

History

of the Church of God

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Chapter XV

FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

FOURTEENTH CENTURY—During the fourteenth century the density and blackness of the clouds overhanging the most of Catholic Europe increase; but the dark masses break partially away in England and Bohemia, and John Wycliffe, “the Morning Star of the Reformation,” appears, disseminating the light of scriptural truth; and the Waldenses in Northern Italy are still blessed with the starry beams of heavenly light.

The characteristics of the fourteenth century are the downfall of the papal Pseudo-theocracy (in the miserable overthrow and death of Boniface VIII.); the Abject subjection of the papacy to France; the so-called papal “Babylonish Captivity of Seventy Years;” the beginning of the papal Schism of forty years; the culmination of papal avarice and simony and extortion (in John XXII. and Boniface IX.); the papal abridgement of the Decalogue into two words, “Give Gold;” the unspeakable debauchery of the papal court and city, Avignon; the revival of the old Roman and Greek Pagan literature and Infidelity and immorality in Italy (Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio being the chief writers); the brief apparent restoration of the old Roman Republic by Rienzi, “The last Of The Tribunes” the improvement of the mariners compass, and the first use of cannon in war; the establishment of fifteen universities in Europe; the first authorization, by a Roman Catholic council (that of Ravenna in 1311), of the substitution of sprinkling or pouring for baptism; the decline of Pelagian Scholasticism and the rise of Pelagian and

pantheistic Mysticism; the papal persecution and abolition of the wealthy Order of the Knight Templars at the dictation of the avaricious French king, Louis the Fair; the height of the Catholic persecution of the Jews; the papal persecution of the Fratricelli, the Dolcinites, and the Waldenses in France, Italy and Germany, and of the lepers in France; the discovery of the Canary Islands by Genoese and Spanish seamen, and the papal claim to those islands; the conquest of Asia Minor by the Ottoman Turks and their establishment in Europe; the unparalleled ravages of the plague called black death in Asia, Europe and Africa, destroying from one-half to two thirds of the population; the excessive increase of penance by flagellation; the celebration of the three papal Jubilees in Rome (in 1350, 1390 and 1400); the peasant insurrections in England and France produced by governmental oppression; the increase of the power and the constitutional liberty of England; the conversion of Lithuania and Poland to Catholicism; the partial nominal success of Catholic Franciscan Missions in Northwest Persia, and temporary success in Tartary and China; the career and productions of Geoffrey Chaucer, "the father of English poetry," and John Wycliffe, "the father of English prose"—Wycliffe, the greatest and foremost man of the fourteenth century, the center of the social, literary and religious of his country and age, the able, bold and enlightened Catholic "priest" and "doctor," who, though living and dying in the Catholic communion, devoted his wonderful God-given talents, energies and illumination to the study, translation and circulation of the scriptures (which he maintained to be the only authoritative standard of faith and practice) and to the severe and fearless exposure of the anti-scriptural traditions, superstitions and corruptions of the Catholic Mendicants and Papacy and Episcopacy—the uncompromising predestinarian, who did not flinch from declaring that the salvation of the soul depends, not upon outward ordinances or any of the imperfect works of human righteousness, but upon the sovereign and efficacious grace of God. This century was also marked by the rise and spread of the Lollards in Bohemia and England (the followers of Wycliffe in England being called Lollards), and the reformatory labors of Conrad, Milicz and Matthias in Prague, the capital of Bohemia, and the early life of the martyr-reformers, John Hus and his companion Jerome, in the same city. The most important single event of the fourteenth century was the

appearance of Wycliffe's ENGLISH BIBLE, the first translation of the entire scriptures into a modern language.

Of the wretched end of Pope Boniface VIII. an account has already been given in connection with the thirteenth century. "The quarrel between Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair," says Milman, "is one of the great epochs in the papal history, the turning point after which, for a time at least, the papacy sank with a swift and precipitate descent, and from which it never rose again to the same commanding height. It led rapidly to that debasing period which has been called the Babylonian captivity of the popes in Avignon, during which they became not much more than the slaves of the kings of France." "From this ill-omened transfer of the papacy from Rome to Avignon," says Trench, "springs the Great Schism of the West; from the Schism, and with a view to the healing of this, the Three Councils (of Pisa, Constance and Basel, in the fifteenth century); while all these events effectually work together for the bringing about of the Reformation."

Benedict XI., the successor of Boniface, not being sufficiently subservient to the selfish purposes of Philip The Fair, King of France, died in less than a year after his accession to the papacy, having been poisoned, as was believed. A Frenchman, who assumed the name of Clement V., was, in 1305, elected pope through the influence of King Philip, who had previously exacted from him several hard conditions, among which were the full absolution of the king and all whom he had employed in strife with Boniface, the tenths for five years from the clergy of the realm, the condemnation of the memory of Boniface, and a secret promise in blank, to be afterwards stated by the king—believed to have been the abolition of the Order of Knight Templars. At the request of Philip, Clement in 1309 removed the papal court from Rome to Avignon, a city situated on the Rhone, three hundred and sixty-five miles southeast of Paris, but not then belonging to France. Here seven popes reigned until Gregory XI., in 1376, re-established the papal chair in Rome. Avignon, during the papal residence came to have a hundred thousand inhabitants; and Petrarch, thought he had two natural children, repeatedly speaks with loathing abhorrence of the moral corruption of the city, declaring it to be "the sink of Christendom." Several of the popes themselves set the example of profligacy. The unscrupulous, relentless and

rapacious monster, John XXII., who cruelly tortured and put to death multitudes of the anti-papal Fratricelli, Dolcinites, Waldenses and Jews, and even poor lepers and others accused of witchcraft, left, at his death, twenty-five million gold florins in specie, plate and jewels—equal to fifty million dollars, and probably worth as much as two hundred million dollars at present. In extreme opposition to the unrivalled papal and Catholic avarice, the Fratricelli, or Spiritual Franciscans, of whom two thousand were burned at the stake, declared that absolute poverty was the sole perfection of Christianity; that even granaries and cellars were a wicked mistrust of God's providence; that the birds of the air and the beasts of the field ought to be the examples of the people of God. John XXII. Was perhaps the greatest politician among the popes. Plunging more deeply than all his predecessors or successors into the political affairs of his time.

The wealthy Order of Knight Templars, founded early in the twelfth century for war against the Saracens, was, in the early part of the fourteenth century, sacrificed by Pope Clement V. to King Philip's avarice, to avert, if possible, the condemnation of the memory of Pope Boniface. Their number throughout "Christendom" was at this time fifteen thousand. They were charged with infidelity, idolatry and sensuality; large numbers in France were horribly tortured by the inquisition, the confessions thus extorted from them being afterwards recanted; and a hundred and fifteen, including the Grand Master, James Du Moley, were burned alive in Paris alone. The order was dissolved by the council of Vienne in 1311. King Philip obtained their vast wealth in France. But he and pope Clement died in 1314, the next year after Du Moley burned.

In 1378, at Rome, Urban VI. was chosen Pope—the French "Cardinals" afterwards declared that they were forced to this choice by the violent threats of the Roman populace demanding, under penalty of their lives, a Roman Pope; and Urban was so insolent and cruel after his accession to the papacy that these "Cardinals" retired to Anagni, declared that Urban was an apostate, an accursed Antichrist, and they elected Clement VII. Pope, who removed his seat to Avignon. The different nations of Europe acknowledged that one of these two rivals to be pope whose circumstances best suited

their individual temporal interests. Thus, says Wycliffe, was the head of Antichrist cloven in twain, and each part fought against the other; and the friends of truth lifted up their heads and rejoiced. Each pope excommunicated, cursed and warred upon the other; and this "Great Western Schism" lasted from 1378 to 1417. There being two costly papal courts, and the field of revenue being divided, the papal exactions upon the Catholic world became intolerable; and many, not knowing which so-called "Head of the church" to look to, looked away from both to Christ, who is the only Head and King of His spiritual people. Among the innumerable and abominable devices to fill the papal exchequer were the sales of income-yielding "church" offices, even before they were vacated by death, to all who applied for them, the pope selling the same office to as many as a hundred persons if he could, and some paying for it two or three times, and then seeking to compass the death of the incumbent so that they might take his place, and after obtaining the office, never visiting the place, but sending their agents to collect the revenues; also, the multiplication of Jubilees in Rome, reducing the period from a hundred to fifty, and thirty-three, and twenty-five years, in order for the popes to reap more frequently the golden harvests of the sales of indulgences to sin; and the establishment of pardon-marts in numerous cities in Europe, spreading tables with rich cloths, like bankers, near the altars in the "church" buildings, setting a price upon each sin, and trading pardons for gold. At this time "the whole (Catholic) organization," says Trench, "seemed little better than *a vast and elaborate machinery for the wringing, under every conceivable plea, of the greatest possible amount of money from the faithful.*" Numerous Protestant organizations seem little else in this nineteenth century of ours; as the Swedish princess, "Saint" Bridget, in the fourteenth century, said of Rome, so to a great degree with them—"All the commandments seem to be abridged into one precept, *Give Gold.*"

While the papal court was at Avignon, the brilliant but weak Rienzi, a Catholic professing to be specially inspired with the Holy Ghost, restored at Rome the semblance of the old Republic for seven months in 1347 and two months in 1354; but, becoming a drunken tyrant, he was assassinated by the people. Relieved from the incubus of the immediate presence of the papacy, which had pressed upon them for nearly a thousand years, the

Italian Catholics eagerly returned to the more ostensible paganism of former times, reviving the *natural* literature, cruelty and profligacy of ancient heathen Rome.

The most general and fatal epidemic that ever desolated the world was the Black Death of the fourteenth century. Originating in China, preceded by dreadful droughts, famines, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, and swarms of locusts, characterized by black carbuncles and buboes all over the body, terminating fatally in two or three days, sometimes announced by dense and awful clouds coming from the east, poisoning the water and the air, maddening some and demoralizing others, the horrible pestilence ravaged the entire Eastern Hemisphere, scattering death everywhere on land and sea. It is believed to be a moderate estimate that fifty millions of human beings perished. The plague prevailed in Europe from 1348 to 1351. Flagellation was revived by armies of tens of thousands of people marching from city to city, chanting mournful ditties, and at stated times, lacerating their bodies with triple scourges armed with points of iron—thus blindly seeking to expiate their sins and avert the pestilence. The Jews, so often treated by professed Christians as scapegoats, were tortured and murdered by thousands on the charge of poisoning the wells. The Jews were also repeatedly persecuted, during this century, in France and Spain, for their wealth and their religion; hundreds of thousands are said to have submitted to compulsory “baptism;” those who refused thus to submit were either banished or massacred, and their property confiscated.

In 1386 Jagello, the Grand Duke of Poland, in order to win the young princess Hedwig, and with her the crown of Poland, was baptized into the Roman Catholic communion; and he compelled his heathen subjects to submit to the same ceremony, as the Laplanders had yielded to Catholic “conversion” fifty years before.

Let it never be forgotten by the friend of truth that it was early in the fourteenth century when even the Roman Catholic “Church” *first* (in the Council of Ravenna, in 1311) “legalized baptism by sprinkling, by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister—this practice having been before permitted even by Romanists only in the case of sick persons, but having

gradually spread in spite of the opposition of councils and hostile decrees" (See the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ninth edition, vol. iii., page 351; Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, pp. 568-570; and Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, pp. 7, 8, 17, 18). The Greek Catholic "Church" has never ceased to oppose this *innovation of Roman Catholicism*.

About the year 1300 there was formed in Antwerp, Belgium, a semi-monastic society devoted to the care of the sick and the burial of the dead. They were called Alexians, from the "patron-saint;" Cellites, from their dwelling in cells; and *Lollards*, from their practice of singing dirges at funerals, and of humming psalms—the Low-German word *lollen* or *lullen* signifying to sing softly or slowly. "They soon spread through the Netherlands and Germany, and in the frequent pestilences of that period were useful, and everywhere welcome. The clergy and the begging-friars, however, who neglected their duty of attending the sick, disliked and persecuted the Lollards, and called them heretics; and the name of Lollards was afterward very commonly given as a term of reproach to different classes of religionists, sometimes to the truly pious, sometimes to the worst pretenders; and in England it became a designation of the followers of Wycliffe."

Three zealous reformers labored, within the Catholic communion, during the fourteenth century, at Prague, in Bohemia: Milicz of Kremsier, Conrad of Waldhausen, and Matthias of Janow; John Hus and Jerome of Prague were also born in this century (the former in 1369, and the latter in 1365), but their labors for reform took place in the fifteenth century. A full account of the labors and sufferings of these five men is given in the last volume of Neander's *Church History*. Milicz and Conrad were more practical, and Matthias more doctrinal, in their reformatory labors. Milicz preached especially to the poor and the sinful, sometimes five times in a day and several hours at a time; he gave them nearly everything that he had, and he exercised great influence among them, and brought about a wonderful moral reformation in Prague. Conrad was especially successful in preaching to Jews; in denouncing the hypocrisy of the wealthy and luxurious begging-friars he offered to give sixty groats (\$2.40) to any one who could cite a single passage from the New Testament showing that Christ had ever begged. As Milicz was the precursor of Hus, so Matthias was the precursor of

Luther. Matthias exposed and denounced the superstitions and corruptions of the hierarchy, and maintained the indispensability and the sufficiency of an internal, vital, spiritual faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to eternal salvation. All these five Bohemian reformers were Augustinian predestinarians.

England, like the remainder of the world, was at this time overrun with Pelagianism in theory and life. Almost the only man in the Established "Church," in the early part of this century, of whom we have any account as opposing conditionalism, was Thomas Bradwardine (1290-1349), who for six weeks before his death was "Archbishop of Canterbury." He was a most stringent supralapsarian predestinarian, not only denying all merit to man, but referring all things, both good and evil, including all the acts of rational beings, directly to the Divine will as the efficient cause, ignoring a distinction between the Divine will and the Divine permission in reference to evil, but still insisting that creatures are morally responsible, "since evil subjectively contradicts the will of God."

John Wycliffe (born 1324, died 1384) was almost as stringent a predestinarian as Thomas Bradwardine. "He went far beyond Augustine himself in his polemical hostility to everything that seemed verging on Pelagianism, to all worth or ability on the part of the creature; his doctrine amounting, in fact, to the denial of free-will and of contingency. He affirmed that the original eternal ground of all things, including sin and the punishment of sin, was the Divine predestination; but still he would not throw back the causality of evil upon God, no more than ascribe the cause of darkness to the sun. While sin was necessary, its guilt and punishment was equally necessary." "In a severe Augustinian Predestinarianism," says Milman, "the more austere churchmen and all the first Reformers (or they would hardly have dared to be Reformers) met as to its theory, if not its application." "Wycliffe's predestinarian Augustinianism," says J. R. Green, "formed the groundwork of his later theological revolt."

Of the first forty years of Wycliffe's life little is known; but much is known of his last twenty years. He was a pupil, a graduate, a master, a doctor, and a professor in Oxford University, an institution second to none in Europe,

except the University of Paris, and in Oxford, Wycliffe stood without a rival. He was a man of slender frame, genial disposition, immense energy, immovable conviction, and of austere plainness and purity of life, "the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists, the first reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and, with his last breath, to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the papacy." In many ways did *Divine Providence* favor him, and prepare the way for his important life-work. The long and intolerable exactions of the papacy, the removal of the pope to Avignon and his subjection to France (the inveterate enemy of England), the death of Pope Gregory XI. when he was proceeding against Wycliffe, the ensuing Schism in the papacy itself, one pope cursing, warring against, and weakening the other, the favor and protection, at different times, of King Edward III., and of one of his sons, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and of Joanna, widow of the Black Prince, another son of Edward III., and of Queen Anne of Bohemia, the wife of King Richard II. of England, and of the citizens of London—all were clear providences favoring the success of the reformatory ideas and plans of Wycliffe. Another prominent and remarkable feature of the life of Wycliffe was the *progressive* development of his views of Scripture truth; in his daily study and spiritual understanding of the Scriptures he discovered more and more of the unscripturalness of Romanism, and "he was thus carried along from one step to another in his progress as a reformer." His progress was not only in the *Protestant* but in the *Baptist* direction; and I am persuaded that, if he had lived longer, and additional Divine light had been given him, he would have been a thorough-going BIBLE BAPTIST. No man perfectly understands the Scriptures; we all now see through a glass darkly; it is only at the time and to the extent that the Holy Spirit opens our understandings that we discern spiritual things. Wycliffe first denounced the corrupt *practices* and then the corrupt *doctrines* of Romanism leading to those practices. It is said that in 1360 he made a vigorous assault on the manifold impositions and corruptions of the Mendicant Friars, dwelling on their blasphemy in comparing their institutes to the gospel, their founder to the Savior; branding the wealthier Friars as hypocrites who, professing mendicancy, had all the pride and luxury of wealth; and the poorer as able-bodied beggars,

who ought not to be permitted to infest the land.—The English Parliament, in 1376, declared that the taxes paid in England to the “Church” of Rome amounted to five times as much as those levied by the king; a great portion of these taxes was squandered on the luxuries and vices of the pope and his cardinals. In 1213 King John had basely surrendered his kingdom to the pope, and agreed to pay him an annual tribute of a thousand marks (about three thousand dollars). After 1332 the yearly payment was in arrear, because paying such a tribute was virtually subsidizing France, which country was at war with England. Pope Urban V. re-demanded this tax in 1365. Wycliffe wrote a powerful argument in resistance to this demand, and maintained that the pope had no temporal power. The English king and Parliament refused to continue the payment, and the pope has never revived his claim.—On an embassy, in 1374, to the papal legates at Bruges, Belgium, in reference to the extortions of Rome, Wycliffe discovered still more of papal corruptions, and on his return he declared that Christ was the only Head of the church, and that the pope was Antichrist. In 1375 he was made, for a short time, chaplain to the king; and, in 1376, “rector” of Lutterworth. In 1377 he was summoned to answer at “St. Paul’s” in London, before the “Archbishop of Canterbury” and the “Bishop of London,” for erroneous opinions; but he was delivered even from trial by the favor of the powerful John of Gaunt who accompanied him. In 1378 he was delivered from trial in a similar case at Lambeth by the favor of some citizens of London who were present, and by the command of the Princess Joanna. In the same year his persecutor, Pope Gregory XI., died, and the papal Schism occurred.—Preaching had been almost entirely abandoned by the rich, worldly, corrupt and indolent Catholic clergy. Wycliffe, longing to bring home to the great body of the people the words of eternal life, encouraged many who believed and understood some important scriptural truths to go forth as “poor preachers.” “Barefoot, and clad in long russet garments of coarsest material, and, being unmarried, content with food and lodging, they passed two and two through the land, denouncing everywhere the sins of all sorts and conditions of men, but with an especial emphasis the sins, the luxury, the sloth, the ignorance of the clergy. They declared, with simplicity and earnestness, the plain truths of the gospel in the vernacular tongue. Not one in five hundred of the people could read; and their ministers did not preach to them. The naked truths of the Scriptures shook, thrilled, enthralled the

souls of men so that the adversaries of Wycliffe soon complained that half of England was infected with Lollardy." Wycliffe taught that preaching the gospel was the highest office in the world, and that the life of the preacher should give emphasis to his preaching; that, like Paul, he should not seek to obtain the gold, silver or apparel of his hearers, but work with his own hands and be content with the barest necessities, and follow the pattern of Christ in poverty, self-denial and renunciation of the world; also that all the ministers of Christ were on an absolute footing of equality; that, as in the apostolic church, there should be no other offices than presbyters (or Elders) and Deacons; that there should be no popes or prelatical "Bishops" over these, because Christ is the only Head of the church. He said that Christians need not visit the heathen for the purpose of converting them and dying as martyrs; but they could do plenty of preaching in England soon to win the crown of martyrdom—a prediction sadly verified in the next two centuries. The tithes, he said, should be given to the poor, while preachers should be satisfied with the voluntary contributions of their flocks.—Wat Tyler's insurrection in 1381 was caused, as the latest and best historians agree, not by religious, but by political grievances—the people demanded a better government and the abrogation of the poll tax. Wycliffe did not encourage and was not at all responsible for it. In the same year the English Parliament passed the first English statute against heresy, enjoining the arrest, trial and imprisonment of heretics. Weak and corrupt men wrested Wycliffe's teachings from their spiritual connection, and made such applications and perversions as he never intended; just as there were political commotions at the same time with the Donatist movement in North Africa in the fourth century, and in connection with the Lutheran Reformation in the sixteenth century.—Having already denounced, as utterly unscriptural, papal pardons, indulgences, excommunications, absolutions, pilgrimages, image worship and saint worship, Wycliffe in 1381 boldly declared his disbelief in the doctrine of transubstantiation, the chief support of mediaeval Catholicism; he maintained that, in the elements of the Lord's Supper, Christ was not bodily, but only spiritually and sacramentally present; the ordinance of baptism he also retained, but did not regard it as essential to salvation. Condemned by Oxford University, and deserted by John of Gaunt and numerous other followers, he fearlessly stood by what he believed the Scriptures taught him, declaring that the Scriptures are the only ultimate

authority in all matters of faith and practice; that all the good in man is due to grace, and that our eternal salvation is the work of Christ alone. The greatest work of his life was the translation of the entire Scriptures into the English language from the Latin vulgate,^{i[1]}ii completed in 1384, the year that he died—for this most important work God had prepared and preserved him. Only portions of the Psalms had before been rendered into English, and that for the clergy, not for the common people. Wycliffe's enemies soon complained that "laymen and even women knew more of the Scriptures than the best educated of the clergy." God had prepared a people to receive the truth; and now He sent them the truth.

"An eager appetite for scriptural knowledge," says Mr. J. J. Blunt, "was excited among the people, which they would make any sacrifice and risk any danger to gratify. Entire copies of the Bible, when they could only be multiplied by means of amanuenses, were too costly to be within the reach of very many readers; but those who could not procure 'the volume of the book' would give a load of hay for a few favorite chapters, and many such scraps were consumed upon the persons of the martyrs at the stake. They would hide the forbidden treasure under the floors of their houses, and put their lives in peril rather than forego the book they desired; they would sit up at night, sometimes all night long, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing others read the word of God; they would bury themselves in the woods, and there converse with it in solitude; they would tend their herds in the fields, and still steal an hour for drinking in the good tidings of great joy." As in the time of Samuel's childhood, "*the word of the Lord was precious in those days.*"

I believe that Wycliffe was a child of God in Babylon. He came out of Babylon in one sense, but not in another—he denounced her abominations, but he did not leave her communion. She showed her deadly hostility to him by persecuting him all that she could during his life, and by burning his books at Prague in 1410, and burning his bones at Lutterworth in 1428. His ashes were cast into the river Swift, which, as Fuller and Wordsworth remark, conveyed them through the Avon and the Severn into the sea, and thus disseminated them, as his teachings were disseminated, over the world. How vain for man to fight against God! The truth is indestructible.

Episcopalian historians, of the High-Church order, give thanks that the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century did not occur in Wycliffe's time and was not of his doing; as otherwise the Catholic substratum of their own communion might have altogether disappeared. This congratulation will give Bible Baptists a still higher opinion of the spirituality and scripturalness of Wycliffe's teachings. Even Mr. Trench (in his *Mediaeval Church History*) admits that, notwithstanding the severe persecutions of the next two centuries, "the Lollards lived on; and when the Reformation came at last, these humble men, as we may well believe, did much to contribute to it that element of sincerity, truth and uprightness, without which it never could have succeeded." And Mr. Jennings (in his *Ecclesia Anglicana*) plainly shows the un-protestant and Romanist spirit of his objections to Wycliffe by repeatedly ridiculing the idea of "all religion being gotten from the Bible, each reader being his own commentator."

The English Lollards flourished most in the ten years after Wycliffe's death. In 1394 they petitioned Parliament for a reformation of the "Established Church" on more scriptural principles, but without success. In 1399 Thomas Arundel, "Archbishop of Canterbury," aided Henry IV. in his usurpation of the English throne; and Henry agreed to pay him, and thus retain the support of the hierarchy, by persecuting the Lollards.

Fifteenth Century.—Of all the nineteen centuries of the Christian era, the fifteenth, according to the unanimous testimony of all accurate and reliable historians, was the most corrupt in doctrine and practice. The densest and blackest clouds overhung all Catholic Europe, lurid everywhere with the flames of persecution. Of the long night of the Middle Ages this was the darkest period just before the day; only a few stars of inferior magnitude shone here and there through the awful gloom.

The fifteenth (and the first quarter of the sixteenth) century was the period of the Augustan culmination and thorough paganization of Latin "Christianity" (in Popes Nicholas V. and Leo X.); of the unspeakable abominations of John XXIII. and Alexander (Borgia) VI.; of papal conspiracies, poisonings for wealth, assassinations and debaucheries; of the papal suppression of all vernacular translations of the Scriptures; of the

burning of the Lollards in England (including Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham) and of Hus and Jerome of Prague, and of the ferocious papal crusades against the Bohemian Hussites and the French and Italian Waldenses; of the establishment and operations of the so-called "improved, reformed, or modern," diabolical, terrific and unequalled *Spanish Inquisition* against Jews, Moors and "heretics," with Torquemada's superintendence and his infernal *autos da fe*; of the so-called "Reforming Councils" of Pisa, Constance and Basel, pretending to correct some of the external evils of Catholicism (while leaving unnoticed the false doctrines lying at the root of those evils), but miserably failing in their attempts, the popes, with Satanic, yet characteristic cunning and perseverance, taking back more than all that had been taken from them; of two and even three popes and Councils at once, cursing and warring against each other, and making "confusion worse confounded;" of the unrivalled increase of the worship of images, relics, saints, and especially Mary, and of penances, pilgrimages, jubilees and post-jubilees, and of the sale of indulgences for the sins of the dead and for the past and future sins of the living, a price in money being fixed for every sin; of the abandonment of preaching by the ordinary "clergy," and the degradation of it by the monks to the mere rehearsal of lying legends, indecent tales and low comic exhibitions; of the disappearance of religion from the head, as it had long since disappeared from the heart; of the substitution of the abominable Machiavellian politics, and of the old Pagan literature, mythology, cruelty and sensuality for Christianity; of the abandonment of the restraining principle of shame, and of the almost universal prevalence of degrading and unnatural licentiousness in monasteries and nunneries, and among the "secular clergy" and all ranks of society, and of the consequent first appearance, at the close of the fifteenth century, of the most awful and loathsome contagious disease that ever afflicted humanity; so that as in the horrible chaos of the first century of the Christian era, men everywhere even naturally despaired of their race unless it were regenerated by Divine power. The utter hollowness of the Catholic doctrine of justification by works, and the absolute necessity of a radically different doctrine, that of justification by faith, were unmistakably demonstrated to all the world that had eyes to see. And yet there were many providential events in this period of dismal spiritual darkness, unconsciously, as it were, preparing for the widespread and successful

publication to poor lost sinners prepared to receive the message, of the glad news of God's free, full, holy, and omnipotent salvation. Among these events were: the supplanting of the old chaotic feudalism, in almost all the States of Europe, by vigorous monarchies, thus consolidating and strengthening the nations and destroying their subjection to Rome; the overthrow of the Greek Empire at Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks, driving many profound scholars to central and western Europe; the revival of the study of Greek and Hebrew languages and of the original Scriptures forming the pure source of Christian doctrine, and showing the utterly unhistorical and unscriptural basis of Roman Catholicism; the invention of the art of printing, which was applied to the publication of the Bible in the Latin and the original tongues; and the discovery, not only of the Cape of Good Hope and the ocean route to Asia, but also of America, thus opening up the New World, enlarging men's view's, and facilitating the approach of modern civilization.

The witnesses of the truth were, in the fifteenth century, allowed to bear their testimony but a little while, and were then compelled to seal it with their blood; or they were temporarily silenced in this hour of darkness by the Satanic fury of persecution; or were driven forth to the deserts and mountains, and made to dwell in the dens and caves of the earth. The world plainly shows that it was not worthy of them. The abominations of Sodom, Egypt and Babylon overspread the earth. Even the eminent Catholic, Jesuit, cardinal-archbishop and polemic theologian, Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), admits that, about the close of the fifteenth century, "religion was almost extinct" in the world. "The old paganism," says Mr. J. H. Allen, "came back with seven spirits more wicked than itself, and took full possession of the (so-called) Christian Church. Throwing off the restraint of all law, human and Divine, it inaugurated riot of human blood and debauchery, surpassing the horrors of ancient heathenism, to which unsanctified Learning opened the door, and Grecian Art decorated the way. The last state of mankind was worse than the first. Sacerdotal 'Christianity' was fatally dishonored; and the forces were already in training which, in the next generation, would deliver their assault under the new (and yet the old apostolic) banner of Salvation by Faith"

The first year of the fifteenth century, 1401, was marked by the passage, by the English Parliament, of the first English statute for the burning of "heretics;" and the last year, 1500, was distinguished by the triumphal entry into Rome of that atrocious monster, "the human Beelzebub." Caesar Borgia, the worthy son of Pope Alexander Borgia, on his return from the papal conquest of the Romagna.

"The Great Papal Schism," says Trench, "forever dissipated the nimbus of glory with which the early Middle Ages had encircled the papacy." The Roman and Avignonese popes, Gregory XII. And Benedict XIII., perfectly hated, mistrusted, and sought to destroy each other; neither would resign; and the cardinals of both finally united in calling a General Council to meet in Pisa in Italy to terminate the Schism, and to "reform the church in its head and members." At this Council, which sat from March 25th to August 7th, 1409, twenty-six "Cardinals," some two hundred "Bishops" and some five hundred Doctors of Theology and of the Civil and Canon Law, with representatives of numerous Universities and temporal potentates, were present. Both the popes were declared by the council to be notorious schismatics, heretics and perjurers, and they were both deposed; and Alexander V. was chosen in their stead. He dismissed the council as soon as he could, and promised to call another in three years to "reform the church;" and thus matters were left worse than before—instead of two popes there were three, as Gregory and Benedict would not recognize or obey the Council, and no reformation was yet effected. People called the Catholic "Church" a Cerberus, a three-headed monster. Alexander dying in less than a year, poisoned, as it was supposed, by his successor, Balthazar Cossa (John XXIII.), was, by fear or bribery, or both, chosen pope by the cardinals; he was said to be the ablest and worst man in "Christendom." He had been a pirate; and, while papal lord of Bologna, had been guilty of the most outrageous tyranny, avarice and simony, had murdered multitudes of men and women, and had victimized two hundred maids, wives, widows and nuns. Of the seventy charges preferred against him by the Council of Constance, he is said to have confessed the truth of forty; he was generally known, says the Council, as "the Incarnate Devil." Compelled by the German Emperor Sigismund, he summoned the Council just mentioned. Constance, where it met, now in Baden, was then a free city of the German Empire; it is

situated on the southern side of the Rhine, at its exit from the lake of Constance. Its population 40,000 has now been reduced to 10,000. The most famous thing that ever occurred in it was this Council and its immortal infamy in not only the condemnation but the burning of John Hus and Jerome of Prague. The session of the Council lasted from 1414 to 1418. Its object was threefold—to end the papal schism; to prevent the spread of the teachings of Wycliffe, Hus and Jerome; and to “reform the church in its head and members.” It surpassed in the number and dignity of its attendants all the Councils that succeeded it. There were present, it is said, twenty-six princes, one hundred and forty counts, twenty-nine cardinals, thirty-three archbishops, one hundred and fifty Bishops, six hundred prelates and doctors, and four thousand priests—amounting, with their attendants, to eighteen thousand. Ordinarily fifty thousand, and sometimes one hundred thousand visitors, with thirty thousand horses, were in the city during the session of the Council. John XXIII. was deposed, having made the name (John) so infamous that no succeeding pope has assumed it; but he was afterwards made by his Dean (of Chief) of the College Cardinals. Martin V. was chosen by the Council of Constance to succeed him; and, by making concordats with the delegates of each nation separately, he thwarted all the reformatory plans of the Council, showed him that he was their master, declared that the pope was above a General Council, and Dictatorially assumed to himself the infallibility of God. He soon revived the worst evils of the papacy, and dissolved the Council, and left the city, with the emperor holding his bridle on one side, and the Elector of Brandenburg on the other, and with a train of forty thousand persons on horseback accompanying him on the first stage of his journey home. What a triumph for the religion of Satan! The apparently deadly wounds of the Babylonish captivity and the Great Schism now seemed to be completely healed.—In compliance with a rule laid down by the Council of Constance, and because of the continued clamors for reform, and in order to attempt to reunite the Greek and Roman “Churches,” Pope Eugenius IV., the successor of Martin V., confirmed the act of his predecessor in summoning the Council of Basel (In Switzerland), which sat from 1431 to 1443. This Council is said to have been much more democratic than the other two, the “inferior clergy” carrying most of their measures. The pope became alarmed at their entering into conciliatory negotiations with the Hussites, and tried to dissolve the Council, but that

body obstinately refused to be dissolved, and the pope had to yield to them for a while. When they proceeded, however, to reform some of the papal abuses, and thus dry up some of the papal income, the pope became furious, declared that they were a collection of all the devils in the world, called upon the faithful to kill them, and, on the plea that negotiations with the envoys of the Greek "Church" could be more conveniently conducted in an Italian city, tried to remove the seat of the Council to Ferrara, and afterwards to Florence. He had Councils at both of these cities; but the Council of Pisa refused to stir; they deposed Pope Eugenius IV., and in 1439 elected Felix V., the last anti-pope, in his stead, who resigned his office in 1449. This new schism so offended the Catholics generally, and so weakened, that it finally died of inanition. Thus closed the *last* "Reforming Council" of the Roman Catholic "Church," having failed in all its undertakings as completely and ingloriously as its two predecessors. The absolute necessity of reformation in that communion, or rather *regeneration*, was, by these Councils, however, publicly acknowledged to the world; their failure was due, says Mr. Trench, to their "refusing to see that the abuses in practice were rooted in errors in doctrine, drawing all their poisonous life from them, and that blows stricken at the roots were the only blows which would profit."

Nicholas V., the successor of Eugenius IV., was pope from 1447 to 1455, and was acknowledged by all the Roman Catholic world. In his Jubilee of 1450, such a flood of riches poured into Rome that it became "*a city of gold*," it was said. Nicholas designed and began the magnificent structures of the Vatican and "St. Peter's," and adorned the city with numerous splendid public edifices. For Christianity he substituted the idolatry of Greek and Roman Pagan literature. The revival of the study and the worship of the classics was quickened by the flight of large numbers of Greek scholars, with their manuscripts of the old Greek and Hebrew authors, from Constantinople to Italy and Germany, France and England—Constantinople having been taken by the Turks in 1453 (the Greek Catholic "Church" was still tolerated by the Turks, and was made the standard of orthodoxy in Russia in 1462). The Italian Humanists, or promoters of classical learning, became thorough infidels or Pagans in profession and in morals; but the more profound and religious German and English Humanists devoted their linguistic studies to

the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures. The *paganism* of the Italians was nothing to the popes; but the dangerous German and English studies of the Bible were sought to be destroyed by the fires of the Inquisition. A favorite remark of Pope Leo X. (1513-1521) was, "*How much that fable of Jesus Christ has profited us!*" Pope IV. (1471-1484), when there was to be a duel to the death between two squads of his guard, "posted himself as a window looking down on the closed yard from which no man was to escape, gave his blessing to the combatants, and crossed himself as a signal for the massacre to begin." The sole object of Pope Innocent VIII. (1484-1492) was to aggrandize his seven illegitimate children. Alexander VI. (1492-1503) is universally admitted to have the wickedest of all the popes. Having bought the papacy by bribing the cardinals, he, like his predecessor, sought to exalt his five natural children, especially his favorite, the monster Caesar Borgia. He lived with a Spanish lady and her two daughters. His pontificate witnessed the highest revel of debauchery, venality and murder. The scenes in his palace at the bridal feast of his daughter Lucretia surpassed in impurity, says Merle D'Aubigne, the revels of the groves of antiquity. How appropriate the inspired prophet's designation of Mystery Babylon as the Mother of Harlots (Rev. 17)! Alexander is said to have died of the poison which he prepared for a rich cardinal, to get the money of the latter, but which the intended victim bribed the cook to give to the pope himself. His son Caesar murdered his brother and his brother-in-law, and stabbed one of his father's favorites who had taken shelter under the pontifical robes, so that the blood spurted into the pope's face. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), "the keenest of diplomatists," "the demon of politics," who idealized the character of Caesar Borgia, "did not scruple to advocate lying whenever it would pay; force and fraud whenever they would succeed; tyranny, in needful to keep a tyrant on his throne; murder and bloodshed as a means of obtaining an end. Such was the policy of the popes at this time. Rome was the center of the rottenness and corruption of the world." HOW TOTAL THE DEPRAVITY OF THE HUMAN HEART WHICH COULD AND DID AND WILL NO DOUBT AGAIN COVER SUCH ENORMITIES WITH THE CLOAK OF THE PURE, GENTLE, HOLY AND DIVINE RELIGION OF CHRIST!

In 1399 the Plantagenet King, Richard II. Of England, was dethroned and in the next year, it is believed, murdered by the Lancastrian Henry IV. At the

instigation of Arundel, "Archbishop of Canterbury"—Henry promising the recompense the "church" for its nefarious assistance to him by the persecution of the Lollards or Wycliffites. Accordingly, early in 1401, the Parliament passed the first English statute for the burning of heretics; this statute remained in force for 276 years, not being repealed till 1677. The infamous law was at once carried into execution. William Sautre, a London priest, who was said to be a godly and zealous man, was in February, 1401, burned in public for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. The second victim on record was a poor tailor named John Badby; who in 1409 was burned in Smithfield for the same unpardonable crime; neither persuasions nor the promise of a yearly maintenance being sufficient to reconcile his to the idolatry of transubstantiation. In 1408 a law was passed forbidding the preaching of the Lollards, and commanding the suppression and destruction of all Wycliffe's Bibles. In 1413 was enacted that *"whoever read the scriptures in the mother tongue should be condemned as traitors and heretics, and should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods from his heirs forever."* Multitudes were thus driven into exile, fleeing into Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and the wilds of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; of course they carried with them the scriptures and the love of the truth, and the glad tidings of God's salvation were thus disseminated in many countries. The condemnation of Wycliffe's teachings by the Council of Constance incited the English clergy to still more vigorous proceedings against the Lollards preaching and books. "Lollardy was banished, henceforth, from the fields and streets, and took refuge in places of concealment. There was no more wayside preaching, but instead there were secret conventicles in houses, in peasants' huts, in sawpits, and in field ditches, where the Bible was read and exhortations were given, and so Lollardy continued." A few of the Lollards were nobles, but the large were poor and obscure people. Some called Lollards seem to have planned a political insurrection; and thirty-nine of them were, in 1414, arrested and hastily tried and executed. Sir John Oldcastle (Lord Cobham) was pretended but not proved to be their leader; and was hung on a gallows and burned by a slow fire at his feet, for the alleged double crime of treason and heresy. He had greatly favored the Lollard preachers, and zealously aided in the circulation of Wycliffe's Bible. Even his enemies admitted that he was a pious man; but then he rejected the worship of images, the efficacy of

pilgrimages, the supremacy of the pope, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. "Before his execution," says the accurate and impartial Milman, "he fell on his knees, and implored forgiveness on his enemies. He addressed the multitude in a few words, urging them to obey the law of God in the Scripture, to reject all evils in their lives. He refused the aid of a priest; 'to God only, now as ever present, he would confess, and of him entreat pardon.' His last words, drowned by the crackling flames, were praise of God. The people wept and prayed with him; they heard and contemptuous silence the declarations of the priests, that Cobham died an enemy of God, an heretic to the church." On some unknown account, conjectured to be either the weariness of the persecutors or the suppression of the public worship of the Lollards, the burnings for heresy ceased in England about 1435, but were revived from 1485 to about 1515. In spite of all opposition, however, Lollardy made the Bible familiar to the people of England in their mother tongue.

On account of the marriage of Richard II. of England to Anne of Bohemia, there grew up a close association between these two countries; after her husband's death Anne returned to Bohemia with many of Wycliffe's writings. These productions were also carried with them by several Oxford students who went to the University of Prague; and thus the influence of Wycliffe's writings was added to that of the writings of Milicz, Conrad and Matthias, in the publication of the truth in Bohemia. John Hus (1369-1415) was a man of poverty and affliction all his life of forty-six years. "His is undoubtedly the honor of having been the chief intermediary in handing on from Wycliffe to Luther the torch which kindled the Reformation, and of having been one of the bravest of the martyrs who have died in the cause of honesty and freedom, of progress and of growth towards the light. He added nothing to the intellectual, but immensely to the moral capital of the world. Seldom have the power conscience and the imperial strength of a faith rooted in Christ asserted themselves in so commanding and heroic a manner." He was humble, upright, God-fearing, straightforward, unswerving, conscientious man. He did not discern as much of the truth as did Wycliffe; but what he did discern he was neither ashamed nor afraid to proclaim to the world. First a student, then a graduate, a professor and a rector of the University of Prague, he also preached in the Bohemian tongue to the people, and

earnestly denounced many of the flagrant abuses of Catholicism, though he did not deny transubstantiation nor any of the other ordinary doctrines of that communion. Inconsistently, however, with these doctrines, he taught the Bible doctrine of salvation by the electing love and grace of God, and also the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Summoned to appear before the Council of Constance, he attended under the safe-conduct of the German Emperor Sigismund, and he was not in the least abashed or intimidated by the presence of that imposing or formidable assemblage. He suffered greatly but most humbly in the six long months of his imprisonment. After his condemnation to death on thirty-nine articles, he fell on his knees in the Council, lifted up his hands, appealed to heaven and prayed for his enemies. He was then degraded from the priesthood with many childish formalities, but he bore all the insults with meekness and dignity. Delivered to the secular arm, he went with fortitude and even cheerfulness to his dreadful death. Reaching the place of execution, he kneeled and prayed, using especially the fifty-first and thirty-first Psalms, and repeatedly saying, "Into Their hands, Lord, I commit my spirit." After being chained by his neck to the stake he was again called upon to recant, but answered he could not unless convinced of his error; that his chief aim had been to teach men the necessity of repentance and the forgiveness of sins according to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the fire had been kindled, he sang with a loud voice the Kyrie Eleison, "Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me." His voice was stifled by the flames, but his lips were seen from some time afterwards to move as if in prayer. The ashes of the body were cast into the Rhine.

Jerome of Prague (1365-1416), the ardent friend and disciple of Hus, was even a more able, learned and eloquent man. He was a graduate of the University of Prague, and a "doctor of divinity" in the Universities of Paris, Cologne, Heidelberg, and Oxford. He traveled through many countries of Europe, circulating the writings of Wycliffe, and declaiming against the corruption of the clergy. Going to Constance to defend Hus, he was arrested and thrown into a fetid dungeon. "Four months of weary imprisonment, in chains, in darkness, on meager diet; the terror, as himself owned, of the stake; sickness; the bland promises of some; the awful threats of others; the persuasion of weaker friends, broke his spirit. In a public session of the

Council he retracted all errors against the Catholic faith, especially those of Wycliffe and Hus." But his remorseless enemies declared that his recantation was ambiguous; new articles were drawn up against him, and he was brought again to trial. His courage now returned, and he declared that he deeply regretted his cowardly recantation, and was resolved to remain even to death to the tenants of Wycliffe and Hus, believing them to be the true and pure doctrine of the gospel, just as their lives were blameless and godly. In a powerful and magnificent oration of twelve hours, occupying two days of the Council, he replied to the accusations against him, and vindicated the scriptural truth of the principals to which he had devoted his life; and from his iniquitous judges he appealed to the Supreme Judge, before whom they, as well as himself, should shortly appear. Condemned to death, he prayed for his persecutors. His heroism shone with increasing splendor as he approached the scene of martyrdom. With cheerful countenance he sung many songs and hymns to God. Bound to the stake, enclosed up to his breast with faggots, he sung with deep untrembling voice, "*Hanc animam, in flammis, offero, Christe, tibi*"—"This soul of mine, in flames of fire, O Christ, I offer Thee." His ashes were also cast into the Rhine.

The execution of Hus and Jerome occasioned a storm of passionate indignation in Bohemia and Moravia. After the burning of Hus, an assembly of fifty-four Bohemian and Moravian nobles indorsed his doctrines, and protested against the action of the Council of Constance, and leagued themselves together to protect the free preaching of God's word on their estates. Pope Martin V. inaugurated a crusade against Bohemia; and in a war of eleven years (1420-1431), characterized by the greatest atrocity, the Bohemians were almost uniformly victorious. The horrible Catholic butcheries of the Bohemian prisoners were met by equally awful reprisals on the part of the Hussites, from whom the spirit of Hus departed more and more as the hideous conflict went on. They became divided into two factions—one called the Calixtines (from calix, a cup), who chiefly demanded the restoration of the cup to the "laity" in communion; and the other Taborites (from Mount Tabor, their principal fortress, sixty miles south of Prague), who desired to sweep away all traditions and return to the simplicity of the apostolic church. The Catholic, not being able to conquer these stubborn "heretics," made, in the Council of Basel, in 1433, some

illusory concessions to the Calixtines, which were withdrawn by Pope Pius II. in 1462; but these arts accomplished their purpose in permanently dividing the Bohemians and reducing the Calixtines to submission. The Taborites were signally defeated by the Catholics in 1434, and their stronghold was taken and destroyed in 1453. The remnant fled to the borders of Moravia and Silesia, and reappeared about 1460 as the Bohemian Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*), who utterly renounced all war and tradition and sought to return to apostolic usages; and who, though cruelly persecuted by the Catholics, fled to the deserts and caves (being called Cave-dwellers), and overcame now, not by the weapons of carnal warfare, but by the blood of the Lamb. Some joined the reformers in the sixteenth century. Others retained a separate organization; and to them the Moravians of the eighteenth century retrace a succession.—The galling feudal ecclesiastical oppressions suffered by the Bohemians were the chief cause of their taking up arms. The lords had long been encroaching more and more on the peasants' rights, increasing their burden and decreasing their privileges, and reducing them to almost abject slavery. They had to work for their lords in fair weather, and for themselves on rainy days; and were not allowed their common rights in the pastures, forests and rivers. On holidays they had to turn out and gather fruit for the folks at the Castle. When a peasant died, the lord's agent came and carried off from the widow's home the *heriot* or best chattel, perhaps the horse or cow on which the family was dependent. And to the Catholic priests the peasants had to pay the tenth part of all their corn, grass, wood, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese, chickens, eggs, wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese, and butter; and, besides, they had to pay the priests money for baptism, for confirmation, for marriage, for confession, for indulgences, for extreme unction, and for burial. It was no wonder that, in the dark age, the poor victims of such oppression mixed political and ecclesiastical affairs together in their minds, and demanded in one breath both civil and religious freedom.

About the year 1400, in the depths of winter, the Catholics committed great depredations upon the Waldenses who inhabited the valley of Pragela in Piedmont. About 1460 the Inquisition preyed cruelly upon the Waldenses in the French valleys of Faissiniere, Argentiere and Loyse—the poor and peaceful lovers of truth fleeing with their children and valuables to the ops of

the mountains and hiding in caves. Their merciless enemies placed large quantities of wood at the entrances of the caves and set it on fire, and suffocated, it is said, four hundred children in their cradles or in the arms of their dead mothers; while multitudes, to avoid suffocation, leaped down upon the rocks below, and were either dashed to pieces or immediately slaughtered by the brutal soldiery. All the inhabitants of the valley of Loyse, three thousand, are said to have perished in this campaign. In 1488 an army of eighteen thousand Catholics made war upon the Waldenses of Piedmont, who at length losing their patience, and departing from the peaceful principles of their ancestors, armed themselves with wooden targets and cross-bows, and for a while fought in defense of their wives and children, everywhere defending the defiles of their mountains, and repelling the invaders. Some were driven by fear from public to private worship; and others conformed to Catholicism. Evidences henceforth increase of a degeneracy from their primitive purity of faith and practice.

Jerome Savonarola, of Florence (born 1452), endeavoring to stem the corrupt torrent of the Italian Pagan renaissance, was tortured, strangled, and burnt, in 1498, by the sentence of Pope Alexander Borgia.

The notorious Spanish Inquisition was established at Seville in 1480 by the blind religious zeal of Queen Isabella and the unscrupulous avarice of King Ferdinand and Pope Sixtus IV.—the grand object of this famous institution being to *make money* by the confiscation of the property of wealthy "heretics." In 1481, the first year of its operation, two thousand persons were burned. In the sixteen years of generalship of Thomas de Torquemada (1483-1498), it is said that 8,800 were condemned to the flames, 6,500 burned in effigy, and 90,000 subjected to imprisonment, confiscation and other penalties. Llorente, the secretary and official historian of the Spanish Inquisition, estimates that institution, during the whole period of its existence, burned about 30,000 persons alive, and condemned about 300,000 to punishments less severe than death. In 1492, persecution was begun against the Jews, of whom 500,000 were expelled from Spain and their wealth confiscated. In seventy years the population of Spain was reduced from 10,000,000 to 6,000,000 by the banishment of Jews, Moors

and Morescoes ("Christianized" Moors), the most wealthy and intelligent of the inhabitants of that country.

The art of printing was invented in Germany about 1440, and about 10,000 editions of books were published in this century. The earliest known printed book was the Mazarine Latin Bible, issued about the year 1455.—In 1492 Columbus discovered America; and in 1498 Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese navigator, having doubled the Cape of Good Hope, sailed to India. By the invention of printing, knowledge was disseminated among the masses of the people; and by these maritime discoveries nearly all the habitable globe opened up to European access.

As we are now upon the eve of the great Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, when the Lutherans, Episcopalians and Presbyterians originated as distinct communions by seceding from the Catholic body, it is exceedingly interesting to notice the candid admission of the careful Lutheran historian, J. L. Mosheim, in reference to the ORIGIN OF THE BAPTISTS. "The true origin of the Anabaptists or Mennonites (or Baptists)," says this learned and impartial writer, "is *hidden in the depths of antiquity*, and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained. They are not entirely in an error when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrusians and other ancient sects, who are usually considered as witness of the truth in the times of general darkness and superstition. *Before the rise of Luther and Calvin*, there lay concealed in almost all countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine, which the Waldenses, Wycliffites and Hussites had maintained, some in a more disguised, and others in a more open and public manner, viz.: *'That the kingdom of Christ, or the visible church which He had established upon earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought, therefore, to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests, to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors.'*" I know of no people who are, by their principles, so closely identified as Old School or Bible Baptists with this *primitive, spiritual, truly apostolic succession*. Again: Tow learned members of the Dutch Reformed Church, Ypeig and Dermout, the first a professor of theology

Groningnen, and the second the Royal Chaplain, appointed by the King of Holland to examine into the origin and history of the Dutch Baptists, made a careful investigation of the facts, and their book, published in 1819, made the following important declaration as a result of their careful and impartial researches: "The Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which had stood since the days of the Apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the gospel through all ages. The notion of the Catholics that their communion is the most ancient, is erroneous." The doctrine of the gospel is, I believe, no where else maintained in such purity as among Bible Baptists.

In reference to the period at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, Mr. W. E. H. Lecky well remarks "Wherever the eye was turned, it encountered the signs of disorganization, of corruption, and of decay. For the long night of medievalism was now drawing to a close, and the chaos that precedes resurrection was supreme."

ENDNOTES:

iii[1]iv He did not feel sufficiently acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages to translate directly from the original Scriptures. His version, therefore, is not distinguished for critical accuracy; but it was by far the most valuable addition made to English literature before the sixteenth century.
