

**Chapter 1 : Select English Works of John Wyclif**

*Select English Works Of John Wyclif V1: Sermons On The Gospels For Sundays And Festivals [John Wycliffe, Thomas Arnold] on blog.quintoapp.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers. This scarce antiquarian book is a facsimile reprint of the original.*

His ideas, however, had an important shaping effect on the Lollard movement in England and on the Hussite movement in Bohemia, and his career and ideas anticipated the work of later English reformers in the 16th century. During the second half of the 14th century a series of changes took place in England and elsewhere that altered the nature of English society in a manner that was to last for several centuries. In spite of occasional lulls, England was involved throughout this period in a war with France that ultimately resulted in the loss of English territory on the Continent. The war also hastened a growing separation between the English Church and the papacy, which from until was resident at Avignon and French-controlled and which after was split into two rival factions that further eroded respect for the authority and sanctity of the Holy Office. Both in literature and in theological writings many doctrines and practices of the Roman Church were coming under attack, with the result that England increasingly moved in the direction of nonconformity. England also experienced in this period a revival in vernacular literature, in which the leading figure was Geoffrey Chaucer. Little is known of the life of Wyclif before he arrived at Oxford, where he remained throughout most of his life. It seems most probable that he derived from a family of the lesser gentry in the area around Richmond. In he completed his arts degree at Oxford as a junior fellow of Merton College. Soon he shifted his affiliation to Balliol College, where, before , he was elected master. During the summer of Wyclif resigned that position to accept the richest benefice within the gift of that college, namely, the rectorship of Fillingham In Lincolnshire. Although eventually critical of pluralism and absenteeism, as a student he held more than one benefice at a time and was not always conscientious enough to pay a vicar to perform the services for which he was receiving the revenues. Political Career In Wyclif entered the service of the King as a theological adviser and diplomat. The year before, he had attended Parliament in the company of two Austin friars, who argued there the thesis that dominion, or the right to exercise authority and to own property, was granted by God only to those in a state of grace. Sinful clergy might, therefore, be justifiably deprived of their property by a pious layman on behalf of the common good. This concept, known as the lordship of grace, suited the government and the lay members of Parliament who were attempting to raise funds in support of the war against France and who were having difficulty convincing the clergy to undertake half of those expenses. His attack was directed primarily against the monastic establishments in England rather than against the mendicant friars who, at least in theory, supported the idea of apostolic poverty and directly served the needs of the people. Although he may have been sincere in his campaign, his antagonism toward the monks resulted in part from his dismissal from the wardenship of Canterbury College at Oxford in in favor of the monk Henry Woodhall. Until Wyclif was protected by Gaunt from being disciplined by Church leaders as a result of his treatises attacking ecclesiastical possessioners. When, in , Wyclif was called to St. The bishop was frustrated in his attempt to convict Wyclif, but the incident increased the animosity that the people of London held for Gaunt and for his party. The next year Wyclif was summoned to Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the archbishop of Canterbury, to answer charges of false teaching. Again the royal family intervened, and Wyclif was freed with the warning to cease teaching questionable doctrines. From Harassment to Heresy The year was a crucial date in the life of Wyclif. The return of the papacy to Rome and the papal election that year resulted in the election of two popes, an Italian, resident at Rome, and a Frenchman, resident at Avignon. While the papal schism weakened the position of the papacy in taking action against Wyclif in England, it also permitted a reconciliation between the English government and the Italian pope, thus decreasing the usefulness of Wyclif. He was encouraged by his royal protectors to put down his pen and to return to the academic debates of Oxford. Beginning in he wrote a series of polemical and doctrine treatises that slowly carried him in the direction of heresy. The first work was *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*; it was a harmless and somewhat incoherent defense of the inspiration of Scripture and of the importance of its literal meaning. In another work,

On the Church, Wyclif restricted true membership in the Church to the elect, or predestined, a group known only to God and which might not include the pope. Since one could not alter this judgment of God, prayers for the dead were useless. In his works *On the Office of King* and *On the Power of the Pope* he raised temporal power above that of the Church and tried to demonstrate that the authority claimed by the papacy had no foundation in Scripture or the life of the early Church. The work of Wyclif that most disturbed his contemporaries was *On the Eucharist*, composed in 1381. According to Wyclif, the validity of the sacrament depended upon the sanctity of the one receiving it, not on the consecration of the priest. Early in 1382 he was condemned by the chancellor of Oxford for teaching heretical doctrine on the Eucharist and prohibited from further expressing his views. Ignoring the advice of friends to remain silent, Wyclif published a defense of his condemned opinions under the title *Confession* and, with that parting shot, left Oxford for his rectorship at Lutterworth, where he remained until his death. In 1388 Wyclif composed his last work, the *Triologue*, in which he summarized many of his earlier opinions and called for a vernacular translation of the Bible for the use of uneducated priests and the literate laity. Recent works include *Edward A.* For background information consult Herbert B. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe* repr.

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Early life[ edit ] Wycliffe was born in the village of Hipswell near Richmond in the North Riding of Yorkshire , England, in the mids. The family was quite large, covering considerable territory, principally centred on Wycliffe-on-Tees , about ten miles to the north of Hipswell. Wycliffe received his early education close to his home. According to Robert Vaughn, the effect was to give Wycliffe "Very gloomy views in regard to the condition and prospects of the human race. Career[ edit ] Wycliffe completed his arts degree at Merton College as a junior fellow in The mortality rate among the clergy had been particularly high, and those who replaced them were, in his opinion, uneducated or generally disreputable. In he was granted a prebend at Aust in Westbury-on-Trym , which he held in addition to the post at Fillingham. His performance led Simon Islip , Archbishop of Canterbury , to place him in at the head of Canterbury Hall , where twelve young men were preparing for the priesthood. In December Islip appointed Wycliffe as warden [14] but when Islip died the following year his successor, Simon Langham , a man of monastic training, turned the leadership of the college over to a monk. In Wycliffe appealed to Rome. The incident was typical of the ongoing rivalry between monks and secular clergy at Oxford at this time. William Frederick Yeames , Wyclif Giving " The Poor Priests " His Translation of the Bible In his name appears second, after a bishop, on a commission which the English Government sent to Bruges to discuss with the representatives of Gregory XI a number of points in dispute between the king and the pope. In a book concerned with the government of God and the Ten Commandments , he attacked the temporal rule of the clergy, the collection of annates , indulgences , and simony. He entered the politics of the day with his great work De civili dominio "On Civil Dominion". This called for the royal divestment of all church property. Wycliffe argued that the Church had fallen into sin and that it ought therefore to give up all its property and that the clergy should live in complete poverty. The tendency of the high offices of state to be held by clerics was resented by many of the nobles. John of Gaunt , who had his own reasons for opposing the wealth and power of the clergy, possibly used[ clarification needed ] a naive Wycliffe as his tool. The exact charges are not known, as the matter did not get as far as a definite examination. The second and third books of his work dealing with civil government carry a sharp polemic. On 22 May Pope Gregory XI sent five copies of a bull against Wycliffe, dispatching one to the Archbishop of Canterbury , and the others to the Bishop of London , King Edward III , the Chancellor , and the university; among the enclosures were 18 theses of his, which were denounced as erroneous and dangerous to Church and State. In March , he was summoned to appear at Lambeth Palace to defend himself. Wycliffe then wrote his De incarcerandis fedelibus, in which he demanded that it should be legal for the excommunicated to appeal to the king and his council against the excommunication; in this writing he laid open the entire case, in such a way that it was understood by the laity. He wrote his 33 conclusions in Latin and English. The masses, some of the nobility, and his former protector, John of Gaunt, rallied to him. Before any further steps could be taken at Rome, Gregory XI died in The attacks on Pope Gregory XI grow ever more extreme. Closely related to this attitude was his book De officio regis, the content of which was foreshadowed in his 33 conclusions. This book, like those that preceded and followed, was concerned with the reform of the Church, in which the temporal arm was to have an influential part. From onwards, Wycliffe devoted himself to writings that argued his rejection of transubstantiation, and strongly criticised the friars who supported it. He said that there was no scriptural justification for the papacy. No one who is eternally lost has part in it. There is one universal Church , and outside of it there is no salvation. His first tracts and greater works of ecclesiastical-political content defended the privileges of the State. By in his De ecclesia "On the Church" , Wycliffe clearly claimed the supremacy of the king over the priesthood. It was Wycliffe who recognised and formulated one of the two major formal principles of the Reformation â€” the unique authority of the Bible for the belief and life of the Christian. Attack on monasticism[ edit ] The battle against what he saw as an imperialised papacy and its

supporters, the "sects", as he called the monastic orders, takes up a large space not only in his later works as the *Triologus*, *Dialogus*, *Opus evangelicum*, and in his sermons, but also in a series of sharp tracts and polemical productions in Latin and English of which those issued in his later years have been collected as "Polemical Writings". In the *Objections to Friars*, he calls monks the pests of society, enemies of religion, and patrons and promoters of every crime. The first, from to , reflects a political struggle with Rome, while to is more a religious struggle. In each Wycliffe has two approaches: He argued that criminals who had taken sanctuary in churches might lawfully be dragged out of sanctuary. Each year they focus more and more, and at the last, the pope and the Antichrist seem to him practically equivalent concepts. Yet there are passages which are moderate in tone: The first step, which carried him to the outbreak of the schism , involves moderate recognition of the papal primacy ; the second, which carried him to , is marked by an estrangement from the papacy; and the third shows him in sharp contest. While Wycliffe is credited, it is not possible exactly to define his part in the translation, which was based on the Vulgate. From him comes the translation of the New Testament , which was smoother, clearer, and more readable than the rendering of the Old Testament by his friend Nicholas of Hereford. There still exist about manuscripts, complete or partial, containing the translation in its revised form. From this, one may easily infer how widely diffused it was in the 15th century. For this reason the Wycliffites in England were often designated by their opponents as "Bible men". Then the English hierarchy proceeded against him. The chancellor of the University of Oxford had some of the declarations pronounced heretical. When this was announced to Wycliffe, he declared that no one could change his convictions. He then appealed "not to the pope nor to the ecclesiastical authorities of the land, but to the king. He published his great confession upon the subject and also a second writing in English intended for the common people. During the consultations on 21 May an earthquake occurred; the participants were terrified and wished to break up the assembly, but Courtenay declared the earthquake a favourable sign which meant the purification of the earth from erroneous doctrine, and the result of the " Earthquake Synod " was assured. The former had reference to the transformation in the sacrament, the latter to matters of church order and institutions. It was forbidden from that time to hold these opinions or to advance them in sermons or in academic discussions. All persons disregarding this order were to be subject to prosecution. To accomplish this the help of the State was necessary; but the Commons rejected the bill. The king, however, had a decree issued which permitted the arrest of those in error. He still commanded the favour of the court and of Parliament, to which he addressed a memorial. He was neither excommunicated then, nor deprived of his living. Wycliffe aimed to do away with the existing hierarchy and replace it with the "poor priests" who lived in poverty, were bound by no vows, had received no formal consecration , and preached the Gospel to the people. Itinerant preachers spread the teachings of Wycliffe. The bull of Gregory XI impressed upon them the name of Lollards , intended as an opprobrious epithet, but it became, to them, a name of honour. His last work, the *Opus evangelicum*, the last part of which he named in characteristic fashion "Of Antichrist", remained uncompleted. Wycliffe was 64 years old. The "Constitutions of Oxford" of aimed to reclaim authority in all ecclesiastical matters, and specifically named John Wycliffe as it banned certain writings, and noted that translation of Scripture into English by unlicensed laity was a crime punishable by charges of heresy. This order, confirmed by Pope Martin V , was carried out in Paintings representing Wycliffe are from a later period. In the history of the trial by William Thorpe , Wycliffe appears wasted and physically weak. Thorpe says Wycliffe was of unblemished walk[ clarification needed ] in life, and regarded affectionately by people of rank, who often consorted with him, took down his sayings, and clung to him. But this example of Netter is not well chosen, since the tone of Wycliffe toward Kynnyngham is that of a junior toward an elder whom one respects, and he handled other opponents in similar fashion.

Chapter 3 : Select English works of John Wyclif; edited from original mss. by Thomas Arnold.

â€”LUC. vi. [] *ÃŽS gospel moveÃ¼ men to mercy aË•en Ã¼e ypocrisy of Ã¼es false Pharisees, and Crist biddiÃ¼ first generally men to be merciful as your fadir is merciful. For whanne a general word is seid bi himsilf, it shal be taken for Ã¼e most famous.*

Religious unrest was another subversive factor under Richard II. England had been virtually free from heresy until John Wycliffe, a priest and an Oxford scholar, began his career as a religious reformer with two treatises in â€” He drew his prebend while residing elsewhere, a practice he condemned in others. In and he was granted permission from the bishop of Lincoln to absent himself from Fillingham in order to study at Oxford, though in he exchanged Fillingham for Ludgershall, a parish nearer the university. He became a bachelor of divinity about and a doctor of divinity in Political activities and theories On April 7, , Edward III appointed Wycliffe to the rectory of Lutterworth in place of Ludgershall, and about this time the theologian began to show an interest in politics. He received a royal commission to the deputation sent to discuss with the papal representatives at Brugge the outstanding differences between England and Rome, such as papal taxes and appointments to church posts. The righteous alone could properly have dominion, even if they were not free to assert it. He then proceeded to say that, as the church was in sin, it ought to give up its possessions and return to evangelical poverty. Such disendowment was, in his view, to be carried out by the state, and particularly by the king. These politico-ecclesiastical theories, devised with ingenuity and written up at inordinate length, may be criticized as the work of a theorizer with a limited sense of what was possible in the real world. Exhibiting an ingenuousness and lack of worldly wisdom, he became a tool in the hands of John of Gaunt â€”99 , Duke of Lancaster and a younger son of Edward III, who, from motives less scrupulous than those of Wycliffe, was opposed to the wealth and power of the clergy. Wycliffe preached acceptably in London in support of moderate disendowment, but the alliance with Gaunt led to the displeasure of his ecclesiastical superiors, and he was summoned to appear before them in February The proceedings broke up in disorder, and Wycliffe retired unmolested and uncondemned. That year saw Wycliffe at the height of his popularity and influence. Parliament and the king consulted him as to whether or not it was lawful to keep back treasure of the kingdom from Rome, and Wycliffe replied that it was. In May Pope Gregory XI issued five bulls against him, denouncing his theories and calling for his arrest. The call went unanswered, and Oxford refused to condemn its outstanding scholar. But his chief target was the doctrine of transubstantiation â€”that the substance of the bread and wine used in the Eucharist is changed into the body and blood of Christ. As a Realist philosopherâ€”believing that universal concepts have a real existenceâ€”he attacked it because, in the annihilation of the substance of bread and wine, the cessation of being was involved. He then proceeded on a broader front and condemned the doctrine as idolatrous and unscriptural. Meanwhile, he pressed his attack ecclesiastically. The pope, the cardinals, the clergy in remunerative secular employment, the monks, and the friars were all castigated in language that was bitter even for 14th-century religious controversy. For this exercise, Wycliffe was well equipped. His restless, probing mind was complemented by a quick temper and a sustained capacity for invective. Yet most scholars agree that Wycliffe was a virtuous man. Proud and mistaken as he sometimes was, he gives an overall impression of sincerity. Disappointed as he may have been over his failure to receive desirable church posts, his attack on the church was not simply born of anger. It carried the marks of moral earnestness and a genuine desire for reform. He set himself up against the greatest organization on earth because he sincerely believed that organization was wrong, and if he said so in abusive terms he had the grace to confess it. Neither must his ingenuousness be forgotten. There was nothing calculated about the way in which he published his opinions on the Eucharist, and the fact that he was not calculating cost himâ€”in all probabilityâ€”the support of John of Gaunt and of not a few friends at Oxford. He could afford to lose neither. His mind was too much shaped by Scholasticism , the medieval system of learning, to do the latter himself. There were two translations made at his instigation, one more idiomatic than the other. The most likely explanation of his considerable toil is that the Bible became a necessity in his theories to replace the discredited authority of the church and to make the law of God available to every man

who could read. This, allied to a belief in the effectiveness of preaching, led to the formation of the Lollards. The precise extent to which Wycliffe was involved in the creation of the Lollards is uncertain. What is beyond doubt is that they propagated his controversial views. His social teaching was not a significant cause of the uprising because it was known only to the learned, but there is no doubt where his sympathies lay. He had a constant affection for the deserving poor. The archbishop of Canterbury, Simon of Sudbury, was murdered in the revolt, and his successor, William Courtenay 1396, a more vigorous man, moved against Wycliffe. Many of his works were condemned at the synod held at Blackfriars, London, in May; and at Oxford his followers capitulated, and all his writings were banned. That year, Wycliffe suffered his first stroke at Lutterworth; but he continued to write prolifically until he died from a further stroke in December. Legacy It is no wonder that such a controversial figure produced—and still produces—a wide variety of reactions. The monks and friars retaliated, immediately and fiercely, against his denunciations of them, but such criticism grew less as the Reformation approached. There has now been a reaction to this, and some modern scholars have attacked this view as the delusion of uncritical admirers.

### Chapter 4 : Books by John Wycliffe (Author of John Wyclif)

*The present edition of selected works of John Wyclif, English and Latin, was undertaken by the Delegates of the University Press at the earnest instance of the late Canon Shirley, who devoted the best part of ten years of a life, alas! Too short, to the study of the works and the age of the English.*

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