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WILLIAM OF OCCAM

A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Armin W. Born

Introduction

The Middle Ages can conveniently be divided into two periods. The first of these periods begins in 476 A.D. with the fall of Rome and continues until about the year 1000 A .D. This time is known as the "Dark Ages", although many Protestant historians prefer to characterize the entire Middle Ages as "dark". Thus, also, the term is commonly understood. But stigmatizing the entire Middle Ages as "dark" is unjust. Properly speaking, it is the first five hundred years after the barbarian invasions. It is the woeful period in which the highly artistical and civilized, yet effeminate and over-luxurious Romans, conquered by the powerful Germanic tribes, yet strengthened and revived by the strong blood of these their conquerors, are developing ~~in~~ into the various Latin peoples as they exist today. The intermixture of these two diametrically opposed natures and civilizations could not but bring chaos and confusion. The blending and formation of solid nations and peoples required much time and involved much war, civil strife, racial disputes, and the like. The knowledge, the art, the beauty which was once Rome's, learnt from the Greeks, was forgotten, yes despised, during this period of barbarism, of lack of educational facilities, of constant warfare. But the time came when the hatred of the Roman for the German and that of the German for the Roman ceased, when out of the two peoples there

arose the realization that the two were really brothers and that they formed a unity. The map of Europe now presents an altogether different picture. So it is that in the 11th century we see that France is a distinct nation, Germany, is at least ostensibly united under the Holy Roman Empire, England just conquered by the Norman-French possesses all the elements that go to make up its characteristics. Italy, although divided and subjugated, is asserting its independence from the Holy Roman Empire. Scandinavia has become christian. Spain, under the rule of the Moors, is looked upon as a separate nation. Rome and its former boundaries are forgotten. A man is no more a Roman or a German, but either Frenchman, Italian, or Spaniard, or German.

It is now that the second period of the Middle Ages sets in. It is known as the "Age of Revival." "The Age of Revival begins with the opening of the eleventh century and ends with the discovery of the New World. During all this time civilization was making slow but sure advances; social order was gradually triumphing over feudal anarchy, and governments were becoming more regular. The last part of the period especially was marked by a great intellectual revival, a movement known as the Renaissance, or 'New Birth', by improvements, inventions, and discoveries which greatly stirred men's minds and awakened them as from a sleep."*)

It is with the middle and last half of this period that we are concerned. The ecclesiastical and political conditions at this

* Meyer, General History, p.332.

time were undergoing a significant change. The crusades, which had just passed, had brought new life into all classes of men. The toll that these exhausting expeditions wrought upon the nobles in money and life brought a decline in "both numbers and influence," and there is a corresponding growth of royal authority, so that feudalism is being undermined. Then, too, the crusades had important effect upon commerce. "They created a constant demand for the transportation of men and supplies, encouraged ship-building, and extended the market for eastern wares in Europe." *) Especially noteworthy is the contribution that the crusades made to intellectual and social progress, so that we have at this time a marked degree of progress in the breadth of knowledge and free thinking.

This period is also significant inasmuch as the papacy is beginning to lose its temporal power and prestige. After the death of Innocent III and Boniface VIII the decline is quite rapid, as the kings gaining in power over the nobles are also asserting greater independence of the papacy. The most noteworthy example of this movement we see in the triumph of Philip the Fair of France over Boniface VIII and the resultant "Babylonian Captivity" at Avignon. This then resulted in the "Great Schism", a blow from which the papacy never did recover. The breaking away from Rome is also an indication of the free thinking that asserted itself at this time. The Estates-General declared that Philip

*) Webster, "Early European History" p. 436.

was subject to God alone. The German electors issued a proclamation that the emperors need no approval from the Pope in the management of the affairs of the Empire. Meanwhile, the royal houses of Europe were strengthening their personal power. Together with the decline of temporal power and influence of the Pope, they rose above the restrictions and decentralization of the feudal system and began to demand direct obedience from all classes of men. Especially was this the case in France, where the movement began with Philip Augustus and continued to grow steadily, reaching its climax several centuries later in Louis XIV. France during this time is making extensive additions in territory. In England we have the rule of the Plantagenets, a line of noteworthy kings. Edward I brought Wales under the control of England and annexed Scotland. Under him the English Parliament took definite shape. It was during the "Age of the Revival", too, that the Hundred Year's War took place. Outside of Europe the Moguls were conquering Asia and threatening eastern Europe.

We see, then, how the old order of things is giving way to the beginning of those forces which brought on the Renaissance, and later made the people ready and eager to accept the Reformation. But among the forces that helped this movement along were several great men of learning living at this time, who with their writings and teachings did much to further this revival.

Among these was William of Occam.

THE MANBiography

Of the life of William of Occam very little is known. So little, in fact, that one will as a rule find all the incidents of his career that can be definitely established listed in the common encyclopedias, in one volume church histories, in smaller histories of philosophy, and other smaller works. They all coincide in stating most of the salient facts in the life of William of Occam, not, however, mentioning that their information comprises our full amount of reliable data on his life. Some reference works state as facts ^{points} ~~p~~ints in his life that are denied, doubted, or ignored by others; but generally speaking, their meagre accounts go to show that very little of the life of Occam is known, the fact that he is universally acknowledged by historians to be a prominent scholastic, an important man, one who had much to do in influencing the mind of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries and in making it ready for the great changes of the following centuries, notwithstanding.

His name appears in different spellings. In English print it is usually written "William of Occam." For example, this spelling is used by the Standard Dictionary, Encyclopedia Britannica, New International Encyclopedia, Concordia Cyclopedia, Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, in most histories and in histories of philosophy. But we find that many English works also use different forms of spelling his name. This seems to be the case especially with the better and larger works treating of the life and works of Occam. They seem to prefer to use the spelling as it is used in England of the town from which William came.

The name of this place is "Ockham"*) and is so spelled in the Encyclopedia Britannica. Thus Birch, among the latest of the men who have paid special attention to Occam and who recently published Occam's "De Sacramento Altaris", uses the spelling "Ockham" throughout his work. Webster's New International Dictionary gives this form as preferred and lists "Occam" as secondary. The Encyclopedia Britannica and the New International Encyclopedia give "Ockham" as secondary spelling. "Ockham" is also used by Richard McKeon in his "Selections from Mediaeval Philosophers, Vol. II, Roger Bacon to William of Ockham." Townsend in his "Great Schoolmen" uses the form "Ockam," as does M. DeWulf in his "History of Mediaeval Philosophy." German writers are generally agreed in the spelling "Ockam," and[†] is so used by Seeberg in Herzog-Plitt, "Realencyklopaedie." Koehler in his "Kirchengeschichte," however, uses "Occam", and Boehmer, "Der Junge Luther" uses "Ockham." Seeberg lists the appearances of his name in Latin as follows: For William: Guilelmus, Gulielmus, Guilermus, etc. For Occam: Ocha - mus, Ockam, Okam, Occham, Ocamus, Occamus. **) In our reading we found that still different forms than those listed above are in use. This divergence of spelling is not, however, surprising, since we have such situations otherwise in history. But the more common use is either "Occam" or "Ockham", the former being used

*) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris" p. XI: This town is listed in the Doomsday Book and is there spelled "Bocheham." "It is, however, spelled Ockham in an inscription of the year 1483, which is on an urn in the church at Ockham."

**) Herzog-Plitt, "Realencyklopaedie", Dritte Auflage, Band 14, S. 260.

according to the pronunciation, the latter by association with the name of his birthplace.

Had the plan of William of Occam to write an autobiography to be placed in the 8th tract of the third part of his Dialogues materialized, we should be in a position to say more about his life. As it is, we know as much as nothing sure of his parentage or early years. The date of his birth, the place where he studied, and the date of his entry into the Franciscan order cannot be satisfactorily determined. He was probably born in the village of Ockham *), from which he took his name, in Surrey, England, a little southwest of London on the Wney river. The date of his birth must be placed somewhere towards the end of the 13th century. M. DeWulf says "about 1300," Townsend, however, somewhat earlier, "ca. 1280," which is supported by Seeberg in Herzog-Plitt. "Whatever may have been the character of his early training, he seems to have had an unusually plastic mind, and as the times were strangely stirring, all the peculiarly English qualities of his nature were called into existence." **) Unattested tradition has it that the Franciscans persuaded him while yet a boy to enter their order, and that they then sent him to school, first to Merton college **), Oxford. Seeberg is rather wary about

*) Ockham Park is now owned by the Right Honorable Mary Countess of Lovelace.

**) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen", p. 289.

***) This institution had been "developed out of the 'Domus Sclarium de Merton' which was established near Ockham at Malden in Surrey in 1264 'to support 20 scholars living at Oxford or wherever else a university may chance to flourish.' In 1274 it was 'moved from Malden to Oxford.'" Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris", p. XI.

believing that he studied at Merton college and contradicts the dates of his stay at Oxford as they are given by Birch; namely, 1312-1320. The latter believes that it is now that Occam became a member of the Franciscan order. This much is certain that he entered the Franciscan order very early. At Oxford he received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity having written a thesis on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. Now the reports of his life become surprisingly conflicting. Despite the opinion of Birch that "there is no certain proof that he was a pupil of Duns Scotus, or that he was a student or professor at the University of Paris," and that "it is not certain that he ever received the degree of master or of doctor," others state that he taught as bachelor at Oxford, and that then after attending the lectures of Duns Scotus at Paris, he afterwards became a master and lectured on many subjects in theology and philosophy at Paris. Seeberg sets the date of his activity in Paris between 1315 and 1320, but Birch says, "He taught as a bachelor at Oxford until about 1323." He may, indeed, have returned to Oxford from Paris and taught there until 1323. But on this point Seeberg remarks: "Nicht nur zeitlich sondern auch sachlich wird die Pariser Zeit Ockams als Hauptperiode seiner Lehrtaetigkeit zu gelten haben. Dass er nachmals nach England zurueckgekehrt sei und jetzt in Oxford doziert habe ist eine durch nichts zu begruendende Annahme, wohl aber haben seine Lehren in Paris feste Wurzel geschlagen, so dass 1339 die philosophische Fakultaeet vor ihm zu warnen sich genoetigt sieht." M.DeWulf, too, says nothing of a possible student or teaching ca-

reer at Paris, but, as Birch holds, simply states that he studied at Oxford and taught there as a bachelor until about 1324. In a note on p. 176 of his "History of Mediaeval Philosophy" he says: "J. Hoper, 'Biographische Studien ueber W. von Ockham' destroys many legends concerning his life. In particular he shows that Ockham was not a disciple of Scotus, did not obtain the degree of master in theology, and did not teach at Paris." And whereas Birch and M. DeWulf are authorities of much later date, it appears that we ought to be very careful in speaking of his work in Paris, the position of other authorities as Seeberg, Townsend, Encyclopedia Brittanica, the New International Encyclopedia, Meyers Konversationslexicon, and others, notwithstanding.

At any rate, we now meet William of Occam on the field of debate and controversy. He is engaged in the controversy concerning evangelical poverty, the beginning of his quarrels which stopped his academic advancement to the doctorate. This fight concerning absolute poverty according to which not only the individual member of the order but also the order as such was not to own property, considered the ideal, founded upon the example of Christ and the apostles, as an antidote against worldliness in the church, now again looms up. Our philosopher and theologian entered this fight heart and soul, and soon a second motive was joined to the first, that of the fight for freedom of the state from control of the papacy. To show the situation in church and state at this time we quote Townsend in toto:

"In 1305 the temporal power of the papacy sustained an enor-

mous check by the Pope becoming subject to the influence of France, followed by the removal of the Papal court from Rome to Avignon, a neighborhood as lovely as a Paradise, but far removed from the heart of public affairs. Not only so, the outward magnificence manifested by the successors of St. Peter, the humble fisherman of Galilee, was so infinitely lavish, that every means had to be used to extort money from the faithful in all parts of the Church. In 1316 Pope John XXII assumed the Papal throne after the Church had been in the anomalous position of being without a head for two years and four months in consequence of the violent quarrels of the French and Italian cardinals. Clement V had been venal and rapacious to an extraordinary degree, and his subjects were exasperated by his extortions, but he was surpassed by his successor John to such an extent that Italian historians testify that in his lust for money he ground the people severely, he practiced simony so unblushingly that he sold church benefices openly in the market. This shameful truckster in ecclesiastical merchandise sought to console himself for his subordination to France by fierce absolutism in relation to Germany. When a contest arose between the Archduke Frederick of Austria and Louis, the Duke of Bavaria, for the crown of Emperor, he exerted all his energy to secure the decision of the contest for himself. After seven years of civil war, which drained the contending states of their blood and treasure, victory declared itself on the side of the Duke of Bavaria and he assumed the title of Emperor Louis IV. The Pope was frantic with

rage that events had decided themselves without his manipulation or arbitration, and he indulged an unrelenting animosity against Louis, which led the new Emperor to form an alliance with the opponents of the temporal power of the Papacy, then existing in great force in many countries, but chiefly consisting of the great Ghibelline party, against whom the Guelphs were indulging their merciless vendetta.

"John launched his excommunication against the Emperor and laid under stern interdict those portions of Germany which acknowledged his supremacy. Louis demanded that a General Council should be summoned where the matters in dispute between him and the Pope could be discussed and settled. The clangour and clash of controversy which raged at this time exceeds description: the interdict was observed in some places and not in others, and in some districts where the partisans of the Pope attempted to observe it the adherents of Louis rose up and expelled the recusants. Amidst the din and dust of the prevailing disorder there were some brave and noble voices raised in behalf of Louis, and arguing against the assumptions of the Pope in the warmest manner. Prominent amongst these were Marsilius of Padua, physician and religious teacher of Louis, who wrote the 'Defensor Pacis,' and Michael Ceseno, a Franciscan monk, who affirmed the principle of absolute poverty in the boldest terms. The 'Defensor Pacis' aimed to show that as Church and State had each its own

natural province, their limits should be fixed and thus peace definitely settled between them. The popularity and influence of this book were amazing, and it aided much in preparing the way for the prevalence of views which not only revolted from the excesses of the Papacy, but undermined its whole foundation." *)

And into this fight Occam, disgusted with the pride and sordidness of the dignitaries of the Church, entered on the side of the opposition to the Pope. Just how or when his views developed we do not know, but they took on distinct form after 1322 when he was present at the chapter of the Franciscans at Perugia. Some say that he was Provincial of England at this time **), but Seeberg in Herzog-Plitt, the Encyclopedia Britannica, and Birch agree in denying that he ever attained this position. The William who was provincial at this time was rather Wilhelmus de Nottingham, a professor at Oxford and Provincial of England since 1321. But we can be reasonably sure in believing that Occam was there at the assembly. "He heard there the famous speech of Michael de Cesena, the General Minister of the Franciscan order, which set forth the position of the order relative to evangelical poverty and developed the bitter controversy between Cesena and Pope John XXII. This was the be-

*) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen", pp. 269-271.

**) Cf. Townsend, "Great Schoolmen" , p. 272.

ginning of the revolt of the whole order as distinguished from the Spirituals *)." **) Another leader of the opposition at Perugia was Bonagratia.

After this we find Occam spending some time in the dioceses of Ferrara and Bologna urging the absolute poverty of Christ and the apostles as a necessary ideal, and now he comes into direct conflict with the Pope. In 1323 Bonagratia had written a book against Pope John XXII, in which he asserted the same views as Cesena, who was among the leaders of the Spirituals and the advocates of the evangelical poverty. In 1327 Bonagratia stated that Occam was present when Cesena spoke against Pope John XXII in a convention of Friars Minors. Townsend in describing Occam's activity in these years against the Pope says: "He strongly condemned the growing love of wealth in the Mendicant orders; he even disapproved of the enormous sums of money which were being expended over the church building to memorialize the founder of his Order, St. Francis of Assisi. Nor was this all. He took up and urged with the utmost boldness the rights of emperors and kings as against the claims of the Pope to temporal dominion. He issued a work called, 'The De-

*) Catholic Encyclopedia; p.230, Vol. XIV: "A general term denoting several groups of Friars Minor, existing in the second half of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, who, in opposition to the main body of the order, pretended to observe the Rule of St. Francis in its primitive severity."

**) Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XII.

fense of Poverty,' which was the most clear, logical, and powerful of all the productions of the day on the Papal disputes, and which astonished the whole of Christendom by the sheer audacity with which it opposed the pretensions of John." *) He then goes on to say that two bishops were commanded to examine the book, condemnation was passed on it, and as a result Occam, with two friends, was placed in confinement in Avignon. These two friends were Cesena and Bonagratia. Birch gives the cause of the imprisonment of Occam somewhat differently, stating that it was a sermon of Occam that aroused the Pope's suspicion. He gives the account of Occam's capture thus: "In a letter in 1323, Pope John instructed the bishops of Ferrara and Bologna to inquire about the report that in a sermon at Bologna Ockham had upheld his conception of evangelical poverty in opposition to that of the Pope. If the report was correct, the Bishops were to send Ockham 'to Avignon within a month.' Sullivan believes that Ockham would never have opposed the Pope had that question of evangelical poverty not been raised.'" **) Most of the other sources on Occam's life simply state that he was confined to prison at Avignon as a result of his heretical teachings. The time of the stay of Occam, Bonagratia, and Cesena is given by Seeberg as four years, but by the Encyclopedia Britannica as seventeen weeks. The former is the more likely since Occam was cited to appear ~~to appear~~ at Avignon

*) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen", p. 272.

**) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris" p. XII

in 1323 and escaped in 1328. During this time we have a bull issued by John XXII in 1327 which charges Occam with having uttered "many erroneous and heretical opinions." *) But there is some uncertainty as to just what this bull has reference to since Ehrle asserts that the Pope has reference to Occam in 1329 and that "the process had nothing to do with the case of the Spirituals and the quarrel over evangelical poverty." **) It was towards the end of his stay at Avignon that Occam discovered through the study of the constitutions of John XXII that the Pope was a notorious heretic. Naturally the three captives did not feel safe "in the hands of enemies so bitter and unscrupulous," and on May 25, 1328, all three, Occam, Bonagratia, and Cesena, managed to escape from Avignon and fled to Aigues Mortes, Italy. Just how they contrived to get away, and what route they took to get to Italy is also a matter of conjecture. We found one writer who stated that they traveled through Germany. On the 9th of June they arrived at Pisa and immediately made common cause with the Emperor Louis IV, who resided in Italy at this time. Here it was that Occam according to Trithemius, which is the first we hear of it, presented himself before Louis with these words: "O imperator, defende me gladio et ego defendam te verbo." But Seeberg, Townsend, and

*) Quoted in Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XIII

***) Quoted in Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XIII

M. DeWulf, who says that all historians repeat it, cite the saying thus: "Tu me defendas gladio, ego te defendam calamo," to which Seeberg remarks, "Das Wort ist unverbuergt, kennzeichnet aber die Situation." Occam then accompanied Louis to his court at Munich in Bavaria, and it is in this refuge that he spends the rest of his hectic life. Cesena had by this time (1329) been deposed as General Minister of the Franciscan order and Geraldus Odonis made successor. In 1331 Cesena and his associates were ruled out of the order. Meanwhile the Pope is hurling threat upon threat, curse upon curse against William and his teaching. We list these as given by Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris" beginning on page XIII: "On May 28th Pope John XXII sent a letter to all the princes and the bishop instructing them to seize Ockham and to return him for trial [this was in 1328]. On June 6th he issued a bull telling of Ockham's escape, cited the heresies of Ockham, and excommunicated him. On June 20th the Pope issued a bull informing the archbishop of Milan and his associate bishops that Ockham had been excommunicated. In 1328 or 1329 the Pope sent letters containing like information to the archbishops in Germany, and the letter to the archbishop of Cologne was publicly read in the cathedral on June 30th. On April 21st, 1329, the Pope published a bull similar to that of June 6th, 1328.

"About June 11th, 1329, Ockham was condemned by the Minorite General Ode and the members of his order were instructed

not to assist him. On April 1st, 1330, the Pope issued a bull instructing all ecclesiastics in Germany to seize Ockham. In a letter of July 31st the Pope again charged Ockham with heresy, and submitted the writings of Ockham to certain doctors who found many heresies in them. On January 4th, 1331, John again issued a bull forbidding anyone to aid Ockham, for he was said to uphold the error of Marsiglio of Padua, who had been condemned for stating that 'the emperor can depose the pope.' Ockham and others were summoned to a General Council to be held on May 10th. The bull and the summons were to be nailed to the door of the church at Avignon, and the heresies were to be reviewed even if the heretics were absent. In 1331 the Minorite General Geraldus opposed the errors of Ockham."

But Occam in his retreat is not silent either. The Emperor now permits himself to be counseled and defended by the Minorites; prior to this he had desired peace with the Church. Chief among these Minorites is Occam. He now develops his political ideas, most of which he most likely had already at Paris, and he knows how to apply these to the present situation. Of course, he was still influenced by the teachings and tendencies of his order. He was more than just a proposer of doctrines, for he did not forget his doctrine either. That John XXII was a heretic and no Pope, and that the poverty of Christ and the apostles is an article of faith, was as certain and true to him as that the State and the rights of the Emperor are independent of the Pope and the Church. And these ideas of his dovetailed into one common opinion

and doctrine concerning the relation of the state to the Church and the relation of the papacy to the Christian Church. And thus firmly convinced of his position he attacked the Pope. Townsend characterizes this activity of his thus: "In this refuge [at the court of Louis IV] he felt he could safely treat with contempt the threats and fulminations of the Pope, and he issued two works on the current controversies, one of them, it is said, being composed in ninety days, both which showed such independence of mind, such subtilty of logic, and such powerful reasoning as to produce a profound impression on the public mind. They showed as burning a hatred to the Papacy as a temporal dominion as was ever manifested by Martin Luther; they are held in high esteem even to this day, and are carefully treasured in the choicest libraries. Selden, whose learning and judicial calmness peculiarly fitted him to give an opinion, testifies - and as coming from a Protestant such a testimony should carry considerable weight - that his works were 'the best that had been written in former ages on the Ecclesiastical Power.' He lived in the protection and favour of Louis for some years; condemned by the Pope, disowned by the Franciscans; almost flooded with sentences of heresy, deprivation and imprisonment, for which he recked nothing, but pursued his course, steadfastly and earnestly devoting himself to the composition of works which were to make his name more famous as a dialectician than it was as an ecclesiastical reformer." *) One of the blows

*) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen," beginning on page 272.

that Occam dealt Pope John XXII was concerning the latter's position on the Beatific Vision. *) This view was very unpopular and had already been denied, and of this Ockham and his associates took advantage. "The controversy waxed warm. The Pope's view produced 'a profound sensation in the Church.....Princes, clergymen, laity urged John to retract. He retracted.' Ockham declared that John was 'wholly ignorant in theology.'" **)

And thus for about 20 years William of Occam lived in Munich. His residence was in the house of his order of that city. He was greatly aided in his political theories in defense of Louis which "anticipated those of the present" by Marsiglio of Padua. These two men worked side by side, and they mutually influenced the writings of each other. "Emerton states that 'the distinction between them is that Ockham was primarily a philosopher trying to apply his general principles to human institutions, while Marsiglio was a trained physician and theologian without, so far as we can see, a definite philosophical system.'" ***) When the Emperor made his descent upon Italy and was crowned King of Lombardy at Milan, received the Imperial Crown at Rome, deposed John XXII, and raised Peter de Cervava to the papal throne as Nicholas V, Occam went along, rejoiced with him in his brilliant success, and

*) E.A.Pace in the Catholic Encyclopedia: "The Beatific Vision is the immediate knowledge of God which the angelic spirits and the souls of the just enjoy in heaven."

**) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XIV

***) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XXXIV

remained faithful to him when the expedition failed, his army being defeated near Milan. During this crisis in the affairs of Louis IV the electors sided with him and at Rense declared that the Emperor did not need the confirmation by the Pope to be legally elected. Then on August 8th Louis declared that the action taken by the Pope was null and void and then appealed to a General Council, which, however, came to nought. During all this time Occam truly did his best to defend Louis with the pen. This is the climax of his anti-papal writings. He wrote a defense of the claims of Louis and entered into a discussion of the nature of the authority of the Emperor and Pope. On December 4, 1334, Pope John died, but Occam continued to side with the Emperor against temporal papal authority. This he continued until the death of Louis on Oct. 11, 1347. The Popes succeeding John, Benedict XII and Clement VI, both confirmed the excommunication of Emperor Louis, and Benedict that of Occam.

What was the position of the laity and theologians not directly concerned with the issue? As usual during the Middle Ages, officially people sided with the Pope. We again quote Birch who lists the opposition thus: "In 1339 students were warned against the writings of Ockham, which had become popular. On Dec. 29th, 1340, the University of Paris prohibited his teachings, and in a letter of May 10th, 1346, Clement refused to permit the masters and scholars of the University of Paris to study the doctrines of Ockham.

In 1348 the general chapter of the Augustinian order prohibited the reading of the works of Ockham under threat of excommunication." *)

In 1342 Cesena died. It is said that he transferred the seal of his order as well as his claims to leadership to Occam. Occam, therefore, became the nominal head of the order, and "after the death of Bonagratia in 1347 he became the undisputed chief of a powerful minority." All attempts of Louis to make peace with the Curie had gone amiss. And although in 1343 already Clement VI had attempted a reconciliation with Occam and his followers, he excommunicated Louis officially in 1346. In this year Charles IV was crowned, having been declared rightful king after agreeing to the papal demands. In the next year, then, Louis died. But, as stated above, all this did not deter Occam, who true to his position continued his opposition to the Pope in spite of the waning of his followers and the growing loneliness in friends and help. Whether Occam ever became reconciled to the Church is a question of great dispute. Several of the Minoritès of Munich made peace with the Pope, others, however, died unreconciled. Finally Occam stood alone, being the only one of the early leaders remaining. William was again cited to appear before the papal court, but nothing came of it because he re-

*) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XV

fused to admit that Louis was a heretic and schismatic. Clement then demanded that the order take action. "A chapter held on Whitsuntide, 1349, asserted that but few brothers remained who had supported Michael of Cesena and Louis; that 'William the Englishman,' who was prominent among these, had sent back the seal of the order to the general, and that he and others, while they could not conveniently appear in Rome, petitioned for release from their excommunication." *) As a result, Clement VI in a letter of June 8th, 1349, "offered to grant this request on condition of their subscribing to a formula which was somewhat less stringent than that which had been issued since John XXII." **) He was "to promise:

1. To believe as the Holy Catholic Church believed;
2. To declare heretical the statements that the Emperor could select, create, and depose the Pope;
3. To obey the present Pope and his successors;
4. To renounce the heretical opinions of Louis of Bavaria and Michael of Cesena and to promise not to give help to the enemies of the Church." ***)

We do not know whether he ever agreed to them or not. We know that in 1348 he had already rejected almost these same demands. Such men as Trithemius and Wadding and others say that Occam did sign and hence was absolved. But there is no

*) R. Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge."

***) R. Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge."

***) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. XVI

documentary evidence for his rejection or acceptance of the proposal. "Some writers insist that 'he remained an excommunicated heretic,'" chief among whom is Jacob de Marchia who says expressly concerning Cesena, Bonagratia, and Occam, "qui tres haeretici excommunicati remanserunt." Generally, too, it is not believed that he ever became reconciled to the Church. Perhaps death came too soon for him to decide, or more likely he remained inflexible until the very end.

Historians are not decided as to the date of his death, nor even the place of his burial. Birch and Townsend are in open conflict here, although the former is not quite so dogmatic as the latter. Around the dates given by these two, we found that all the other biographers that came to our notice give the date of the death of Occam. Seeberg and Birch are the only ones that have gone into a discussion of the matter. The latter says: "It is reasonably safe to believe that Ockham died in the convent of his order at Munich and was buried there. Earlier writers, and in particular Vol. I and II of 'Analecta Franciscana' state that Ockham died on April 10, 1347, and was buried in Munich as the inscription on the tombstone in the Franciscan chapel indicates. Leidinger, of the Department of Manuscripts, Bayerische Staats-Bibliothek, Munich, states that the St. Francis Church of Munich, in which Ockham was buried, was pulled down in 1803 and that the tombstone no longer exists.

He has, however, supplied a photographic copy of the inscription which was on the cover of the grave. The copy of the inscription is preserved in Cod. lat. 1755 I, page 34. (Monumenta ecclesiae Fratrum Minorum Monachii.)" *) This inscription reads: A Dni. 1347 IV id. Apr. o. A.R. et doctiss. P.F.Wilhelm dictus Ockam ex Anglia ss. theol. doctor. This date, April 10, 1347, is also corroborated by a chronological table of the 15th century and by "Glassbergus' Chronik." The month and day seem to be correct. But in spite of the above mentioned listed reasons for the year 1347 as given by Townsend and a host of others, Birch and Seeberg agree in placing it in 1349. Birch says: "In view of the document of Clement VI and the tract of Ockham treating of the election of Charles IV, recent conclusions lead to the belief that Ockham died April 10th, 1349, or at least not before the year 1349." **) Seeberg, whom Birch seems to follow, gives the following in an attempt to establish the date: "Dass er im Fruehling 1349 noch lebte, ist nach Obigem sicher [cf. the chapter held on Whitsuntide 1349]. Demnach kann er nicht am 10. April 1347 gestorben sein..... Ockam koennte dann am 10. April 1350 gestorben sein, oder wahrscheinlich schon am 10. April 1349. Bei letzterer Annahme begriffe sich die doppelte Ueberlieferung am besten: er starb vor der

*) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," pp. XVII-XVIII

**) Birch-Ockham, "De Sacramento Altaris," p.XVIII

Unterwerfung, aber er hatte seinen Wunsch nach Versöhnung kundgegeben." According to that position, then, when on Pentecost, 1349, the chapter was considering this matter and when in June the Pope set up his terms of reconciliation, Occam was already dead. It may be well to note, however, that in the report of the order to the Pope the excuse for not appearing at Rome is given as inconvenience and difficulty in travelling ("non commode"). That may indicate that Occam was sick or decrepit from old age. Although nothing sure can be established, from the last considerations stated above it is also possible that he died in 1350. But the fact that we hear nothing definite as to his reconciliation which by that time then could easily have been effected, militates against this date. Our more reasonable date is therefore 1349 for the death of William. M. DeWulf strikes the happy medium by saying that he died in 1348. Wadding gives the impossible tradition of his death in 1320. He also thinks that there is a possibility of his lying buried in Campania. There have been men who have tried hard to substantiate these traditions, but most of their arguments have to be rejected as unreliable speculations. 1349 as the date of the death of Occam is corroborated by the Encyclopedia Brittanica, the New International Encyclopedia, Concordia Cyclopedia, and others.

Character

Not much is known concerning the character of William of Occam, but from his writings and historical gleanings here and there we receive a very favorable impression of the man. Accepting his persistent refusal to become reconciled to the Church to the very end, we note that he was a man of conviction and moral courage, a sincere Franciscan. He was an able and prolific writer, one of the most wide-awake scholars of the Middle Ages and had a "personality of striking consistency and boldness." He "stuck to" to what he considered true, and often one feels the ring of a "I can do no other" in his statements. His life was one of many sorrows and heartbreaking occurrences; "he was not able to procure the triumph of his most cherished ideals," one friend after another either left him or died. Even the Emperor, who was of a vacillating character and at times almost sided with the Pope against his defender, was not of much consolation to him. But in spite of all that, this lonely friar was one of the mighty forces of the time. Townsend has this to say: "He was a man of unusually broad sympathies, and was concerned about many interests; he was a warm politician; he was profoundly versed in theology; he was a born logician, and whatever subject he touched he felt himself in warm accord with it, and wrote on it with great force and clearness." *) The opinion that the contemporaries and suc-

*) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen," p. 269.

cessors of Occam had of him can be inferred from the number of various titles given him by his admiring students and followers. Birch lists these as: Venerable Preceptor, Doctor Subtilissimus, Unparalleled Doctor, Doctor Invincible, Singular Doctor, Author of Nominalism, and Father of the Nominals. Such terms as "inceptor, expositor, indagator, magister, professor, and doctor are also associated with his name." DeWulf and Birch use as argument that William never became a master or doctor the fact that he is often called "Venerable Inceptor." "The bachelors at Oxford who did not go on to the mastership were known as inceptors." *) Townsend adds another title, that of "Venerable Founder," and gives as reason the fact that he re-established nominalism on a new and more enduring basis. Among the names that occur most frequently is that of "Invincible Doctor," undoubtedly as a result of the "fearless" tone he preserved both in his political and philosophical writings." He became the real leader of the reforming tendencies of the time, and gave a "decided impulse to the philosophical thought of Europe on the sensational side."

*) M. DeWulf, "History of Mediaeval Philosophy," Vol. II. P. 176.

Works

In connection with the works of William of Occam we have a strange situation. Historians are all agreed that the productions of Occam are of great value and that they had a profound influence on the development of new thought as it is known to us in the 14th and 15th centuries, culminating in the Reformation. It is conceded that Luther and many of the pre-Reformers drew from his views, either by accepting original thoughts of him, or by using his views and arguments as corroboration of their own ideas. But in spite of this universal acclaim to the "Invincible Doctor", when one wants to read some of his works, one is confronted with the necessity of travelling here and there to find ~~his~~ these works, most of which were published centuries ago. It is for this reason that Birch could earn his doctor title by publishing Occam's "De Sacramento Altaris." In the introduction to this book he shows how difficult it was to study the works of Occam and how great were the number of libraries he had to visit or correspond with to get at the material desired. On page XVII he quotes A.E.Taylor, Edinburgh, "Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism," p. 67, as saying: "How hard it is, for example, even to have copies of Duns Scotus or Ockham at hand. I know very little about Ockham for this reason. His works are simply not accessible to me, as I am too busy to go where I could get at them." On p. 283 Townsend, "Great Schoolmen", states that "the works of Occam have never been collected and pub-

lished in a uniform edition. They are very scarce, and are carefully preserved in some of the great libraries of Europe. So difficult are they of access that Brucker, when he wrote his "History of Philosophy," had not seen them, and even one so widely read as Sir James Mackintosh had not been able to consult them." Richard McKeon in his "Selections from Mediaeval Philosophers, Vol. II -From Roger Bacon to William of Ockham," says on p. 351: "William of Ockham presents the spectacle (which has had not a few parallels) of a philosopher, generally conceded to be of the first importance, whose reputation would seem undiminished by the fact that none of his logical, physical, or philosophical works have been published since the seventeenth century. The present selections were translated from what is probably the last (the second) edition of the 'Quodlibeta,' that of Strasbourg 1491. There are indications, too, that some of the manuscripts still available contain works of his, if they are proved to be genuinely his, which have never been published." And Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog says: "There is no complete edition of the works of Occam, which is a token of the disfavor into which he fell by his rebellious attitude..... A complete critical edition of Occam is much to be desired." (He adds the remark, too, that it were a good idea for the Franciscans to publish a full edition of the works of their great brother, William of Occam.) The Encyclo-
^{Brittanica} pedia/says, "There is no good monograph on Occam."

Since Occam was a prolific writer, we undoubtedly are not in possession of nor have on record a list of all his works. There is also some dispute concerning the genuineness of some works ascribed to him. We shall endeavor in the following to list his most prominent productions. *) Seeberg divides the works of William of Occam into two classes, the first embracing his philosophical and theological writings, the second his works on church and state.

Philosophical writings:

1. *Expositio aurea et admodum utilis super totam artem veterem.* Inc.: *Quoniam omne operans quod in his operationibus.* This work contains Occam's logic, epistemology, and metaphysics, and is in the form of commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, on the *Categoriae De Interpretatione*, and *Elenchi* of Aristotle. It was printed in 1496 at Bologna. In America there is a copy of this work in the Widener Branch of the Philadelphia Public Library.

2. *Summa logices*, dedicated to a brother of the order by the name of Adam, printed in Paris in 1408, Bologna 1498, Venice 1508, Oxford 1657, and elsewhere. Inc.: *Quam magnos veritatis sectatoribus afferat fructus.*

3. *Quaestiones in octo libros physicorum.* Printed at Strassburg in 1491. Inc.: *Valde reprehensibilis.*

4. *Summelae in libros physicorum*, in four parts. Inc.:

*) In this list we have followed R. Seeberg in Herzog-Plitt, "Realencyklopaedie," with reference to Birch's list in "De Sacramento Altaris" of works available in this country. Seeberg basfs his list on Little, "Grey Friars," and Wadding, "Scriptores ord. min."

studiosissime saepiusque rogatus. Printed at Svaedis, Venice in 1506, Rome 1637. A copy of this work may be found in the library of the University of Penn. and that of the University of Nebraska.

The following works, which belong under the head of philosophy, are mentioned by Little as still unprinted:

5. Quaestiones Ockam super phisicum et tractatus eiusdem de futuris contingentibus. This may be a work identical with those listed as nos. 3 and 4.

6. De Successivis. Inc.: Videndum est de locis.

7. Quaestiones Ockam in terminabilis Albertide Saxonia.

Theological Works

8. Quaestiones et decisiones in quattuor libros sententiarum. Inc.: Circa prologum primi libri Sententiarum quae-ro primo. Printed in Lyon in 1495 ff. The following American libraries have this work: University of Penna, Yale, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Andover Harvard, Boston Public Library, Peabody Institute Library at Baltimore.

This work is the most important theological production of Occam. The first book, often found in manuscripts apart from the others, is more complete. We can suppose, therefore, that Occam published it separately and later added the other three books, perhaps taken from lectures in the classroom.

9. Centiloquium theologicum omnem ferme theologiam speculativam sub centum conclusionibus complectus. Inc.: anima nobis innata eo potius, "which gives a piquant collection of instances of what rational theology might consider possible."

10. Quodlibeta septem. Inc.: utrum possit probari per rationem naturalem, etc. Printed in Paris 1487; Strassburg 1491. This work is to be had in America in the University of Pennsylvania, Gettysburg Theol. Seminary, Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Andover-Harvard; c. 1487: Nebraska. It is of this work, too, that Richard McKeon quotes in his "Selections from Mediaeval Philosophers," Vol. II. Here "William in colorful sequence treats almost all the problems of Philosophy and Theology." They are based perhaps on the disputations which he held in Paris.

11. De Sacramento Altaris and De Corpore Christi, two parts of one work. Inc.: circa conversionem panis, and stupenda super munera largitatis. Printed in Strassburg 1491 and elsewhere. Here Luther received theoretical support for his doctrine on the Lord's Supper. This work is now available to all since Birch has edited it in the Latin with an English translation, published by the Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa, in 1930.

12. De praedestinatione et futuris contingentibus, printed at Bolgna in 1496. This work may have been edited under another name.

The Cathedral library at Worcester has a volume, entitled

"Sermones Ockam," but we are not able to determine whether or not this is our Occam or Nicholas de Ockam.

Works on Church and State

13. Opus nonaginta dierum. Inc.: doctoris gentium et magistri beati Pauli. Printed at Lyon 1495 and then by Goldast, "Monarchia," II, 993 - in 1236[?] This was is to be had in the University of Penna, Yale, Harvard, Andover-Harvard, Boston Public Library. It is to this work that Townsend had reference above when he mentioned that it was written within ninety days, for from this fact the work takes its name. It was written some time between 1330 and 1333. It is a defence of poverty as the true perfection and answers the Bull of John XXII, "Quia vir reprobus."

14. Tractatus de dogmatibus Johannis XXII papae. Inc.: verba eius iniquitas et dolus. This work is written in opposition to a statement of the Pope that the souls in purgatory will not see the beatific vision before the day of judgment.

15. Epistola ad fratres minores in capitulo apud Assisium congregates. Inc.: religiosis viris fratribus minoribus universis. Written in the spring of 1334, and is in the possession of the Paris National Library in handwriting. This letter is of special interest because of the light it throws upon the author's character.

16. Opusculum adversus errores Johannis XXII. Inc.: non

invenit locum penitencii Johannis XXII. This was written shortly after the death of the Pope in the early part of 1335, and is preserved in handwriting in the Paris National Library.

17. Compendium errorum Johannis XXII papae. Inc.: secundum Bohkyg super sacram scripturam. This work lays bare the heresies of the constitutions: ad conditorem canonum, cum inter nonnullos, q uia quorundam, and q uia vir reprobus. It was written under Benedict XII, and was printed at Paris in 1476, Lyon 1495, and is to be found, also, with Goldast, "Monarchia," Vol. II, 957-976. In America the following libraries have it: Harvard, Andover-Harvard, Boston Public Library, University of Penna, Yale, Nebraska, New York Public Library, Episcopal Divinity School, Philadelphia.

18. Defensorium contra Johannem XXII. Inc.: universis Christi fidelibus. It was printed at Venice 1513 and can be found in America at the Boston Public Library and the New York Public Library. There is a dispute as to whether or not Occam wrote this work. It recurs in the work by Baluze-Mansi, Miscell. III, 341-355, but is there given as written by Cesena. It cannot have been written before the time of Clement VI because of the remark of the eschatological heresies of John: successores eius non tenuerunt nec tenent, so that it fits the time of 1342. It is a circular letter to all christians stating that the right of the Minorites in the fight against the stiffnecked heretic, John XXII, had been proved. There is a likelihood that this work could have been written at this time, because as Louis in 1343 was negotiating

peace terms with the Curie, he distinguished carefully between his concern and that of the Minorites. That Cesena could not have written it is made evident by the fact that the time is impossible. Occam may have written it, but we have no proofs.

19. *Tractatus ostendens, quod Benedictus papa XII non-nullos Johannis XXII haereses amplexus est et defendit. Inc.: ambulavit et ambulat insensanter, non re sed nomine Benedictus.* Seven books in this work deal with the Pope, wherein he is reviled as enemy of the Kings of Germany and England, as a damnable parasite of the French king. Occam defends the right of Louis to proceed against him with arms. The occasion for the work was that in 1337 the negotiations between Louis and the Pope, who was under influence of the French court, broke up. In July of the same year Louis joined with King Edward of England and had in mind to march upon Avignon. This tractatus was therefore written undoubtedly in the latter half of 1337. It is preserved in handwriting in the National Library at Paris.

20. *Peto quaestiones super potestate ac dignitate papali. Inc.: sanctum canibus nallatenus esse dandum.* This work of Occam was written to answer questions placed him by a certain "dominus mihi quem plurimum venerandus," which most likely means the Emperor. These questions all pertain to the burning arguments of the day concerning the temporal power of the Pope and the like, which Occam investigates in great detail, presenting both sides. But he does not make his own position stand out. Seeberg in Herzog-Plitt indicates that the work must have been

written about 1339. It was printed in Lyon in 1496.

21. Tractatus qua de postestate imperiali. Inc.: inferius describuntur allegaciones per plures magistros in sacra pagina approbate, per quas ostenditur indenter, quod processus factus et sententia lata in frankfurt per dominum ludovicum quaetenu dei gracia Romanorum imperaberem.

22. De iurisdictione imperatoris in causis matrimonialibus. Inc.: divina providentia disponente. This work was written in defense of the marriage of the son of Louis in 1342 to Margaret Maultasch, after she had been divorced from Johann Heinrich, son of the King of Bohemia. Written in 1342. Printed in Heidelberg in 1598. Some doubt the integrity of the book.

23. Dialogus inter magistrum et discipulum de imperatorum et pontificum potestate. Inc.: in omnibus curiosus existis nec me desinis infestare. This work is said to have been written in an attempt on the part of Duke Albrecht of Austria, who had Occam write it, to stay any influence that the excommunication and interdict of Clement VI upon Louis and his land might have upon Austria. It is a "mild" work. Occam discusses several opinions on the debates of that day, but keeps his own views in the background. Here, however, we find Occam's entire conception of the relation between Church and State. The first part of the work is concerned with the difference between Catholics and heretics, presented in seven works. He shows that Popes can err and have erred, and even claims the possibility of Councils erring. Then,

too, princes and laymen have the right and duty to judge concerning a heretical pope. This part of the work shows Occam to have been in possession of great historical knowledge, although he complains that Munich was very deficient in historical literature. The second part is incomplete and contains some precious works of Occam. The third part was to be a colossal production, the nine parts of which are indicated in the prologue. They are:

- a. Concerning the power of the Pope and the clergy.
- b. Concerning the power and rights of the Roman Emperor.
- c. Concerning the deeds of John XXII.
- d. Concerning the deeds of King Louis of Bavaria
- e. Concerning the deeds of Benedict XII.
- f. Concerning the deeds of brother Michael Cesena.
- g. Concerning the deeds and teachings of brother Gerald Odonis.
- h. Concerning the deeds of brother William of Occam.
- i. Concerning the deeds of other christians; kings, princes, prelates, and subordinates, of the laity and secular clergy, of the religious brothers, minors, and others.

But this entire project was never accomplished. The first two are on hand, but even the second already is incomplete. The work was written between 1341 to 1343. Printed in Lyon 1495.

24. De electione Caroli IV. Inc.: quia sepe viri ignarō.

It was written perhaps in the first half of 1348 and is a tract against the form of oath that those siding with Louis had to take to gain absolution. This is the last work of Occam of which we know.

25. De imperatorum et pontificum potestate. Inc.: univ-
 ersis Christi fidelibus presentum tractatulum inspecturis.

The work, Disputatio inter militem et clericum super potestatem praelati ecclesiae atque principibus terrarum commissam, is listed by Birch, but Seeberg rejects it as not genuine, stating that this mistake was made by the fact that it is listed in Little's "Grey Friars."

Wadding lists the following works not mentioned above: De paupertate ~~apostolorum~~ Christi liber unus; de paupertate apostolorum liber unus; apologia quaedam liber unus; defensorium suum liber unus; dialectica nova libri duo; commentarii in metaphysicam liber unus; quaestiones de anima; de quattuor causis; de forma prima; de forma artificiali; de pluralitate formae contra Suttonum liber unus; de materia prima liber unus; de privatione liber unus; de subitanea mutatione liber unus; de perfectione specierum; de actibus hierarchicis liber unus; errorum quos affinxit papae Johanni liber unus; quodlibeta magna.

Leland mentions another work: de invisibilibus.

In the present state of knowledge it is impossible to determine whether some of the works listed above actually exist or not; whether they are genuine; or whether in many cases we just have parts of some works already known.

Occam's Scholasticism

The Principles of Scholasticism

William of Occam is not only noted as a prominent historical figure in the fight between John XXII and Louis IV, but his fame is equally great because of his scholasticism. He lived during the declining period of this Mediaeval philosophy and not only was a noted scholastic himself, but by using the very methods of the schoolmen themselves, he was a predominant factor in bringing this system of philosophy to a speedy death.

"Scholasticism" derived its name from the cathedral and monastic schools, called in Latin, "scholae." These schools at first merely studied the church fathers, but as they began to multiply, the "schoolmen", as the teachers were called since the days of Charlemagne, began to apply the methods of logic, or of dialectics, to the discussion of theological problems. When these discussions once began to grow, the movement went forward, especially at the Universities, until we have the full development of scholasticism.

We note three periods in the history of this Mediaeval philosophy:

1. Its rise: 11th and 12th centuries.
2. The period of glory: 13th century.
3. Its decline: 14th century.

In the first period we have such prominent men as Anselm of Canterbury, the "father of scholasticism," Abelard, and Peter Lombard, the latter being especially known because of his "Libri

quattuor sententiarum." This work is especially noteworthy for it formed the dogmatic textbook of the Middle Ages up to the Reformation, and many a student wrote his Bachelor of Divinity thesis on this work. During the period of glory we note Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus. The last period gives us but one really outstanding character, William of Occam. Towards the end of the period of glory and during the last period Oxford and Paris were the two main theological Universities, and most of the men of these times worked and studied there. Our title does not call for a complete discussion of these men, but before we can enter into a discussion of the merits and position of Occam as a scholastic, something will have to be said as to the general purpose and theories of the schoolmen.

What is scholasticism? Weber in his "History of Philosophy," translated into English by Perry, introduces the chapter on scholasticism thus: "As the sole legatee of the Roman Empire, the Church is the predominant power of the Middle Ages. Outside of the Church there can be no salvation and no science. The dogmas formulated by her represent the truth. Hence, the problem no longer is to 'search' for it. The Church has no place for philosophy if we mean by philosophy the pursuit of truth. From the mediaeval point of view, to philosophize means to explain the dogma, to deduce its consequences, and to demonstrate its truth. Hence, philosophy is identical with positive theology; when it fails to be that it becomes heretical. Christian thought hemmed in by the law of the Church resembles a river confined between two steep banks; the

narrower the bed, the deeper the stream. Being unable to escape from the dogma encompassing it, it endeavors to penetrate it and eventually undermines it." *) Thus the definition of scholasticism given by Fischer applies well when he says, "Scholasticism was an application of reason to theology not to correct or enlarge the accepted creed, but to systematize and vindicate it," **) and Klotsche says, "The problem which the scholastics undertook to solve was simply to support the traditional dogma by the evidences of reason or philosophy, and to present the whole mass of dogmas in a schematic and harmonious unity." ***) But in their philosophizing and rationalizing these men did not build up their own logic and methods, but drew upon the works of the ancient Greeks. Scholasticism was first influenced by Platonism through the mediation of Saint Augustine; but then from the thirteenth century on, it gradually suffers the influence of Aristotle's philosophy, brought in through the Arabs. And by using his works, scholasticism sought to "render dogma acceptable to reason." "The characteristic feature in the method of the Schoolmen consists in this that they present their teaching in the form of commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, which became the foundation of academic lectures for centuries. Starting a multitude of isolated questions on all the subjects of which they treat they carry out the dialectical method in the minutest detail with

*) Weber and Perry, "History of Philosophy," p. 156.

**) Fischer, "History of the Christian Church" p. 209.

***) Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p.133

its thesis and antithesis, its pro et contra, and then sum up with a brief decision (conclusio or resolutio). In this way the Schoolmen believed to establish and prove the rationality of the dogmas of the Church." *)

The philosophers of the Middle Ages were divided in their methods of proving their assertions. As the movement developed, there entered in the discussion of "universals": namely, the question "as to the existence of genera and species." This debate had its inception in Porphyry's "Isagoge," a work from which the scholastics also drew in their dialectic methods. This "one philosophical question was uppermost in the scholastic age"; **) namely, "what is the relation between the idea of a thing and its reality? between thinking and being? Do words which denote general ideas (universalia) designate realities, entities? or are they mere names (nomina) invented to express qualities of particular things?" ***) In the course of the argumentation which followed in the attempt to solve this question, three schools developed. They are:

1. Those that advocated the "realism of the Platonic type." These men "asserted that universalia existed apart from and antecedent to the individual objects - ante rem." ****) This is the position that the greatest of the scholastics held, among whom were predominantly Anselm, William of Champeaux, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas. They are known as the realists.

*) Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p. 135.

**) Fischer, "History of the Christian Church," p. 210.

***) Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p. 135.

****) Walker, "A History of the Christian Church," p.

2. Opposite of realism is nominalism, which "maintained that general conceptions are merely the products of human reason (flatus vocis), intellectual abstractions (nomina) derived from the common properties of individual objects; universalia post rem." *) This view had its supporters in Roscellini, Duns Scotus, Occam, and Biel. This was also the doctrine of the old Stoics.

3. An intermediate view was held by Abelard, called by Klotsche, "Realism of the Aristotelian type," or also known as Conceptualism, which holds "that general conceptions are inherent in the objects themselves." **) - universalia in re.

At first this discussion might appear as a trivial matter, but just why it was such an important question can be seen from a paragraph in Weber. He says on page 171 of his "History of Philosophy," "The Catholic or 'universal' Church does not merely aim to be an agregation of particular christian communities and of the believers composing them; she regards herself as a superior power, as a reality distinct from and independent of the individuals belonging to the fold. If the Idea, that is, the general or universal, were not a reality, 'the Church' would be a mere collective term, and the particular churches, or rather the individuals composing them, would be the only realities. Hence, the Church must be realistic, and declare with the Academy: Universals are real. Catholicism is synonymous with realism. Common sense, on the other hand, tends to regard universals as mere notions of the mind, as

*) Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p. 135.

**) Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p. 135.

signs designating a collection of individuals, as abstractions having no objective reality. According to it, individuals alone are real, and its motto is: Universals are names or symbols; it is nominalistic, individualistic.

"The latter view was advanced and developed about 1090 by Roscellinus, a canon of Compiègne. According to him, universals are mere names, *vocis flatus*, and only particular things have real existence. Though this thesis seemed quite harmless, it was, nevertheless, full of heresies. If the individual alone is real, Catholicism is no more than a collection of individual convictions, and there is nothing real, solid, and positive, but the personal faith of the Christian. If the individual alone is real, original sin is a mere phase, and individual and personal sin ~~alone~~ ~~is real~~ alone is real. If the individual alone is real, there is nothing real in God except the three persons, - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and the common essence which, according to the Church, unites them into one God, is a mere word, a *flatus vocis*. Roscellinus, who is especially emphatic on the latter point, is not content with defending his tritheistic heresy; he takes the offensive and accuses his adversaries of heresy. To hold that the Eternal Father himself became man in Christ in order to suffer and die on Calvary, is a heresy condemned by the Church as *Patripassianism*. Now, if the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have the same essence, and if this essence is an objective reality, it follows that the essence of the Father or the Father himself became man in Christ: a statement which is explicitly contradicted

by Scripture and the Church herself.

Roscellinus had pointed out a difficulty in the dogma, - an offense for which the Church never forgave him. The Council of Soissons condemned his heresy and forced him to retract (1092). Nominalism thus anathematized held its peace for more than two centuries, and did not reappear until about 1320, in the doctrine of Occam." *)

Such were some of the scholastic disputes, then, that raged for centuries in the great universities, only to end in failure. Kotsche indicates why when he says, " The constant effort of Scholasticism to demonstrate Christianity as rational and the rational as Christian seemed at last realized. But the further progress of scholastic thought shows that Scholasticism had failed in its task to rationalize the doctrines of the Church. The failure was due to the contrariety of the two authorities by which the minds of men were governed: in the province of natural reason, the authority of Aristotle; in the Christian province, the authority of the Church's tradition. The contrariety between these two authorities naturally led to scepticism. Men refused to admit as truths what could not be proven by dialectics. After Duns Scotus had dissolved the unity between theology and philosophy, the decay of Scholasticism begins, soon to end in complete dissolution." **)

It was the pupil and follower of Duns Scotus who with ideas that first took a firm hold two centuries later helped to complete the "dissolution" of scholasticism decisively. This was William of Occam.

*) Weber and Perry, "History of Philosophy," pp. 171-173.

***) Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p. 136.

Occam's Scholastic Principles

What were the teachings and theories of William of Occam? "His career was ^ascientific, political, and religious one." As scientist he carried the banner of nominalism to victory in the philosophy of his age. Politically he struck out a new line of thought as to the relation of temporal and spiritual authority of church and state. In religion he encouraged the critical spirit in regard to traditional dogma, and taught men how to use it as a "counterpoise to ecclesiastical positivism."

Being a scholastic, Occam wrote as one. His style follows that of the previous schoolmen, so that to one inexperienced in the mode of scholastic reasoning and presentation, to follow him becomes extremely difficult, and at times, impossible. The logic is highly abstruse, the sentences extremely involved, and the thought delicately fine. Occam is known for his sophistries and subtelties, which, by the way, he deliberately used to escape being ensnared by his opponents.

Occam was a nominalist and gave nominalism a vigorously logical and rational treatment, but his was of a modified form. It is usually stated that he reintroduced nominalism, which had lost almost all ground since the days of Roscellinus, by teaching that universals are only "flatus vocis." This cannot be substantiated by his works. The Encyclopedia Brittanica says: "He revived nominalism by collecting and uniting isolated opinions upon the meaning of universals into a compact system, and popularized his views by associating them with the logical principles which were in his day

commonly taught in the universities." He denied that the universal really exists, for it is only a "mental concept signifying univocally several singulars." *) He proved the non-existence of the universal by showing that the same thing cannot exist simultaneously in several different things, which was taught by the "absurd" realists. In other words, the universal is not a thing, but a "mere sign that serves to designate several similar things, a word; and there is nothing real except the individual." **) "No universal is a substance existing outside of the mind," but it is an inference of the thinking mind; hence, the universal is "post rem." He applied the principle now very well known in philosophy and which is often called "Occam's Razor," or the "Law of Parsimony," to reject realism; namely, that entities are not to be multiplied needlessly. "Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem." And in "De Sacramento Altaris," he says, "Frustra fit per plura, quod potest fieri per pauciora," and thus he denied "the hypostatic existence of abstractions. He said that even supposing that our knowledge rests on universal concepts, the universal does not necessarily exist..... Even in the mind conception does not exist substantially. It is a mere conception IN the mind, and out of it, it is a mere word, a sign." ***) And all this he proves by "keen logical thinking." He said that it is impossible to inquire about things pertaining to the thinking principle; simply because "we have no experience of the human mind beyond what can be known from the experience of its

*) Quoted by Klotsche, "An Outline of the History of Doctrines," p. 145.

***) Weber-Perry, "History of Philosophy," p. 201.

***) Townshend, "Great Schoolmen," p. 275.

operations."

From this he forms his fundamental distinction between two orders of knowledge. The one is, as DeWulf puts it, "sensation, which consists in the apprehension of phenomenal states by the senses and depends upon the corporeal organs," "an intuitive intellectual knowledge." *) The other is "an abstractive power by which things are separated into their elements or forms general ideas applicable to many things." **) Or as Townsend says, "This abstract knowledge is that which arises from the discrimination and comparing of objects presented through the senses." ***) Occam said, "There is nothing in the understanding that was not previously in the senses." But we must be careful not to put him into the same category with those who reduced thought to sensation. He maintained that abstract concepts retain their "ideal value."

But then we ask, "have abstract concepts the same value as intuitive concepts?" His answer is no, because the former is just thought of, and does not apply to the real object itself. The abstract has no existence outside of the mind. "The internal representations do not correspond to anything outside; they are fabricated and combined together entirely by the understanding." ****) The purpose of these abstract concepts is that they take "the place in the mind of the multitude of individual beings." By them ~~we are~~

*) M. DeWulf, "History of Mediaeval Philosophy," Vol. II. p. 178.

***) McKeon, "Selections from Mediaeval Philosophers," Vol. II. p. 353.

****) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen," p. 277.

*****) M. DeWulf, "History of Mediaeval Philosophy," Vol. II. p. 180.

we are enabled to arrange orderly in our mind our views of real individuals according to genera and species, or, as Townsend puts it, "The universalia (to him) were signs which might be applied with equal propriety to anyone out of a number of individual objects."

But these doctrines soon came in conflict with the teachings of the Church and theology. How? Since he affirms that all knowledge has as root the senses which convey ideas to the mind, we have no means of immediate perception of God by our mind because nothing of him can be known through presentation through the senses. So he rejects every argument, a priori and a posteriori used to prove the existence of God. Hence, we can speak of an agnosticism on the part of Occam. And here it is that he opposed the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas and also especially of Duns Scotus. He rejects all the "arguments advanced by Scotus in favor of God's infinity, omnipotence, his freedom in his works ad extra, his knowledge, or of his monopoly of creative power." *) Our only knowledge or idea of God comes by way of abstractive knowledge, the mind forming a concept of personality from the personality or individuality of which it is conscious by coming in contact with men, and this personality it then exalts into God and "endows it with attributes and perfection the counterparts which it finds in man." **) Thus he runs on until we find him making strange and even absurd remarks about God and soul. But his main argument is that we with our mind cannot argue the substance or reality of God.

*) M. DeWulf, "History of Mediaeval Philosophy," Vol. II. p. 184.

***) Townsend, "Great Schoolmen," p. 229.

Here it is that faith must do its part and simply accept the decrees of the Church and Scripture. Sorley in his "History of English Philosophy" says on page 7, At the hands of Ockam "the separation between theology and philosophy, faith and reason, was made complete. He admitted that there are probably arguments for the existence of God, but maintained the final thesis that whatever transcends experience belongs to faith. In this way he broke with Scotism as well as with Thomism on a fundamental question." *) Taylor, "The Mediaeval Mind," Vol. II says: "Occam asserted the verity of the Scriptures unqualifiedly." **) And since according to this position, a rational theology cannot be established, we here find Occam laying the foundation of religious scepticism, simply because the next step is that the "data of faith which he declares inaccessible to reason are very soon condemned as contrary to reason." ***) But if "there can be no rational or scientific theology, and if the science pursued by such thinkers as Origen, Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas is impossible, then Scholasticism itself becomes a mere heap of barren hypotheses. Science belongs to God, faith to man." ****) So he demands that the "Church recognize the futility of their speculations and become interpreters of practised truth and propagators of the faith! Let the Church abandon this empty, terrestrial science! Let her cast off all the worldly elements with which she has been tainted by her contact with the world; let her reform and return to the simplicity, purity, and holiness of the Apostolic times!" *****) This was the cry that shook scholasticism; these doctrines of Occam

*) Quoted in Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," pp. xxvi-xxvii.

**) Quoted in Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxvii.

***) Weber, "History of Philosophy," p. 201

****) Weber, "History of Philosophy," p. 201.

*****) Weber, "History of Philosophy," pp. 201-202.

by the aid of "the last of the Scholastics," Gabriel Biel, brought it to an end.

Occam in his doctrines of God, Sálvation, Christ, and the Sacraments cannot shake off the influence of Duns Scotus. Of God he says that the distinction of right and wrong depend not on the nature of God, but on his arbitrary will. He went farther than Scotus when he said that "moral evil is only evil because it was prohibited," and again that "if God had commanded His creatures to hate Himself, hatred of God would have been praiseworthy." God has two wills, the "potentia absoluta" and the "potentia ordinata." In practice the latter is used, since the "potentia absoluta" is simply the hypothetical possibility of God's doing anything. The "voluntas ordinata" is "based on no inner necessity, but is determined by the fact that it pleased God as a matter of fact to do thus and not otherwise." *) Of Christ he believed that the human nature was assumed by the divine. Of the Eucharist he held the consubstantiation theory. This theory he brings out in his "De Sacramento Altaris" in which he uses this line of argument: Quantity does not exist as a thing itself, but can only be spoken of in connection with the "res quanta." "Now quantity can increase or diminish, and thus a thing may be without quantity like a mathematical point." **) It is thus that the body of Christ is present in the bread, not "after the manner of substance, not after that of quantity." ***). Occam lays stress on the absolution in penance, and sin is destroyed by the fact that God does not impute the guilt. On his views of sin. in gen-

*) Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge."

**) Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge."

***) Thomas Aquinas, Summa. IV Lxxvi.1. Quoted by Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog.

eral, he differs from Scotus.

Occam had ^{two} arguments in taking the position that he did on the relation between the Church and State. His position was intensified by his bitterness against Pope John XXII whom he accused of attempting to subjugate the Empire and of trying to prove faulty poverty vows of the Franciscans. He said in the first place that the Church and the world must be kept separate in sharp distinction; and then he showed the impossibility of the Church controlling the state by showing the limitations and errors of the official ecclesiastical authorities. The papal power extends only to spiritual things. He even doubts the necessity of the papacy at all. But we must be careful not to imagine Occam as attempting any kind of upheaval or change of existing conditions. At best he desired but "a certain amelioration of existing condition within the circle of the system, and his most reasonable demands went to pieces on the positivism of the nominalists." *)

There is quite a dispute among students of scholasticism as to whether Occam was sincere or not when he says that he accepts the dogmas of the Church. There are those who say that he simply said so to protect himself, whereas in reality it is the deepest irony. Birch quotes R. Seeberg as saying that "the reader can not escape a painful impression when the talented author apologizes for his bold conclusions as harmful ^{less} intellectual exercises," and this seems to be the opinion of most Protestants. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, however, Occam's only mistake was in that he denied the Pope temporal power and went too far in some things

*) Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge."

essential "to the system of christian theology." "Rashdall asserts that Ockham was 'unimpeachably orthodox on all questions except the authority of the Papacy and its relation to the Civil Power!'" *) But that is a question that, perhaps, will never be satisfactorily decided.

OCCAM'S INFLUENCE

On Philosophy

We come now to the discussion of Occam's influence upon later philosophy. Birch lists three points to prove this influence:

1. "The repeated use of Ockham's 'Law of Parcimony,' or of 'Ockham's Razor'.
2. "He influenced the subsequent political theories seen in the development of the social contract theory of government, popular sovereignty, and the inalienable and indestructible right of freedom.
3. "He influenced the development of all subsequent philosophical and theological thought and is profoundly influencing present-day thought." **)

As stated above, his doctrines and theories, ushering in as they did a world of new ideas and of free thought, soon brought an end to scholasticism. But not only that. His theories started a new trend in religious and philosophical thought, a trend which headed straight for the Reformation and which was a great factor in the enlightenment of the time of the Renaissance. It is true, some have

*) Quoted in Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxxiv.

***) Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," pp. xxvii-xxviii.

called Occam a forerunner of the Reformation and "the first Protestant," but these titles are going a little too far. Also the influence that Occam is supposed to have had on the pre-Reformers as Wycliffe and Huss has been overestimated. However, no one can deny the influence he had on the minds of the people of Europe in the next two centuries in making it ready to accept the Renaissance and then the Reformation. We pass over a whole line of statements to this effect by Townsend and others, quoted by Birch, but give that of R. L. Poole in his "Illustrations of the History of Mediaeval Thought and Learning," where he states that "Ockham in virtue of his greater conformity to the spirit of his day, not to speak of his eminence as a philosopher, unequalled among contemporaries and hardly surpassed by Thomas Aquinas or John Duns Scotus, handed down a light which was never suffered to be extinguished, and which served as a beacon to pioneers of reform like Wycliffe and Huss. In politics, as well as in some points of doctrine, Ockham may be greatly claimed as a precursor of the German reformers of the sixteenth century." He "left an unbroken line of successors until the enduring elements of his aim found a partial realism in the religious revolution of the sixteenth century." *) Milman says; after discussion the philosophy of Occam, "Thus may William of Ockham seem with fine and prophetic discrimination to have assigned their proper, indispensable, yet limited power and office to the senses, to have vindicated to the understanding its higher, separate, independent function; to have anticipated the famous axiom of Leibnitz,

*) Quoted in Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxix.

that there is nothing in the intellect but from the senses, except the intellect itself; to have anticipated Hobbes; foreshadowed Locke, not as Locke is vulgarly judged, according to his later French disciples, but in himself; to have taken his stand on the same ground with Kant." *)

The system embodying the thoughts and theories of Occam with some additions is known as "Occamism" or "Terminism," the latter being used because of Occam's doctrine of the termini. **) It constituted what was called in the 14th and 15th centuries the "via moderna," in contrast to the "via antiqua." The supporters of the via moderna were the "doubters," and rejected such things as astrology and alchemy, and advanced the views of Occam. "The whole doctrinal history of the universities in the 14th and 15th centuries consists of the conflict between the ancients (reales) and the moderns (nominales). In these centuries one was either for or against Occamism; nobody overlooked it, and we may say that it represents the chief scholastic tendency of the time." ***) Weber says that it transformed the universities into veritable fields of battle, not to be understood in a metaphorical sense, and won because it appealed to common-sense. The movement was soon felt in the universities of Oxford and Paris, where adherents were drawn from the ranks of the artists, and in these faculties was the principle seat of the quarrels. The intellectual members of the great Mendicant orders were usually opposed to it, but we note a gradual gain of Occamism, since

*) Milman, "Latin Christianity," Vol. XIV, p.150.

**) DeWulf explains this doctrine of Occam on page 180 thus: "The term is capable of application to a number more or less great of individual beings independent of each other; but the object of thought behind the abstract term does not belong to the beings to which it is applied." Vs. realism.

***) DeWulf, "History of Mediaeval Philosophy," p. 187.

the spirit of scepticism was pervading all classes of people. It stands to reason, too, that as time went on new ideas were brought in, and old ones discarded, so that there also arose factions within the ranks of the Occamists themselves. The doctrines at first took a firmer hold in Paris where John Buridan was the leader of the *via moderna* during the first half of the 14th century. Occamism had a great leader also in Marsilius of Ingham, a disciple of Buridan. These reforming ideas now also begin to take a hold in all the faculties and orders, and thus the movement continued until we meet Peter D'Ailly, "the eagle of France," and Gerson, the former the master of the latter, both staunch advocates of Occamism. The next great step is the spreading of the *via moderna* to the other universities, chief of which were those of Prague and Vienna, and then a little later Heidelberg, Erfurt, Leipzig, Cracow.

Occam's Influence upon Luther

And thus it was that at Erfurt Luther first came in touch with the teachings of Occam. It would be hard to overestimate the influence that Occam had upon Luther. Boehmer in his "Luther in the Light of Recent Research," translated by Dr. Huth of Chicago University, says: "It is hardly possible to rate too highly the influence of Ockhamist criticism upon the development of Luther." As far as we have read, all histories on Luther, church histories in general, histories of philosophy, and histories of the Reformation, all works and books on Occam never fail to speak emphatically of the similiarity between Occam and Luther in some doctrines.

Boehmer in his "Der Junge Luther" in speaking of the training that Luther received at Erfurt gives an excellent account of the doctrines of the via moderna that Luther was taught, and since this paragraph of Boehmer contains almost everything that we found otherwise while reading on this early training of Luther, we quote it in toto: "Die Dozenten waren alle eidlich verpflichtet, in ihren Vorlesungen die Werke des Aristoteles im Sinne der in Erfurt offiziell anerkannten scholastischen Schule auszulegen, der secta des englischen Franziskaners Wilhelm von Ockham oder der via moderna. Die Modernen oder Ockhamisten unterschieden sich dadurch vor allem von den Thomisten and Skotisten, dass sie die Frage, ob die menschliche Vernunft zu einem sicheren Wissen von den uebersinnlichen Wirklichkeiten des Glaubens gelangen koenne, aufs entschiedenste verneinten. Aber sie verneinten diese Frage nur, um mit der groessen Energie zu betonen, dass die Kirche in ihrem Dogma eine absolut untruegliche Erkenntnis jener Wirklichkeiten besitze und dass es daher nicht nur aus sittlichen und religioesen, sondern auch aus wissenschaftlichen Gruenden geboten sei, dem Dogma, moege es noch so absurd und widerspruchsvoll erscheinen, im Gehorsam des Glaubens sich unbedingt zu unterwerfen. Hat Luther an diesen Lehren Anstoss genommen? Ja und nein! Von einer solchen unbedingten Unterwerfung unter das Dogma der Kirche wollte er selbstverstaendlich spaeter nichts mehr wissen. Aber dass die Vernunft unfaeig sei, die Mysterien des Glaubens, die in den duerren, hellen Spruechen der heilige Schrift bezeugt seien, zu erkennen, dass diese mysteria

fuer sie stets eine Narrheit, eine Torheit und ein Geheimnis bleiben und daher ihr zum Trotz geglaubt werden muessen, daran hat er stets festgehalten. Was die Welt der sinnlichen und inneren Erfahrung anlangt, so bestritten die Ockamisten nicht, dass sie dem menschlichen Erkenntnisvermoegen zugaenglich sei. Wenn sie den Erkenntnissen, die der Mensch auf diesem Wege gewinnen kann, dennoch den Charakter der Evidenz oder der Wissenschaft absprachen, so geschah das nur darum, weil sie als Wissenschaft im strengen Sinne lediglich die Logik anerkannten, aber nicht weil sie richtige Erkenntnisse in jenem Erfahrungsbereich fuer unmoeglich hielten. Sie trieben daher im Anschluss an Aristoteles diese Wissenschaften zweiten Ranges genau so gruendlich, wie die Logik. Aber sie folgten dabei doch nie unbedingt dem Stagiriten. Sie verbesserten ihn erstlich staendig in maiorem gloriam ecclesiae, d.h. sie suchten seine Lehren in Einklang zu bringen mit dem Dogma, und sie buchten zweitens immer auch gewissenhaft alle Erkenntnisse, die ueber ihn hinausfuehrten. So lernte Luther z.B. schon durch seine Erfurter Lehrer die Beweise dafuer kennen, dass die Erde keine Scheibe, sondern eine Kugel sei, und dass der Mond Ebbe und Flut erzeuge. Er hoerte weiter von ihnen schon, dass das Gewitter zwar nicht immer, aber meist auf natuerliche Weise zustandekomme, dass die Alchimie eine sehr zweifelhafte Wissenschaft und auch mit der Astrologie kein Staat zu machen sei. Zwar wirkte der gestirnte Himmel auf die menschlichen Sinnesorgane und durch diese wieder auf die Affekte. Aber der Mensch koenne diesem Einfluss Widerstand leisten und daher vermoege der Astrologe hoechstens vorauszusagen, wie er

handeln koenne, aber nicht wie er tatsaechlich handeln werde und muesse. Wenn Luther spaeter so entschieden gegen diese Pseudowissenschaften sich erklaert hat, so ist das also letzten Endes ein Ausfluss der kritischen Stimmung, die Trutvetters naturphilosophische Vorlesungen damals in ihm geweckt haben. Dem heutigen Leser muten diese Vorlesungen natuerlich sehr "naiv" an. Aber es war doch nicht das sogenannte „naive Weltbild“, sondern das wissenschaftliche Weltbild der Zeit, das Luther in ihnen kennen lernte und sich aneignete." *)

The two main teachers of Luther here at Erfurt were Trutvetter and Usingen, both of whom were hard and fast modernists. So Luther became a nominalist, but not of the rigid type that he would and could not accept the good parts of the realists. Luther was thus influenced by the Franciscan tendency which "regarded theology less as a subject for dogmatic systematizing than as furnishing a basis for an ethical view of life." Also the Occamist attitude toward the will was very important to him, because it taught him, as we have shown above, "that the objective basis of faith falls outside the field of logic and knowledge and belongs to mystic intuition." **) Faith and knowledge have nothing in common. "Theology separates from philosophy and ceases to be a science. The doctrines of faith are not demonstrable. Their field is that of supernatural reality." ***) From Occam Luther also received his basis for ready acceptance of the doctrine of salvation, because the Occamists did not believe that works of themselves make men just. "In his lectures at Wittenberg in 1516 we find him standing on Occam's position with regard

*) Boehmer, "Der Junge Luther," pp. 39-40.

**) Fife, "Young Luther," p. 65.

***) Fife, "Young Luther," p. 65.

to the preparation of God's grace." Naturally, the wrong belief of Occam that God in his arbitrary will can reject good and accept evil as well as reject evil and accept good disturbed him at times.

Just how much of Occam Luther read at Erfurt or later we do not know, but he most likely knew him chiefly through Biel. Of the Occamist school he also studied the works of D'Ailly and Gerson. Later on, it appears, ~~that~~ he also studied the original works of Occam.

To go into the entire field of Luther's development in his young life and to show every dependence of Luther upon Occam and his teachings of which we know would take us beyond the scope of our subject. We ^{add} ~~several~~ ^{statements} ~~of~~ contemporaries of Luther and of Luther himself to show his regard for this master. Melancton in his Vita Lutheri says that Luther "read Occam much and long and preferred his acumen to that of Thomas and Scotus." *) In the Table Talk of Luther we have an interesting passage we reads as follows:

"The Terminists, among whom I was, are sectaries in the high schools; they oppose the Thomists, the Scotists, and the Albertists; they are also called Occamists, from Occam, their founder. They are of the newest sect, and are now strongest in Paris.

"The question with them was, whether the word 'humanitas' means a general humanity, residing in every human creature, as Thomas and others hold. The Occamists and Terminists say: It is not in general, but it is spoken in particular of every human creature; as a picture of a human creature signifies every human crea-

*) Quoted in Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxiii.

ture.

"They are called Terminists, because they speak of a thing in its own proper words, and do not apply them after a strange sort. With a carpenter we must speak in his terms, and with such words as are used in his craft, as a chisel, and axe. Even so we must let the words of Christ remain, and speak of the sacraments in suis terminis, with such words as Christ used and spake; as "Do this," must not be turned into "Offer this;" and the word corpus must not signify both kinds, as the papists tear and torment the words, and wilfully wrest them against the clear text." *) Later on Luther says, "Occam was an able and sensible man." **)

Birch says, "Luther, however, criticizes Ockham 'as one who had no knowledge of spiritual temptations.'" ***) Luther is cited by several writers as having said on different occasions, "Mein Meister Occam" and "Mein Lieber Meister Occam." When Luther was excommunicated in 1520, he says proudly by way of explanation: "Sum enim Occanicae factionis."

"In the 'De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae' Luther refers to a discussion of the doctrine of the Real Presence of D'Ailly, whose view was similar to that of his teacher, Ockham. Luther states that 'formerly, while I was gulping down the Scholastic theology, the Cardinal of Cambry (D'Ailly), in Book IV of his Sentences, gave me occasion to reflect, by contending very acutely that it would be far more probable, and fewer superfluous miracles would be required, if it were understood that true bread and true wine, and not their accidents alone, were on the altar.' ****)

*) "Luther's Table Talk," translated by William Hazlitt, Esq. p. 290.

**) "Luther's Table Talk," translated by William Hazlitt, Esq. p. 291.

***) Quoted by Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxiii.

****) Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxiv.

Seeberg in his "History of Doctrine" shows, too, that the "De Sacramenta Altaris" influenced Luther very greatly. He says: Es "ist klar, dass Luther von Ockam beeinflusst ist. So wohl die Einteilung des oertlichen Seins, als die ueberräumliche Existenz des Leibes Christi im Abendmahl and allem Seienden weist deutlich auf diese Quelle zurueck." *)

Just how much Occam influenced Luther both externally and internally will perhaps never be completely, exactly, and fully correctly known. This we know, that Luther, having studied these great Modernists, of whom Occam was the founder, was given a correct and enlightened start on the great teachings of his which have meant so much for the freedom of our age. In later years he was able to pick out the good of Occam and leave the dross. Thus he was "assisted in developing his own constructive program which sufficiently blended progress and conservatism." **)

We conclude with a part of the last paragraph by Seeberg in Schaff-Herzog:

"As a philosopher, he [Occam] won a decided victory, even over his greater teacher, Scotus, and became the pioneer of modern epistemology; as a theologian he enforced the critical method of Scholars on generations to follow; and as a constitutionalist he furnished a haven in his ideas on Church and State and on the supreme authority of Scripture which was destined to work

*) Seeberg, "Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte," p. 380.

***) Ockham-Birch, "De Sacramento Altaris," p. xxv.

mightily on a later age. Both on the negative and on the positive side, he stands in a direct relation to the greatest event of the succeeding age, the Reformation. It has been shown above that he was no forerunner of Luther as a Reformer, but he was one of the factors without which a Reformation would have been impossible."

Outline

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The reader will have noticed that we have quoted almost exclusively from the first six works listed above. These works are the best authorities that we had at our disposal, and they treated Occam much more extensively than the others. In the main, all the rest agree substantially with what we have presented, and to have entered into a discussion of every divergent point would have taken us to almost impossible limits.

The frequent and, at times, rather long quotations will, we hope, be considered a merit rather than a demerit.