

**EVANGELICAL**  
**BIOGRAPHY;**  
OR,  
AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
**LIVES & DEATHS**  
OF  
THE MOST EMINENT AND EVANGELICAL  
**AUTHORS OR PREACHERS,**  
BOTH BRITISH AND FOREIGN,  
IN THE SEVERAL  
**DENOMINATIONS OF PROTESTANTS,**  
FROM THE  
BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

WHEREIN  
Are collected, from authentic Historians, their most remarkable Actions, Sufferings, and Writings; exhibiting the Unity of their Faith and Experience in their several Ages, Countries, and Professions; and illustrating the Power of Divine Grace in their holy Living and Dying.

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BY THE  
**REV. ERASMUS MIDDLETON,**  
Of King's College, Cambridge; Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Countess of Cranford and Lindsay; and Rector of Turvey, Bedfordshire.

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The FAITHFUL are chosen in Christ, EPH. i. 4.—called by grace, GAL. i. 15.—justified freely by grace, ROM. iii. 24.—holy and beloved, COL. iii. 12.—they live by faith, GAL. iii. 11.—obtain a good report through faith, HEB. xi. 39.—die blessed in the Lord, REV. xiv. 13.—shall appear with him in glory, COL.— iii. 4.

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## Biographia Evangelica.

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### JOHN WICKLIFFE,

#### THE FIRST REFORMER.

WHEN we look back upon the days of barbarism, and the gross ignorance of the true light of the gospel, which prevailed in the Christian world, for so many ages together, before the Reformation; when we reflect upon the stupid ceremonies and abominable superstitions and cheats, practised by the monks and others; and then survey the hand of GOD, working, in a most extraordinary manner, through all this mass of corruption and folly, and bringing about, by degrees, the clear shining of the everlasting gospel: we must stand astonished at the whole, and from the wonderful contrast of the times, may say; This hath GOD wrought; it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

GOD vouchsafed to honour England with the first dawning of the Reformation: and an Englishman was the first champion of that cause, which afterwards received the name of PROTESTANTISM This remarkable instrument of the divine blessing was JOHN WICKLIFFE, (or JOHN DE WICKLIFFE) taking his surname from a village once called Wickliffe, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, where he was born in the year 1324. It has been observed, that no such place exists at present under that name; but it is well known, that great numbers of our villages, and even towns and hundreds, have received different denominations from change of possessors in the course of ages. Wickliffe was sent early to Oxford, and was first admitted commoner of Queen's College, and afterwards of Merton, where he became fellow.

Merton College was then the best seminary for great and learned men in the whole university; and the following eminent persons belonged to it, about this time. 1. Walter Burley, called the Plain Doctor, who was preceptor to king Edward III. 2. William Occam, called the Singular Doctor. 3. Thomas Bradwardine, the Profound Doctor, who was called to court by archbishop Stratford, and succeeded him in the see of Canterbury. 4. Simon Mepham, archbishop of Canterbury, in 1330. 5. Simon Islip, who was also promoted to the same see, in 1349, was lord privy seal, and secretary to the king. 6. William Rede, an excellent mathematician, and bishop of Chichester in 1369. 7. Geoffry Chaucer, the Father of English Poetry. Wickliffe was afterwards called Doctor Evangelicus, or the Gospel Doctor; and he certainly deserved the title, as the study of the holy scriptures

was his principal delight. He was indeed (to use the words of bishop Newton) deservedly famous, the honour of his 'own, and the admiration of all succeeding times.'

Wickliffe was soon distinguished, among these illustrious contemporaries, for the closeness of his application to study, and the vivacity of his genius. He became celebrated in philosophy and divinity; being so remarkable for an elegance of wit, and strength in disputations, that he was esteemed more than human by the common sort of divines. He adorned the learning of the schools by acquiring a deep knowledge of the civil and canon law, as also of the municipal laws of his own country, which have been always too much neglected till our own times, when we find the Vinerian professorship of the laws of England established in the university of Oxford. Wickliffe not only studied and commented upon the sacred writings; but he translated them into his native language, and wrote homilies on several parts of them. He also diligently studied the writings of St Austin, St Jerom, St Ambrose, and St Gregory, the four fathers of the Latin church: but he was thirty-six years of age before he had a proper opportunity of exerting his excellent talents, so as to attract the observation of the university, and even of the whole kingdom; for it was in the year 1360 when he became the advocate for the university against the encroachments made by the mendicant friars, who had been very troublesome from their first establishment in Oxford, in 1230, and occasioned great inquietude to the chancellor and scholars, by infringing their statutes and privileges, and setting up an exempt jurisdiction.

Popery was established in England by Austin the monk, and continued to be the only religion till the Reformation. The church of Rome had infected all Christendom with its errors and corruptions; and the whole church was degenerated from its primitive purity by the artifices of the monks, who had polluted the clear stream of religion with the rank weeds of superstition.

The clergy had engrossed the greatest part both of the riches and power of Christendom: but the corruptions of their worship and doctrine were easily detected; nor had they any varnish to colour them by, except the authority and traditions of the church. When some studious men began to read the ancient fathers, and councils, they found a vast difference between the first five ages of the Christian church, in which piety and learning prevailed, and the last ten ages, in which ignorance had buried all their former learning. Only a little misguided devotion was retained for six of those ages; and, in the last four, the restless ambition and usurpation of the popes were supported by the seeming holiness of the begging friars, and the false counterfeits of learning, consisting only of a vile metaphysical jargon, or vain school-divinity, which prevailed among the canonists, school-men, and casuists.

It may be noted, that soon after and about the year 1300, flourished several able and pious men, who boldly withstood the errors of the church of Rome, and the insolence of its popes. Of these, perhaps, none was more remarkable than Marsilius of Padua, who wrote his *Defensor Pacis* for the emperor Lewis, of Bavaria, against pope John XXII, and who is execrated by name in the bull of pope Gregory against Wickliffe. He vehemently opposed the enormities of the court of Rome, and maintained, that believers are freely justified by grace alone, and that works are not the efficient causes of our salvation, though justification and salvation are ever attended with them. He and others paved the way for our great countryman, who soon afterwards appeared and distinguished himself above them.

Wickliffe was indeed the morning-star of the Reformation; though he appeared like a meteor to the monks, when he opposed them in support of the university. The number of students there had been thirty thousand; but, in the 1357, they were so far decreased that the whole was not above six thousand. This was entirely owing to the bad practices of the preaching friars, who took all opportunities to entice the students, from the colleges, into their convents, which made people afraid of sending their children to the university. The friars disregarded the determination of the parliament in 1366, whereby it was enacted, that they should receive no scholar under the age of eighteen; and that the king should have power to redress all controversies between them and the university. Wickliffe soon distinguished himself by his bold and zealous opposition against the usurpations and errors of the friars, who justified their begging trade, by asserting, that the poverty of Christ, and his apostles, made them possess all things in common, and beg for a livelihood. This opinion was first opposed by Richard Kilmyngton, dean of St Paul's; who was seconded by Richard Fitz-Ralph, archbishop of Armagh; after which, Wickliffe, Thoresby, Bolton, Hereford, Bryts, and Norris, openly opposed this doctrine at Oxford, where they made the friars blush for their audacity.

Wickliffe wrote with an elegance uncommon in that age, especially in the English language, of which he may be considered as one of the first refiners, and his writings afford many curious specimens of the old English orthography. In one of his tracts, entitled "Of Clerks Possessioners," he exposes the friars for drawing the youth of the university into their convents, and says, "Freres drawen children fro Christ's religion into their private order by hypocrisie, lesings, and steling. For they tellen that their order is more holy than any other; that they shullen have higher degree in the bliss of heaven than other men that been not therein; and seyn, that men of their order shullen never come to hell, but shullen dome other men with Christ at domesday."

Wickliffe wrote and published several tracts against the beggary of the friars; particularly "Of the Poverty of Christ, against able Beggary;" and "Of Idleness in Beggary." He asserts, that "Christ bad his apostles and disciples that they should

not bere a sachell, ne scrip; but look what man is able to hear the gospel, and eat and drink therein, and pass not hence, and not pass fro house to house.—Sith there were poor men enough to taken mens alms before that freres camen in, and the earth is now more barren than it was, other freres, or poor men, moten wanten of this alms but freres, by subtle hypocrisie, gotten to themselves, and letten the poor men to have these alms.”

He disputed with a friar, on able beggary, before the duke of Gloucester, to whom he sent an account of both their arguments, and addressed his highness in these words; “To you lord, that herde the disputasion be geve the fyle to rubbe away the rust in either partye.”

These controversies gave Wickliffe such great reputation in the university, that, in 1361, he was advanced to be master of Baliol College; and four years after he was made warden of Canterbury-hall, founded by Simon de Islip, archbishop of Canterbury, in 1361, and now swallowed up in Christ-church. The royal license granted to the archbishop, for founding the college, is dated the twentieth of October 1361; and only mentions ‘a certain number of scholars,’ religious and secular. There were to be a warden and eleven scholars, who were to study logic, the civil and canon law; for whose maintenance the archbishop settled on them the rectory of Pageham in Sussex, and the manor of Wodeford in Northamptonshire. He purchased some old houses in the parish of St Mary’s in Oxford, and fitted them up for the reception of his scholars, whom he placed there himself, and appointed Henry de Wodehall, or Woodhall, to be the warden. This man was a monk of Christ-church, Canterbury, and doctor of divinity. But he was at such variance with the secular scholars, that the archbishop, in 1365, turned him, and three monks, out of his new-founded Hall, in whose room he appointed Wickliffe to be warden, and three other seculars to be scholars. It was afterwards pretended, that the warden, and three of the scholars, were to be monks of Christ-church, Canterbury, and the other eight, secular priests; though this limitation could not be proved from the writings relating to the foundation.

The letters of institution, whereby the archbishop appointed Wickliffe to this wardership, were dated the fourteenth of December, 1365; in which he is styled “a person in whose fidelity, circumspection, and industry, his grace very much confided; and one on whom he had fixed his eyes for that place, on account of the honesty of his life, his laudable conversation, and knowledge of letters.”

Wickliffe behaved with universal approbation, till the death of the archbishop, who had a great esteem for him. His grace died the twenty-fifth of April, 1366, and was succeeded in the archiepiscopal dignity by Simon Langham, bishop of Ely, who had been a monk, and was inclined to favour the religious against the seculars. The monks of Canterbury applied to Langham to eject Wickliffe from his wardenship, and the other seculars, from their fellowships. They alleged, that

the warden was to be a monk, and nominated by the prior and chapter of Canterbury, and appointed by the archbishop: but that Wickliffe craftily obtained the wardenship. Archbishop Langham ejected Wickliffe from the wardenship, and the three other seculars, in 1367; in consequence of which, he also issued out his mandate, requiring Wickliffe and all the scholars to yield obedience to Wodehall as their warden. This was refused by them, as being contrary to the oath they had taken to the founder; but the archbishop sequestered the revenue, and took away the books and other things, which the founder, by his last will, had left to the Hall.

Wickliffe, and the three expelled fellows, appealed to the pope; to which appeal the archbishop made a reply, and the pope commissioned cardinal Andruynus to examine and determine the affair; who, in 1370, ordained, by a definitive sentence, which was confirmed by the pope, that only the monks of Christ-church, Canterbury, ought to remain in the college called Canterbury-hall, and that the seculars should be all expelled; that Wodehall and the other monks, who were deprived, should be restored; and that perpetual silence should be imposed on Wickliffe and his associates. Wickliffe and three poor clerks, could not oppose such a powerful combination, and the decree was strictly put in execution, pursuant to the papal bull, dated at Viterbium, the twenty-eighth of May, 1370, directed to Simon de Sudbury, bishop of London, and others, who were to restore Wodehall and the monks, and to compel all those who contradicted them by ecclesiastical censures, without permitting any appeal.

In this arbitrary manner Wickliffe was dispossessed of the wardenship of Canterbury-hall, which had been conferred on him by the founder, whose munificent intentions were frustrated by the papal sentence, which was directly contrary to the form of the licence of Mortmain that empowered the founder to endow his seminary for a certain number of scholars, religious and secular, who now, by this papal sentence, were to be all religious. It was, therefore, a question in law, whether the Hall and endowment were not forfeited to the crown? But the monks, in 1372, procured the royal pardon, and confirmation of the papal sentence, on paying 200 marks, which was equivalent to 800 pounds of our money.

While the dispute was carried on about the right to Canterbury-hall, king Edward had notice from Pope Urban, that he intended to cite him to his court at Avignon, to answer for his default in not performing the homage which king John acknowledged to the see of Rome; and for refusing to pay the tribute of 700 marks a year, which that prince granted to the pope. The king laid this before his parliament, in 1366; who were determined to assist him with all their power against such arbitrary attempts from the pope. The firmness of the parliament caused the pope to stop short, and prevented his successors from ever after troubling the kings of England on that account. However, one of the monks ventured to defend the claim made by the pope; to which Wickliffe replied, and proved, that the res-

ignation of the crown, and promise of a tribute made by king John, ought not to prejudice the kingdom, or oblige the present king, as it was done without consent of parliament. No wonder, then, that Wickliffe should incur the resentment of the pope, who was impatient of contradiction, and could not bear any opposition to his pretensions: but Wickliffe thereby made himself known to the court, and particularly to the duke of Lancaster, who took him under his patronage. At this time Wickliffe styled himself *peculiaris regis clericus*, or the king's own clerk or chaplain. But he professed himself an obedient son of the Roman church, to avoid the personal injury intended him by his adversaries.

However, this deprivation was no injury to the reputation which Wickliffe had acquired. Every body saw it was a party business; and that it was not so much against his person that the monks had a prejudice, as against all the seculars that were members of the college. Shortly after, Wickliffe was presented, by the favour of the duke of Lancaster, to the living of Lutterworth, in the diocese of Lincoln; and then it was that he published, in his writings and sermons, certain opinions which appeared to be novel, because contrary to the received doctrine of those days. As he did not declare his sentiments till after he had lost his rectorship, his enemies have taken occasion, from thence, to accuse him of acting out of a spirit of revenge, by reason of the injury that had been done him. 'I shall not,' says Rapin, 'undertake to clear him from this charge. As there is none but God alone that sees into the hearts of men, it is rashness to accuse or excuse them with regard to the sacred motives of their action. I shall only take notice, that Wickliffe's bitterest enemies have never taxed him with any immoralities.'

Wickliffe was turned out of his rectorship by the court of Rome; and a man must be possessed of a very disinterested way of thinking, not to resent such usage; especially as Wickliffe was irreproachable in his morals. The spirit of the times was no little encouragement to his resentment. 'I must however,' says Mr Guthrie, 'do Wickliffe the justice, which has not been done him before, of observing, that he seems to have maintained his reforming opinions even before he was turned out of his rectorship.' This is to his honour, and removes one of the strongest objections against the motives of Wickliffe's Reformation, as we have it from an author unfavourable to his memory. This opinion is also farther confirmed by the ingenious Mr Gilpin.

But Wickliffe began more early to attempt the Reformation of those disorders and corruptions which he saw in men of his own profession; and particularly the exactions and usurpations of the pope. This is evident from his tract, "Of the last Age of the Church," which he published in the year 1356, fourteen years before he lost the rectorship.

Wickliffe, in 1372, took his degree as doctor of divinity, which he publicly professed, and read lectures in it with very great applause; for he had such au-

thority in the schools, that his opinion was received as an oracle, instead of being disregarded after his ejection. In these lectures, he more strongly exposed the follies and superstitions of the friars. He charged them with holding fifty heresies and errors. He shewed their corruptions, and detected their practices. This was striking at the root of all the abuses which had crept into the church; at a time when the greater and more necessary articles of faith, and all genuine and rational knowledge of religion, had generally given place to fabulous legends, and romantic stories, fables which, in this respect, only differed from those of the ancient heathen poets, that they were more incredible, and less elegant.

The pope disregarded the statute of provisors, by still continuing to dispose of ecclesiastical benefices and dignities as he thought fit. These were enjoyed by Italians, Frenchmen, and other aliens, who had the revenues of them remitted abroad. The parliament frequently complained to the king and the pope of this intolerable grievance, by representing its fatal inconveniences to the church and pernicious consequences to the kingdom.

This oppression was so insupportable, in 1373, that the king sent the bishop of Bangor, and three other ambassadors, to the pope, to require of him that he would not interfere with the reservation of benefices. But this embassy was ineffectual; for though the pope entered into a concordate about that matter, it was only a temporal concession; and the parliament renewed their request, that remedy should be provided against the provisions of the pope, whereby he reaped the first fruits of ecclesiastical dignities. It has always been the policy of the court of Rome to play fast and loose with temporal princes in its transactions with them, waiting diligently for advantageous seasons, and pressing them closely whenever they occurred: but, when it met with dangerous oppositions; it dexterously waved the contest without renouncing its claims, and temporized, and soothed, and flattered, and lay by, for a more convenient opportunity.

The king, in 1374, issued out a commission for taking an exact survey of all the ecclesiastical dignities and benefices, throughout his dominions, which were in the hands of aliens. The number and value of them astonished the king, who then appointed seven ambassadors to treat with the pope upon the business of the former embassy. Doctor Wickliffe was the second person mentioned in this commission; and the ambassadors were met at Bruges by the pope's nuncio, two bishops, and a provost, to treat concerning the liberties of the church of England. The treaty continued two years, when it was concluded, that the pope should desist from making use of reservations of benefices. But all treaties with that corrupt court were of no signification; and the parliament, the very next year, complained the treaty was infringed. A long bill was brought into parliament against the papal usurpations, as the cause of all the plagues, injuries, famine, and poverty of the realm. They remonstrated that the tax paid to the pope amounted to five times as



much as the tax paid to the king; and that God had given his sheep to the pope to be pastured, not fleeced. Doctor Wickliffe was now made more sensible of the pride, avarice, ambition, and tyranny of the pope, whom he boldly exposed in his public lectures, and private conversation. He called him "Antichrist," the proud worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed "of clippers and purse-kervers." He also very freely reprov'd the corruptions which prevailed among the prelates and inferior clergy, observing, "that the abomination of desolation had its beginning from a perverse clergy, as comfort arose from a converted clergy." Of prelates, he says, "Oh Lord, what token of mekeness, and forsaking of worldly riches is this? A prelate, as an abbot or prior that is dead to the world, and pride and vanity thereof, to ride with fourscore horse, with harness of silver and gold: and to spend with earls and barons, and their poor tenants, both thousand mares and pounds, to meyntene a false plea of the world, and forbare men of their right." But Wickliffe sufficiently experienced the hatred and persecution of those, whom he endeavoured to reform. The monks complained to the pope that Wickliffe opposed the papal powers, and defended the royal supremacy; on which account, in 1376, they drew up nineteen articles against him, extracted from his public lectures and sermons. These articles were sent to the pope, and were principally as follow:

"That there is one only universal church, which is the "university" [or entire number] "of the predestinate. Paul was never a member of the devil, although" [before his conversion] "he did certain acts like unto the acts of the church malignant. The reprobate are not parts of the" [invisible] "church; for that no part of the same finally falleth from her; because the charity" [or grace] "of predestination, which bindeth the church together, never faileth."

"The reprobate, although he be sometime in grace, according to present justice," [by a present appearance of outward righteousness,] "yet is he never a part of the holy church" [in reality:] "and the predestinate is ever a member of the church, although sometime he fall from grace adventitia, but not from the grace of predestination: ever taking the church for the convocation of the predestinate, whether they be in grace or not, according to present justice," i.e. whether they be converted already, or yet remain to be so, the predestinate, or elect, constitute, as such, that invisible church, which God the Father hath chosen, and God the Son redeemed.

"The grace of predestination is the band, wherewith-the body of the church, and every member of the same, "is indissolubly joined to Christ their head."

"That the eucharist, after consecration, was not the real body of Christ, but only an emblem or sign of it. That the church of Rome was no more the head of the universal church than any other church; and that St Peter had no greater authority given him than the rest of the apostles. That the pope had no more jurisdiction in the exercise of the keys, than any other priest. That if the church misbehaved, it

was not only lawful, but meritorious, to dispossess her of her temporalities. That when a prince, or temporal lord, was convinced that the church made an ill use of her endowments, he was bound, under pain of damnation, to take them away. That the gospel was sufficient to direct a Christian in the conduct of his life. That neither the pope, nor any other prelate, ought to have prisons for the punishing offenders against the discipline of the church; but that every person ought to be left at his liberty in the conduct of his life.”

This was opposing the rights, which the popes had long asserted, of a superiority over temporal princes, and of depriving them of their kingdoms, whenever they thought proper. It was justifying the regal, in opposition to the papal, pretensions of an ecclesiastical liberty, or an exemption of the persons of the clergy, and the goods of the church, from the civil powers. It was denying the power that the pope maintained of remitting, or retaining, the sins of individuals absolutely. It was showing the abuse of ecclesiastical censures, and rejecting the opinion of papal indulgences.

Such are the tenets with which this famous reformer is charged. And it is rather wonderful that he should have the courage to proceed so far, than extraordinary, that he did not go farther, considering the prejudices of education, which the wisest and best of men, without a particular effort of divine grace, seldom or never subdue.

The followers of Wickliffe went greater lengths than he intended, but all the opinions which they had fathered upon the Wickliffites are not to be regarded; any more than the censures which were afterwards thrown upon Luther for the subsequent heterodoxies of the Lutherans, the Anabaptists, and other sects in Germany, which he opposed himself while living, and to which his writings are a standing contradiction.

Wickliffe had opened the eyes of the people; and they began to think, the moment they could see; to which they were the more incited by the example set them by the duke of Lancaster, and the lord Henry Percy, earl-marshal, who took Wickliffe under their patronage and protection. This alarmed the court of Rome; and pope Gregory XI. sent forth several bulls against Wickliffe, all dated the twenty-second of May, 1377. One was directed to Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, and William Courtney, bishop of London, whom he delegated to examine into the matter of the complaint. Another was dispatched to the king himself: and a third to the university of Oxford. In the first bull to the two prelates, he tells them, ‘he was informed that Wickliffe had rashly proceeded to that detestable degree of madness, as not to be afraid to assert, and publicly preach such propositions, as were erroneous and false, contrary to the faith, and threatening to subvert and weaken the estate of the whole church.’ He therefore required them to cause Wickliffe to be apprehended and imprisoned by his authority; and to get his con-

fession concerning his propositions and conclusions (of which they deemed nineteen to be heretical) which they were to transmit to Rome; as also whatever he should say, or write, by way of introduction or proof. But, if Wickliffe could not be apprehended, they were directed to publish a citation for his personal appearance before the pope within three months. The pope requested the king to grant his patronage and assistance to the bishops in the prosecution of Wickliffe, who had promulgated ‘opinions full of errors and containing manifest heresy; some of which appeared to be the same with those of Marsilius of Padua, and John de Gandun, condemned by Pope John XXII.’ In the bull to the university, he says, the heretical pravity of Wickliffe tended to subvert the state of the whole church, and even the civil government, and he orders them to deliver Wickliffe up in safe custody to the delegates.

King Edward III. died the twenty-first of June 1377, before the bulls arrived in England. The university treated their bull with contempt, or with very little devotion. They favoured and protected Wickliffe, who was powerfully supported by the duke of Lancaster, and the earl-marshal. These noblemen openly declared, they would not suffer him to be imprisoned. And, indeed, there was yet no act of parliament, which empowered the bishops to imprison heretics without the royal consent. But the delegated prelates, on the nineteenth. of February 1378, issued out their mandate to the chancellor of the university of Oxford, commanding him to cite Wickliffe to appear before them in the church of St Paul, London, in thirty days.

Before that day came, the first parliament of king Richard II, met at Westminster, where it was debated, whether they might lawfully refuse to send the treasure out of the kingdom, after the pope required it on pain of censures, ‘and by virtue of the obedience due to him?’ The resolution of this doubt was referred, by the king and parliament, to doctor Wickliffe, who answered it was lawful; and undertook to prove it so, by the principles of the law of Christ.

Wickliffe appeared to the summons of the delegates at St Paul’s, where a vast concourse of people assembled to hear the examination. The doctor was attended by the duke of Lancaster, and the lord-marshal Percy, who had conceived such a very high opinion of his learning and integrity, that they assured him he had nothing to fear, and that he might make his defence with courage against the bishops, who were but mere ignorants in respect to him. When Wickliffe came near the place of the assembly, there was so great a crowd of people attending, that it was with difficulty he and his two patrons got admission into the church. This manner of their appearance, by introducing Wickliffe as to a triumph, rather than a trial, touched the bishop of London, who told the earl-marshal, ‘if he had known what masteries they would have kept in the church, he would have stopped them from coming there.’

The archbishop and the bishop of London, held their court in the chapel, where several other prelates, and some noblemen, attended to hear the trial. Wickliffe stood before the commissioners, according to custom, to hear what was laid to his charge. But the earl-marshal bid him sit down, as he had many things to answer, and had need of a soft seat to rest him upon, during so tedious an attendance." The bishop of London objected to this; which was answered by the duke of Lancaster, in such warm terms, that he told the bishop, ' he would bring down the pride of all the prelacy in the kingdom.' The bishop made a spirited reply and the duke said softly, to one who sat by him, that, rather than take such language from the bishop, he would drag him out of the church by the hair of his head.' This was overheard by some of the bystanders, and the assembly was instantly in a violent commotion. The Londoners declared they would oppose any insults upon their bishop. The noblemen treated the citizens with disdain; they carried off Wickliffe in safety; and the court broke up without entering into an examination of the business. But the Londoners plundered the duke of Lancaster's palace in the Savoy, and the duke turned the mayor and aldermen out of the magistracy, for not restraining the sedition. Wickliffe had the happiness to find his doctrine embraced by men of letters, and persons of quality. Some would make us believe, that people were frightened into a feigned approbation of his doctrine, but it may be said, with much greater probability, that fear deterred many from being his followers. The truth is, a man ran no risk in continuing to adhere to the old tenets; whereas it might be dangerous to embrace the new ones.

The duke of Lancaster was made president of the council; and the bishops were afraid to offend the avowed protector of Wickliffe. However, the two prelates summoned the doctor a second time before them, at Lambeth. He appeared; when the Londoners forced themselves into the chapel, to encourage the doctor, and intimidate the delegates. Wickliffe seemed willing to give the prelates some sort of satisfaction, and delivered them a paper, wherein he explained the several conclusions with which he was charged. In all appearance, the delegates would not have been contented with so general an explanation; if the king's mother had not obliged them to desist, by sending Sir Lewis Clifford to forbid their proceeding to any definitive sentence against Wickliffe. The delegates were confounded with this message; and, as their own historian says, 'at the wind of a reed shaken, their speech became as soft as oil, to the public loss of their own dignity, and the damage of the whole church.' They dropped the thoughts of all censures against Wickliffe, and dismissed him, after enjoining him silence; to which injunction he paid no regard, and maintained his opinions in the utmost latitude. This steadiness ill agrees with the explanation of his opinions, which it is pretended he made before the bishops, and is represented as full of equivocations and evasions. The disguising his sentiments is little conformable to his natural temper, which was far

enough from being fearful. Though a modern writer takes upon him to say, 'that Wickliffe appears to have been a man of slender resolution.' He also calls Wickliffe explanations awkward apologies. But he should have remembered they are only such as are given us by Walsingham, whom he calls a prejudiced writer.

The duke of Lancaster flattered his nephew, who was crowned on the thirteenth of July 1377; but the parliament joined some bishops and noblemen with him in the regency. This was a damp upon the Wickliffites, or Lollards, who were become so numerous, that two men could not be found together, and one not a Lollard. But pope Gregory XI. died the twenty-seventh of March 1378, which was a great advantage to Wickliffe; for, by his death, an end was put to the commission of the delegates. Here the historian seems to be mistaken, when he says, the demise of the pope occasioned grief to the faithful. Because Wickliffe did not make his appearance before the delegates of Lambeth, till almost three months after the death of Gregory. A schism ensued, by a double election of two popes; which was a real advantage to the Wickliffites; since Urban VI. was not acknowledged by the kingdom to be lawful pope till the end of the next year. On this occasion, Wickliffe wrote a tract, "Of the Schism of the Roman Pontiffs:" And soon after published his book "Of the Truth of the Scripture." In the latter he contended for the necessity of translating the scriptures into the English language, and affirmed, that the will of God was evidently revealed in two Testaments; that the law of Christ was sufficient to rule the church; and that any disputation, not originally produced from thence, must be accounted profane.

The fatigues which Wickliffe underwent by attending the delegates, threw him into a dangerous fit of illness, on his return to Oxford. The mendicant friars took this advantage, and sent a deputation to him, to inform him of the great injuries he had done them, by his sermons and writings. The deputies told him he was at the point of death, and exhorted him to revoke whatever he had advanced to their prejudice. Wickliffe immediately recovered his spirits, raised himself on his pillow, and replied: "I shall not die, but live to declare the evil deeds of the friars!" The unexpected force of his expression, together with the sternness of his manner, drove away the friars in confusion.

The parliament, which assembled in 1380, was famous for a statute made against the blood-suckers that had long devoured the land; viz. the foreign ecclesiastics, who, by this statute, were rendered incapable of holding any benefices in England. At the same time, the parliament petitioned the king to expel all foreign monks, for fear they should instil notions into the people of England, repugnant to the good of the state. While Wickliffe, in his lectures, sermons, and writings, embraced every opportunity of exposing the Romish court, and detecting the vices of the clergy both religious and secular.

The festivals of Wickliffe, which are extant, and his sermons on the Commune Sanctorum, gave great offence to the monks, who kindled a seditious spirit among the people on account of the poll-tax, which soon broke out into those insurrections headed by Wat Tyler, Ball, and Littstar. These rebels beheaded Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, the lord high-treasurer, and put many others to death. Their design was to murder the king, root out the nobility, and destroy all the clergy except the mendicant friars. Some historians accuse the Wickliffites with causing this rebellion; but without any foundation. It is certain, that religion had no hand in these commotions; since the duke of Lancaster, the avowed protector of Wickliffe, was the principal object of the rebels' fury: besides, Wickliffe then resided on his living of Lutterworth, and was never charged with any thing on that account. Nor can we hardly find an instance of insurrections, caused by a religious zeal, appeased in so short a time as this was, which continued only about a month, from the beginning to the end.

The holy Scriptures had never been translated into English; except by Richard Fitz-Ralph, archbishop of Armagh, and John de Trevisa, a Cornish-man, who both lived in the reign of Edward III. That task was now undertaken by Wickliffe, and other learned associates; which made it necessary for Wickliffe to apologize for their undertaking, by showing that Bede translated the Bible, and king Alfred the psalms, into the Saxon tongue. It had long given Wickliffe great offence (says Mr Gilpin,) and indeed he always considered it as one of the capital errors of popery, that the Bible should be locked up from the people. He resolved, therefore, to free it from bondage. The Bible, he affirmed, contained the whole of God's will, which, he said, was sufficient to guide his church. These, and other arguments, paved the way for the publication of this great work, and satisfied the minds of all sober men.

This work, it may easily be imagined, raised the clamours of the clergy. Knighton, a canon of Leicester, and contemporary with Wickliffe, affords a sample of the language of his brethren. 'Christ entrusted his gospel (says he) to the clergy, and doctors of the church, to minister it to the laity and weaker sort, according to their exigencies and several occasions. But this master John Wickliffe, by translating it, has made it vulgar, and laid it more open to the laity, and even to women who can read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy and those of the best understanding. And thus the gospel-jewel, the evangelical pearl, is thrown about, and trodden under foot of swine.' However, some great and learned men were of opinion, there was an older translation, which must have been that above mentioned. Though it has been asserted, 'the first translation that was ever made of the whole Bible into the English language, as spoke after the conquest, was made by doctor Wickliffe.' He and his assistants were very careful in making their translation, by correcting the Latin text, collecting the glosses, and

consulting the ancient divines; after which they set about the translation, not literally, but as clearly as they could to express the sense and meaning of the text according to the Hebrew, as well as the Latin Bibles. In this he had much assistance from the commentators, and particularly from the annotations of Nicholas Lyra. They distinguished which books had the authority of holy writ, and which were apocryphal. They justified their translations; and affirmed, “that he that keepeth mekeness and charitie, hath the trewe understandyng and perfection of holi write.”

The zeal of the bishops to suppress Wickliffe’s Bible only made it, as is generally the case, the more sought after. They, who were able, among the reformers, purchased copies; and they, who were not able, procured at least transcripts of particular gospels, or epistles, as their inclinations led. In after times, when Lollardy increased, and the flames were kindled, it was a common practice, to fasten about the neck of the condemned heretic, such of these scraps of scripture as were found in his possession, which generally shared his fate.

Wickliffe proceeded in detecting the errors and abuses that had crept into the church; and opposed the popish doctrine of transubstantiation, which was asserted by Radbertus about the year 820. It is confessed by the papists, that this man was the first that wrote seriously and copiously on this subject, ‘the truth or reality of the body and blood of the eucharist.’ This was contrary to the catholic doctrine that had existed near a thousand years after Christ, and particularly in the church of England according to the Saxon homilies. Wickliffe attacked this error in his divinity lectures, in 1381, and maintained the true and ancient notion of the Lord’s supper. On this account he published sixteen conclusions, the first of which is, that “the consecrated host, seen upon the altar, is not Christ, or any part of him; but an effectual sign of him.” He offered to enter into a public disputation with any man upon these conclusions; which was prohibited by the religious, who were doctors in divinity; and Wickliffe then published his opinion concerning the eucharist.

In his tract de Blasphemia, he observed, that the true doctrine of the sacrament of the eucharist was retained in the church a thousand years; even till the loosing of Satan; but this opposition to the doctrine of transubstantiation soon brought Wickliffe into more difficulties; for he was attempting to eradicate a notion, that exalted the mystical and hierarchical powers of the clergy. William de Barton chancellor of the university, and eleven doctors, of whom eight were of the religious, condemned Wickliffe’s conclusions as erroneous assertions. Wickliffe told the chancellor, that neither he, nor any of his assistants, were able to confute his opinion; and he appealed from their condemnation to the king.

William Courtney, bishop of London, succeeded archbishop Sudbury in the see of Canterbury, and was entirely devoted to the interest of his patron the pope. This

prelate had before shewn himself a violent opposer of Wickliffe, and now proceeded against him and his followers. But as soon as the parliament met, in 1382, Wickliffe presented his appeal to the king, and both houses. Walsingham represents this, as done with a design to draw the nobility into erroneous opinions; and that it was disapproved by the duke of Lancaster, who ordered Wickliffe to speak no more of that matter. Others say, that the duke advised the doctor, not to appeal to the king, but submit to the judgment of his ordinary; upon which, the monks assert, he retracted his doctrine at Oxford, in the presence of the archbishop of Canterbury, six bishops, and many doctors, surrounded with a great concourse of people. It is true, he openly read a confession in Latin; which was so far from being a retractation, that it seems rather a vindication of his opinion of the sacrament; for it declares his resolution to defend it with his blood; and censures the contrary as heresy. He at large explains his meaning, how he understood the body of Christ to be in the eucharist, or sacrament of the altar; and expressly says, "this venerable sacrament is naturally bread and wine; but is sacramentally the body and blood of Christ."

The new archbishop prevailed upon the king to empower the bishops to imprison heretics, without asking the royal permission, but the house of commons complained to the king, that this was a breach of the people's privileges, and very destructive to liberty; since the clergy thereby, became the absolute masters of the honour and fortune of private persons. The king revoked the grant; but the revocation is not to be found on the parliament rolls, where it was expunged by the artifices of the clergy, whose chief view was to punish the Wickliffites.

The king, in 1382, married Anne of Luxemburg, sister of the emperor Wenceslaus; and this princess became a great patroness of the Wickliffites to the time of her death, which happened in 1394. But archbishop Courtney prosecuted Wickliffe, and appointed a court of select bishops, doctors and batchelors; which assembled in the monastery of the preaching friars, London. This court declared fourteen conclusions of Wickliffe, and others, heretical and erroneous.

It is said, Wickliffe was cited to appear at this court, but was prevented by his friends, who advised him, that a plot was laid by the prelates to seize him on the road. However, his cause was undertaken by the chancellor of Oxford, the two proctors, and the greatest part of the senate, who, in a letter, sealed with the university seal, sent to the court, gave him a great commendation for his learning, piety, and orthodox faith. Doctor Nicholas Hereford, Doctor Philip Rapyngdon, and John Ayshton, M. A. were the principal followers of Wickliffe, and appeared at this court, where they defended his doctrine, as also in the convocation. Doctor Hereford afterwards took a journey to Rome, and offered, in the consistory before the pope, to defend the conclusions lately condemned by the archbishop, who committed him to prison on his return to England. It has also been said, that the



duke of Lancaster deserted the Wickliffites; and that all of them, except Wickliffe, submitted to the established church. Archbishop Courtney exerted all his own authority, and all his interest at court, to punish the Wickliffites, and suppress their doctrine. He ordered the condemnation of the heretical articles to be published in the university. But Wickliffe increased in reputation, and his doctrine gained ground in the affections of the people; while he was obliged to quit his professorship, and retire to Lutterworth, where he still vindicated his doctrine, and justified his followers.

Doctor Wickliffe was seized with the palsy, in 1382, soon after he left Oxford; and the pope then cited him to appear at Rome. Wickliffe returned a letter of excuse to this citation; wherein he tells the pope, that "Christ taught him more obeishe to God than to man." His enemies were sensible that his distemper would soon put a period to his life; and therefore they permitted him to spend the remainder of his days in tranquillity, after he had been many years exposed to continual danger. He was seized with another violent fit of the palsy, on Innocents' day, 1384, as he was in the church of Lutterworth, when he fell down, never recovered his speech, and soon expired, in the sixtieth year of his age.

The Christian world has not had a greater man in these last ages than doctor Wickliffe. He had well studied all the parts of theological learning; and he was endowed, by the grace of God, with an uncommon gravity and sanctity of manners; from whence arose that vehement desire of restoring the primitive purity of the church in that ignorant and degenerate age. His most inveterate adversaries never presumed to call in question his excellent piety, and unblemished life. But many of them have sufficiently acknowledged his great learning, and uncommon abilities. Indeed, in those writings of his which are yet remaining, doctor Wickliffe has shown an extraordinary knowledge of the scriptures; he discovers a sound judgment, argues closely and sharply, breathes a spirit of true piety, and preserves a modesty becoming his character. Nothing is to be found in him either puerile or trifling, a fault very common to the writers of that age; but every thing he says is grave, judicious, and exact. He wanted nothing to render his learning consummate, but his living in a happier age.

The great Bradwardin was, in some sense, Wickliffe's spiritual father; for it was the perusal of Bradwardin's writings, which, next to the holy Scriptures, opened that proto-reformer's eyes to discover the genuine doctrine of faith and justification. Bradwardin taught him the nature of a true and justifying faith, in opposition to merit-mongers and pardoners, purgatory and pilgrimages.

The censure which Melancthon passed on Wickliffe was made great use of by the papists. And some protestant writers have charged him with maintaining several erroneous opinions; but what Collier says of him is beneath contempt. Guthrie affects to condemn him for being a predestinarian; but he acknowledges, how-

ever, that ‘his notions about the fopperies of religion, images, pilgrimages, legends, and the like, are many of them sensible, and most of them allowable. That his opinions with regard to the sacraments of the church, as then believed in England, are free, and such as have been adopted by many strict foreign churches. That, however immoderate he was in his principles, he appears to have been a wise and moderate man in his practice; witness his dying in peace upon his own living, amidst an universal combustion which his tenets had raised. And that he must be allowed to have left behind him the dawn of that Reformation which was afterwards completed.’

Mr Guthrie observed, that Wickliffe ‘seems to have been a strong predestinarian.’ It will presently appear (says a later writer) that he more than seemed to have been such; and that Luther and Calvin themselves were not stronger predestinarians than Wickliffe. I shall open the evidence with two propositions, extracted from his own writings:

1. “The prayer of the reprobate prevaieth for no man.”
2. “All things that happen, do come absolutely of necessity.”

The manner in which this great harbinger of the Reformation defended the latter proposition, plainly shows him to have been (notwithstanding Guthrie insinuation to the contrary) a deep and skilful disputant. “Our Lord,” says he, “affirmed that such or such an event should come to pass. Its accomplishment, therefore, was unavoidable. The antecedent is infallible. By parity of argument, the consequent is so too. For the consequent is not in the power of a created being, for as much as Christ affirmed so many things” [before they were brought to pass]. Neither did [pre] affirm any thing accidentally. Seeing, then, that his affirmation was, not accidental, but necessary, it follows, that the event affirmed by him, must be necessary likewise. This argument,” adds Wickliffe, “receives additional strength, by observing, that, in what way soever God may declare his will, by his after-discoveries of it in time; still, his determination, concerning the event, took place before the world was made. Ergo, the event will surely follow. The necessity, therefore, of the antecedent, holds no less irrefragably for the necessity of the consequent. And who can either promote or hinder the inference, namely, That this was decreed of God before the formation of the world.” I will not undertake (says Mr Toplady) to justify the whole of this paragraph. I can only meet the excellent man half-way. I agree with him, as to the necessity of events, but I cannot, as he evidently did, suppose God himself to be a necessary agent, in the utmost sense of the term. That God acts in the most exact conformity to his own decrees, is a truth which scripture asserts again and again. But that God was absolutely FREE in decreeing, is no less asserted by the inspired writers; who, with one voice, declare the Father’s predestination, and subsequent disposal, of all things, to be entirely

founded, not on any antecedent necessity, but on the single, sovereign pleasure of his own will.

The quotation however, proves, that Wickliffe was an absolute necessitarian. And he improves, with great solidity and acuteness, the topic of prophecy into (what it most certainly is) a very strong argument for predestination, As the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments are such an evidence of the divine inspiration of the sacred writers, and such a proof of Christianity, as all the infidels in the world will never be able to overthrow; so, on the other hand, those same prophecies conclude, to the full, as strongly in favour of peremptory predestination. For if events were undecreed, they would be unforeknown, and, if unforeknown, they could not be infallibly predicted.<sup>1</sup> To say, that ‘events may be foreknown without falling under any active or permissive decree;’ would be saying neither nothing to the purpose, or worse than nothing. For, if God can, with certainty, foreknow any event whatever, which he did not previously determine to accomplish or permit; and that event, barely foreknown, but entirely undecreed, be so certainly future, as to furnish positive ground for unerring prophecy; it would follow, 1. That God is dependent, for his knowledge, on the things known; instead of all things being dependent on him: And, 2. That there are some extraneous concatenations of causes, prior to the will and knowledge of God, by which his will is regulated, and on which his knowledge is founded.

What he little more than intimates, in the citation given above; he delivered, it seems, more plainly and peremptorily, elsewhere. Among the sixty-two articles, laid to his charge by Thomas Netter (commonly called, Thomas of Walden who flourished about the year 1409,) and for which that writer refers to the volume and chapter of Wickliffe’s works are these three: 1. That “all things come to pass by

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<sup>1</sup> 1 It is very observable, that Wickliffe’s argument for predestination, drawn from the prophecies of our Lord, so puzzled the then archbishop of Armagh (whose name I know not, nor do I think it worth hunting out) that it furnished his grace with employment for two years together, to reconcile the free will of man with the certain completion of prophecy. A talk, however, which after all his labour, the Romish prelate found too hard for him. Yet, his lordship, that he might not be forced to acknowledge predestination, and give up free will, thought proper to give up the infallible prescience of Christ himself; blasphemously affirming, that it was possible for Christ to be mistaken in his prophecies, and to misinform his church as to future events.’ The passage is so uncommon, that I will give it in the writer’s own words. “ Dick adversarius [scil. Wicliffe, quoad istud argumentum, dominum Armachanum per duos annos studuisse pro ejus dissolutione, & finaliter neseivit (ut dicit) aliter evadere, nil, CONCEDENDO quod Christus, et errasse decepisse. Quant conclusionem nullus carholicus (ut dicit Wickliffe) concederet. Et sic videtur ponere dominum Armichanum extra numerum catholicorum,” Gulielmm. Wodford contra Wicklesum, Vide Fascic. Rer. vol. 1. p. 256.

FATAL necessity.” 2. That “God could not make the world otherwise than it is made:” 3. And, that “God cannot do any thing, which he doth not do<sup>2</sup>.”

This is fatalism with a witness. And I cite these propositions, not to depreciate Dr Wickliffe, whose character I admire and revere, as one of the greatest and best since the apostolic age; nor yet with a view to recommend the propositions themselves, but, simply, to show, how far this illustrious Reformer ran from the present Arminian system, or rather no-system, of chance and free-will. But concerning even those of Wickliffe’s assertions, which were the most rash and unguarded; candour (not to say, justice) obliges me to observe, with Fuller, that were all his works extant, we might therein read the occasion, intention, and connection, of what he spake, together with the limitations, restrictions, distinctions, and qualifications, of what he maintained. There we might see, what was the overplus of his passion, and what the just measure of his judgment. Many phrases, heretical in sound, would appear orthodox in sense. Yea, some of his [reputedly] poisonous passages, dressed with due caution, would prove not only wholesome, but cordial truths; many of his expressions wanting, not granum ponderis, but granum salis; no weight of truth, but some grains of discretion<sup>3</sup>.

What I shall next add, may be rather styled bold truths, than indiscreet assertions. “He defined the church to consist only of persons PREDESTINATED. And affirmed, That God loved David and Peter as dearly, when they grievously sinned, as he doth now when they are possessed of glory<sup>4</sup>.” This latter position might, possibly, have been more unexceptionably expressed; be it, substantially, ever so true.

Wickliffe was sound in the article of gratuitous pardon and justification by the alone death and righteousness of Jesus Christ. “The merit of Christ,” says he, “is, of itself, sufficient to redeem every man from hell. It is to be understood of a sufficiency OF ITSELF, without any other concurring cause. All that follow Christ, being justified by HIS righteousness, shall be saved, as his offspring.” Dr Alix observes, that Wickliffe ‘rejects the doctrine of the merit of works, and falls upon those who say, that God did not ALL for them, but think that their merits help.’ “Heal us, Lord, FOR NOUGHT, says Wickliffe; that is, for no merit of ours, but for

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<sup>2</sup> Fuller’s church hist. b. 4. p. 134.—What this valuable historian premises, concerning Wickliffe, before he enters on his account of him, deserves to be quoted. ‘I intend,’ says Dr Fuller, ‘neither to deny, dissemble, defend, nor excuse, any of his faults. We have this treasure, saith the apostle, in earthen vessels: And he that shall endeavour to prove a pitcher of clay to be pot of gold, will take great pains to small purpose. Yea, should I be over-officious to retain myself to plead for Wickliffe’s faults, that glorious saint would sooner chide than thank me.’

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 134.

thy mercy.” It has been already observed, and proved, that he had very high notions of that inevitable necessity, by which he supposed every event is governed. Yet, he did not enthusiastically sever the end from the means. Witness his own words: “Though all future things do happen necessarily, yet God wills that good things happen to his servants through the efficacy of prayer.” Upon the whole, it is no wonder that such a profligate factor for popery and arminianism, as Peter Heylin, should (pro more) indecently affirm, that “Wickliffe’s field had more tares, than wheat; and books more heterodoxies, than sound catholic doctrine.” See Top-lady’s Historic Proof.

Whatever Walsingham and Knighton have advanced in prejudice of Wickliffe, is sufficiently contradicted by letters testimonial given by the university of Oxford, in 1406, in his behalf, and sealed with their common seal; wherein it is said, ‘that his conversation, from his youth to his death, was so praise-worthy and honest in the university, that he never gave any offence, nor was he aspersed with any mark of infamy or sinister suspicion. But that in answering, reading, preaching, and determining, he behaved himself laudably, as a valiant champion of the truth, and catholicly vanquished by sentences of holy Scripture all such as by their wilful beggary blasphemed the religion of Christ. That this doctor was not convicted of heretical privity, or by our prelates delivered to be burnt after his burial. For God forbid that our prelates should have condemned a man of so great probity for an heretic, who had not his equal in all the university in his writings of logic, philosophy, divinity, morality, and the speculative sciences’

As Doctor Wickliffe was very diligent and frequent in preaching, and reading his divinity lectures; so he wrote and published a great many tracts, of which Bishop Bale has given a particular account. They are two hundred and fifty-five in all, of which thirty-two are preserved in Trinity College, and C. C. C. Cambridge; five in Trinity College, Dublin, four in the Bodleian Library, two in the Cotton Library, and three in the King’s Library. Most of them are theological; but some are philosophical; forty-eight are in English, and the others are in Latin. Besides these, there is a volume of English tracts said to be wrote by Wickliffe; some of which are yet extant. He is said to have wrote two hundred volumes, besides his translation of the Bible into English, a fair copy of which is in Queen’s College, Oxford, and two more in the university library. ‘It was done no doubt in the most expressive language of those days, though sounding uncouth to our ears; the knave of Jesus Christ, for servant; and Philip baptized the gelding, for eunuch: So much our tongue is improved in our age<sup>5</sup>.’

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<sup>5</sup> Romans ix 11-21. “ Whanne thei weren not ghit borun, neithir hadden doon ony thing of good, eithir of yvel; that the purpos of God schulde dwell hi eleccioun, not of workis, but os God clepying; it was seid to him, that the more schulde serve the lasse: as it is writun, I louvde Jacob, but I hatide Esau. What theresore schulen we seie? wher wickidnesse be anentis God? Gad forbede. For he seith to Moises, I schal have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I schal ghyve merci on whom

His opinions were misrepresented by his adversaries; but he was protected by many powerful friends, and his doctrine was embraced by the greatest part of the kingdom. King Edward III. the princess dowager of Wales, the duke of Lancaster, the queen of Richard II. the earl-marshal, Geoffry Chaucer the father of English poetry, and lord Cobham, who dispersed Wickliffe's works all over Europe, were his patrons and friends. From such a noble fountain the stream ran strong, and was soon increased for many eminent divines, noblemen, and other persons of distinction, embraced the new doctrine; which constantly gathered ground, notwithstanding it was violently opposed by the priests, who raised bloody persecutions against the Wickliffites in the reigns of Richard II. Henry IV. and Henry V.

The number of those who believed in the doctrine of Wickliffe multiplied like suckers growing out of the root of a tree. After a time, the secular and ecclesiastical powers were combined to suppress its growth; and archbishop Arundel, in convocation, condemned eighteen of Wickliffe's conclusions, twelve years after his death. Acts of parliament were made against the Wickliffites, and many of them were burnt for heretics. The books of Wickliffe were prohibited to be read in the universities: And, in 1416, archbishop Chichely set up a kind of inquisition in every parish to discover and punish the Wickliffites; by which cruel and unchristian methods the great and good John lord Cobham was burnt for heresy; and he was the first nobleman whose blood was shed in England, on account of religion, by popish barbarity. Fox asserts, in his acts and monuments, that the two famous poets of that time, Gower and Chaucer, were Wickliffites, and that they covered their opinion very ingeniously, and by way of parable, in their writings; adding likewise, that, by the exposition of those writings by such as had the key, many were brought into Wickliffe's persuasion. Chaucer died in the year 1400, and Gower some time before.

The infallibility of the pope was opposed to the doctrine of Wickliffe; and the council of Constance, on the fifth of May, 1415, condemned forty-five articles, maintained by Wickliffe, as heretical, false, and erroneous. His bones were ordered to be dug up, and cast on a dunghill. But this part of the sentence was not executed till 1428, when orders were sent by the pope to the bishop of Lincoln to have it strictly performed. The remains of this excellent man were accordingly dug out of the grave, where they had lain undisturbed four and forty years. His bones were burnt, and the ashes cast into an adjoining brook called the Swift,

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have mercy. Therefore, it is not neither of man willynge, neither rennynge; but of God hauynge mercy. And the scripture seith to Farao, for to this thing have I styrred thee, that I schewe in thee my vertu, and that my name be teeld in al erthe. Therefore, of whom God wole, he hath mercy; And whom he wole, he endureth. Thanne seist thou to me. What is sought ghit, for who withstoodith his will? Oo man, what art thou that answerist to God! Wher a maad thing seith to him that made it, What hast thou maad me so? Wher a pottere of cley hath not power to make, of the same gobet, on vessel into onour, anothir into dyspyt!" Lewis's edition of Wickliffe's Transl. N. Test.—Lond. 1731. Folio.

which springs near Knaptoft in Leicestershire. Such was the resentment of the Romish Church on the memory of him, who was called the first English Lollard<sup>6</sup>. Cambden says, this was done forty-one years after his death by warrant of the council of Sienna: but this is a mistake, for it was done by the same council of Constance, which condemned John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, to be burnt for favouring the doctrine of Wickliffe, and maintaining others which were also condemned as heretical. This council sat to give sanction to injustice, and to establish iniquity by law; though it inflicted an irretrievable blow upon the papal authority.

It is said, that the gown which doctor Wickliffe wore now covers the communion-table in the church of Lutterworth: and, as this eminent man may justly be considered as the author of the reformation, not only in England, but throughout all Europe; sure some decent respect should have been paid to his worth, and a public monument erected to his memory.

The Wickliffites were oppressed, but could not be extinguished. Persecution served only to establish that faith which became general at the reformation, about a hundred years after these restraints were moderated. The whole nation then unanimously embraced the doctrine which Wickliffe began; and popery was abolished in England, that the purity of religion might increase the blessings of liberty.

His works (says Mr Gilpin) are amazingly voluminous; yet he seems not to have engaged in any very large work. His pieces in general may be properly called tracts. Of these many were written in Latin; and many in English. Some on school-questions; others on subjects of more general knowledge; but the greatest part on divinity. It may be some amusement to the reader to see what subjects he hath chosen. I shall give a list therefore of the more remarkable of them, from the various collections which have been made. Trialagorum, lib. 4.—De religione perfectorum.—De ecclesia & membris.—De diabolo & membris.—De Christo & Antichristo.—De Antichristo & membris.—Sermones in epistolas.—De veritate scripturæ.—De statu innocentia.—De stipendiis ministrorum.—De episcoporum erroribus.—De curatorum erroribus.—De perfectione evangelica.—De officio pastoralis.—De simonia sacerdotum.—Super poenitentis injungendis.—De seductione simplicium.—Dæmonum astus in subvertenda religione.—De pontificum Romanorum schismate.—De ultima ætate ecclesiæ.—Of temptation.—The char-

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<sup>6</sup> The sect of the Lollards, spread throughout Germany, had for their Leader WALTER LOLLARD, who began to despise his doctrines about the year 1515. He despised the sacrament of the church, and derided her ceremonies and her constitutions; observed not the fasts of the church, nor its abstinences; acknowledged not the intercession of the saints, and believed that the damned in hell, and even the evil angels, should one day be saved. Trithemius, who recite their opinion, says, that Bohemia and Austria were infected with them; that there were above, 24,000 persons in Germany which held those errors, and that the greater part defended them with obstinacy, even to death.—Du Pin.

tre of hevenc.—Of ghostly battel.—Of ghostly and fleshly love.—The confession of St Brandoun.—Active life, and contemplative.—Virtuous patience.—Of pride.—Observationes piæ in Christi præcepta.—De impedimentis orationis.—De cardinalibus virtutibus.—De actibus animæ.—Expositio orationis dominicæ.—De 7 sacramentis.—De natura fidei.—De diversis gradibus charitatis.—De defectione a Christo.—De veritate & mendacio.—De sacerdotio Christi.—De dotatione Cæsarea.—De versutiis pseudocleri.—De immortalitate animæ.—De paupertate Christi.—De physica naturali.—De essentiali accidentium.—De necessitate In-turorum.—De temporis quidditate.—De temporis ampliatione.—De operibus corporalibus.—De operibus spiritualibus.—De fide & perfidia.—De sermone Domini in montem.—Abstractiones logicales.—A short rule of life.—The great sentence of the curse expounded.—Of good priests.—De contrarietate duorum dominorum.—Wicliffe's wicket.—De ministrorum conjugio.—De religiosis privatis.—Conciones de morte.—De vita sacerdotum.—De ablates restituendis.—De ante sophistica.—De fonte errorum.—De incarnatione verbi.—Super impositis articulis.—De humanitate Christi.—Contra concilium terra-motus.—De solutione Satanæ.—De spiritu quolibet.—De Christianorum baptismo.—De clavium potestate.—De blasphemia.—De paupertate Christi.—De raritate & densitate.—De materia & forma.—De anima.—Octo beatitudines.—De trinitate.—Commentarii in psalterium.—De abominatione desolationis.—De civili dominio.—De ecclesiæ dominio.—De divino dominio.—De origine sectarum.—De perfidia sectarum. Speculum de antichristo.—De virtute orandi.—De remissione fraterna.—De censuris ecclesiæ. De charitate fraterna.—De purgatorio piorum.—De Pharisæo & Publicano.

His great work, and what offended the church of Rome most highly, was his Translation of the Scriptures into English, which effectually exposed the sophistries and superstitions of the time, and led the people from following the traditions of men, to the pure will and word of the blessed GOD.