

## THREE EARLY TREATISES ON THE CHURCH

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IN THE encyclical *Satis Cognitum*, Pope Leo XIII observes that, since Christ instituted and formed the Church, it is of capital importance in any discussion of its nature and constitution to know just what His will in the matter really was: "Ecclesiam instituit formavitque Christus Dominus; propterea natura illius cum quaeritur, caput est nosse quid Christus voluerit quidque reapse effecerit."<sup>1</sup> All the important elements of the Church as we know it today appear in the Gospel pages themselves. Christ's favorite expression, "the Kingdom of heaven," indicates the plan of God's design for the salvation of men not only individually but socially. The Church is but the incarnation of that social plan. What Christ meant the Church to be appears not only in the parables and in such illuminating words as His "render unto Caesar . . ." but also in His whole manner of acting, in His gathering of the disciples into one co-operative group, and in His own personal direction of that group. And the Gospels themselves make it clear that, in His personal direction of the apostolic group, Christ transmitted to them much more than appears in the written record.

Christ's idea of the Church received further clarification in the inspired interpretation which is furnished by the words and actions of St. Paul, partly preserved for us in the Pauline Epistles. Later, the Fathers of the early Christian Church, in commenting on the words of Christ and St. Paul, clarified the doctrine of the Kingdom still further; and by applying it to the circumstances of their day they put more of the living tradition of the Church into their writings. St. Irenaeus and St. Cyprian excelled in this service; St. Augustine excelled even more. "Doctor of Grace" is universally recognized as Augustine's well merited title. But many authorities are of the opinion that he may, with equal justice, be acclaimed "Doctor of Ecclesiology."<sup>2</sup> Hugh of St. Victor is generally recognized as the one who, among the early medieval Scholastics, contributed most to the growth of ecclesiological doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> Cavallera, *Thesaurus Doctrinae Catholicae* (Paris, 1920), n. 274.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Portalié, "Augustin (saint)," *DTC*, I, 2408.

But only the elements exist in these great writers. Neither the Gospels, nor the Pauline Epistles, nor St. Augustine, nor Hugh of St. Victor furnish us with well defined treatises on the Church. We look in vain in the Master of the Sentences and in St. Thomas for a systematization of their ideas on the Church.

The treatise *De Ecclesia*, it is now clear, had its beginnings as a separate treatise in the early fourteenth century. It is the object of the present article to sketch the circumstances which led to these beginnings, and to try to seize the viewpoint and the surroundings which gave their own characteristic coloring to the first specifically ecclesiological treatises.

Before the Council of Trent, treatises on the Church were still few: Archbishop Giacomo Capocci's *De Regimine Christiano*; Wyclif's *De Ecclesia*; the latter's satellite treatise from the pen of Hus; Torquemada's great *Summa de Ecclesia*, which may be regarded as the orthodox fruit of the struggles of the conciliar movement; and Cardinal Pole's *Pro Ecclesiasticae Unitatis Defensione*. The present study will deal with the first three. Although more than a century elapsed between the first and the third, they are, as David S. Schaff has pointed out,<sup>3</sup> products of the same new period in the history of ecclesiological thought which opened with the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII. Men like Pierre Dubois, Marsilio of Padua, and a host of pamphleteers were led to scrutinize anew the ecclesiastical institution which had developed through more than a millenium and had in medieval times grown highly centralized. The treatises of Capocci, Wyclif, and Hus were the most ambitious fruits of that scrutiny.

#### GIACOMO CAPOCCI

Under the title, "Le plus ancien traité de l'Église," M. Arquillière published at Paris in 1926 the *De Regimine Christiano* of Giacomo Capocci, who is also known as James of Viterbo.<sup>4</sup> This was a challenge to those who saw in the *Summa de Ecclesia* of Cardinal John Torquemada, O.P., the first treatise on the Church,<sup>5</sup> or who attributed

<sup>3</sup> *The Church*, by John Hus, translated with notes and an introduction by David S. Schaff (New York, 1915), p. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> H.-X. Arquillière, *Le plus ancien traité de l'Église, Jacques de Viterbe, De Regimine Christiano*, Étude des sources et édition critique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1926).

<sup>5</sup> M. d'Herbigny, *Theologica de Ecclesia* (Paris, 1920), I, 9.

to this treatise a post-Reformation origin.<sup>6</sup> M. Arquillière, however, would appear to have justice on the side of his claim. Capocci's treatise antedates both Torquemada and Bellarmine, and it is, as the following pages will show, truly a treatise *De Ecclesia*. It is, moreover, improbable that any earlier document will be unearthed with equal claim to be considered such a treatise.<sup>6<sup>bis</sup></sup> Yet it must not be forgotten that there did exist, prior to Capocci, the great body of ecclesiological doctrine to which reference has already been made.

The *De Regimine* appeared at a time when ecclesiological ideas were passing through a crisis. The introduction of Aristotle's works into the closed world of medieval thought about the middle of the thirteenth century changed the whole course of theological development. About 1260, a Latin translation of the *Politics* of Aristotle appeared. It exercised a deep influence on the political thinkers of the day by leading them to the concept of Church and State as separate entities.<sup>7</sup> Christian thinkers through the centuries had distinguished the two powers in Christendom, the spiritual and the temporal. But they had not carried this distinction to the point of seeing in Christendom two separate societies, founded on different principles and functioning side by side, the Church and the State. They were accustomed, rather, to see in Christendom the Mystical Body of Christ, which is one, and in which each of the two powers functioned in its own way. Thus there was a theoretic basis for the confusion which, in its practical consequences, is stressed by Carlyle.<sup>8</sup> Just as Christian thought did not separate theology from philosophy or mark out clearly the domains of reason and faith, so there was a prevailing tendency to look upon grace as absorbing nature and to consider the supernatural Kingdom of Christ as transcending mere natural authority even in its own proper sphere. A defective understanding of St. Augustine may well

<sup>6</sup> J. de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique au XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1914), p. 289.

<sup>6<sup>bis</sup></sup> Dr. Joseph C. Fenton of Catholic University has, however, communicated the information that Moneta of Cremona, O.P., in his *Summa contra Catharos et Waldenses* (1241), has much ecclesiological material. The Carmelite Thomas Netter's fifteenth-century treatises are also frequently mentioned.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. Lecler, "L'Idée de séparation entre l'Église et l'État," *Études*, CCV (1930), 669.

<sup>8</sup> *A History of Medieval Political Theory*, IV (London, 1922), 1; cf. J. Rivière, *Le problème de l'Église et l'État au temps de Philippe le Bel* (Louvain, 1926), p. 371.

have been the source from which this tendency in the thinking of the period derived.<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle's *Politics*, with its concept of Church and State as distinct societies, made a vivid and deep impression on the medieval mind. Aristotle represented the State as the supreme society, subject to no other, sufficient in itself, the end of the individual and of the family and of the other human groups. In the light of the experience of the Greek commonwealths, he developed the State's natural right to existence, its powerful position in human affairs, the thoroughly subordinate position of the Church.

These ideas came to medieval thinkers as a tremendous contrast to the ideas which ruled the world in which they lived. The imperial papacy was then at the height of its power. The administration of the Church had been centralized to an extent unknown in previous centuries. Some ecclesiastical theorists were even asserting an absolute authority for the Church in both the temporal and the spiritual spheres. St. Thomas was the first great theologian to employ the political wisdom of Aristotle and incorporate what was true in it into the larger unity of Christian thinking. Like Aristotle, St. Thomas proclaimed the natural independence of the State; but unlike Aristotle, who knew of no supernaturally established Church, St. Thomas maintained that the Church was a perfect society in its own higher sphere.

But simple statements of the limits of the Church's power were not sufficient in the brief and fierce struggle which brought the great Boniface VIII into conflict with Philip the Fair of France, and with the legists of his government. The spirit of nationalism was beginning to emerge upon the medieval scene. The secular power was recurring to the Roman idea of sovereignty and protesting against the political tutelage which circumstances had compelled the medieval Pontiffs to adopt, and which some theorists of the papal Curia were commencing to regard as essential.<sup>10</sup>

In the political conflict which ensued, Capocci's treatise occupies a very definite place. He stands as the peer of Aegidius Romanus among the ablest defenders of that papal absolutism which was passing. But it is not with his position in the political struggle that we are now

<sup>9</sup> Arquillière, *op. cit.*, p. 41, n. 1; p. 45, n. 4.

<sup>10</sup> For an admirable discussion of this conflict from the doctrinal viewpoint, see J. Rivière, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 8).

concerned. What concerns this present study is the fact that, when Capocci decided to examine the nature of the Kingdom of the Church before going on to examine the power of its King,<sup>11</sup> he broke new ground and became the founder of a new branch in theology, or better, the compiler who for the first time assembled into one treatise what theology has to say about the nature of the Church.

It was, for Capocci, a very natural move. Once the *Politics* of Aristotle had called attention to the distinction between the two societies, civil and ecclesiastical, it was inevitable that theologians should speculate on the nature and constitution of each and on their interrelation, particularly at a time when the ecclesiastical society was attacked in what many regarded as its essentials. It was not enough to collect the principles underlying the supremacy of papal power. The larger and more important question of what the Church is loomed in the background of all this controversy, and was destined to remain long after the complete destruction of the papal supremacy as understood by many of its ardent medieval defenders. Capocci realized the existence of the larger question and its import. Disciple of St. Thomas and adopting with him the fundamental Aristotelian principles, he was conscious of the lack of development of the theory about the Church. And there can be little doubt that there was added to this awareness the prodding of contemporary regalist fanatics.

The natural reaction to the extreme claims put forth by proponents of papal absolutism was an equally extreme affirmation of royal (or imperial) authority, to which the Church itself should be subordinated. The anonymous *Disputatio inter Clericum et Militem* and *Rex Pacificus*, which appeared about the time of the *De Regimine Christiano*, are examples of such reaction. Only twenty years later came the *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilio of Padua and John of Jandun, developing the reaction even more radically. Starting with a statement of Aristotle's principles, they conclude to the subjection of all clergy to the civil power, to the absence of any real jurisdiction among them, to their incapacity to possess property, and to the illegitimacy of any monarchical papacy. Such conclusions would strip from the Church not only the borrowed splendor of direct temporal power in international affairs but also many of the essential features of its divine constitution. It was the challenge

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Arquillière, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

of such excesses as these which led Capocci to undertake the task which is now his claim to a unique renown.

His originality lay in his effort to establish the nature of the Church as an independent society and the basis of its power, before going on to discuss the power of the Church's ruler, which was the principal stake in the struggle then going on. In the originality of his initial synthesis we may behold the origins of our present treatise *De Ecclesia*. The first steps in an important field are ever interesting. As we follow them we shall find that Capocci's effort was not that of a mediocre talent.

Archbishop Giacomo Capocci, who died in 1308, was a member of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. He was Master at the University of Paris for many years, before becoming successively Archbishop of Benevento and Naples. His *De Regimine Christiano* appeared in 1302,<sup>12</sup> in the midst of the struggle between Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII (1296-1303). The treatise is not long and is divided into two parts. The second part is taken up with the discussion of the relation between the papal and royal powers; this, as has been mentioned, was the immediate point at issue in the contest. The shorter first part—fifty-eight octavo pages—contains Capocci's presentation of the nature of the Church; this alone concerns us now.

In a brief dedication Capocci inscribes his treatise to Boniface VIII and makes it clear that he is a devoted servant of the papacy (p. 85). Then follows the Introduction. Capocci reveals his own awareness that he is breaking new ground. The earlier doctors of the Church ("luminaria mundi") had contented themselves with a mere assertion of their ecclesiological position (p. 87). The errors of the day now required a more formal treatment, which Capocci will endeavor to give "ex veridicis scripture fontibus" (p. 88). Although only the Scriptures are mentioned here as the sources from which the author will draw, we shall find him in fact using other sources as well.

Capocci first considers the Church as a Kingdom. The term "regnum," he notes, is properly applied to the greatest of the three societies (domestic, municipal, national) to which man's social nature gives existence. Holy Scripture, however, applies the same title to

<sup>12</sup> All the ensuing page references made parenthetically in the text refer to Arquillière's edition.

the Church; and rightly so, for the Church is a true society, called into being not by nature but by the vocation of grace (pp. 89 ff.). "Dicitur enim ecclesia, id est, convocatio, Deo ipsam convocante et congregante per gratiam" (p. 94). This call of divine grace to His Church constitutes a more special intervention of God than even the constitution of the Jewish theocratic kingdom (p. 101). The Church is a true kingdom, embracing many peoples and nations. It is, in its own order, a true perfect society, because it possesses all the means necessary for the spiritual life and for leading men to the eternal life in heaven which is its goal; for this reason it is called also the Kingdom of Heaven (p. 95).

The Kingdom which is the Church has Christ for its King. Christ is King because, as omnipotent God, He has subject to Him every creature, even those who are His subjects unwillingly. In addition, God made Man, Christ possesses a Kingdom into which are gathered all the faithful who believe in Him. This Kingdom of the faithful has two parts, the militant Church ("militaris ecclesia") and the triumphant Church, which comprises the angels and saints. Both of these are united in allegiance to their common King and in pursuit of a common end.

Opposed to this Kingdom of faith is the Kingdom of the world ("regnum terrenum"), which is rightly called the devil's kingdom and embraces wicked men as well as the fallen angels. These two kingdoms differ as widely as humility differs from pride (p. 97), but, so far as men in this present life are concerned, their membership is not mutually exclusive. On the threshing floor of the Church are straws as well as good grain, until the divine winnower shall come in the end to separate them. But the opposition between the two realms, manifest in the beginning in the episode of Cain and Abel, endures unbroken.

Although the Kingdom of the Church is built on faith, it is an external Kingdom; for it possesses and must use external, temporal things. Christ its King is a real King; and the Pope, His Vicar, is a real king. It is a perfect society in the supernatural order just as the temporal kingdom is in the natural order. Capocci buttresses this conception of the Church mainly by quotations from Scripture and St. Augustine, and makes it the backbone of his treatise. Into the further refinements of the doctrine of the Kingdom, with which very

modern treatises *De Ecclesia* have made us familiar, Capocci does not go. He is concerned with inculcating that distinction between the two kingdoms—the ecclesiastical and the temporal—which is of such cardinal importance.

The remainder of the ecclesiological first part of the *De Regimine* is devoted to the four notes of the Church, taken from the Creed of the First Council of Constantinople (381), “. . . unam, sanctam, catholicam, et apostolicam ecclesiam.” These chapters constitute the first extended development of the “notes of the Church” in extant theological literature. It is to be noted, however, that Capocci’s treatment of them is not in the least apologetic, as we understand the word today. He is concerned to portray the objective constitution of the Church, rather than to identify, among several rival claimants, which is the true Church. We would say today that he presents those characteristics *quae sunt*, rather than *quatenus sunt*, notes of the true Church.

That the Catholic Church of Capocci’s day was the true Church of Christ was so generally admitted that only once does he show any tendency to offer proof of it. He opposes the universality of the Catholic Church to the narrow bounds of the heretical conventicles in a single sentence: “Catholica autem dicitur ecclesia id est universalis. Non enim sicut conventicula hereticorum, in aliquibus regionum partibus, coarctatur; sed per totam terrarum orbem dilatata diffunditur” (p. 123). This passing remark, together with one other in the same off-hand manner, is the sum of Capocci’s apologetics in the first part of his treatise. His practical object is an apologetic, not for the Church itself but for the papal power which the regalists (who were Catholics) had attacked. His presentation of the four notes is therefore speculative and theological, not properly apologetic. Even the difficulties which he urges against the true doctrine of the Church’s unity are of a speculative and biblical origin (pp. 114 f.). And throughout his discussion of the four notes we find dialectical reasoning mingled freely with arguments from revelation.

Capocci’s treatment of the unity of the Church offers striking illustration of this method. He proves that the Church is one by the simple observation that every multitude and every community, precisely because they are multitude and community, are one. He adds that, if we



wish to speak accurately, we should speak of its "union" rather than of its "unity": "Igitur, cum ecclesia sit multitudo quedam, magis proprie dicitur unita, quam una et eius connexio magis proprie dicitur unio quam unitas" (p. 107). The whole proof of his main point is complete with these statements, except for the remark, later made in passing, that the Lord manifested the unity of the Church when He appointed Peter to be its one head (p. 117).

Capocci then proceeds to philosophical and theological considerations of the causes and modes ("per quid et qualiter") of the unity of the Church. What effects this unity among the multitudes from various nations and centuries who are gathered into the Church? The formal cause of this unity is constituted by the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The Blessed Trinity is the efficient cause. The unification of the Church is attributed, by appropriation, to the eternal Father as the principle of all being; or to the Son who, as Head of the Church, gathers His members into one living organism; or to the Holy Spirit who is Infinite Love, since love is the common life of the Church (pp. 107 ff.).

The unity of the Church, in itself, is threefold. It is, first of all, a unity "of totality," one body composed of many members, who are drawn from many different nations and ages. Secondly, it is a unity "of conformity"; the common virtues of faith, hope, and charity, along with the common practice of the works which proceed from these virtues, effect this unity among the diverse members who make up the Church-Body. Thirdly, the Church is one with the unity "of attribution." By this Capocci means the unity of a common end and destiny ("Omnes enim fideles attributionem habent ad unum finem, qui est salus et beatitudo eterna. . .") as well as that of a common Head and supernatural principle of life ("... et ad unum principium et caput quod est tota trinitas secundum rationem influentie, sed specialiter homo Christus secundum convenientiam nature et gratie" [pp. 109 ff.]).

In this triple unity there unfolds a triple diversity which facilitates the unified action of the Church and contributes to her perfection and beauty in unity. There is diversity of duties in the several members, diversity of dignity in the gradations of ecclesiastical office, and diversity of degree in the spiritual perfection of different souls. There is, in

addition, the further diversity of many different rites and customs. All of these combine to produce that unity in variety which is the perfection of unity, and which is the Church's great strength (pp. 114 ff.).

The Church, therefore, is one and indivisible, as Christ is one. There is one Christ and one Church, one Head and one body, one bridegroom and one bride, one shepherd and one fold, one King and one Kingdom, one ruler and one people. For the Church is Christ's seamless robe, the one ark of the true Noah, in which is safety for all under one helmsman, and outside of which lies destruction. He who breaks from this unity breaks from the Church and for him there is neither grace nor remission of sins nor spiritual life. Outside this unity neither the reception of the sacraments nor good works can avail for salvation. Wherefore, he who would rend the unity of the Church is justly known as infidel and enemy, and will be punished in time and in eternity (pp. 117 f.).

To prove the catholicity of the Church, Capocci relies mostly upon the words of Scripture and of the Fathers (pp. 122 ff.). The celebrated text of Malachy (1:11) proves the universality of the Church as transcending that of the synagogue. St. Isidore is quoted to establish both the catholic destiny of the Church and her actual realization of that destiny in spreading over the entire world. Thus the Church is universal "quantum ad loca." She is also universal "quantum ad conditiones hominum," embracing all classes of mankind—Gentiles and Jews, Greeks and barbarians, slaves and freemen, men and women, the wealthy and the poor, learned and ignorant, the eloquent and the simple ("oratores et ydiotas"). The Church is also universal "quantum ad tempus." While Isidore describes the Church as beginning on Pentecost, she really goes back to Abel, although not in all the fullness of her perfect formation. Her catholicity is also "quantum ad status" because she embraces, in one way or another, both angels and men, both *viatores* and *comprehensores*; "quantum ad doctrinam" because she possesses all the truth which is necessary for the salvation of the entire race; "quantum ad remedium" because, with her seven sacraments, which constitute the one way unto the liberation of all souls, she offers to all men the remedies for all their spiritual ills and cures them: ". . . quia curat universaliter omnia omnium peccata, et omnium hominum continet sufficientia et universalia remedia" (p. 124).

The proof that the ecclesiastical kingdom is holy is constructed by Capocci in terms of three different definitions of sanctity, two taken from the Fathers, and the other from a false etymology of the Greek work for holy (*ἅγιος*) as if it meant a (privative) *γη* (sine terra).

The first of the patristic definitions is drawn from the Pseudo-Dionysius: "quod sanctitas est ab omni immunditia libera et perfecta et omnino immaculata munditia" (p. 129). In this sense the Church is holy because she is free from the two great impurities, sin and error. She is freed from sin by the grace of the sacraments, and from error, by her doctrines drawn from holy sources—the Scriptures, apostolic tradition, the Fathers, the Councils, and finally from reasonable and approved customs.

The other definition is threefold. Holiness means sprinkled with the blood of a victim (*sanguis—sanctus*); it means confirmed by a sanction (*sancire—sanctus*); it means what is dedicated to the divine service. The holiness of the Church follows from her sprinkling by the Blood of Jesus Christ, her confirmation by a divine sanction in grace and union with God, her dedication to God by internal and external worship. In this part, as in the former, the main emphasis is on the Fathers and Scripture.

The section on the apostolicity of the Church is the shortest of the four. The Kingdom of Christ is apostolic because it has its beginning and origin in the apostles, "quantum ad tempus gratie revelate" (p. 138). They were the first and greatest Christians. To them succeed the bishops and prelates: "quorum precipuo et primo, scil. Petro succedit primus prelatus et summus pontifex, universalis ecclesie pastor et rector" (p. 140). The Church is founded principally on Peter, who after Christ, nay, in place of Christ, is the Church's head and foundation stone (p. 142). These apostles were the sons of the prophets and patriarchs both carnally and in their office—to work for universal salvation. Therefore, the latter are also included in the title "apostolic." In the same way Apostolic Church is equivalent to Christian Church. The apostle is one sent; Christ is their sender, in addition to being the greatest of apostles sent by His Father.

In the long second part of the *De Regimine*, there are two sections which interest us. First of all, there is Capocci's original view on the ultimate reconciliation of the spiritual and temporal powers. He never

denies his contention that temporal power has its origin in a natural God-given right, but he denies that it can be formally perfect unless it has received the ratification and approbation of the spiritual power: "indiget etiam formatione ratificationis et approbationis per potestatem spiritualem" (p. 233). For Capocci the State has need of the Church if she is to reach her end. The union of the two powers under the hegemony of the Church alone can fulfil the divine plan.

Secondly, we are concerned with Capocci's treatment of the papacy. What is the Pope's power within the Church in his system, and how does he support his theories? First of all, as we have seen, Capocci employs the comparison taken from politics: the Church is a true kingdom and Christ is her King; His Vicar the Pope is also a true king (p. 95). In explaining this doctrine Capocci shows how all power in the Church derives from the power which Christ had, not as God (for the divine power as such is incommunicable) but as Man. This latter is twofold, sacerdotal and regal. The former includes the right to offer sacrifice, to offer public prayer, to preach, to administer the sacraments. Christ also communicated to the apostles and in particular to Peter the power of binding and loosing, i.e., judicial power. Now all judicial power is in a strict sense regal. In addition to the right of judging, the regal power includes among others the right to correct and punish, to make laws and administer the ecclesiastical benefices (p. 192). This regal spiritual power is superior to the sacerdotal. The priest is a mediator and a minister and has the dignity that befits his office. The king has the dignity of a cause. The regal spiritual power is, then, the supreme power among men.

Who have these various powers? Bishops and priests share the power of orders, equally so far as the real Body of Christ is concerned (i.e., they can all consecrate), unequally as regards the Mystical Body of Christ. Bishops are equal so far as orders are concerned but differ in power of jurisdiction. In this power there is a real hierarchy leading by degrees to the supreme Ruler, Christ and His Vicar. To prove that Peter was designated by Christ as His Vicar, Capocci brings forward not only the formal texts (Matt. 16:16; Luke 22:31; John 21:15) but also marshals all the minor texts which to an impartial observer signalize the preponderance of Peter in the Gospel narrative.

To the Pope's ecclesiastical power Capocci assigns no limits; the Pope has the fullness of spiritual regal power (p. 206). Although he rules various Churches through other pastors, he has the right to rule any other Church immediately. He has the plenitude of power; the other pontiffs have a part derived from his. He is the supreme judge of all Christians whatever their condition, dignity, or station, whereas he can be judged by no other. He can bestow all offices, benefices, and dignities of the Church (pp. 207-208). He is the supreme legislator. By divine right all are his subjects. ("Ab nulla alia potestate puri hominis limitatur, aut ordinatur aut judicatur.")

Archbishop Giacomo Capocci's theological vision was large, but it could not transcend the horizons set to it by his times. Indeed, in affirming the doctrine of direct papal supremacy in temporal matters he was lagging behind the clear-sighted John of Paris, O.P., and Dante Alighieri, to mention two of the greatest names among those of his contemporaries who solved more correctly the great problem at issue in that struggle between Church and State. Despite the fact that he is the champion of a lost cause, the influence of his work seems to have been considerable. He was used largely by the Pontifical theologians under John XXII, and indeed Pelayo incorporated his treatise bodily into his great work, *De Planctu Ecclesiae*. But his treatise was first of all intended for the men of his day and bears clearly the marks of the epoch. We have already noted that he has no practical apologetics. His treatise belongs rather to dogmatic than to fundamental theology, save, perhaps, for his thesis on the Primacy of Peter. Like his contemporaries, he loves dialectical reasoning and his exegesis is that of his time.

The main source of his doctrine is St. Augustine, whom he faithfully echoes in most points;<sup>13</sup> it is to be noted, however, that he takes no account of the circumstances in which Augustine's doctrine was elaborated. There is no trace of the Donatist struggle in his pages. And if the echoes of the struggles of the past are absent, premonitions of future struggles are totally lacking. Although Capocci obviously understands by the Church on earth a visible society ruled directly by men who hold Christ's place and power, he loves to dwell on the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Arquillère, *op. cit.*, "Étude critique des sources," pp. 34-48; 57-71.

sublime concept of the great invisible society of the elect and the angels. Nor does he hesitate to oppose to it the devil's society of bad men and fallen angels.

Capocci's dependence on the part of the little treatise of St. Thomas, *Expositio super Symbolo Apostolorum*, which deals with the Church, seems probable. Indeed, it is also probable that he inherits from Aquinas the Aristotelian doctrine of the natural right of the State—a doctrine which influences his whole thought. In a sense this work of St. Thomas may be considered the inspiration of the first treatise *De Ecclesia*.

#### JOHN WYCLIF

The fact that an author's conception of the Church is often colored by his personal convictions, and by the theological and political preoccupations of the moment, is clearly evidenced in the two authors whom we are now to consider, John Wyclif, the famous English heretic, and John Hus, his Bohemian disciple. Wyclif (*ca.* 1330–1384), a Yorkshire man, became prominent at the University of Oxford in the 1360's. At first, and for some time, he, like most of the doctors, had used university and papal influence to obtain advancement and revenues. In 1374, however, he became a theologian of the government party, and fell under the influence of John of Gaunt, the influential Duke of Lancaster, whose aim was to humiliate the Church.<sup>14</sup> This connection led Wyclif to publish opinions on dominion, borrowed from Archbishop Richard Fitzralph (d. 1360), which alarmed the papal curia; and on May 22, 1377, eighteen propositions, drawn principally from Wyclif's *De Civili Dominio*, were condemned. At the time, Wyclif met with no effective opposition in England because of court protection. The death of Gregory XI, whom Wyclif had dubbed a horrible devil, and the successive elections of Urban VI and Clement VII precipitated the Great Western Schism. This scandal seems to have helped turn Wyclif from a critic of the ecclesiastical system into something like a rebel against it. During the year 1378 he put together his *De Ecclesia*,<sup>15</sup> in which he pays lip service to Urban VI, but actually seeks to undermine the whole papal position.

<sup>14</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXIX, 422.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. H. B. Workman, "Wyclif," Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh, 1921), XII, 816.

Wyclif is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in the history of the development of ecclesiology. He is, of course, unmistakably heretical, and in many respects he caricatures the traditional teaching of the Church. Moreover, his whole conception of the Church is vitiated both by the definition which he adopts and clings to with great tenacity, and also by the obtruding intensity of his dissatisfaction with the ecclesiastical organization of his day. But the very keenness of his defense of his wrong opinion served to throw light on the important truth that the life of the Church is real even in those who will not be saved. Moreover, Wyclif's rigid doctrine and his vehemence against the Roman Church were destined to pass, by way of Hus, into Reformation thought.

Despite its importance and its bulk, Wyclif's *De Ecclesia* scarcely merits the title of a treatise on the Church.<sup>16</sup> Capocci had far more doctrine in the short first part of his book, *De Regimine Christiano*. Moreover, the structure of Wyclif's work is extremely loose. Chapters VII–XVI were written at the request of the government to support its bloody violation of the right of sanctuary in Westminster Abbey on August 11, 1378.<sup>17</sup> Wyclif took the occasion to give his views on ecclesiastical privileges in general. In the concluding chapters (XVII–XXIII), he undertakes to refute a contemporary reply to some of the opinions he had expressed in the earlier chapters. His opponent is not named; it is merely stated that the objections of a certain doctor, given in Scholastic form, will serve to clarify the points at issue (p. 388). In answering these objections Wyclif goes off into lengthy discussions of abstruse theological points which have little or no connection with the subject matter. Moreover, his answers add very little to what he has said before; he merely repeats his former arguments, or, when his adversary has scored a good point, he resorts to subtleties or abuse. At any rate, he does succeed in making his own position very clear, and he reveals his tendencies by striking examples.

The first six chapters are the most interesting from the standpoint of ecclesiology, though even in these one is disappointed. Wyclif is

<sup>16</sup> J. Wyclif, *Tractatus de Ecclesia*, edited with an introduction by Johann Loserth (London, 1886); the treatise runs to 587 large octavo pages. All the ensuing page references parenthetically made in the text are to this edition by Loserth.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Loserth, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. xiv; Workman (*art. cit.*) limits this digression to Chapters VII–XII, in which case Chapters XIII–XVI would be an epilogue.

always on the defensive, constantly engaged in answering objections to his own doctrinal novelties. As a matter of fact, the only positive part of his whole work is in the first chapter, in chapter XX (an exegesis of Proverbs 31), and in a section of his treatment of the Westminster affair.

Wyclif begins his treatise with a definition of the Church as the congregation of all who are predestined: "Quamvis autem ecclesia dicitur multipliciter in scriptura, suppono quod sumatur ad propositum pro famosiori, scil., congregacioni omnium predestinatorum" (p. 3); "ipsa [ecclesia catholica] est omnes predestinati presentes, preteriti, et futuri" (p. 5). This definition is the sustaining premise of the whole treatise. One who is foreknown (*prescitus*) does not and cannot belong to the Church; he is not a living member of Christ's Body; he has not eaten that Body, i.e., he has not faith (p. 4). Wyclif attempts to sustain the definition by citations from St. Augustine, Hugh of St. Victor, St. John Chrysostom, and also by several texts from Scripture (pp. 72 ff.). In fact, with his characteristic arrogance he claims for it the patronage of all the doctors: "Et eadem est sententia sanctorum doctorum qui seipsos intelligunt in ista materia."

According to Wyclif, predestination gives its subject a deep-seated grace which he can never lose, even though he be for a time in mortal sin: "...radicalem gratiam a qua non possunt excidere, licet ad tempus priventur fluente gratia" (p. 75). The foreknown may be in the state of grace for a time, but, since they lack the grace of predestination, they are never loved by Christ as much as the predestinate, no matter how criminal the latter may be at the moment (p. 80). Indeed, the predestinate are never really criminal; for, although they may lose faith and grace "secundum presentem iusticiam," they have infused faith "secundum gratiam predestinacionis" (p. 417). The foreknown, while in the state of grace, may form a "tugurium estivale" of Christ, but they are never part of the Church. In fact, Wyclif shows but little esteem for the passing state of grace of the foreknown, and at times he seems to doubt whether they have real grace at all: "Dicas quod regulariter fides infunditur in baptismo; quod ego credo de omni predestinato rite baptizato." Later he affirms that only the predestinate are united by right faith: "...per rectam fidem, eo quod omnes alii continue peccato indelebili peccant mortaliter et sic sunt



perpetuo heretici" (p. 416). It is, therefore, scandalous and slanderous to say that the foreknown form part of the Church; for then the Church would be the object of God's intense hate (p. 122).

From his definition of the Church, as from a fundamental principle, Wyclif draws seven conclusions, which make up his personal teaching on the Church. In three of these conclusions he insists directly or indirectly on the idea, which is at the same time a program, that no man may call himself the head of the universal Church, or even of a particular Church (pp. 5, 17, 21). In two others he is likewise concerned with the headship of the Church; in one, he interprets the Bull *Unam Sanctam* (p. 14), and in the other he defines the actual position of the Pope. The remaining two conclusions deal with the unity of the Church and with the fact that outside the Church there is no salvation. The last-named point is quickly despatched (p. 11); indeed, granted Wyclif's definition of the Church, it needs no proof.

Wyclif insists a great deal on the unity of the Church. The three parts of the Church—militant, sleeping, triumphant—form but one Church (pp. 7 f.); the angels and all the predestined from Abel down belong to the one Church (pp. 69, 389 ff., 437). The external form of the Church is predestination considered from the side of the divine will; the inward form is the same predestination as participated by the individual. To this union of the elect, the Body of Christ, Wyclif opposes the union of the foreknown, the body of the devil. The outward form of this latter union is the foreknowledge of God, and the inward form is the sin of final impenitence. In this fashion, Wyclif's concept of the Church dictates his concept of her unity. And so great is his insistence on this concept of unity that one feels that he is using it more as a weapon against papal supremacy than for its intrinsic value.

To prove that no man may call himself head of the universal Church Wyclif alleges various reasons: Christ is the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18); moreover, the Church is not a monster with two heads (here he cites the *Unam Sanctam*); again, if a mere man were head of the Church, he would be superior to Christ and to God. But his fundamental argument is drawn from his definition of the Church: barring a special revelation, no one can know with certainty that he is even a member of the Church, nor that others are members; therefore, a fortiori no one can call himself head of the Church (p. 5).

If the Roman Pontiff is predestined, and if he discharges his pastoral functions well, then he is the head of as much of the Church as is subject to him. In one place, Wyclif makes the Pope head merely of a particular Church, and says that it seems probable that he might have a superior (e.g., the head of the Church of Asia, if the latter happened to rule, in conformity with the law of Christ, a greater number of people); he adds, however, that he personally prefers to grant the superiority of the Pope, and not contend about it (pp. 30-31). In another place (p. 19), he is willing to extend the Pope's headship to the whole militant Church, "cum clerus jam peregrinus consentit in eum ut capitaneum"; but he makes the significant reservation, "unless the opposite is clear." At all events, no constitution, election, or acceptance can make a man a member of the Church, let alone its head. The one and the other depend on predestination; a man may be reputed to be Christ's Vicar, and be in reality a horrendous devil (p. 366). And from the other point of view, "Ubi cumque terrarum clericus vel laycus post ascensionem edificat ecclesiam sanctam cujus est membrum, ipse est tam Christi quam Petri vicarius" (p. 366).

In discussing the statement of the *Unam Sanctam*, "Subesse Romano Pontifici omni humane nature est de necessitate salutis," Wyclif maintains that the Pontiff in question is not the Pope but Jesus Christ Himself. And to the objection that this was not Boniface's meaning, he replies that no Christian should interpret Boniface as meaning himself, since that would be blasphemy. The universal Church is not subject to any Vicar of Peter as to its head (p. 30). Again, no one may maintain that the salvation of any Christian depends on a reprobate Pope. The Pope's influence depends on how far he is pleasing to God. One does not have to believe in the Vicar of Christ in order to be saved; one does not even have to believe that the Pope is head of a particular Church. Saints hesitated to call themselves members of the Church, let alone its head (p. 67). Therefore, it is right to conclude that men should consult the Scriptures before obeying the Pope; for the life and teaching of Christ therein portrayed are the glass by which heretics may be discerned (p. 41).

Extending this teaching, Wyclif declares that the clergy should not be honored unless they prove themselves worthy of honor by a good life. We may legitimately resist, and refuse payments to, evil ec-

clesiastical authorities "querentes quae sua sunt" (p. 49). Prelates are to be judged by their works (p. 129); those who have a care for dignity, primacy, and honor, and not for the observance of Christ's law are out of the Church (p. 102); we have an obligation to pay dues only to those who by their works show that they rightly claim dues; indeed, unless the clergy honor Holy Scripture in word and work they forfeit all their privileges (p. 258).

Wyclif baldly states that the Pope can err "tam in execucione clavium quam eciam in via morum" (p. 353); in fact, Gregory XI, "the horrendous fiend," approved four cardinal heresies and condemned four propositions of Catholic faith. In matters of doubt, therefore, the only authority is the Scripture; Pope and synod are infallible only inasmuch as their doctrine is based thereon (p. 563).

Moreover, Wyclif maintains that the Roman Church is not confined to Rome, to the Pope and the Cardinals: wherever there is a faithful Christian, there is the Roman Church (pp. 14, 15). The Catholic Church is called Roman for three reasons: (1) Christ knew that the nations which made up the Roman Empire were to be substituted for the Jews; (2) a multitude of martyrs suffered at Rome; (3) to show that *fides formata*, and not place or antiquity, is the foundation of the Church (pp. 15, 16).

For the Roman Curia itself Wyclif has nothing but hatred. It is venal; the Pope and the Cardinals are in league with England's enemies; they are blinded by avarice (p. 352). The court of Rome is a nest of mischievous foxes, whence poison flows to all parts of Christendom. By their sly traditions they have enclosed their nest with a triple barrier: first, they place themselves above all human judgment; secondly, they make it a matter of salvation that all Christians should be their subjects; finally, they claim the right of ruling other Churches (p. 357). They call themselves "'servos servorum Dei,' licet sint in opere et per consequens in nomine reali servi precipui patris mendacii et mendacissima membra dyaboli" (p. 130). Wyclif's hate for the Roman Church in particular and for the hierarchical organization of the Church in general is never more than thinly veiled, and frequently appears in all its vigor. Indeed, his *De Ecclesia* is more an appeal for reform than a treatise on the Church.

There remain but two points of importance to be discussed: Wyclif's

theory of ecclesiastical privilege, and his solution of the difficulties that derive therefrom.

He maintains, first of all, that there is no true privilege of the Church which is not derived from her Head, Christ Jesus (p.168). Consequently, the Church has no true privilege "*nisi de quanto fundatur, docetur, vel elicitur, ex scriptura*" (p. 173). The greatest privilege for the Church would be to be divested of temporal possessions that she might run freely after Christ in evangelical poverty (p.176). Endowment of the Church is evil; it subjects clerics to wordly cares, causes quarrels, and induces men who are unfit for office to seek it. It is one of the greatest sins ("*excommunicatissime peccant*") to take away "*antiquissima et validissima privilegia, instituta a Christo, [quae] steterunt in paupertate altissima.*" Wyclif has a particular animus against perpetual endowments; for, in addition to being against Christian humility and trust in God, they tend to secularize the Church by troubling it with money quarrels and by giving it a false sense of security (pp. 289 f.).

For the endowment question Wyclif has a radical solution. As a foundation for his teaching, he vigorously combats the idea that ecclesiastical power extends to civil and secular affairs; this is a capital heresy, even though it is held by recalcitrant prelates (p. 300). Indeed, "*minus remotum est a sacerdocio Christi recipere a dominis temporalibus alternatum usum uxorum suarum secundum copulam carnalem quam quod recipiant a seculari dominio dominacionem civilem*" (p. 365)—a statement made apropos of the endowment of the Roman Church (the "poisoning of the Church") by Constantine. From this position he advances by degrees to his doctrine of disendowment and subjection to the State. He suggests the confiscation of Church property and its distribution "*inter seculares dominos.*" This would be the remedy for the ills of Christendom; wars would cease, and the infidels would be converted (p. 290). The Church, which once abandoned Christ's privilege of poverty for Caesar's of endowment, may and should now do the opposite (p. 381). If the clergy abuse their temporalities, Wyclif is sure that the king may withdraw them; many English kings have done so, and no open condemnation has been forthcoming (p. 330).

He then proceeds to propose that the king should each year examine

the disposition of Church goods and make what changes he sees fit (pp. 385 f.). The idea that recourse should be had to the Pope for sanction of this measure is ridiculed. If the king had no power over the goods of the clergy, a fourth of the realm would be withdrawn from his rule (p. 338). Wyclif's opinion regarding the Westminster privilege throws light on this doctrine. The interpretation of the privilege lies solely with the king. If the Pope is consulted, he may humbly give what he considers to be the scriptural doctrine in the matter; but he is not to be obeyed "nisi de quanto sentenciam suam fundavit in scriptura sacra" (p. 228). With regard to this power of the king, Wyclif is entirely explicit in his *De Potestate Papae*: "Expurgescat igitur rex prudentia et non permittat maniacos per privilegia consumere bona sua et bona pauperum regni sui, nam reducere ad statum primevum ecclesiam regi principaliter spectat ad suum officium" (p. 379). Moreover, Wyclif's *De Officio Regis*, the companion volume to his *De Ecclesia*, develops this doctrine at length. All his arguments are framed to convince the king that he should consider himself the supreme head of the Church in his own dominions. He is to superintend the work of the bishops, and see that each parish has a true theologian as its priest. As the editors of this work remark, "Henry VIII himself could have asked no more."<sup>18</sup>

Wyclif's hatred for the Roman Pontiff is even more thinly veiled in the *De Potestate Papae* than it is in the *De Ecclesia*. At that, one feels that he is not as outspoken as he would like to be. He denies that papal jurisdiction extends to the whole Church (p. 95); Peter had no more power than the rest of the apostles. He maintains that the primacy of the Roman See is of human origin (p. 178); it dates from the endowment of that See by Constantine. He then draws up a catalogue of the resemblances between the Popes and Antichrist, and concludes that any Pope who claims to be the head of the whole Church is Antichrist (pp. 120 f., 189 f.). He recalls the various historic disputes for the papal throne, and ascribes them all to avarice and a desire for worldly honor. He also draws an argument from the myth of a female pope, a certain Agnes. And at the end of the book he summarizes his attack in a list of the twelve abuses of the papacy; this is

<sup>18</sup> J. Wyclif, *De Officio Regis*, edited by A. W. Pollard and C. Sayle (London, 1887), p. xxvii; *De Potestate Papae*, edited by J. Loserth (London, 1908).

his doctrine of the false Pope. But there is a true Pope, too; he need not be bishop of Rome, nor does he hold office by election. The office is conferred by God alone; and this Pope is the holiest and most righteous of men; yet, should he sin, even he would be degraded (pp. 195, 367).

As is well known, Wyclif has no great opinion of St. Thomas or the other Scholastics; but he professes great reverence for the Scripture, for the early ages of the Church, and particularly for St. Augustine, from whom he claims to have taken the definition of the Church that is the foundation of all his doctrine.<sup>18<sup>bis</sup></sup> What are we to think of this claim? First of all, there is no doubt that this definition is found in St. Augustine. It is equally clear that when St. Augustine limits the Church to the predestinate, he is considering either the Church triumphant after the Last Judgment or the Church *secundum praescientiam divinam*. It must be admitted, too, that Wyclif does the same; he frequently distinguishes those who are in the Church "secundum presentem justiciam" from the predestined (pp. 408, 409; cf. p. 125); and he maintains with St. Augustine that a foreknown priest can administer the sacraments with profit to the faithful (pp. 448, 456). Again, many of his finest conceptions about the Church owe their inspiration directly to the great African Doctor: the Church is a spiritual mother, associated with the God-Man in the spiritual rebirth of the faithful, as Eve was associated with Adam in the generation of the human race; God is our Father, the Church is our Mother; the Church is the Spouse of Christ, and their marriage was celebrated in the womb of Mary; the Church is the indivisible Body of Christ; God, in instituting the Church, did not tie His hands, but acts by His grace on those not yet within her fold—all these ideas are taken by Wyclif from St. Augustine.

And yet, despite the correctness of his distinctions, despite the fact that he has borrowed the fine phrases of St. Augustine, the Church portrayed by Wyclif is not at all that portrayed by St. Augustine. It will be possible here to stress only a few points, but they will serve to

<sup>18<sup>bis</sup></sup> F. Wiegand, *Doctrinengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Leipzig, 1919), p. 86, notes that in philosophy Wyclif had abandoned Occamism for Thomistic realism. He notes that Wyclif's heterodox opinions "konnten aber für die Kirche umso gefährlicher werden als sich Wiclif zugleich dem von der Kirche begünstigten thomistischen Realismus zugewandt hatte" (p. 87).

destroy any supposed similarity.<sup>19</sup> Wyclif would have us believe in a Church in which Scripture, as interpreted by the individual, is the ultimate norm of faith; St. Augustine stresses as a fundamental truth the living infallible *magisterium* of the Church; there is, for instance, his maxim: "Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholice Ecclesie commoveret auctoritas."<sup>20</sup> For Wyclif, the Roman Church is either an equivocal term or a source of evil to the universal Church; St. Augustine speaks of the dignity "Romane Ecclesie in qua semper apostolice cathedre viguit principatus";<sup>21</sup> "Inde rescripta venerunt; causa finita est."<sup>22</sup> According to Wyclif, the individual must judge by the works of his ecclesiastical superiors whether they are deserving of obedience or not; but St. Augustine demands obedience: "Pertineat ergo ad nos cura, ad vos obedientia."<sup>23</sup> Wyclif strives to strip ecclesiastical censures of all meaning; St. Augustine distinguishes between, and proclaims the force of, various ecclesiastical censures.<sup>24</sup>

For all his fidelity to a few of the formulas of St. Augustine, Wyclif is in complete divergence from him on fundamentals. By forcing certain sayings without regard for their context, he succeeds in falsifying the whole thought of St. Augustine, while at the same time appealing to his patronage. It is not strange, therefore, that in later life Wyclif abandoned many of the positions for which the great African ceaselessly fought. For instance, in his *De Eucharistia* (p. 113), Wyclif maintains that the validity of that sacrament is conditioned by the priest's acceptability to God; in other places he seems to deny the utility and necessity of prayer. Both these points are natural consequences of his system of rigid predestinationsim.

The *De Ecclesia*, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and especially his doctrines on the Eucharist led to Wyclif's retirement to Lutterworth. On becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay took vigorous measures against his subversive teaching. Twenty-four conclusions taken from his writings were condemned in May, 1382, at London, ten as heretical and fourteen as erroneous. With the aid of

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller treatment, cf. Portalié, *DTC*, I, 2408-16.

<sup>20</sup> *Contra epist. manich.*, c. 5, n. 6 (*PL*, XLII, 176).

<sup>21</sup> *Epist.* XLIII, c. 3, n. 7 (*PL*, XXXIII, 163).

<sup>22</sup> *Sermo CXXXI*, c. 10, n. 10 (*PL*, XXXVIII, 734).

<sup>23</sup> *Sermo CXLVI*, n. 1 (*PL*, XXXVIII, 796).

<sup>24</sup> *Post coll. ad Donat. liber*, c. 4, n. 6 (*PL*, XLIII, 656).

this condemnation, Courtenay within six months broke the hold which the Lollards, as Wyclif's followers were called, had obtained on Oxford. Wyclif himself seems to have been undisturbed, thanks to the protection of Gaunt. He died at Lutterworth on the last day of 1384. During his last years he wrote in his *Triialogus* a very comprehensive criticism of the Church.<sup>25</sup>

#### JOHN HUS

Wyclif's treatise *De Ecclesia* remained in manuscript until the nineteenth century. In England it exercised little influence. Lollardy, although crushed at Oxford, did spread, until it was forcibly repressed under Henry IV and Henry V. But the case was different in Bohemia. For five centuries John Wyclif was there regarded as a "fifth evangelist."<sup>26</sup> During his lifetime copies of his philosophical treatises were introduced, and his defense of realism against nominalism won the attention and favor of the professors at the University of Prague. His theological position was also known in Bohemia before Jerome of Prague, the companion of Hus, returned from England early in the fifteenth century. Wyclif's teaching soon divided the University; the Czech professors favored it, but the German professors rejected it. At the first formal discussion of the subject in 1403, the majority rejected forty-five propositions from Wyclif's works, including the twenty-four which had been condemned in England in 1382.

This condemnation did not prevent the spread and study of Wyclif's teaching. John Hus particularly became known as his zealous defender, although he refused to accept the name of Wyclifite. In 1408 the Archbishop of Prague ordered that all copies of Wyclif's treatises be submitted for examination. By this time the cause of Wyclif had become deeply involved in the cause of Czech nationalism at the University. Hus, who soon came to be looked upon as the leader of the anti-German faction, continued to study Wyclif and to embrace more and more of his views. He published works and preached sermons which were taken almost entirely from Wyclif. Nor did the burning

<sup>25</sup> *Cambridge Medieval History*, VII (Cambridge, 1932), 503.

<sup>26</sup> J. Loserth, *Hus und Wiclif*, Zur Genesis der husitischen Lehre (2nd ed. rev.; Munich and Berlin, 1925), p. 1; there is an English translation of the first edition by M. J. Evans (London, 1884).



by the Archbishop in 1410 of all the confiscated works of Wyclif and Hus's devotion to his master. Rather, he composed many works which were centos of Wyclif. "Although the other Czech professors abandoned Wyclif's writings 'as honeyed poison,' Hus still continued to bow before him as the 'master of deep thoughts.'"<sup>27</sup>

The *De Ecclesia* of Hus, composed in 1412-14, is considered his most important work. It has been stated, not without truth, that the work contains hardly a line—local coloring and polemics apart—which was not drawn from Wyclif's writings. Johann Loserth, who has written the definitive work on the relationship between Wyclif and Hus,<sup>28</sup> has proved that the Bohemian professor took from Wyclif his teaching on the sources of Christian faith, on the Church and its constitution, on papal power, on the priesthood, on Church government, on predestination and its consequences, on sin, on ecclesiastical and civil institutions, on the sacraments (with the doubtful exception of that on the Eucharist), on eschatology, on the national (particularist) church. What Wyclif wrote of England, Hus applies to Bohemia, the 'only change being that *Anglia* is deleted and *Boemia* inserted in its place. Hus's definition of the Church, of faith, of indulgence, of the sacraments, of heresy, etc., are taken word for word from Wyclif. It is not strange that one of the first nineteenth-century critics to become aware of this dependence wrote that Hus stole his whole theology from Wyclif.<sup>29</sup> As Dr. Loserth has proved, almost all of the first eight chapters of Hus's *De Ecclesia* are drawn from Wyclif's *De Ecclesia*, with some excerpts from Wyclif's *De Fide Catholica* and *De Christo et Adversario Antichristo*. In his second part (Chapters IX-XXIII), Hus answers his opponents by paragraphs taken from Wyclif's *De Potestate Papae*. As Hus was burned at Constance principally because of the *De Ecclesia*, it is true to say that he died as a Lollard.

Hus occasionally quotes from Czech authors but he never gives Wyclif as an authority. It is true that in medieval times authors were much more free in the use of materials drawn from others than is customary today. But the plagiarism of Hus has no parallel. David S.

<sup>27</sup> Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. note 26.

<sup>29</sup> A. Hausrath, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, VI, 17 ff.

Schaff, in the preface to his English translation of Hus's *De Ecclesia*, admits that "never did a man owe more to mortal teacher than Hus to John Wyclif."<sup>30</sup> Yet he affirms that Hus was not a servile imitator of Wyclif. To prove this he points out that Hus puts Wyclif's matter into new collocations; that he omits details of Wyclif's argument "where we would expect Hus to have drawn from his predecessor," that he omits many of the authors quoted by Wyclif; that he was well read in canon law and used it independently; and that he knew Augustine well. In view of the findings of Dr. Loserth, it must be admitted that not much even of this shadowy originality still persists. Schaff is on surer ground when he points out that Hus is clearer and more direct than Wyclif. From the polemical point of view the Bohemian undoubtedly has the merit of being less prolix. His compact volume of two hundred pages contains all the venom and specious arguments which Wyclif spreads over the thousand and more pages of the three tracts we have cited. As a consequence, the Czech is often more powerful as well as more insidious than his English prototype. This may be the merit of a *vulgarisateur*, but it made Hus's *De Ecclesia* what it was called at Constance: "a work which by its abundance of proofs combats the authority and plenary power of the Pope, no less than the Koran combats the Catholic faith."<sup>31</sup>

That Hus's opponents in Prague did not accuse him of plagiarism astonishes us. On the other hand, we are not surprised that at Constance an Englishman, John Stokes, characterized Hussism as pure Wyclifism. The relationship could not but be known to contemporaries. But as the knowledge of Wyclif's work vanished, Hus's personality came gradually to overshadow that of his master. In Luther's time, Hus passed as the author of Wyclif's theological position, and was considered the one true forerunner of the Reformation. Only in fairly recent times has the true state of affairs become generally known.

<sup>30</sup> Schaff, *op. cit.*, pp. xxvi f. In the chapter on Hus in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, Kamil Krofta makes no attempt to estimate the extent of Wyclif's influence on Hus, but he does not contest Loserth's findings; cf. *Cambridge Medieval History*, VIII (Cambridge, 1936), 45-64.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Letters of John Hus*, edited by H. B. Workman and R. M. Pope (London, 1904), p. 86.

## CONCLUSION

It seems certain from internal evidence that Wyclif was not familiar with the literary products of the great controversy between Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair. Amid a multitude of references of all kinds, he cites none of the authors involved in that controversy. Moreover, his thought on a more or less similar subject matter is rarely conditioned by the principles and arguments used in France and Italy three-quarters of a century before. However, the Bull *Unam Sanctam* is quoted by him as part of the *Corpus Juris*, and it forms an important link between him and the continental struggle. Apparently, this Bull is one of the causes of Wyclif's hatred of the papacy; as we have seen, he maintains that a Pope who would apply it to himself is a blasphemer and Antichrist. Wyclif, therefore, represents a part of the violent legistic reaction to the claims of the imperial papacy. Moreover, by his doctrine on the disendowment of the Church he is connected with Marsilio of Padua, William of Occam, the extremists among the Franciscans, and Richard Fitzralph of Armagh. On another point, too, he is allied with Occam—his appeal to the Bible as to the primary, unconditioned, and absolute authority.

However, it is generally maintained that the theological principle which moves Wyclif is English, and that he inherited it from Thomas Bradwardine. Certainly, Wyclif himself asserts at least twice that anyone who has read the *Doctor Profundus* on the unchangeableness of God's will and knowledge could not but agree with him in his conclusions as to membership in the Church and its effects. However, the passages to which Wyclif refers do not prove that Bradwardine erred as did Wyclif himself. At any rate, Wyclif's concept of membership in the Church—whether original with him or not—was destined to be the most fecund of all his ecclesiological teaching. Through Hus it influenced all Protestant thought on the nature of the Church, and thus indirectly influenced Catholic thought.

As for Archbishop Capocci, it is clear that Wyclif is even farther removed from him than from St. Augustine. Despite the fact that Capocci on occasion speaks of the Church as the society of the elect, and opposes it to the synagogue of Satan, the difference between his thought and Wyclif's would be apparent even to the casual reader.

Capocci does indeed regard the Scripture and St. Augustine as his great authorities, but he accepts both of them under the guidance of the living Church of his time and under the light of Scholastic theology. To Wyclif, however, these latter two norms were anathema. He rejects them, and by so doing inevitably lays himself open to error in his interpretation of both the Scriptures and St. Augustine—in-  
evitably, because he cuts himself off from a part of the living tradition which is of capital importance in any discussion of the nature and constitution of the Church.