclif also criticizes the scholastics with regard to the nature assumed and the Persons assuming. He opposes the view of Scotus and Ockham that any creature, animal, stone or wood, could be assumed by the Word.<sup>65</sup> Against Lombard and Aquinas, the Word could not assume more than one nature. It is idle to argue that the Word could assume many humanities. For if Christ is many human beings, then he is many individuals, many persons, which is absurd.<sup>66</sup> Nor could the other Persons of the Trinity, the Father and Holy Spirit, assume a human nature, for it is appropriate that only the Word assume a human nature.<sup>67</sup> The absurdity of these positions arises the use of Lombard's Sentences on the Continent.

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The anonymous Centiloquium Theologicum of the 1340's stressed the separation of Christ's body and soul in the three days. See Borchert, 79.

<sup>64</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 7.117, 10.168. See Denzinger, The Sources of Catholic Dogma, 153; Denzinger and Schönmetzer, Enchiridion, 239.

<sup>65</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 4.65, 9.158, 10.162, 12.210. The Centiloquium Theologicum asserted that there is no contradiction in God assuming the nature of an ass, or that a stone or a piece of wood be assumed. See Borchert, 76-77.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.201, 13.217-19, 223.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.78, 6.88-89, 13.223.

Another criticism of certain moderns is the tendency to identify Christ's humanity and divinity. Wyclif asserts that Augustine's sentence, "God is man, man is God," is a praedicatio equivocata per accidens; Christ's humanity and divinity are not confused.<sup>68</sup> The erroneous consequence of the confusion of Christ's human and divine natures is to assert the ubiquity of Christ's humanity.<sup>69</sup>

Another criticism of the moderns is when Wyclif argues that the the hypostatic union is not capable of dissolution, in that the Word could not lay aside the assumed human nature.<sup>70</sup> The scriptural passage of John 10:35, "Scriptura solvi non potest," means that Christ, as Scripture, can not be dissolved with respect to the hypostatic union.<sup>71</sup> Pope Leo I and Anselm also

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 10.172-73. This criticism shows that Wyclif misunderstands as monophysite the nominalist view of the communicatio idiomatum, which was interpreted by his older contemporary on the continent, Nicholas Oresme (d. 1382). See Borchert, 109-37.

<sup>69</sup>De Trinitate 12.131.

<sup>70</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 3.43, 5.65-84; also Triologus 3.27.226. Damasus Trapp, "Augustinian Theology of the Fourteenth Century," Augustiniana 6 (1956): 151, notes that the English theologians Nicholas Aston and Uthred of Boldon were "implicitly censured" in the condemnation of the continental nominalists Nicholas of Autrecourt and John of Mirecourt, who asserted that by God's absolute power "the second Person of the Trinity might assume, dismiss and reassume a sinning nature: and so produced a monstrous Christ. Nicolas Oresme argues in a similar fashion in his De Communicatione Idiomatum. The nominalist position is functionally equivalent to Nestorianism, although Wyclif does not explicitly recognize it as such.

<sup>71</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 5.73-74, 80.

argue for the indissolubility of the union.<sup>72</sup> Wyclif rejects the nominalist argument that God could by his omnipotence annihilate the hypostatic union in Christ. For the divine omnipotence is constructive, not destructive.<sup>73</sup>

### The Impeccability of Christ and the Infallibility of Scripture

Just as the Word can not lay aside the assumed human nature, so the Word can not assume a sinner. Wyclif argues against the moderns' "impiety" that God could assume a sinner by his absolute power.<sup>74</sup> For Wyclif, the defense of the truth or infallibility of Scripture is inseparable from the defense of Christ's impeccability. On both points Wyclif attacks the moderns, whose view implies that Christ, our God, the author of Scripture, was a most false, lying, and deceiving human being.<sup>75</sup> The importance of the incarnation is

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 4.60, 5.70.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 5.71, 75-78.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 11.197. Wyclif's opponent Kenningham denies that Christ told an untruth, although this remains a logical possibility. See Robson, 166. As we saw in chapter III, Scotus had argued that Christ's human nature was peccabilis in se, but free from sin because of the hypostatic union. Ockham's speculation on Christ's peccability as a human being was censured in Avignon in 1328. Robert Holcot held that by God's absolute power Christ could have deceived his disciples; see Borchert, 69. The possibility that God could assume an adult sinner is discussed by Nicolas Oresme De Communicatione Idiomatum, ch. 11, in Borchert, p. 33\*.

<sup>75</sup>Veritate 2.16.1.

contrasted by Wyclif with the blameworthiness of those who mock Scripture.<sup>76</sup> Christ's impeccability is the result of the fact that the hypostatic union is more efficacious than baptism in deleting sin.<sup>77</sup> The idea of Christ's peccability, resulting from the dissolution of the hypostatic union, would be contrary to divine justice.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Wyclif contrasts Christ's impeccability with the peccability of the pope and of the church. It is certain that Christ is true God and true human being, altogether "impeccable"; the pope is very "peccable," or sinful.<sup>79</sup>

#### Wyclif's View of the Atonement

In his soterology or doctrine of atonement, Wyclif follows Grosseteste in stating that the incarnation is the foundation of the Christian faith.<sup>80</sup> Wyclif approves of the Anselmian doctrine of satisfaction. It must be that sin preceded Christ in the root, as the faith of scripture says, so that the first parents, in whom the entire human race existed, sinned. Since it was necessary for the entire human nature to be saved, it was necessary that an individual of the human race, agreeing in nature both with humanity being

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 3.28.133-39.

<sup>77</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 4.64.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 5.67-68.

<sup>79</sup>See De Antichristo 1.38.141.

<sup>80</sup>Veritate 3.28.136-7.

reconciled and with God the reconciler, to make satisfaction by his mediation, because no other human being could make satisfaction for his or her own self, much less for the entire human race. Christ therefore is univocally our brother and consequently the same nature which sinned. He made satisfaction for that common nature, since in his divinity he owed nothing, but only humbled himself to such extent as the human race sinfully exalted itself in its presumptuous pride.<sup>81</sup>

Thus Wyclif follows the Western tradition in asserting that redemption is through Christ's humanity.<sup>82</sup> More properly, however, as Wyclif interprets Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction, Christ's redemptive work was in the hypostatic union.<sup>83</sup> Christ as God and human being is the redeemer of the human race according to the most appropriate manner. Thus he is our redemption, salvation and reward, in fact all that is necessary for the human race.<sup>84</sup>

For Wyclif, the salvific work of Christ is directed to the church, not simply to individual believers. According to Grosseteste, in Christ the church

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 1.10.211-12.

<sup>82</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 10.183.

<sup>83</sup>De Mandatis 23.312.

<sup>84</sup>Veritate 3.31.242.

and the human race is saved.<sup>85</sup> For Wyclif, the church as Christ's body has an ontological reality. He believes that there is a personal unity of Christ and the church, just as there is a personal unity of Adam and Eve.<sup>86</sup> Further, Wyclif believes that the restoration that Christ brings is to a state greater than before sin. Christ gained more than Adam lost. As Romans 5:20 states, where sin abounded, grace abounded even more. Christ's merit suffices for deleting our sin, as a medicine greater than the infecting guiltiness.<sup>87</sup>

Besides the theory of satisfaction, the exemplarist view of the atonement, going back to Abelard and favored by the Franciscans, is also found in Wyclif. We are to follow Christ's example, as he says in John 13:4, "and example I give to you, as I have done to you, that you also do."<sup>88</sup> Christ is the good pastor; all who follow him must spiritually feed his people according to the religion he established in the New Testament.<sup>89</sup> Christ's humility and life are an example and instruction for us, as he says in Matthew 11:29, "learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart."<sup>90</sup> Wyclif also alludes to the older patristic

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 3.28.126.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 1.8.178, 3.28.126.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 3.30.206, 212-13.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 3.29.155-8. See De Civili Dominio 2.15.208.

<sup>89</sup>Veritate 2.21.173.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 1.5.89.

view of ransom from the devil's captivity, a theme not accepted by Anselm. Christ handed over the church to his Father, which he conquered by his passion, by waging war against the devil, and which he removed from attack by the powers of darkness, so that death, which is the devil and his followers, shall be destroyed in the last day, when it will be thrust down from the everlasting body of Christ. Not that all death will cease to be, but the vessels of death and the sin which puts to death will not have any more occasion to attack the church.<sup>91</sup> In this connection he utilizes the homo assumptus theory of Augustine and the fathers: before we could participate in Christ's immortality, it was necessary that he participate in our mortality.<sup>92</sup> Thus, as in Aquinas's view of the atonement, although the theme of "satisfaction" is prominent for Wyclif, other themes are present as well.

On the issue of the necessity of the incarnation and the primacy of Christ, R. W. Southern argues that Wyclif follows Grossteste (and hence Scotus) in holding that Christ would have been incarnated even if there were no original sin.<sup>93</sup> This, however, is not Wyclif's view. We see in the Trialogus and De Antichristo that the issue of the necessity of the incarnation is taken up along Anselmian lines. Because of Adam's pride, the person

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 3.30.227-28. See also De Mandatis 23.313; De Civili Dominio 2.15.207

<sup>92</sup>Veritate 1.3.59.

<sup>93</sup>Southern, Robert Grosseteste, 299.

giving satisfaction had to descend in humility. Because sin was committed out of ignorance, it had to be deleted by Personal Wisdom, which can only be by the Word of God.<sup>94</sup> By occasion of the fall, our Jesus was incarnated; nor must we be concerned whether God would have become incarnate if human being had not sinned, because God's eternal decree is that human being by Christ's ordination would be freed from the penalty of sin.<sup>95</sup> Like Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas, Wyclif argues for the convenience and necessity of Wisdom to remedy sin.<sup>96</sup> Thus Wyclif rejects the doctrine of the primacy of Christ as an example of curious speculation.

#### Assessment of Wyclif's Christology

One may question whether Wyclif's understanding of Christ's humanity is really satisfactory, and whether his emphasis on Christ's divinity and the indissolubility of the hypostatic union and the "impeccability" of Christ preserves a true understanding of Christ's humanity. Although he emphasizes the humanity of Christ, one often wonders whether Wyclif views Christ as super-human instead of human. Christ is the first human being simply in dignity, and so is prior to Adam.<sup>97</sup> Christ as a human being is greater than

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<sup>94</sup>Triialogus 3.25.215-16. See De Civili Dominio 3.25.579.

<sup>95</sup>De Antichristo 1.54.198.

<sup>96</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.25.579.

<sup>97</sup>Triialogus 3.29.233-34.

any other human being; so his book or Scripture is greater than any other book.<sup>98</sup> Christ is the best possible human being; as human being he is greater than the angels.<sup>99</sup> At the time of his writing the De Benedicta Incarnatione in 1372, Wyclif argues that latria is due to Christ's humanity joined to the Word.<sup>100</sup> In rejecting Christ's peccability he may go to the other extreme, presenting Christ as altogether immune from temptation. In Christ's body there was so great an equilibrium of harmonious complexion that there could be no rebellion of his body to his soul, as there would be in any brother of his.<sup>101</sup>

In conclusion, Wyclif sets off on the dyophysite christological track of Scotus, insisting on the language of the Fathers concerning Christ as a creature and as assuming a human being. However, he rejects this track when it leads to the speculative tendencies of the nominalists, who entertain the possibility of the peccability of Christ and the dissolubility of the hypostatic union. His polemical attitude toward the dyophysite positions of the nominalists seems somewhat misplaced, for in reacting against the nominalists

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 3.31.239; quoted in Kropatscheck, 329.

<sup>99</sup>De Benedicta Incarnatione 2.25.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 10.183-84. See Edward Harris's editorial note, 249. Wyclif corrects this in his De Mandatis 23.313 and De Eucharistia 9.316, where he says Christ's humanity is to be adored with hyperdulia.

<sup>101</sup>Trialogus 3.29.233.

he tends to the Cyrillian christology of Thomas Aquinas. Although Wyclif's ecclesiastical-political interpretation of Christ's humanity shows the influence of later medieval sectarian criticisms of the church and of the papacy, the emphasis on Christ's humanity has not entirely penetrated into his doctrinal formulation of christology. Perhaps the most significant point of contact between Wyclif's christology and his understanding of the Bible is his conviction that Christ's impeccability implies the infallibility of Scripture. This point shapes Wyclif's views on the person of Christ in tilting toward Christ's divinity as dominating his humanity.

We are now in a position to summarize Wyclif's overall view of Scripture as of his middle period. With the justification of his metaphysical ideas, Wyclif defends the truth and infallibility of Scripture. However, his view of Scripture is in continuity with later medieval sectarianism, in that he develops a "national church" view of the Scripture principle that rejects other established historical, social, and institutional norms of authority. His literalism is in tension with the traditional medieval scholastic fourfold interpretation, so that his theology of history entails a forceful Augustinianism combined with concessions to sectarian apocalyptic rhetoric as represented by the spiritual Franciscans. His view of the relation of the Bible to theology shows both Thomistic and Franciscan influences, whereas his insistence on the sufficiency of Scripture in respect to tradition is undergirded by his view of the poverty of

Christ and the early church, a common social theme of the later middle ages. Finally, Wyclif's objection to the scepticism of the nominalists combined with his insistence on Scriptural infallibility lead him back to a Thomistic christology, without realizing the problems of such a view.

## CHAPTER IX

### WYCLIF'S LATER DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE:

#### THE TRIALOGUS

Wyclif's Trialogus, written in late 1382 or perhaps early 1383, represents Wyclif's most mature and concise statement of the doctrinal views of his late phase. In it we see the radicalization of his doctrine of Scripture in continuity with both previous and succeeding forms of later medieval sectarianism. The Trialogus is the only work that comes closest to expressing a systematic theology.<sup>1</sup> It was his most influential work; it was studied intensely and copied extensively in Bohemia in the fifteenth century. Most of Wyclif's condemned propositions at the Council of Constance came from the Trialogus. Appearing in Vienna in 1525, it was the only work of Wyclif's to be printed before the nineteenth century. The four books of the Trialogus are analogous to Augustine's Enchiridion, Damascene's De fide orthodoxa, or Lombard's Sentences. Book I is concerned with God as first cause, the Trinity, and the divine ideas. Book II treats of creation, and in particular human being, the

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<sup>1</sup>An excellent analysis of this work, from the standpoint of Wyclif as "radical dissenter," is Edward A. Block's John Wyclif: Radical Dissenter. On the connection of Wyclif's radical views to the Lollard movement, Anne Hudson's The Premature Reformation must be consulted.

angels, and predestination. Book III treats of the virtues, vices, original sin, Christ, and Scripture as Christ's law. Book IV discusses "signs," i.e. the sacraments; after a polemic against the friars, it concludes with the last things.

In this work Wyclif has three interlocutors: Aletheia, representing pure philosophy or a theological novice; Pseustis, representing a nominalist theologian, "sophist," and opponent of Wyclif; and Phronesis, representing Wyclif's own views. The work shows an Anselmian confidence in the harmony of faith and reason, so that reason can demonstrate the Trinity, creation, the immortality of the soul, and even the resurrection. To understand fully the background and content of this work, one would have to study Wyclif's three Summae, the De Eucharistia, and his polemical writings against the friars.

In this chapter we will analyze three aspects of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture in the Triologus that reflect the increased radicalization of the late phase of his career. We will examine: the significance of his simplification of his metaphysical doctrine of Scripture; his increased emphasis on the literal interpretation of Scripture and the rejection of allegory as used in monasticism; his radical criticism of the church and of the sacraments.

#### Simplification of the Metaphysical Conception of Scripture to a Threefold Meaning

Wyclif never loses his metaphysical convictions to the end of his life. They are still strongly in evidence in the Triologus, although the theologically

oriented books III and IV are much more detailed in exposition than the metaphysically oriented books I and II.

Chapter 31 of Book III of the Trialogus treats of the same issues of the doctrine of Scripture as chapter six of the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae.

There are, however, some significant divergences. The fivefold meaning of Scripture in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, influenced by Grosseteste's fivefold conception of being, has now been simplified to a threefold meaning. Wyclif had articulated this threefold scheme earlier in his De Civili Dominio;<sup>2</sup> he will stay with this threefold scheme in his last work De Antichristo.<sup>3</sup>

1. Scripture is Jesus Christ, the book of life, in whom all truth is written, according to John 10:35.<sup>4</sup> This corresponds to the first of the fivefold meanings.

2. Scripture is the truths written in the book of life, whether they are exemplary eternal reason or temporal truths.<sup>5</sup> Thus Wyclif has conflated the second, third, and fourth meanings of Scripture of his earlier scheme.

3. Most familiarly, Scripture is the aggregate of codices of God's law and the truth which God imposes on them. Wyclif says that he has not learned to call

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<sup>2</sup>De Civili Dominio 3.19.403.

<sup>3</sup>De Antichristo 1.10.36.

<sup>4</sup>Trialogus 3.31.238.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 238-39.

this naked material writing "Scripture," unless sacred Scripture is present, because the codices themselves are not sacred, unless the sacred sentence (i.e., Scripture in the first two meanings) is present.<sup>6</sup>

The logic of Scripture is most right, subtle, and useful. Repeating his statements concerning the "five weapons" against the moderns, Wyclif asserts that proper knowledge of Scripture requires: 1. Right knowledge of universals; 2. The right metaphysic of Christ's school, that accidents are formally inhering dispositions; 3. The belief that all things past and future are present to God; 4. The belief that creatures have an eternal idea in God; 5. The belief that material essence is perpetual, incapable of annihilation.<sup>7</sup>

Thus we see that Wyclif has simplified his metaphysical understanding of Scripture. His metaphysical views are still strong but a subordinate interest. This may be because of his growing preoccupation with sacramental theology, which is discussed in book IV. This chapter 31 of book III continues many of the emphasis of Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture seen from the time of his De Civili Dominio and the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae. The christological link is apparent both in the systematic placement of the subject under christology, and in the first meaning of Scripture given.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 239.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 242.

Wyclif treats of the authority, authorship, and infallibility of sacred Scripture in a manner similar to his earlier writings. He states that "the authority of sacred Scripture, and especially of our gospel, is of infinitely greater authority than the authority of any other Scripture. . . . Christ, the proximate author, is infinitely greater than any other human being; so his book or Scripture, which is his law, proportionally relates to any other Scripture."<sup>8</sup> As the gospel narrates, the evangelists as scribes wrote down the law of Christ, sacred Scripture, which has for its sense the sentence of Jesus Christ, and can not be false nor deceive anyone.<sup>9</sup> Wyclif attacks the "new" doctors for saying that Scripture, especially Christ's word in John's gospel, is false. Augustine, by contrast, states that false opinion arises from incorrect codices or false interpretation.<sup>10</sup>

Criticism of Monasticism and Omission of the  
Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture

Wyclif's original attack on the possessioner monks of his middle phases, was, as we have seen, inspired by the "Scripture principle" of the friars. Now, however, he has turned against the mendicants as well.<sup>11</sup> This is because of

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 238-39.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 239-40.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>11</sup>See Gwynn, 225-79.

his increased awareness of their accommodation to the world, their support of papal church claims against the King of England, their use of the nominalist theology, and their view of the eucharist. The monastic two-tiered ethic, distinguishing "counsels" for religious from "precepts" for all Christians, is rejected.

Wyclif launches a sustained attack on the mendicants in book IV of the Trialogus, chapters 26-38. The friars are condemned for their views on the Eucharist, their begging as opposed to Christ's poverty, their use of letters of fraternity, their support for papal indulgences, and their treachery to the English realm. Their claims with respect to their historical origins are attacked as well. The notion of Christ as the sole "abbot" of the Christian "religion" excludes the rules and religions of Augustine, Benedict, Francis and Dominic. The four mendicant orders are called by their acronym Caim (Carmelites, Augustinians, Jacobites or Dominicans, Minorites or Franciscans),<sup>12</sup> and the sincerity of Dominic and Francis is questioned.

We saw in the De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae that Wyclif accepts a four-fold literal and allegorical reading of Scripture. Wyclif never abandons his use of allegory in his later period. Indeed, in his Trialogus he considers the

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<sup>12</sup>Compare this accusation of Proux Boneta of the Provençal Beguines against John XXII and the Dominican Order. Rupescissa's criticism of the accommodationism and "hypocrisy" of the four mendicant orders is also quite sharp. See Bignami-Odier, 104-9.

mystical sense of Scripture necessary.<sup>13</sup> His use of Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom in the Opus Evangelicum of the last two years of his life also reinforces his occasional use of allegorical interpretation. Nor does his literalism become entirely wooden, for he still holds to a literal sense beyond the plain meaning of the text, i.e. a metaphorical or parabolic meaning. However, having said all this, it is also clear that the literalist strand emerges in the late period of Wyclif. This can be attributed to his increased radicalism and association with the emerging Lollard movement.

We can already see evidences of his radical literalism in the political-ecclesiastical trilogy of the Summa Theologiae of 1378-79 and in the De Eucharistia of 1380. Although a mystical sense of Scripture is not self-evident to the ignorant for proving scholastically what is figured, it can be proved from reason or Scripture that some mystical sense is intended by the author, as in I Corinthians 10, Galatians 4, and Hebrews 7, he says.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, there is literal truth in Christ's prophesy of Antichrist.<sup>15</sup> In the De Eucharistia, the literalist strand is justified in a different way: if there are no competent prelates, we may ignore the mystical and even the secondary literal sense and

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<sup>13</sup>Triologus 2.6.94.

<sup>14</sup>De Potestate Papae (Fall 1379) 3.51.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 7.148.

rest on the plain literal sense, leaving to the Holy Spirit any other sense.<sup>16</sup>

Again, in his De Eucharistia et Poenitentia of 1382, Wyclif argues against the use of allegory in theological argument by the friars, since it leads to arbitrary interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

In the chapter on Scripture of the Trialogus, Wyclif states that Antichrist and his disciples are all devils, for they cannot refute any part of Scripture taken literally (de virtute sermonis). By contrast the Christian, like a grammarian, should rest in the letter, and avoid imposing any sense on Scripture which the Holy Spirit does not inspire.<sup>18</sup> This literalism is reaffirmed in Wyclif's last work De Antichristo, where Wyclif seems to be aware that the allegorical reading of Scripture is tied up with the medieval social synthesis of monasticism. He states that the law of Christ does not establish monastic life in its "anagoric" meaning.<sup>19</sup> We may say, therefore, that, in Wyclif's late period, his literalism is such that, while he continues to

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<sup>16</sup>De Eucharistia 9.28. Note, however, that in this work Wyclif insists that language about Christ's presence in the eucharist is figurative, not literal.

<sup>17</sup>De Eucharistia et Poenitentia 6, in Loserth's edition of De Eucharistia, 341. On the date of the work, see W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 75-77.

<sup>18</sup>Trialogus 3.31.243.

<sup>19</sup>"anagorice": De Antichristo 37.138. Is this a corruption of the term allegorice? A.W. Pollard, in his edition of De Officio Regis 9.165, corrects this term to anacorita.

utilize figurative and allegorical interpretation as of Scripture, he refrains from enunciating a theory of four-fold interpretation.<sup>20</sup>

### Radical Criticism of Tradition and Sacramental Theology

In this chapter on Scripture in the Trialogus, Wyclif restates his view of Scripture and tradition in a rather radical sense. The writings of the great doctors (i.e., the fathers), however much true, are apocryphal. They are not to be believed except to the extent they are established in the Lord's Scripture.<sup>21</sup> Wyclif still concedes that truths may be contained implicitly in Scripture. However, there are many truths in Scripture, presumably of a speculative nature, which God does not will to be explicitly believed. Augustine himself often commands that no one should believe his writings or words, except to the extent that they are established in Scripture. Papal bulls and sentences of the scholastic doctors have been promulgated after the unleashing of Satan, i.e. after Nicolas II's reign or 1060, which occurred after the first millennium

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<sup>20</sup>On Wyclif's rejection of the "two swords" in its mystical sense to support the curialists, see Lechler, 2:32-33 and Daly, 84. Compare John of Paris, Marsilius of Padua, and Ockham.

<sup>21</sup>Trialogus 3.31.239.

after Christ.<sup>22</sup> Now Wyclif is not only critical of medieval Catholic tradition, but he is wary of the fathers as well.

This theoretical expression of Wyclif's criticism of tradition is translated into a criticism of Catholic ecclesiology throughout the Triologus. Wyclif applies the solo Christo principle to deny the value of canonization or prayer to saints.<sup>23</sup> He attacks permanent foundations or chantries established to pray for rich dead patrons as providing sinecures for monks. He rejects Thomistic arguments for particular prayers for the dead, because general prayer suffices; moreover, we know not whether the persons prayed for are in hell, thus beyond praying for.<sup>24</sup> The universalistic implication of prayers for the dead, by enlarging purgatory to include the damned, is rejected.<sup>25</sup> Wyclif

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 240. In De Eucharistia 6.172-73, Wyclif had already argued that truths outside of Scripture may be true, but we need not believe them for salvation. Decretals are not authoritative; there is no reason why the church should be burdened by additions to the Scriptures. At ibid., 9.283, Wyclif states that the doctors and glossers of human laws are uncertain and contradictory.

<sup>23</sup>Triologus 3.30.234-38. See also De Officio Regis 10.233. Cf. Lechler, 2:114-18, and Block, 31-33.

<sup>24</sup>Triologus 3.8.157. This criticism goes back to the De Civili Dominio, book III, written in 1377.

<sup>25</sup>Triologus 3.25.217. Wyclif has Uthred of Bolden in mind. Like the Spiritual Franciscans, Wyclif was not without universalistic tendencies of his own with respect to those outside Western Europe, but not with respect to the corrupters of the visible church. See De Antichristo 1.54.200. Compare the radical Reformers of the sixteenth century in George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 832-40, and the New Divinity and the Black church's attitude toward slave owners.

to the end of his life does not reject purgatory, as he thought it validated by Augustine;<sup>26</sup> but he rejected medieval financial accretions to the Augustinian doctrine.<sup>27</sup> Like the Reformers after him, he thought prayers for the dead and prayers to saints to be inextricably connected to the financial abuses of the church.

Wyclif's constant polemic on church wealth also involves him in criticizing the power of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Concerning the papacy, he holds that Christ is the sole head of the church, not the pope. There is no distinction between bishop and priest, hence no need for pope, cardinals, archbishops, and "private religions" represented by monks and mendicants. Excommunication and the coercive power of the church are rejected. Wyclif's iconoclastic tendencies, present in his Scriptural commentaries and the De Mandatis, also come to the fore in his criticism of priestly vestments, church buildings, the university, images, and pilgrimages.

Wyclif's radicalism is primarily directed against the medieval Catholic view of the sacraments. In the opening chapter of book IV of the Triialogus, Wyclif insists that a sacrament is a "sign of a sacred thing." Since it seems that

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<sup>26</sup>In his last work De Antichristo 1.6.22-23 of 1384, Wyclif asserts that the church has three parts: militant in heaven, dormant in purgatory, and triumphant in heaven. This is essentially unchanged from his 1378-79 work De Ecclesia.

<sup>27</sup>See De Civili Dominio 3.26.633-36. The Lollards and the Taborites rejected purgatory altogether.

everything that can signify is a sacrament, Aletheia raises the issue of the number seven of sacraments. Why is preaching itself, for example, not a sacrament? Hence Wyclif expresses the sectarian preference for preaching and conversion against the Catholic view of objective authority of the church as the mediator of salvation through the sacraments. Aletheia states that there are 1000 sensible signs in Scripture, which have as much reason to be sacraments as these seven in general. Wyclif, as Phronesis, concedes that many things may be said to be sacraments, in this manner, for "sacrament" is not limited to the seven sacraments. Yet he finds it expedient to follow the common order of exposition of the seven sacraments.<sup>28</sup>

Chapters two to ten amount to a summary of Wyclif's 1380 work De Eucharistia.<sup>29</sup> Wyclif's emerging radicalism on the eucharist can be attributed

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<sup>28</sup>Triialogus 4.1.244-46.

<sup>29</sup>For treatments of Wyclif's eucharistic doctrine, see Lechler, 2:186-95; Darwell Stone, A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), 1:364-68; Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 2:206-7; idem, Dogmengeschichte 3:791-921; Workman, John Wyclif 1:30-44; Stacey, John Wyclif and Reform, 101-9; Gordon Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages 2:549-57; Kenny, Wyclif, 80-90; Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, vol. 4, Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 58; J.I. Catto, "Wyclif and the Cult of the Eucharist," in The Bible in the Medieval World, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 269-86; Heather Phillips, "John Wyclif and the Optics of the Eucharist," 245-58; Maurice Keen, "Wyclif, the Bible and Transubstantiation," in Wyclif in his Times, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 1-16; Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 281-83. Leff, Kenny, and Hudson argue that Wyclif holds to a "real presence" doctrine. Certainly Wyclif would have subscribed to the eucharistic doctrine of the 39 articles, but his view is not that of Luther or

not simply to his metaphysical views but to the possible influence of the Free Spirit or "Beghard" sectarians on the continent, to his study of Scripture<sup>30</sup> and the fathers,<sup>31</sup> and to the eucharistic radicalism of his followers.<sup>32</sup> Wyclif's main point is the remanence of the elements after consecration. Wyclif accuses the Friars' view of transubstantiation as making the common people commit idolatry. The doctrine of remanence, he argues, was held by the

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Elizabeth. Phillips recognizes that Wyclif holds to the view of "spiritual presence"; Stacey notes that Wyclif's view anticipates Calvin's.

<sup>30</sup>In his commentary on 1 Corinthians 10:16ff., found in Benrath, Wyclifs Bibelkommentar, 369-70, which was perhaps written in 1376, all the major elements of Wyclif's later doctrine are present, such as the remanence of the elements, and the figurative, symbolic, spiritual or virtual presence of Christ in them.

<sup>31</sup>Keen, 11-12, criticizes Workman and Leff's interpretation of Wyclif's eucharistic heresy: "the central positive point in Wyclif's conclusion on the Eucharist was that bread and wine remained after the consecration. To prove this affirmatively, he did not rely on metaphysic: what he relied on was scripture and the teaching of the early church." Kenny, Wyclif, 82, 88, also allows Scripture and the fathers as a significant influence on Wyclif's eucharistic views. Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 2:207; idem, Dogmengeschichte 3:792, notes that Wyclif utilizes Augustine's eucharistic views to criticize medieval developments in Catholic eucharistic doctrine.

<sup>32</sup>Wyclif recognizes three different eucharistic views among his followers, all of which seem to deny transubstantiation, in the De Eucharistia 7.230-31. On evidence for "extra-mural" eucharistic heretics before 1381, see Margaret Aston, "Wyclif and the Vernacular," in From Ockham to Wyclif, ed. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 292-96, 310-15. There is no reason to doubt the validity of John Ball's confession to Courtenay before his execution in 1381, asserting that he had embraced Wyclif's eucharistic doctrine for the previous two years.

church until the time of the "Ego Berengarius" of 1060 under Nicolas II.<sup>33</sup>

Thus in chapter six Wyclif attacks Innocent III and the mendicants for the doctrine of transubstantiation and the metaphysical view that accidents could exist without a subject.<sup>34</sup>

Having established his opposition to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and insisted on remanence, Wyclif gives several clues as to how his view may be understood in a positive sense. Although Wyclif utilizes Berengar to establish the doctrine of remanence of the elements after consecration, his view of the eucharist is not that of the "real presence" in Berengar's confession, some conservative utraquists, Luther, and Elizabeth, however, but more like the "spiritual presence" view of Erasmus, Bucer, Ridley, Cranmer, and Calvin. In chapter two, he states that the "sacrament and thing" is the Lord's body, which is above. "The sacrament and not the thing" is the sanctified bread, since it is not the thing signified, which is Christ's body in heaven.<sup>35</sup> In chapter four, Wyclif concedes that this sacrament is Christ's body, not simply that it will be or figures sacramentally

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<sup>33</sup>Trialogus 4.2.249.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.6.263. Wyclif's attack on Innocent III is deep seated, and reals his social views and pent up nationalism. Innocent's errors include subjecting England to tribute, inciting war between England and France, condemning of Joachim, and founding of the mendicant orders: De Eucharistia 9.278. Wyclif is aware that the increase of the papacy is associated with the doctrine of transubstantiation: De Antichristo 1.44.163.

<sup>35</sup>Trialogus 4.2.248.

the body of Christ, but that it at the same time both bread and the body of Christ. Yet Wyclif is quite elusive on this point; this sacrament is not in nature the body of Christ, for the same sacrament is figuratively Christ's body.<sup>36</sup> In chapter seven, Wyclif again insists on the figurative or symbolic meaning of the sacrament, rejecting the sacramental realism and literalism of the friars. He anticipates the receptionist ideas of the Protestant Reformation by stressing the need to receive the sacrament in faith and charity; thus a mouse eating the eucharist receives the sacrament, but not Christ's body.<sup>37</sup>

In chapter eight, the doctrine of impanation and identification are rejected. Like Zwingli and Calvin, Wyclif states that although it may be said that the presence of Christ's body is spiritually, potentially, virtually, and relationally in every point of the world, he insists that Christ's body does not move locally or descend to the consecrated host in any church, but remains stable and unmoved in heaven.<sup>38</sup> Again, Wyclif rejects the doctrine of God's

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 4.4.255-56.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 4.7.267-68. See De Eucharistia 1.17 and 6.158-70. Cf. Lechler, 2:168. In 1378, the Franciscans Peter of Bonageta and John of Lato were condemned for their receptionist views: Denzinger, The Sources of Catholic Dogma, 208; Denzinger and Schönmetzer, Enchiridion, 308-9.

<sup>38</sup>Triologus 4.8.272. See De Eucharistia 7.184-222, and Stacey, 115-16. The view of impanation was originally associated with the conciliarist thinker, John of Paris. It was attacked by his curialist opponent, Giles of Rome. Perhaps it represents a compromise or via media between the Waldensians and the "Herodians" or curialists. In one sense it is anticipation of the view of some of the conservative Utraquist humanists and of Luther; however, for Wyclif, it is a restatement of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Its possibility

absolute power as intervening in establishing a real presence. Hence in chapter 10, the Scotist-nominalist view of the local presence and ubiquity of Christ's body is rejected; Christ's body is present in the eucharist spiritually, not dimensionally or extensively.<sup>39</sup> The Thomistic view that Christ's body remains locally in heaven and not in the elements, mediated by FitzRalph,<sup>40</sup> is influential on Wyclif's own view of the spiritual presence of Christ's body in the eucharist. Wyclif's view in turn anticipates the radical views of the Reformation.<sup>41</sup>

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and even "probability" was defended by Scotus and the nominalists from Ockham to d'Ailly and Biel, although the Fourth Lateran decree is inevitably accepted.

<sup>39</sup>Dialogus 4.10.277-79. See De Trinitate 12.131 and De Eucharistia 8.232-72. In De Antichristo 1.45.165, Wyclif insists that Christ's humanity is at the "right hand of the Father." See Seeberg, Textbook of the History of Doctrines, 2:203-5, 206-7; idem, Dogmengeschichte, 3:789-92. Compare the criticisms of Luther by Zwingli and Calvin.

<sup>40</sup>See FitzRalph De Pauperie Salvatoris 1.16.303. For Aquinas's view, see Summa Theologiae 3.76.5.

<sup>41</sup>In England, the Lollards held many views of the eucharist, with some "simplifying" it to a purely commemorative view. See Ann Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 282-90, Dialogus 4.10.280, and De Eucharistia 9.324. This is in spite of Wyclif's warning, that the elements are not a "naked sacrament," De Eucharistia 9.284. On the Continent, we also find a variety of eucharistic views that deny transubstantiation, ranging from the conservative utraquists to the radical Taborites or "Pickharts," a corruption of the term "Beghard." See Pelikan, 4:58-59, and Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 1-400, 2:702-3. The Augustinian notion of Christ's body being in heaven at the right hand of the Father, would influence the Taborites, the Czech Unity Brethren, and the late fifteenth century Dutch sacramentists, before Carlstadt, the Anabaptists and Zwingli latched on to it. See Williams, 27-44, 85-89.

The most radical aspect of Wyclif's doctrine of the eucharist is in respect to its administration. Even laypersons may consecrate and administer it; for such was the practice of the primitive church. For even St. Cecilia consecrated her home as a church.<sup>42</sup> Hence by one stroke a radical view of the priesthood of all believers is put forward, and the objective power of the church as administering the sacraments is abolished.

A radicalism pervades Wyclif's view of the other sacraments. Confirmation and extreme unction are rejected outright as not founded on Scripture. As for baptism, Wyclif states the standard doctrine that any lay person may administer it in the case of necessity. However, he questions its salvific efficacy as an merely external, objective sacrament. The corporal washing of baptism has no effect, unless the washing of the mind is also present, he states.<sup>43</sup> For only the baptism of the flame is necessary for salvation, not that of the water or of the blood. Moreover, Uthred of Boldon's Pelagian tendencies undoubtedly influences Wyclif's criticism of infant baptism. Infants are saved by the baptism of the flame, he states. Here

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<sup>42</sup>Triologus 4.10.280. See also De Eucharistia 4.98. Cf. Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 2:525-26. The view that God could grant the power of confecting the eucharist to lay persons de potestate absoluta (De Potestate Papae 11.308; see Ockham, Dialogus 1.5.31, p. 503), originates with the Spiritual Franciscans. Wyclif comes to the same conclusion, within a different theoretical framework of predestination: De Potestate Papae 11.312. The result is the same.

<sup>43</sup>Triologus 4.11.282.

the notion of God's absolute power influences on Wyclif; for if God so willed, he could save the unbaptized infant.<sup>44</sup> Thus actual, not just original sin is necessary for the infant's damnation, he states.<sup>45</sup> This criticism of the Catholic doctrines of infant baptism and original sin follows the earlier criticism of Tanchelm, the Cathari, schismatic Waldensians, and the Franciscans.<sup>46</sup>

Wyclif is also critical of the sacrament of orders. Its sign is very equivocal, referring to angels, religious, and clerics, he says. The priesthood is more easily recognized by following Christ's poverty than in the sacramental character. In the primitive church, there was no multiplicity of orders that we

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 4.12.285-87.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 4.13.289. This is exactly Uthred of Boldon's view. David Knowles, OSB, "The Censured Opinions of Uthred of Boldon." Proceedings of the British Academy 37 (1951): 335-37.

<sup>46</sup>Olivi's view, that baptism does not confer sacramental grace, is considered and rejected by Scotus. It was condemned at the council of Vienne in 1311-12. Similarly, Ockham's view that unbaptized pagans could obtain salvation ex puris naturalibus, de potentia absoluta Dei, was censured in Avignon in 1328.

Wyclif's views of baptism anticipates the more radical views of the Lollards: Walter Brut rejects infant baptism. See Ann Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 291-92. We know of no instance of rebaptism in the Lollard tradition. We do find the demand for believer's baptism and the rejection of Catholic infant baptism in the radical Taborites of the early fifteenth century, the Moravian Brethren of the late Fifteenth century, and of course in the sixteenth century anabaptists. See Amedeo Molnar, "La mise en question du baptême des enfants par les hussites radicaux," Communio Viatorum 28 (1985): 177-93. The intermediate solution of the magisterial Reformers was to reject the necessity of baptism for salvation but to insist on infant baptism in order to preserve the civil and ecclesiastical order.

have today, but priests and deacons sufficed.<sup>47</sup> As for the sacrament of marriage, it is quite clear that Wyclif refuses any authority of the church to validate it. In marriage, the word of the mind is more significant than the word of the mouth, he states.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, Wyclif is critical of the medieval Catholic doctrine of penance. He argues that contrition of the heart is the most essential aspect of the sacrament, not confession of the mouth or satisfaction of work, which is tied up with the pecuniary gain of the church. Innocent III invented the doctrine that penance and annual auricular confession are necessary for salvation; we should be content with public confession, which was the practice of the primitive church. The faith of Scripture, without any of the innovations of the Roman curia, sufficiently states, how everyone should live; whoever preserves and follows it by faith, accomplishing the life set forth in it, will be saved.<sup>49</sup> Complementing Wyclif's criticism of the sacrament of penance, Wyclif rejects

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<sup>47</sup>Triialogus 4.15.296. See Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 352-53. Trevelyan and Hudson have noted Wyclif's "presbyterianism." In reality, however, Wyclif's view is a more radical non-conformity rather than presbyterian, if all lay persons, men and women, may administer the eucharist.

<sup>48</sup>Triialogus 4.22.323. See Ann Hudson, The Premature Reformation, 242. Compare the Free Spirit.

<sup>49</sup>Triialogus 4.23.327-29. Wyclif's attack on penance dates from his response to Richard Strode of 1378. See Block, 23, and W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, 234-40. Scotus, under the influence of Olivi, admits that auricular confession is a historical innovation, but he is unwilling to reject the practice.

the distinction between mortal and venial sins. Only the sin against the Holy Spirit (the sin of final impenitence), properly speaking, is mortal; as for other sins, since we know not which sins are capable of forgiveness, and which are not, we should flee all sin whatsoever.<sup>50</sup> Wyclif's criticism of the Catholic practice of penance shows that he was aware that it was the exercise of the objective power of the church hierarchy over the laity.

In concluding his criticism of Catholic sacramental doctrine, Wyclif states that Antichrist has established sacraments as rites without foundation in Scripture, and has neglected the works of spiritual mercy.<sup>51</sup> Thus Wyclif's Scripture principle, combined with the iconoclasm of his Lollard associates, the "poor preachers," has led him to his radical criticism of the sacraments.

To summarize, a metaphysical emphasis is still evident in Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture in the Triialogus of his late phase. Literalist emphases are somewhat more prominent, however, and his criticism of monasticism is now turned against the friars. Wyclif's criticism of sacramental theology is now quite radical, anticipating the sacramental views of the Protestant Reformation. His criticism of the eucharist and the other sacraments demonstrates his continuity with the later medieval sectarian tendency to turn away from the objective reality of the church and other social institutions as

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<sup>50</sup>Triialogus 3.5.144-46.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 4.25.334-35.

instruments of authority toward poverty and the subjective conversion  
experience as the source of salvation.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture, as stated in his De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae, shows the influence of the British and Thomist academic, metaphysical, and doctrinal traditions; yet it is also in continuity with later medieval sectarianism, as shown in his views of literalism and the theology of history, tradition, ecclesiology, sacramentology, and christology. When this work was written, Wyclif was in his middle phase, holding to the view of a national church; his view of the sufficiency of Scripture and the poverty of Christ and the early church shows points of tension with Catholic tradition, ecclesiology, and sacramentology. However, by the time of the Triologus of his late phase, Wyclif has embraced a radical sectarianism, completely breaking with the Catholic tradition with regard to Scripture, ecclesiology, and sacramentology.

It is hoped that we have made a significant contribution toward understanding Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture beyond previous scholarship, which held that his doctrine is fundamentally "metaphysical." The method we pursued in the dissertation was to discuss the prolegomena to Wyclif's doctrine of Scripture in part I. After surveying the history of the literature on Wyclif's

doctrine of Scripture, we looked at the academic and social background to his doctrine of Scripture.

In part II we then began our exegetical analysis of Wyclif by looking at his metaphysical approach to Scripture. It was clear that Wyclif's insistence on metaphysical realism stems not from Scripture itself, but from the realism of the church fathers and of the earlier scholastics from Anselm to Grosseteste. Wyclif's metaphysical realism shows his philosophical conservatism in the wake of the moderns. He insists on the reality of Christ as Wisdom, the Second Person of the Trinity, and the divine ideas; on God's eternal immutable knowledge and the presence of universals throughout the created order. In keeping with this, he categorically rejects the doctrine of annihilation, whether applied to the doctrines of transubstantiation, christology, cosmology, or eschatology. Wyclif identifies five different meanings of "Scripture." The codex or text is only to be called Scripture by means of an "analogical equivocation," or more properly by what Aristotle would "equivocation by design," intermediate between analogous predication and pure equivocation. It is only when the divine intention is present that the text may truly be called "Scripture."

In the rest of part II we shifted our exegetical analysis by examining the ways Wyclif's doctrinal views take into account social issues in his understanding of Scripture and history, the Scripture principle, and christology.

Finally, we examined the Triologus as summarizing his radical views emerging in the late phase of his career.

We have argued that Wyclif is not merely an extremist metaphysician, but stands in continuity with patterns of other later medieval sectarians or dissenting groups. We have argued, more specifically, that one can prescind from Wyclif's metaphysical views in understanding the social context of his doctrine of Scripture. To support our argument we gave a typology of national church movements and leaders extending from Marsilius, to Wyclif and Hus, to Luther and the other magisterial Reformers, assuming a pattern that embraces both realists (Wyclif, Hus) and nominalists (Luther).

Wyclif puts his metaphysical views to the fore of his thinking. Moreover, he was certainly aware of the social implications of his metaphysics. Many of the reforms he was seeking were social reforms. He thought of his metaphysical convictions as the foundation for the reforms he sought. Yet we have seen several cases in which external non-metaphysical factors influence his doctrinal views. Wyclif would not have seen his own metaphysical and social views in tension. It is ironic that Wyclif, aware only of the debates of his own generation, did not know that nominalism actually originated in the radical Christianity of Olivi. Moreover, his criticisms of Innocent III shows that his historical perspective focused upon the official church, not upon his own predecessors such as the Cathari or Waldensians, though his radical views

clearly parallel these earlier movements. In Wyclif's own mind, therefore, his metaphysical and social views complement each other. It is from from this historically delimited perspective we have interpreted him.

Gordon Leff argues that Wyclif's metaphysical extremism in his early period inevitably and inexorably results in his theological heterodoxy in his middle and late periods. Because of the complex relation between Wyclif's metaphysics and his social views, we must disagree with the view of Leff that Wyclif's heterodoxy is the inevitable result of his metaphysical views. This seems to ignore an entire set of influences, biblical, patristic, popular, and political, on Wyclif during his late phase. His interpretation seems to discount entirely the possibility of social, nationalist, extra-mural, or prior sectarian ideas as having a major formative influence on Wyclif. If Wyclif's eucharistic heterodoxy stems from his metaphysics, why did he not denounce Catholic eucharistic doctrine in his early phase? It is much more plausible to interpret Wyclif's metaphysical arguments as the occasion, not the sole cause, of his eucharistic views, given the other factors involved.

It is unlikely that we will ever know with complete certainty the theological climate of Wyclif's Oxford. Too many of the texts of theologians of his day simply do not survive. When we look at Wyclif's criticism of the moderns or the nominalist theologians of his day, we recognize shadows of the

great nominalist thinker, William of Ockham. Yet many of his criticisms seem to be but a caricature of the thought of this eminent Christian thinker.

We should note the mixed influence of the Franciscans on Wyclif. On the one hand they influenced him immensely. The poverty of Christ, apocalyptic ideas, the Scotist dialectic on the Trinity and christology, and the criticism of the objectivity of the sacraments in favor of the subjective experience of conversion, are all significant influences on Wyclif. On the other hand, the Franciscans' nominalism, speculative tendencies, doctrine of annihilation, view of transubstantiation, and perceived accommodation to wordliness eventually cause Wyclif to attack them bitterly. This mixed influence of the Franciscans perhaps explains why Wyclif delayed so long before attacking them in his late phase.

In Wyclif the theme of the national church is present. It is not necessarily a novel one. Earlier in the middle ages, and certainly since the Gregorian reform, the relation of church to state, papacy to king or emperor, was persistently problematic. In the thirteenth century the power and prestige of the papacy tended to obscure nationalist impulses. In the fourteenth century, however, the decline of the papacy signalled the emergence of national church movements and sectarian groups. National church movements in the fourteenth through sixteenth century extend from Marsilius, Wyclif, and Hus to the magisterial Reformers. The views of Marsilius of Padua, a

predecessor of Wyclif, parallel Wyclif's own, and they were eventually quite influential on both the Henrician reformation and Continental Calvinism. In Marsilius, and later at the Council of Constance, the national church movements show certain affinities with conciliarism. In other respects the national church movements show affinity to radical sectarianism, for example when apocalyptic rhetoric about the papacy is exercised or when ecclesiastical disendowment is demanded.

National church movements as a whole constitute a via media, lying somewhere on the spectrum between Catholicism and radical sectarianism. Marsilius and Henry VIII, and to a lesser extent Hus and Luther, leaned to a national state Catholicism. Zwingli, on the other hand, was much closer to the radical side of the national church spectrum. Calvinism in particular, and later Pietism and Methodism, epitomized the ambiguity of the via media; for what appears to be a moderate view to one party at a given time will appear either too Catholic or too radical at another time as the polarities distinguish themselves.

In this study of Wyclif one is struck by the uniqueness of a British tradition of theology. Since Anselm and Grosseteste this tradition had a distinctive flavor. In emphasizing theology's biblical orientation, Grosseteste in particular takes a different approach to theology from that followed by Thomas Aquinas on the Continent. Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and William

of Ockham continue these emphases, with Scotus and Ockham exercised a perduring influence in the following centuries on the Continent, probably because of their use of scholastic method and their positivistic acquiescence to ecclesiastical authority and doctrine.

It is ironic that despite the breadth of Wyclif's intellectual background and the substantiality of his own intellectual achievement, his academic theological influence was restricted to Oxford for a short time at the end of the fourteenth century and Bohemia and Moravia in the fifteenth century. His influence on Hus and the Taborites in the fifteenth century was such that their realism was opposed to the nominalism of the conciliarists and the German theologians. Wyclif, like many late medievals, became the victim of the invention of printing. Despite the appearance of his Triologus in print in the sixteenth century, his other works were not printed until the nineteenth century. Thus any critical grasp of Wyclif's intellectual span was forbidden by the fact that his writings were inaccessible, locked up as it were in manuscript form.

Unlike his academic and metaphysical ideas, implications of Wyclif's social and sacramental views perdured into the sixteenth century, so that Wyclif's name and presence continued to loom large in the Protestant era and beyond, even when his actual theories were forgotten. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship, especially in England, has done much to recover

his intellectual contribution. However, by then the opportunity had passed for Wyclif's academic influence to fertilize the course of Christian theology.

If we are not to overestimate Wyclif's contribution to the Reformation, we should not underestimate or ignore it as well. It is to be hoped that in the future historians of the Reformation will recognize Wyclif's contributions to both the English and Continental reforms, both magisterial and radical. This can be done if one is willing to examine the doctrinal and social positions of Wyclif and the late medieval sectarians, and admit that there are currents and cross-currents between what we have called radicals or sectarians, national church leaders, and conciliarists and humanists. If this analysis and typology is accepted, Wyclif can be understood in proper perspective. In some sense, the boundary lines between Catholicism and Protestantism run, not just between Calvin and Luther on the one hand and Trent on the other in the sixteenth century, but between the Franciscan movement and Wyclif in the fourteenth century. From this perspective the common social goals of Catholicism and Protestantism become clear, even though the ways of carrying them out differ.

## APPENDIX A

### BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF WYCLIF'S LIFE<sup>1</sup>

c. 1330	Birth of Wyclif
1327-77	Reign of Edward III
1330	Ockham begins his exile in Munich
1337	Beginning of Hundred Years War between England and France
1338	Publication of Ockham's <u>An Princeps</u> , supporting Edward III's policy of expropriating church property to subvent the war against France
1340 or 1349	Death of Nicholas of Lyra, OFM, in Paris
1347-9	Black Death
1347	Death of Ockham in Munich
1349	Death of Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury
1350-56	Publication of FitzRalph's <u>De Pauperie Salvatoris</u>
1351	Statute of Provisors
1352?	Wyclif begins studies at Oxford
1353	Statute of <u>Praemunire</u>
1356	Receives B.A.
1360	Death of FitzRalph
, Spring	Receives M.A.
1361, April-July	Master of Balliol College
1361 ?	Wyclif's Conversion
1361-63	Rector of Fillingham; break in studies
1363	Begins theological studies
1365	Second statute of <u>Praemunire</u>
1365-68	Warden at Canterbury Hall
1365	Begins writing his <u>Summa de Ente</u>
1368-81	Resident at Queen's College
1369	Receives B.D.

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<sup>1</sup>Based on Workman, John Wyclif, 1:xxxvii - xl. For the dating of Wyclif's works, we have consulted W.R. Thomson, The Latin Writings of John Wyclif, and Ivan J. Mueller's introduction, xix-xliv, of his edition of Wyclif's Tractatus de Universalibus. See also May McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, 1307-1399 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), and Kenny, Wyclif.

- 1371 De Trinitate  
 1371 Presentation to Parliament, with mendicant allies, for clerical  
 disendowment  
 1371-6 Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments  
 1372 De Benedicta Incarnatione  
 1372, Fall Receives D.D.; delivers his Principium  
 1372-74 Debate with John Kenningham, O. Carm.  
 1373, Fall Tractatus de Universalibus (revision)  
 1373-4 De Dominio Divino  
 1374, July-Sept Wyclif's mission to Bruges  
 1375 De Mandatis Divinis; De Statu Innocentiae  
 1375-7 De Civili Dominio  
 1376 The Good Parliament; Wyclif supports Gaunt against William  
 Wykeham; Wyclif's 18 theses  
 1377, Feb 19 Trial at St. Paul's  
 , May 22 Gregory XI issues bulls against Wyclif  
 , June 21 Death of Edward III  
 1377-99 Reign of Richard II  
 1377-78 De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae  
 1377-81 English and Latin sermons  
 1378-79 De Ecclesia  
 1378, Aug 11 Haulay and Shakyl breach of Westminster Abbey sanctuary  
 1378, Sept 30 Beginning of Great Schism  
 1379, mid De Officio Regis  
 1379, late De Potestate Papae  
 1380, Spring De Simonia  
 , Fall Publication of De Eucharistia and De Apostasia on the  
 eucharist  
 1381, May 30 Peasants' Revolt begins  
 1381, Summer De Blasphemia  
 1381, late Exile from Oxford to Lutterworth, where Wyclif oversees the  
 summer translation of the Bible into English  
 , Sept 9 Appointment of William of Courtenay as Archbishop of  
 Canterbury  
 , Fall Servants and Lords  
 1382, May 17-21 The Blackfriar's Synod  
 , Fall Publication of Triialogus  
 , Dec The Dispenser's Crusade begins  
 1382-84 Various polemical works  
 1383-84 Opus Evangelicum  
 1384 De Antichristo (books III-IV of the Opus Evangelicum)  
 1384, Dec 31 Death at Lutterworth

APPENDIX B

TABLE 1

A TYPOLOGY OF THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Century	Curialists	Conciliarists	National Church Movements	Dissenters
XIIth	Eugenius II	Bernard		Cathari Waldensians
XIIIth	Innocent III  Innocent IV Giles of Rome	Franciscans Dominicans Grosseteste  John of	King John	Waldensians Spiritual Franciscans
XIVth	Boniface VIII John XXII  Gregory XI	Paris Dante Ockham FitzRalph	Philip the Fair Marsilius  Wyclif	Spiritual Franciscans Free Spirit Lollards
XVth	John XXIII	D'Ailly Constance Biel	Hus Calixtines	Waldensians Taborites <u>Unitas Fratrum</u>
XVIth	Loyola	Erasmus	Luther   Henry VIII Calvin	Carlstadt  Zwingli  Anabaptists  English Separatists

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