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EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD.

(Concluded.)

Friend and foe alike had been advised of the events which had transpired at Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. We have seen how the news stirred the malignant enemies of Christ and made them reckless and desperate. Also the small circle of the followers of Jesus must have been profoundly moved. An episode related by Luke affords a glimpse of the excitement which had seized the disciples. It may have been past the noon hour of this eventful day when two of the disciples started for a village in the neighborhood called Emmaus. Their conversation as they were walking betrayed agitation. They spoke of the report which the women had brought, and which had been verified by Peter and John, but do not mention the fact that the Lord had appeared to Mary Magdalene and later to her companions. What happened on the way and as they turned in at Emmaus is well known. They speed back to the city with the great news that they have been privileged to see the Lord and to converse with Him. That had been the third manifestation. On entering the place where the eleven and others were gathered, they are met with the report that the Lord had meanwhile appeared also to Simon. This is the only statement which Scripture makes of the fourth appearance, if it is the fourth; for it may have occurred immediately after Peter's visit at the grave, when Cleopas and his companion were just about to start for Emmaus. Cleopas relates not only the fact of the Lord's

JOHN WICLIF.

III. THE THEOLOGIAN.

(Continued.)

As the time seemed favorable, the Chancellor of Oxford, William de Berton, an enemy of Wiclif, in 1381 gathered twelve of the "most expert" doctors of theology and canon law and condemned Wiclif's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and forbade its teaching at Oxford under pain of excommunication. Wiclif was lecturing on the subject in the beautiful Augustinian cloister, where now Wadham College stands, when the sentence

of condemnation was handed to him. He was taken aback, it is said, though no sign of confusion is mentioned, but firmly replied, "You put force in place of reasons. Prove me wrong and I'll be silent." But neither the Chancellor nor his colleagues had been able to break his arguments from the Bible. "As a stubborn heretic he appealed not to the Pope, nor to the bishops, but to the King," writes Netter of Walden. Lancaster himself rode down to Oxford and "prohibits the said John from saying another word on the subject." But "the said John" did say another word, and a big one at that. On May 10 he promptly put forth his great "Confessio de Sacramento Altaris," defending his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. (Edited by Dr. Johann Loserth, Professor of History in the University of Czernowitz.) He defies his enemies: "Woe to the adulterous generation that believes an Innocent and Raimund rather than the plain words of the Gospel! Woe to the apostates that bury the Bible truth under the rubbish of later traditions! But I trust that in the end the Truth will conquer!" He appeals from the King to his Oxonians and to the English people, and in the "Wicket" he makes plain to the English people his doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

On May 6, 1382, Wiclif replied to the Council that had condemned his teaching in his "Complainte to King and Parliament," and asked to defend himself. "I appeal to the Church of the first thousand years since our Lord's time. I challenge the existing Church to dispute these questions with me. You reply that the Church has settled the matter; and have, in fact, condemned me beforehand. I cannot expect at your hands anything else but to be silenced, and, what is more, according to your new Ordinance, imprisoned. I know what that means. I demand, therefore, that the lay voice be heard . . . the English people, who have now the Bible in their hands, will speedily perceive that I am no heretic, but the truest Churchman in the land." He makes a stirring appeal to Parliament to maintain the simple faith of Christ "as they are bound on pain of damnation, since it is openly taught in Holy Writ, and by reason

and wit; and damn we this cursed heresy of Antichrist, and his hypocrites, and worldly priests."

After the death of Sudbury, the energetic and powerful William Courtenay, an old enemy of Wiclif, was made Archbishop. On May 6, 1382, he received his pallium from Rome, and on the 17th he called a court to try Wiclif's doctrine. He formed a union with the monks for this purpose, and Wiclif grimly remarks, "On that day Pilate and Herod became friends. If those two made out Christ a heretic, it will be easy for these to brand true Christians as heretics."

The court of ten bishops, sixteen Doctors, and eight Bachelors of Theology, thirteen Doctors of the Canon and Civil Law and two Bachelors of Law, and others, sixty in all, met in the Dominican monastery of the Black Friars in Holborn, where the *Times* and the Bible House now stand. But at two o'clock in the afternoon all London is shaken by a violent earthquake, and the judges grow pale with superstitious awe. Twice before Wiclif's trial has been strangely broken off; are the very elements, now at the third time, in league with the Reformer? Shall the trial be given up? "No!" thunders the resolute Courtenay, rising in his place and with rare presence of mind saying, "We shall not give up the trial. This earthquake but portends the purging of the kingdom; for as there are in the bowels of the earth noxious vapors which only by a violent earthquake can be purged away, so are these evils brought by such men upon this land which only by a very earthquake can ever be removed. Let the trial go forward!"

Wiclif's explanation was, that this earthquake was God's condemnation of His enemies, as the earthquake at Christ's crucifixion had been God's condemnation of Christ's enemies. Wiclif was not present at this "Earthquake Council," as he calls it, likely owing to his first stroke of paralysis.

Twenty-four articles were brought against the Reformer, and after a debate of three days ten were condemned as heretical, the rest as erroneous. His chief heresy was his denial of transubstantiation, which overthrew the very foundation on which the vast power of the priesthood was built up. If the

priest did not have the power of working the daily miracle of "making the body of Christ," of what use was he?

On May 28, Friar Peter Stokes, the Carmelite Doctor of Theology in Oxford and the Primate's Commissary at the University, received the mandate to publish the condemnation of Wiclif's teaching at Oxford, although the heretic's name was not mentioned. Three days later the Bishop of London was ordered to tell all the other bishops to publish the condemnation and to forbid the preaching of these heresies.

On Whitsun-Friday, May 30, the Synod and large numbers of the clergy and laity moved in a barefoot procession through the streets of London to St. Paul's where John Cunningham, a Carmelite Doctor of Theology and one of the most celebrated divines of the day, preached the sermon on the condemned doctrines and at the close read the Archbishop's mandate of Wiclif's condemnation.

At Oxford Wiclif was still the "Evangelical Doctor," the "Flower of Oxford," the greatest living teacher of philosophy and theology, the representative of views shared by at least one half of the university, whose influence was especially great among the younger Masters of Art. On Ascension Day, May 15, 1382, Nicholas Hereford, Wiclif's most prominent disciple, preached a violent sermon against Wiclif's opponents in the cemetery of St. Frideswide, and they appealed to Gaunt. Friar Stokes could not get the new Wiclifite chancellor Robert Rygge to act against the heretic, and the friar did not dare publish the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrine "for fear of death." Spite a threatening letter from the Archbishop, Rygge permitted Philip Repington to preach before the university a strong defense of Wiclif on Corpus Christi, June 5, 1382. The excitement was so great that the Chancellor had secured from the mayor a guard of a hundred armed men, while twenty others with weapons under their gowns escorted the preacher.

Henry Crompt, a monk and a Doctor of Divinity in Oxford, called Wiclif a Lollard, a term of recent origin and now for the first time applied publicly to Wiclif. Chancellor Rygge

promptly suspended the offender. The Archbishop called the Chancellor sharply to account at the adjourned Synod on June 12, and Rygge said it would "cost his life to enforce the condemnation of Wiclif at Oxford," but he promised to submit.

On May 26, 1382, King Richard II admitted a "Statute of the Kingdom" with the pretended consent of Parliament, which made every county officer of the king a policeman of the bishops to imprison every preacher pointed out by a bishop. In October the Commons objected to this forgery, and the king had to withdraw it; the Commons refused "to bind over themselves or their descendants to the prelates."

Fearing that the forged "Statute" of May 26 might not serve his purpose, Courtenay on June 26 got the boy-king to issue a "Royal Ordinance" giving power to the bishops themselves to imprison defenders of Wiclif's doctrines until they recanted, or other action should be taken by the king. This was practically the Inquisition; in fact, Courtenay calls himself "the Chief Inquisitor" and says the other bishops were to be each an inquisitor in his own diocese. Armed with this big stick, Courtenay proceeded to win for himself the shameful distinction of being, according to Hook, the first English churchman to use force in matters of religion. He set about resolutely to hunt down Wiclif's disciples one by one, and forced them to flee, recant, or go to prison. But Wiclif never backed down; without helmet or miter, alone and to the very last, he went on fighting the Antichrist. In his latest writings, such as the "Dialogus" and "Wicket," he is just as vigorous and unconcerned as if there never had been a powerful hostile Archbishop and a powerful faithless John O'Gaunt.

At last, on July 13, King Richard commanded Chancellor Rygge to publish the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrines and banish Wiclif, Hereford, Remyngton, and Aston from the University and town of Oxford within seven days. Wiclif left, and Oxford was dark and dead for a hundred years.

It is held by many that in November, 1382, he was called on once more to answer for doctrines to the Convocation of

Canterbury at Oxford, but he defended himself with freedom, faithfulness, and unflinching courage that no recantation could be extorted and no condemnation passed. He retired in peace to his rectory at Lutterworth.

IV. THE REFORMER.

It is a strong proof of the astonishing hold which Wiclif had gained over large sections of the English people that spite the condemnation of bishop and pope he yet escaped all personal violence. Though hating him with the deepest hatred, the clergy did not dare lay hands on his person; public opinion was too strong for the champion of England, and the Commons seemed to be too much under his influence. In 1382 the bishops and barons voted to silence and suppress Wiclif's poor priests, but the Commons objected, and it never became a law. In 1385 the Commons even voted the church endowments to secular uses, but the Lords objected.

Wiclif left Oxford and retired to his parish at Lutterworth, translating the Bible, preaching sermons, writing tracts, and training his "poor priests" to preach the Gospel.

A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a poore PERSOUN of a toun;
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient. . . .
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In sikness nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte, . . .
 And though he holy were and vertuous,
 He was to sinful man nat despitous . . .
 To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse:
 But if evere any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones. . . .
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

Many think that in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer drew the picture of Wiclif; at any rate, the description fits him perfectly.

Having found the truth in the Bible, Wiclif soon saw the need of spreading the Bible. "To be ignorant of the Bible is to be ignorant of Christ," he said; again, "The Sacred Scriptures are the property of the people, and one which no one should be allowed to wrest from them. . . . Christ and His apostles converted the world by making known the Scriptures to men in a form familiar to them . . . and I pray with all my heart that through doing the things contained in this book we may all together come to the everlasting life." In his treatise on the "Meaning and Truth of Scripture" he argues that, "though there were a hundred popes, and all the friars in the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the Gospel than we should from all that multitude." Elsewhere he says, "Since secular men should understand the faith, it should be taught them in whatever language is best known to them."

Wiclif was the first to give to Englishmen the whole Bible in their "modir tonge," and he spent many years on the work. He turned into English the Gospels and likely the rest of the New Testament; his disciple Nicholas de Hereford worked on most of the Old Testament; the rest was finished by another, possibly Wiclif himself, about 1382.

As soon as the work of translation was done, Wiclif set about to improve it. The whole was revised by his attendant and secretary, John Purvey, whose own manuscript is still in the library of Trinity College, Dublin; the work was finished about 1388, certainly before 1400. Spite all Bible burnings a hundred and seventy copies remain, and several of these very New Testaments may be seen in the Lenox Branch of the New York Library, especially a very fine one presented by Mr. William Waldorf Astor. One of the remaining copies belonged to Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester; another to King Henry VI, who gave it to the Charter House; another appar-

ently to Richard III; another likely to Edward VI; another to Henry VII; another was given to Queen Elizabeth for a birthday present.

Tyndale's printed Bible cost 3 s. 6 d., or about \$10.00 in our money, but Wiclif's hand-written Bible cost £2, 16 s. 8 d., or nearly \$200.00 in our money. The great cost of the Bible of course prevented a very wide sale, yet it was spread. Where there is a will, there is a way: a large sum was paid for even a few sheets; a load of hay was given for permission to read it one hour a day for a certain period; those unable to read clubbed together to pay some one to read to them; at little gatherings one Alice Collins was sent for "to recite the ten commandments and parts of the Epistles of SS. Paul and Peter, which she knew by heart." "Certes, the zeal of those Christian days seems much superior to this of our day, and to see the travail of them may well shame our careless times," says old John Fox in his famous *Book of Martyrs*. "God grant to us all grace to ken well and to kepe well Holie Writ, and to suffer joiefulli some paine for it at the laste," prays Richard Purvey in the preface to his Bible.

The monumental work was splendidly printed in four quarto volumes at Oxford in 1850, and the accomplished editors Forshall and Madden spent twenty-two laborious years in editing it.

Lechler says, Wiclif's English Bible "marks an epoch in the development of the English language, almost as much as Luther's translation does in the history of the German tongues. The Luther Bible opens the period of the new High German. Wiclif's Bible stands at the head of the Middle English."

John Wiclif is not only the greatest figure in Oxford history, but, along with Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, one of the four men who have produced the greatest effect on the English language and literature. Wiclif's Bible gave form and richness to the English language. Dr. Vaughan says, "His writings contributed, far more than those of any other man, to form and invigorate the dialect of his country."

"If Chaucer is the father of our later English poetry,

Wiclif is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts . . . is, in its literary use, as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip," says Green, *Hist. Eng. People* I, p. 489.

"Wiclif's Bible and prose writings were the creators of our modern English. As Luther opened the period of the new High German, so Wiclif laid the foundations among the common people for the present English speech. Chaucer wrote more for the higher classes," says Bishop Hurst, *History* I, p. 24.

Wiclif's translation was looked upon as an act of sacrilege, worthy of punishment. So furious was the outcry against him, as an audacious violator who had dared touch the holy ark with unholy hands, that even a bill was brought into the House of Lords, in 1391, forbidding the people to read the Bible, and it would have become law but for sturdy John of Gaunt. "The Duke of Lancaster answered right sharply: 'We will not be the refuse of other nations; for since they have God's law, which is the law of our belief, in their own language, we will have ours in English, whoever say nay.' And this he affirmed with a great oath."

To the storm of indignation against himself Wiclif replied very simply: "The clergy cry aloud that it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English, and so they would condemn the Holy Ghost, who gave tongues to the Apostles of Christ to speak the Word of God in all languages under heaven."

Knyghton, the old chronicler, voices the general sentiment of the papacy in the following lament: "This Master John Wiclif translated it out of Latin into the Anglican, not the angelic tongue, and thus laid it more open to the laity and to women who could read than it had formerly been to the most learned of the clergy, or even to those of them that had the best understanding. And in this way the Gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine; that which was before precious both to clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, the common jest

of both. The jewel of the Church is turned into the common sport of the people, and what was hitherto the principal gift of the clergy and divines is made forever common to the laity."

Archbishop Arundel, more zealous than learned, complained to the Pope of "that pestilent wretch, John Wiclif, the son of the old Serpent, the forerunner of Antichrist, who had completed his iniquity by inventing a new translation of the Scriptures," and in 1408 the Convocation of Canterbury in St. Paul's, London, said, "It is a dangerous thing . . . to translate the text of the Scripture out of one tongue into another. . . . We therefore decree and ordain . . . that no man read any such book . . . under pain of the major excommunication, until the said translation be approved." Under the influence of this same Arundel, the law of England was so changed as to make heresy punishable with death. But when John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, in 1431 threatened with excommunication any who translated the Bible or copied such translation, he made no reserve in favor of any accepted version. Why should he? "The decrees of the bishops in the church are of greater weight and dignity than the authority of Scripture," was the opinion of Thomas Netter of Walden, the confessor of King Henry V. The air was filled with curses, fagots were gathered, fires were lighted, Bible readers were burned with the Bible tied around their necks.

The Latin schoolman now turned English pamphleteer, and for his "Oxford Movement" wrote a flood of "tracts for the times" in strong, nervous English, of which the best known is "The Wicket," a defense of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper; others are, "The Church and her members," "The Great Sentence of Curse," "The Schism of the Roman Pontiffs," etc.

In those days the pulpit was in a bad way. The preaching monks regaled their hearers with tales of Troy or silly stories of the saints in order to catch the penny collection, and "penny preachers" is the term Brother Berthold of Regensburg applies to them as early as the 13th century. Even Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal, took an old French

dancing song for the text of a sermon, applying "the Fair Alice" and all that is said of her to the Holy Virgin. Even the Dominican Jacob Eckard pronounced such things "stale and absurd."

Wiclif not only translated the Bible into the language of the people, he also preached and enforced it in the plain language of the people. He sought to reform the pulpit, he avoided the dry scholasticism on the one hand and the silly sensationalism on the other. In humble speech the pastor of Lutterworth sought to impart a spiritual knowledge to souls that would die without it. He declared, "In every preaching of the Gospel the true teacher must address himself to the heart, so as to flash the light into the spirit of the hearer and to bend his will into obedience to the truth." "The highest service that man may attain to on earth is to preach God's Word," said Wiclif. The Word is "the life-seed, begetting regeneration and spiritual life." "O marvelous power of the Divine seed, which overpowers the strong man armed, softens obdurate hearts, and changes into Divine men those who were brutalized in sin, and removed to an infinite distance from God." When he portrays Christ, Wiclif is sweet and tender; as a loving brother he directs his hearers to Christ. A classic saying is traced to Wiclif's pulpit: "This I have suffered for thee; what dost thou suffer for Me?"

As Luther would have sermons in Latin for the learned and in German for the plain people, so Wiclif would have the faith preached in Latin and in English. "If Christ and His apostles converted many through sermons in the language of the people, why should not the modern disciples of Christ deal out crumbs from the same bread?" Four volumes of Wiclif's Latin sermons have been edited by Prof. Loserth, and three volumes of his English ones by Thomas Arnold. "The Sonedai Gospelis, Expowned in Partie," written about 1382, is a collection of sermon skeletons, likely for the use of his "poor priests." In 1362 Edward III ordered all legal pleadings to be done in English, "on the ground that French was not much known." And Wiclif was probably the first man to introduce English preaching in

the universities and churches. This is certainly a turning point of the English language and literature.

Luther, "when a tyro at Erfurt," came across a volume of Hus's sermons in the library, and, "burning with curiosity," read one "so skilled in expounding Scripture;" in reading Hus, Luther was reading the ideas of Wiclif.

The next step was to preach and spread the Bible more widely. Accordingly, Wiclif gathered around him his "poor priests," university men most of them, clad in long gowns of undressed wool, rough and brown as russet apples, going bare-foot or on sandals, carrying staves, and preaching the simple Gospel in plain speech to the common people and spreading parts of the Bible. The common people heard them gladly and neglected the monks; many of the middle class helped Wiclif in this work; even at Court Lord Salisbury was their public patron.

In May, 1382, we hear for the first time of these "preachers of God's law" in a mandate of Archbishop Courtenay complaining of "certain uncalled traveling preachers, seemingly very holy, but without episcopal authority, spreading erroneous, nay, heretical assertions in holy and unholy places;" but his complaint does not seem to have done much good. An Oxford commission complains to the Archbishop in the same year that "within a few years" these preachers had arisen.

Wiclif's pure character, his fervent faith, the spiritual energy of his life, had made a deep impression. His disciples, known as Lollards, were found everywhere. Wiclif himself asserted that a whole third of all the clergy had adopted his teaching, and Knyghton, the chronicler, regretfully writes that "of two persons met on the road, one of them was sure to be a Wiclifite." The widow of the Black Prince was favorable to them, and King Richard's "good Queen Anne" was almost an active partisan.

It is held by some that in his last years Wiclif was cited to Rome by Pope Urban, but the frailty of age alone simply made such a trip impossible, and he refused.

While attending service in his own church on Holy Innocents' Day, December 28, 1384, a second stroke of paralysis ended the labors of the veteran; his tongue was lamed, and he never spoke again; he died three days later and was buried in the chancel of the church at Lutterworth, the town he made immortal.

Here is a choice specimen from Walsingham, one of the monkish writers of the time, describing Wiclif's death:—"John Wiclif, the organ of the devil, the enemy of the Church, the idol of heretics, the image of hypocrites, the restorer of schism, the storehouse of lies, the sink of flattery, being struck by the horrible judgment of God, was seized with the palsy throughout his whole body, and that mouth which was to have spoken huge things against God and His saints, and holy Church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to beholders; his tongue was speechless and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse which God had thundered forth against Cain was also inflicted on him."

The *Chronicon Angliæ* says, "This fellow was called John, but he did not deserve to be. For he had cast away the grace which God had given him, turning from the truth which is in God, and giving himself to fables." The St. Albans monk calls him the "lying glutton, Dr. Wickedbelieve," and Adam of Usk calls him "Mahomet who preached incontinence to the young and confiscation to the rich."

It is a curious fact that spite the hate of the clergy, Wiclif in life was never judicially declared to be a heretic and never formally threatened with the ban of excommunication; he died in the possession of his office and dignity as Rector of Lutterworth.