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The Wycliffite and Lutheran element in the English Reformation

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THE WYCLIFFITE AND LUTHERAN ELEMENT
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Introduction

Scholars and historians the world over have spent many tedious hours in arranging and re-arranging, discussing and re-discussing, searching and re-searching, writing and re-writing to find answers to the problems and difficulties which confront the world in analyzing the history of nations, races, and people. One of the most controversial topics in the history of the world is the Reformation Period. It is very difficult to find agreement among historians concerning certain periods in this Reformation history. The material avaliable must be weighed very carefully, and one cannot jump to conclusions until he has made a thorough study of the entire picture.

The above situation is very evident when one considers the Reformation that took place in England. The Reformation in England is just one small part of the great Reformation that took place on the continent. However, it is entirely different and one must be very

careful when he reads material on the English Reformation. He must always take into consideration the position of the author. Roman Catholics usually write as if the Reformation in England would not have taken place if it had not been for the desire of Henry VIII for a divorce. Protestant writers list errors and corruptions in the church, and the influences of certain prominent individuals. Economic writers and political theorists approach the entire picture from a different angle and endeavor to place the causes outside of the Church. For these reasons the reader of English Reformation must be extremely cautious and must take into consideration all views before he forms any conclusions.

The period which this thesis discusses is one of the most important periods in English History. The years 1300 to 1550 show to the world why the Church of England is no longer a member of the Roman Church. This thesis endeavors to show how the teachings and works of John Wycliffe in the 14th century help lay the foundation and groundwork for the real beginning of the Reformation in England in the 16th century, and how the Lutheran element from the continent fits into the scheme of events during the early years of the English Reformation. Again we have to be very careful not to overestimate the influences which John Wycliffe and Martin Luther play in deciding the course of the English Reformation. It is vain to speculate what might have

happened or what could have happened if these two men had lived at the same time. However, one thing is possible. English Protestantism finds its roots in the pioneer labours of John Wycliffe,and Martin Luther not only gives the stimulus and inspiration but also influences the English leaders of the 16th century.

I.CONDITIONS IN ENGLAND DURING THE 14TH CENTURY

The word "reformation" suggests one important item, that is, the existence of evils which make reform a necessity. The evils in England were mounting daily in the 13th century; the clouds were gathering; and the storm was quickly approaching. Although there do not seem to be any sects or divisions of prominence in England outside the Papal Church before Wycliffe's time, there seems to be an awakening of the Reformation spirit that culminates under the leadership of this great man. About 1165 thirty German weavers had come to England and in the minds of the bishops they were disseminating opinions that in their judgment were heretical.[1] It is of no improbable conjecture that others of the Continental sects besides the thirty German weavers came to England, and that in unobtrusive manner they influenced the thought and belief of those around them. At all events there is the evidence that among persons of humble degree in life, and amongst the monks and friars, were those awakened in some degree to the errors of their time. Before long, however, the great leader of reform was to appear.[2]

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1. The term "heretic" meant in those days opposition to papal authority as much as oppostion to the theological dogmas of the Church. Term will be used in this manner in this thesis.

2. W. H. Beckett, The English Reformation to the 16th Century, p. 46.

The conditions in the Church at this time were anything but what they should be. This state of affairs did not only exist in England, but also throughout the entire world. The people were living in darkness and ignorance of God's truth. There was no such thing as doctrine. The people were blindly led by the bishops and priests and were perfectly content to accept everything that was said to them.

The English Church at Wycliffe's time hit an all time low. It was at this time that many corrupt doctrines were fully established -- the doctrine of transubstantiation; the withholding of the cup from the laity; the necessity of confession as the condition of receiving remission; and penance accepted as the expiation for sin. The clergy in no way were shepherds of their flocks. Their ignorance was often incredible. Wycliffe declared that many of the clergy of his day knew not the Ten Commandments, nor read their psalter, nor understood a verse of it.[3] The clergy are accused by many historians of venality, dissoluteness, ignorance, and a disregard for duties.[4] Mendicant friars, who formerly gained the hearts of the people and stimulated religious life, were in the 14th century a general nuisance. They sold indulgences, they invented pious frauds, they were covetous under pretense of poverty, they had become

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3. William Clark, The Anglican Reformation, in the Epochs of Church History, Vol. 10, p. 50.
4. John Lord, Beacon Lights of History, Vol. III, p. 396.

luxurious in their lives, they slandered the regular clergy, they usurped the prerogatives of parish priests, and they enriched their convents.[5] Monasteries and nunneries, so far from being seminaries of learning and piety, were hotbeds of infidelity and vice. The abbots and friars, grown wealthy and indolent, lived on their ill-gotten gains like Eastern potentates. Their feasting, rioting, and sumptuous living shocked the whole country.[6] Futhermore the Catholic Church was aware of the existing evils. Twenty years before Wycliffe began his protest against the flagrant abuses in the Church, Bishop Fitz Ralph of Armagh laid his famous indictment of the four orders before the Pope at Avignon. "For commonly if there be any cursed swearer, extortioner, or adulterer, he will not be shriven at his own curate, but go to a flattering friar that will assail him falsely for a little money by year." The rich were forgiven for a window in the cloister, and the poor for a pair of shoes or a dinner.[7] And Adam of Usk, a prosaic lawyer, went to Rome, and though he had no love for Wycliffe's teaching, yet says, "There everything was bought and sold so that benefices were given not for desert, but to the highest bidder."[8] Dallman in his book on Wycliffe quotes from Milman's Latin Christianity the

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5. Ibid., p. 395.
6. J. Milton Smith, The Stars of the Reformation, p. 6.
7. William Dallmann, John Wyclif, p. 42.
8. Ibid., p. 22.

petition of Londoners to Parliament[9] which fully substantiates the above views on the conditions in the Church at this time.

The greatest evil to many was the control of the finances and property by the Church. Papal exactions not only crippled the government but also impoverished the nation. Half the taxes went to the support of a foreign priesthood, and the taxes came only from the people, not from the clergy. They were exempt from all taxes. The Dominicans and Franciscan orders held half the soil of England which was exempt from taxes and subject to foreign sway.[10] All clerical appointments were made by the pope and all the clergy were under his jurisdiction. And with the clergy holding a prevailing hand over the consciences of men, the Pope actually ruled England.

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9. Ibid., p. 23. Milman, Latin Christianity. "since the Church of England, fatally following that of Rome, has been endowed with temporalities, Faith, Hope, and Charity have deserted her communion. Their priesthood is no priesthood; men in mortal sin cannot convey the Holy Ghost. The clergy profess celibacy but from their pampered living are unable to practice it. The pretended miracle of Transubstantiation leads to idolatry. Exorcism, or benedictions are vain, delusive, and diabolical. The realm cannot prosper so long as spiritual persons hold secular offices. One who unites these two is a hermaphrodite. All chantries of prayer for the dead should be suppressed; one hundred religious houses would be enough for the spiritual wants of the realm. Pilgrimages, the worshipping of the Cross or images, or reliques, is idolatry. Auricular confession, indulgences, are mischievous or a mockery... ... Convents of females are defiled by licentiousness and the worst crimes."

10. Smith, op. cit., p. 10.

The political picture at this time shows a strong national feeling developing against the Papacy. England had just defeated France and Scotland, and now to pay allegiance to the Pope who was a vassal of the French King was definitely out of the question. During the reign of Edward III three important laws were passed.

1. The STATUTE OF PROVISORS AND BENEFICES OF 1350 which states that in every case in which the Pope attempted to confer office the King had the right of filling the post.
2. In 1363 Parliament passes the STATUTE OF PRAEMUNIRE which prohibited the carrying of matters that belonged to the royal jurisdiction before a foreign tribunal and appeal from the former to the latter.
3. When Pope Urban V demanded the sums that had been guaranteed to him by King John and which had been owing for 33 years, Parliament decreed that no king could make agreements like that and they would not pay it again.

The social conditions in England during the 14th century were also in the same turbulent estate as the spiritual. The most terrible plague which the world ever witnessed darkened the plains of England and thousands upon thousands of lives were lost. This brought on much poverty, social unrest, and hatred which finally culminated in an open rebellion -- the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Throughout the entire nation there was much killing; many executions; and barbarous and bloody assaults in many sections of the country.

In the literary field we have two important writers during this age, Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) and William

Langland (1330-1400?). Both these men and their friends were representatives of a generation that had begun to look at life with open minds. Langland was a loyalist and an orthodox Catholic, whose voice, independent of that of the theological Wycliffe, was raised with such power in the cause of social and ecclesiastical reform that next to Wycliffe none was greater.[11] Many think that in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales Chaucer drew the picture of Wycliffe; at any rate, the description fits him perfectly.[12] In the market places and on the village greens, songs and ballads were being sung that show forces were working mightily in the direction of the ecclesiastical revolution.[13]

This is the England that faced John Wycliffe when he appeared on the horizon.

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11. Beckett, op. cit., p. 60.
12. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 56.
13. Beckett, op. cit., p. 61.

II. THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION

Without a doubt John Wycliffe deserves the title, "the Morning Star of the Reformation". He may not have been the "reformer" in the true sense of the word as compared with the 16th century reformers, but he did set the spark which grew by leaps and bounds into a roaring fire at the time of Martin Luther. As Wimberly states, "He was 'the voice crying in the wilderness' as it were, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'. He was the pioneer seeking to make the paths straight; he was the entering wedge of Reformation; he was the cautious scholarly builder of truth. With Wycliffe the Reformation was born; evangelical faith awakened from the dead ashes of a depraved ecclesiasticism."[1]

John Wycliffe was born about the year 1328 in Yorkshire. Because of the meager information concerning his early life doubt has arisen as to the exact date and place of his birth, social standing, and childhood influences. In 1353 it is reported that his father died and that his son became proprietor of the family manor. This is a significant fact because John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was overlord of this territory since 1342 and played an important part in Wycliffe's later life.[2]

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1. C. F. Wimberly, Beacon Lights of Faith, p. 37.
2. James McKinnon, The Origin of the Reformation, p. 80.

At the age of 16 he was sent to Merton College, Oxford, where he began to prepare himself for his later labours as a great reformer. Two thirds of his life were spent in preparation for his task before he dealt with questions of public concern. He first studied the seven arts composing the trivium and quadrivium, namely, grammar, rhetoric and logic, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. With this as a background Wycliffe took up the study of theology and canon law.[3] His college career was such a brilliant one that even an enemy like Knighton had to admit that Wycliffe was the "most eminent doctor of theology of those days. In philosophy he was second to none, in scholastic learning incomparable."[4]

Wycliffe's life as a scholar did not stop after his graduation. He was elected master of Balliol in or about 1361, but soon resigned his position to become parson at Fyllingham in Lincolnshire. During his stay at Fyllingham it it believed that he studied at Oxford and received the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1366(?). In 1365 he was made head of Canterbury Hall, but held this position only until 1367 when he was ousted by the new Archbishop Langham. Also about 1365 he was made "a peculiar cleric of the King", likely a Royal chaplain. Through this position he gained influence at court, and made a deep impression on the nobles and on the citizens.[5] In 1368 he resigned his pastorate

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3. Henry C. Sheldon, History of the Christian Church, p. 401.
4. Cheyney, Readings in English History, p. 267.
5. Dallmann, op. cit., pp. 30ff.

at Fyllingham and became the rector of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire so he could be closer to the University. At the university his popularity grew and he spent many hours lecturing to the students. In 1374 the crown gave him the parish of Lutterworth in Leicestershire which he kept until his death.

Although Wycliffe took a very active part as a curator of souls, he was also seen on the political front. Since politics in those days were so closely connected with the Church, there was an overlapping of ecclesiastical and political problems. This played an important part in Wycliffe's thinking. First of all, as Lechler observes, it is Wycliffe, the patriot, whom we have to place before the eye. He represented in his own person that intensification of English national feeling which was conspicuous in the 14th century. At his first appearance he was the statesman and the diplomatist rather than the theologian; although there was always underneath the religious spirit, and in the end his whole undivided strength was concentrated upon the ecclesiastical domain.[6] It was in 1357 that Urban V demanded that the King pay the feudal tribute which hadn't been paid for 33 years. Such a demand came at the wrong time for England had just won the famous battle of Crecy and was not in the humour to submit.[7] The King, Parliament, and the people refused payment and the Pope threatened

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6. Clark, op. cit., p. 37.
7. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 5.

excommunication. It was at this time that Wycliffe's fame at the University spread to the court. In 1365 his advice was asked with respect to the tribute demanded by Urban which had been unanimously repudiated by the three estates of the realm. Wycliffe wrote a state paper on the subject, and the tax was never paid again. The anti-papal zeal which he displayed greatly added to his popularity at Oxford, where he now became the acknowledged leader.[8]

Continuing his service for the King, Wycliffe was sent as one of the royal commissioners to Bruges in the Netherlands in 1374 to deal with ten papal delegates. Like Luther's famous trip to Rome, it brought Wycliffe into more intimate acquaintance with the corruptions of the papacy, and the mischief of monastic institutions.[9] The conferences were very unsuccessful, and Wycliffe returned to England to devote his time to the reform which was so desperately needed. His theory was to turn to the civil government urging it to regain the usurped authority of the church.[10]

The political situation at this time was by no means favourable to papal domination. Richard II, who came to the throne in June 1377, was bitterly hostile to papal exactions and referred to Wycliffe the question whether they could

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8. A. H. Hore, History of the Church of England, p. 188.
9. Beckett, op. cit., p. 67.
10. Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation, p. 36.

legitimately put a stop to the flow of the treasure of the kingdom to the papal court. Wycliffe answered in the affirmative. Now the friars, bishops, and priests took up the cause against Wycliffe. He was summoned by Courtenay, Bishop of London, to appear before the Convocation assembled in St. Paul's on the charge of erroneous teaching. Here was where John of Gaunt came to the rescue. A quarrel developed between John and the Bishop with the result that the court broke up in disorder and Wycliffe went away without saying a word. Wycliffe's opposition to the Pope made it necessary for him to have a protector, like John of Gaunt, powerful enough to shield him from papal vengeance.[11] (Although Wycliffe needed such protection at this time, many writers have condemned his actions. McKinnon in his book, Origin of the Reformation, gives a fair account of this relationship.[12])

Because of this failure the bishops now sought help from the pope. Gregory XI immediately directed five Bulls against Wycliffe. His friends protested against his imprisonment "at the command of the Pope, lest they should seem to give the Pope dominion and royal power in England".[13] Many of the

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11. Lord, op. cit., p. 406.

12. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 81. John of Gaunt's action was dictated by purely personal and political motives, and the alliance between a reformer of the stamp of Wycliffe and an unscrupulous politician of this sort does not look well, though it is improbable that the reformer sympathized with the politician's self-seeking spirit and methods. Wycliffe was from conviction the antagonist of a wealthy and secularised hierarchy and was, moreover, in need of a powerful protector. John of Gaunt was, from motives of self interest, also the enemy of the hierarchy and was powerful enough to afford protection.

13. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 32.

clergy were in sympathy with Wycliffe, and the University had declared his proposition true despite the papal citation. It was not until the following year that Wycliffe was finally summoned to appear before the Convocation at Lambeth Place. Again the secular authorities stepped in -- this time the mother of the young Richard II -- and Wycliffe escaped persecution. Hore reports that now the rumour had spread abroad that legates sent by the Pope were sitting in judgment upon him and the national spirit of hostility to Papal interference was aroused.[14] This undoubtedly helped Wycliffe immensely and he continued his preaching against the errors in the church.

During this entire decade the peasants were becoming more and more dissatisfied which finally led to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. It is true that the ideas of Wycliffe had been leavening the masses, but whether he was responsible or not, that is another question. His enemies tried to place the entire blame upon his work and his teachings. "Caution is necessary," says Beckett, "in associating this revolt with the widespread influence of Wycliffe's itinerant preachers. Long before the 'Poor Priests' were sent forth, the peasantry were smarting under the sense of their grievances, and the spirit of revolt kindled. Wycliffe had confined himself to ecclesiastical and doctrinal reform; but the

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14. Hore, op. cit., p. 190.

spiritual and the social were too closely bound to be separated. His doctrines led to the recognition of the equal rights of man against the social system of the Middle Ages. This indirect connection between the new religious teaching and the revolt of an oppressed people was made the most of by the Reformer's adversaries."[15] To have led a movement in favour of social revolution would have been to forfeit the support of John of Gaunty and wreck his own efforts for religious reform. All in all, when Wycliffe's writings are examined, it seems that he did not advocate such a revolt and that the masses gave expression to them in terms he had never intended to be used.[16]

In 1382 further proceedings were taken against Wycliffe. The bishops became bolder because they knew that Wycliffe had lost some of his support from the higher classes due to the Peasants' Revolt. And besides it was at this time that Wycliffe passed from attacking the corruptions of the Church to the attack of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. By this attack he forfeited in large measure the support which he had received from the University[17] and also the support of John of Gaunt. The archbishop of London now convened a

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15. Beckett, op. cit., p. 71.
16. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 114. From his "of Servants and Lords" he upheld the existing social order and appealed to the teaching of the New Testament against the reform of social abuse by revolutionary methods. On the other hand, in the same treatise we can see that he showed practical sympathy with the working class as against the injustice and oppression of bad landlords and masters, both lay and ecclesiastical, and tranchantly rebuked their harsh and selfish treatment of this class.
17. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 422.

synod of bishops and doctors and bachelors of divinity at the Blackfriars convent in May 1382 -- "earthquake synod" -- so called from the fact that a severe earthquake occurred during its sittings.[18] The Convention sent an ultimatum to Oxford demanding that they banish Wycliffe and condemn his doctrines. Oxford refused because they did not like the idea of being dictated from the outside. Archbishop Courtenay, however, insisted and through his labors the opposition was crushed by the royal injunction to banish Wycliffe's abetters from Oxford and purge the university of heresy (July 13, 1382).[19] Thus Wycliffe left and Oxford was dark and dead for a hundred years.

Once more, in November 1382, Courtenay summoned Wycliffe to appear before a Convocation at Oxford. Of this appearance Smith says, "So forcible was his appeal and so irresistable his logic that the Council, as they listened to his impassioned eloquence, were warfed into insignificance, and he passed out from their midst unscathed."[20] "Nothing," says Green, "marks more strongly the grandeur of Wycliffe's position as the last of the great schoolmen, than the reluctance of so bold a man as Courtenay, even after his triumph over Oxford, to take extreme measures against the head of Lollardy."[21]

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18. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 117.
19. Ibid., p. 117.
20. J. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 15.
21. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 403.

Wycliffe now returned to his Rectory at Lutterworth where he spent the rest of his days in peace and quietness. He devoted his time to revising his version of the Bible, sending out tracts, and preparing men to preach and spread the Gospel. On the 29th of December, while conducting service in his church, he was struck with paralysis; on the 31st he breathed his last.[22] It is hard to believe that during his life time he was not formally condemned and judged as a heretic. "Strange," says the quaint Dr. Fuller, "that a hare hunted by so many packs of hounds should at last die quietly in his nest at home."[23] McKinnon has the probable answer why Wycliffe was not persecuted when he says, "The demorilisation of Church life and authority consequent on the schism, in addition to his commanding reputation in the schools and his continued influence among a section of the upper class as well as among the people, probably contributed to his personal immunity from prosecution."[24]

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22. Beckett, op. cit., p. 74.
23. J. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 16.
24. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 123.

III. WYCLIFFE THE REFORMER

When Wycliffe first appeared on the horizon as a leader of people, his attention was drawn to the ecclesiastical corruptions in the church. He spoke very vehemently against the Papal demands, and through his labours Parliament refused to send money to the Roman See. This is where Wycliffe began his public career and each year brought new developments which added to or subtracted from his success until he finally attacked the chief doctrines of the Church. The approach in discussing Wycliffe's life as a reformer will be considered as follows: 1. his views on doctrine. 2. his practical reforms. 3. the results of his labours.

1. His views on Doctrine

During the years of Wycliffe's public ministry his doctrinal position changed gradually and often it was due to the temporal conditions in the Church. The wealth in the Church, the indifference on the part of the clergy concerning the spiritual welfare of the people, and the tributes demanded by Rome brought on his theory of Dominion -- to God alone belongs unqualified dominion; tenure of property depends upon the state of grace of the holder; the denial of the lawfulness of the Church holding

any temporal possession at all. As Sheldon states concerning this theory, "That on Wycliffe's premises it points more largely to an ideal ground of property right than to a practical standard of decision among men. Nevertheless, he was not satisfied to leave the theory without any practical application. He used it to offset the notion that goods once given to the Church are held by a strictly inalienable title and drew the inference that in cases of notorious misuse of spiritual positions the civil authority must take pains to deprive the incumbent."[1] The immorality of the priest made him doubt the efficacy of sacraments administered by priests living in mortal sin. He endeavored to show the people that they were answerable to God for their sins, not to the pope or the priest; and that to pay their money to begging friars for absolution was an aggravation, rather than an expiation of sin.[2] The power of the Bishop at Rome, the existing evils at Rome, and the demands of this bishop prompted Wycliffe to deny the position of the Bishop as head of the visible Church. For him the pope was the anti-Christ.[3] He rejected the Pope's authority saying that there was no need for it; Christ alone was necessary;[4] there was no such thing as the primacy of the Roman pontiff;[5] it was not of divine origin but merely the

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1. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 408.
2. J. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 7.
3. Tractatus de blasphemia
4. De civili dominio
5. Tractatus de officio regis

results of historical evolution;[6] traditional authority of the Church was nothing.[7] With these thoughts in mind Wycliffe placed sole authority of the Holy Scriptures to decide all matters.

All these thoughts in Wycliffe's mind prepared him for his attack on the great Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation. As Green states, "The time came when he brought to bear his strong intellectual powers and knowledge of the New Testament in an examination, exegetical and historical, that resulted in his discrediting and finally repudiating the doctrine of Transubstantiation as then held by the Church. In his denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation Wycliffe in the spring of 1381 began that great movement of revolt which ended, more than a century later, in the establishment of religious freedom, by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic Church."[8] His view was practically and substantially the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Lechler says he was nearer to Luther than to Zwingli and Calvin. His doctrine is an echo of the Apostles and a prelude to the Reformation.[9]

To fully understand Wycliffe's doctrinal position, it may be best to summarize briefly his views as follows:

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6. De veritate sacrae Scripturae
7. De ecclesia
8. Sanford, op. cit., p. 23.
9. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 44.

He swept away one by one almost all the peculiar tenets of medieval Latin Christianity -- pardons, indulgences, excommunications, absolutions, pilgrimages; he rejected transubstantiation; he condemned images, at least, of the Persons of the Trinity.[10] Whether he held the doctrine of justification by faith alone is debatable. In any case it had not in Wycliffe's works the central place which it had in those of Luther.[11] Turning to Wycliffe's sermons these statements are worth noting:

> The holy eucharist after the consecration is not the very body of Christ.
> The Church of Rome is not the head of all churches more than any other church is; not that Peter had any more power given of Christ than any other apostle had.
> The Pope at Rome hath no more in the keys of the Church than hath any other within the order of the priesthood.
> The Gospel is a rule sufficient of itself to rule the life of every Christian man here without any rule.
> All other rules, under whose observances divers religious persons be governed, do add no more perfection to the Gospel than doth the white color to the wall.
> Neither the Pope nor any other prelate of the Church ought to have prisons wherein to punish transgressors.[12]

2. His Practical Reforms

Now Wycliffe, as noted above, took a very definite stand against the errors in the Roman Church. But, happy to say, he did not merely point out the errors, but went ahead and saw to it that his views were spread throughout

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10. Milman, Latin Christianity, viii. p. 203, quoted in Beckett, op. cit., p. 75.
11. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 125.
12. Foxe, Book of Martyrs, p. 57.

So Wycliffe with amazing industry issued tract after tract in the language of the people. He did away with the Church Latin and spoke in the language of the people so that they could understand the truth about God's Word. With these tracts he produced influence on the style of the English language. As the historian Green writes, "If Chaucer was the father of our later English poetry, Wycliffe is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear homely English of his tracts, the speech of the ploughman and trader of the day though coloured with the picturesque phraseology of the Bible, is in its literary use as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it ..... the terse, vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip."[13]

Wycliffe's next step was to translate the Bible into the language of the people. He firmly believed that if the people are to know the will of their God, they may learn it best by reading it from the Bible which contained God's Holy Will. To be ignorant of the Bible is to be ignorant of Christ.[14] Sad to say the details pertaining to the execution of this great enterprise are lost. It is commonly believed, however, that Wycliffe translated the New Testament and part of the Old Testament; that Nicholas

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13. Sanford, op. cit., p. 24.
14. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 56.

Hereford translated the largest part of the Old Testament; that John Pervey in 1388 revised the edition of Wycliffe-Hereford. The effect that the Bible had on the people was tremendous. The Bible gave shape and character to our English language, and above all, it lit a light of Scriptural teaching that can never be extinguished.[15] To show the interest of the people, history reports that those unable to read dubbed together to pay someone to read for them, that a load of hay was given for permission to read the Bible one hour a day for certain periods.[16] The Bible was opened to the people; the church could no longer mislead and terrorize the laymen. The Bible quitted the learned schools, the dead languages, the dusty shelves on which the clergy suffered it to sleep, covered with a confusion of commentators and Fathers.[17]

With the Bible or parts of it, and with the many tracts that he had written, Wycliffe then prepared men to go out to preach the Gospel throughout the Country. These men were called "Poor Priests"[18] because they were vowed to poverty, vowed to accept no benefice. They tried to follow the example of Christ -- sending out of the disciples.

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15. Beckett, op. cit., p. 73.
16. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 59.
17. Sanford, op. cit., p. 23.
18. At the time of Wycliffe there was a great lack of priests because so many had died due to the Black Death. The scarcity of priests caused many men to enter the clerical profession -- their reason was not to care for men's souls, but increase their own wealth by making demands on the people. This caused Wycliffe to send out men who refused any money, and this gained for them the favor of the people -- thus the name "Poor Priests". No doubt this was one of the reasons for Lollard popularity after death of Wycliffe.

They took with them copies of the Bible and tracts, denied the authority of the bishops and priests, and spoke strongly against the teachings of Rome. At first these preachers were men of culture and learning chosen from amongst Oxford students, and those ready to enlist themselves as Wycliffe's disciples. However, after 1382 Wycliffe was beginning to think more about the powers of his disciples as missionaries, and less about their scholarship.[19] These men were constantly moving from place to place, teaching the principles of Wycliffe, and directing the people to Christ, and not to the Pope. This way of disseminating the views of the Gospel helped to prepare England for the Gospel in the 16th Century. Referring to this method of evangelism, Cannon Pennington remarks, "Wycliffe was unquestionably the Wesley of his day."[20]

3. The Results of his Labours

The question now arises, How does the work of John Wycliffe influence and lay the groundwork for the Reformation of the 16th Century. In the first place there is no question beyond a doubt that he influenced the leaders of the Bohemian reformation a century later.[21] His

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19. Trevlyan, England in the Age of Wycliffe, p. 306.
20. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 419.
21. Ibid., p. 424. Prof. J. Loserth states, "Recent research has made it entirely certain that Huss drew largely from the writings of the English reformer."
Dallmann, op. cit., p. 34. Wycliffe's Summa in Theologia contains a part De Ecclesia and Hus' De Ecclesia is but a meager abridgment of Wycliffe's work. Buddensieg says that the ideas of Wycliffe and Huss can be traced through long portions of Luther's Papsttum zu Rom.

writings were carefully copied and circulated in all the universities of Europe and in their most important and essential doctrine reproduced by Huss and Jerome of Prague, the renowned leaders of the Bohemian Reformation, to whom Luther himself was a debtor.[22] John Milton's words from his Areopagtica are worth quoting, "Had it not been for the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable Wycliffe, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome, no, nor the name of Luther or Calvin, had been ever known. The glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours." These words may be a little strong, but they show clearly how Wycliffe influenced the 16th century reformers.

In the second place, Wycliffe influenced the leaders in his own country. These leaders in the 16th century like Wycliffe denounced the Papal Supremacy on the ground of political injury it did to the English people; declaimed against the sloth of immorality and wealth of the English ecclesiastics; advocated a preaching ministry; and looked to the secular power to restrain the vices and reform the manners of the clergy and to govern the Church. Mr. Pollard in Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation writes, "most of the English Reformers were acquainted with

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22. Beckett, op. cit., p. 62.

Wycliffe's works; Cranmer declares that he set forth the truth of the Gospel; Hooper recalls how he resisted 'the popish doctrine of the Mass'; Ridley, how he denied transubstantiation; and Bale records with triumph that, in spite of the efforts to suppress (the writings of Wycliffe), not one had utterly perished."[23] And Dr. Rashdall goes the length of saying it is certain that the Reformation had virtually broke out in the secret-Bible-readings of the Cambridge Reformers before either the trumpet-call of Luther or the exigencies of Henry's personal and political position set men free once more to talk openly against the Pope and the monks, and to teach a simpler and more spiritual gospel than the system against which Wycliffe had striven.[24] No doubt the above statements are somewhat strong, but they do show the evidence that Wycliffe's teachings were spread throughout the country. The next chapters in this thesis will show how Wycliffe's teachings are fostered by the Lollards, How Bible study groups continue thru the 15th century and seem to amalgamate with the influences which come from the continent in the 16th century.

Finally, but not the least important, Wycliffe like Luther helped mould the English language through the

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23. Pollard, Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation, p. 91, quoted in Lindsay, op. cit., p. 318.

24. Dictionary of National Biography, article, "Wycliffe", lxiii 218, quoted in Lindsay, op. cit., p. 318.

translation of the Bible and the sending out of his numerous tracts. An Oxford professor describes Wycliffe as "not only the greatest figure in Oxford history, but along with Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton as one of the four men who have produced the greatest effect on the English language and literature, and still further as wholly unapproached in the entire history of England for his effect on our English theology and religious life."[25] The Bible alone opened the eyes of the people and kept alive the spark which Wycliffe had lit in the 14th century; the Lollards kept this spark smouldering in the 15th century; and all this helped to produce the fire and action of the 16th century.

In 1415 the Council of Constance condemned his works and ordered his bones to be removed from the ground and burned. His ashes were strewn on the waters; the words of Wordsworth's sonnet on it should not be forgotten.

> As thou these ashes, little Brook wilt bear
> Into the Avon, Avon to the tide of Severn,
> Severn to the narrow seas
> Into main ocean they this deed accurst
> An emblem yields to friends and enemies
> How the bold teacher's doctrine sanctified
> By truth shall spread, throughout the world dispersed.

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25. Montagu Burrows, Wycliffe's Place in History, p. 4, quoted in Beckett, op. cit., p. 62.

IV. THE LOLLARD MOVEMENT FROM THE TIME OF WYCLIFFE TO 1520

In the study of the causes, effects, and influences of any great event in the annal of history, there is usually one outstanding feature that governs the actual outcome and helps prepare conditions for new changes. The Lollard movement in England was one of these features, but this movement seemed to take on dual responsibility. Not only did it spread the teachings of Wycliffe, but it was the link, the stepping stone between the 14th and 16th century reform in England. If it had not been for the Lollards, the labours of Wycliffe would probably have proven a failure, his influence on the English reformation would not have exerted itself, and most likely he would be denied the title "the Morning Star of the Reformation". The majority of the people at Wycliffe's time were not ready for a change; it took an entire century to make the people ripe for reform; and even in the 16th century many were not ready. Wycliffe laid the egg; the Lollards kept it warm; and the 16th century reformers hatched it.

The Lollards,[1] a name given to the followers of

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1. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 424. "The name seems to have been imported from the Netherlands. Some have supposed that it was derived from the Latin lolium, meaning darnel

Wycliffe, were already active before the death of Wycliffe and their work continued in one form or another until around 1520. They were men comprised of the lower orders of society although it extended also in some measure to the higher classes and even to the Court itself. The party was unfortunately divided as far as certain doctrines and practices were concerned, but they did seem to agree on the authority of Scripture as the only rule of faith and the need of a reform of somekind. They instilled into the people a contempt for tradition and established authority.

In tracing the development of this movement it is very difficult to obtain the exact picture because the Lollards did not have a particular leader, no prominent writers, very few writings. All the information must be tabulated from the official documents of the Church, the writings of the Bishops, and the decrees of the government. However, enough information has been handed down to see how these Lollards carried on the work of their leader.

Following Wycliffe's death the party grew by leaps and bounds until they became so powerful that they were able to petition Parliament in 1395 to reform the Church

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or tares; others connect it with the old German lollen, to hum or whine. On either supposition, the satirical intent with which the term was applied is sufficiently manifest." Thisnlast statement seems too positive. One explanation is that the "Poor Priests" memorized the Psalms as they wandered through the land "lulling" them.

in accordance with their teachings. The petition has been called the Lollard Conclusions.[2] About a fourth of nation were probably in sympathy with the views at the close of the 14th century. At any rate there seemed to have been a general feeling that reform in some way or another was a necessity. According to the Leicester monk, every second man in those parts was a Lollard.[3] Their tremendous growth was probably due to the political support. The King in 1392 wanted to arrest all Lollards, but the House of Commons felt otherwise. And besides, they were favoured by the knights and the shires who were chiefly desirous of securing the layman's liberty from clerical interference. Many of the nobles had chaplains who were Lollards. All this gave the Lollards a free hand to operate and their views spread rapidly.[4] Up to 1400 the Lollards seemed to be very prominent

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2. Clinton Locke, Age of the Great Western Schism, in Epochs of Church History, V. VIII, p. 222. This petition stated that all temporal possessions run the church, that the priesthood of Rome was not the priesthood of Christ, that kings should possess episcopal rights, that all war was against the principles of the Gospel, that such trades as goldsmith and armorer ought to be put down by law, that the principal duty of a priest was to preach and not to give sacraments, and that the worship of images is sinful. These same views can be found in Wycliffe's writings.

3. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 320. This expression must not be treated as a statistical fact, but only as a strong expression. Half the population had perhaps been impressed more or less favourably by some of Wycliffe's doctrines.

4. Ibid., p. 318. Trevelyan gives a clear picture how these Lollards were received, especially the preachers.

in three sections of the country -- the neighbourhood of Leicester, the West of England, and the Capital.

The situation rapidly changed at the turn of the century. After the revolution of 1399 when Richard II was deposed and Henry IV ascended the throne, the opposition to the Lollards became violent. In 1401 Parliament passed a law which was a disgrace to the nation and the cause of many stains on England's name, viz the "De Heretico Comburendo". With this act passed, the Lollards were persecuted throughout the entire century and many lost their lives. It is from these accounts of persecution that present day historians can evaluate the influences of the Lollard movement. These persecutions may be best divided into periods of years to show the strengthened force of Lollardism.

1401-1417

Although the Act to burn all heretics was passed in 1401, the assault against the Lollard party did not become vigorous until 1414. During this early period a certain number of prosecutions for heresy took place; but most all

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He explains that at the close of the 14th century the unauthorized preacher walked from village to village; his russet gown at once betrayed his errand, and if both the landlord and parson were against him, his chance of getting a hearing was very small. But on friendly ground his reception was entirely different. And this spirit of friendliness was most common. The protection and assistance afforded by so many landlords was enough to instil into the minds of the preachers the distinction that Wycliffe had made between clerical and lay property.

those of which we have record resulted in recantation.[5] Two prominent men lost their lives because of their views, William Sawtrey in 1401 and John Badby in 1410. After 1410 a great thinning of the ranks of the Lollards took place due to the work of Archbishop Arundel, but it seems that Henry IV was not eager to lend a helping hand. With his death in 1413 the situation changed. Henry V fostered Arundel's cause; Lollardism was crushed at the University;[6] Lord Cobham, a member of Commons and a personal friend of Henry IV, was condemned and with his death the Lollards no longer had a great leader to look to;[7] Arundel died in 1414 but Henry Chichely was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury and he renewed Arundel's onslaught on Lollardism with fresh zeal.[8]

Yet in this period it is reported that in 1405 the Lollards were a strong minority in Parliament;[9] that in 1410 the Lollards influenced Parliament in demanding the

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5. Ibid., p. 334.
6. J. C. Carrick, Wycliffe and the Lollards, p. 214.
7. Beckett, op. cit., p. 84. He was convicted to die but escaped from prison. The leaders feared a revolt of the oppressed Lollards. The strength of Lollardy in England is shown by the rumor that 20,000 Lollards were about to march on London and that within the city 50,000 were prepared to assist them. No evidence exists that such a revolution was ever planned, but the scare of such a rising spread, and under its influence whether believing it or not, a sudden raid, was made upon an assembly of Lollards found in St. Giles' Fields, then literally a village in the fields. Four years later Cobham is captured and dies a martyr's death.
8. Carrick, op. cit., p. 215.
9. Maynard Smith, Pre-Reformation England, p. 281.

abolition of all monastic property claiming that alone it would suffice for the up-keep of more earls, knights, squires, and house of alms than the entire kingdom possessed.[10]

At the close of this period these conclusions may be drawn -- the Lollards were active throughout southern England; they evidently had considerable power because the Act of 1401 was not always carried out; their efforts seemed to decline after the death of Cobham, mainly through stern measures to repress them; and they lost many adherents from the upper classes, but were still very strong amongst the lower classes and the tradesmen of the towns.[11] Some historians try to show that this tendency to cater to the lower classes of people had a connection with socialism or even with social revolt. Trevelyan seems to grasp the situation when he says, "We possess reports of the proceedings against scores of Lollards, the items of indictments mount up to many hundreds, yet I have been able to find, between the years 1382 and 1520 only one case of a Lollard accused of holding communistic theories, and not a sihgle case of a Lollard charged with stirring up the peasantry to right their social

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10. G. Constant, The Reformation in England, p. 143.
11. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 132. After 1414 it lost its hold on the country gentlemen; it ceased to attract scholars of the type of Hereford and Purvey, and its poor priests were exclusively men of limited education who had no influence with the educated class.

wrongs."[12] And even the Catholic writer Constant declares, "to look upon Lollardy as merely a political and social movement is to forget its origins and doctrines."[13]

1418-1440

From 1416 to 1428 records show that there wasn't too much activity against the Lollards. Certain men here and there are burned; certain sections of the country received greater attention than others.[14] Henry V died in 1422 and the infant Henry VI succeeded his father. The Regents showed little desire to persecute the Lollards. But as usual this lull in persecution did not last. Following the commands of Pope Martin V in 1428 Bishop Fleming saw to it that the decree of the Council of Constance of 1415 to burn Wycliffe's bones was carried out. He then proceeded to stir up agitation against the Lollards and many received the death penalty. As late as 1431 severe measures were taken to repress another Lollard uprising.[15] What happened to the Lollards during the remaining part of this period cannot be definitely stated. Probably the strength of the group was decreasing and in many places the people took to the underground.

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12. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 340.
13. Constant, op. cit., p. 12.
14. Carrick, op. cit., p. 220. In the diocese of Norwich the measures taken against the Lollards at this time were especially severe, and altogether a 120 names are recorded of those who in this district were burned or punished in some way between 1424 and 1431.
15. Sanford, op. cit., p. 53.

1440 - 1485

These are the years of the War of the Roses which gave historians something more interesting to write about than the persecution of the Lollards. The only evidence of activity is the book written against them about the year 1450 by Bishop Pecock, The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy, which in itself shows the presence and power of Lollardy in the land. Maynard Smith reports that the Lollards were chiefly concentrated in London and the eastern counties, but they appeared sporadically elsewhere.[16] And in 1466 "an heretic was brende (burnt) at the Tower Hill".[17]

1485 - 1509 (Reign of Henry VII)

The great Tudor period in English history began with the ascension of Henry VII to the throne. The war was over and the energy of the crown was turned once more to the persecution of the heretics. Many of the Lollards experienced persecution and some even lost their lives. This period records the first female martyr ever to be put to death by burning in England --an aged woman of over 80 years, named Joan Boughton, mother of Lady Young, suffered for her Lollardism.[18] Fox, Strype, Fuller, and other chroniclers of this period tell their story consistently and clearly of the cruel torturing of many of the victims.[19] All these persecutions

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16. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 288.
17. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 347.
18. Carrick, op. cit., p. 233.
19. Ibid., p. 224.

prove that there was a great revival of Wycliffism in England before the great Reformation in Germany influenced the English people.

1509 - 1521(first part of the reign of Henry VIII before the Spirit of the Reformation on the continent reached England.)

During the early part of Henry VIII's reign there were many acts of persecution against the Lollards.[20] Many historians try to say that Lollardy was no longer in existence at this time, but the many recorded persecutions surely prove that they are in error.

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20. Constant, op. cit., p. 13. A Synod was held in London against the Lollards in 1511.
Lindsay, op. cit., p. 317. Early in 1512 the Archbishop of Canterbury summoned a meeting of convocation for the express purpose of arresting the spread of heresy.
Beckett, op. cit., p. 95. In the year 1519 seven persons, including one woman, were burned on the same day at Coventry for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer and the Tne Commandments in English.
Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 348. The strength of revived Lollardy is displayed in the Registers of the persecuting Bishops which afford us evidence of various Lollard congregations between 1490 and 1521.
Carrick, op. cit., pp. 235-238. From the registry of Archbishop Warham Carrick in his book lists many deeds which happened between 1510 and 1518 -- all were persecutions of some kind or other.
Henry Jacobs, The Lutheran Movement in England, p. 3. As late as 1521 the bishop of Lincoln arrested nearly 500 Lollards who probably had no connection with the movement then beginning in Germany.
Beckett, op. cit., p. 95. For within 25 years six persons suffered death in Kent, five, the eastern counties, two in Wiltshire. With these later Lollards, as with those of the 14th century the points of accusation were the same.
Lindsay, op. cit., p. 316. Foxe's Acts and Monuments show that there was a fairly active repression of heresy in England before Luther's days, and his accounts are confirmed by the State Papers of the period.

Foxe reports that these Lollard heretics were organized in societies in London and the eastern counties, that they held their own religious meetings and their zeal was fostered by wandering preachers.[21] Even the King was engaged as early as 1518 in composing a book against heresy and vindicating the claims of the Roman See, which in its first inception could scarcely be directed against Luther, and probably dealt with the views of the heretics.[22]

After 1521 the Lollards more or less disappeared from the pages of history. Lutheran influence reached England and Lutheran books were translated and read by the common people. It is most probable that, as Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, wrote in 1523, the Lollards, as they were called, were the first to welcome Lutheranism in Britain.[23] Here ended the history of Lollardy proper, not because it was extinguished, but because it was merged into another group.

Thus the records of these years show that the Lollards, even though they were persecuted and often were very small in number, prepared the way in thousands of homes for the great religious reforms of the 16th century.

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21. McKinnon, op. cit., p. 132.
22. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 317.
23. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 38. The Bishops statement as the effect of Lutheranism in England, "It is no question of some pernicious novelty; it is only that new arms are being added to the great band of Wycliffite heretics."

The ordinary layman began to see that there were two sides to the religious question. The ideas of Luther did not come to the Englishman in all shocking violence of novelty, since the doctrines of Lollardy had been common talk ever since 1380.[24] Two interesting items -- the northern part of England had not been covered by the Lollards as thoroughly as the south; and when Henry VIII proposed reforms in the church, the north violently protested in the Pilgrimage of Grace, but the south followed the King. They had been conditioned by the Lollards. And undeniably it was in the eastern counties and other counties where the Lollards most abounded that the principles of the Reformation were most welcomed and in the dark days of Queen Mary most heroically held.[25] Yet one step further -- their influence was felt in the next decade. In 1531 divinity students were required to take an oath to renounce the doctrines of Wycliffe, Huss, and Luther; and in 1535, More, writing to Erasmus, calls Tyndale and his sympathisers Wycliffites.[26] Jacobs exaggerates a little when he shows that the 11th statement of the 67 Points drawn up in 1536 by the Convocation of Canterbury seems at first sight to be an Anabaptistic or Lollard extravagance.[27]

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24. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 352.
25. Beckett, op. cit., p. 96.
26. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 317. He obtained his information from Letters and Papers, V. p. 140 and p. 144.
27. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 84.

The age of Wycliffe finally found an answer in the 16th century. Care should be taken not to forget that the characteristic thoughts and habits of these Lollards of the 16th century were the same as those expressed by the first followers of Wycliffe at the time of his death. Lollardy was simply the English form of that passive protest against the medieval church which under various names had maintained itself in France, Germany, and Bohemia for centuries in spite of persecution.[28] Fuller is right when he says of Wycliffe's followers, "These men were sentinels against an army of enemies till God sent Luther to relieve them".[29]

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28. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 316.
29. Dallmann, op. cit., p. 79.

V. CONDITIONS IN ENGLAND AT THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

Before showing how the Lutheran influence exerted itself in England, there should be a clear picture in the mind of the reader of the conditions prevailing in England at the eve of the Reformation, especially of what was going on in the Church. The reader must be aware of the fact that there existed a close relation between Church and State. This close connection makes the Reformation itself and the events leading up to it all the more complicated and envolved. The true picture cannot always be determined. Under such a set-up, if there is to be a reformation, both realms must be reformed; and that is exactly what happened in England.

It was at the time of the War of the Roses(1455-1485) that the Popes took the opportunity to further their power in England. This was done by denationalizing the Church of England and making all the bishops tools of the Roman Bishop. The nation and Parliament were busy with the war and had little time to devote to the interests of the Church. Thus from the time of the War of the Roses until the Reformation, the Church of England was subject to Rome. The historian Green reports how it affected the individual, "As the citizen of a temporal state his life was bounded by English shores and his loyalty due

exclusively to his English King. But as citizen of the spiritual state he belonged not to England, but to Christendom. The law which governed him was not a national law, but a law that embraced every European nation".[1] This was where a difficulty arose. National life and national pride was becoming very strong in England and this produced many embarassments. All Englishmen seemed to be agreed on one point and that was to abolish the medieval usurpation of Rome and to re-establish the old constitutional supremacy of the King of England.[2]

Now this desire on the part of England to separate itself from the power at Rome was caused by several reasons. All these reasons seemed to work together to bring about the final break with Rome. In the first place, as mentioned above, there was the rise of a national spirit. England was gradually becoming the leading nation in the world and the people did not want to subject themselves to a foreign power like the Pope at Rome. The chief officers of the States were bishops, and from this it might be concluded that the Church was politically powerful, but that was the reason why the Church was politically weak. The king made his principal servants bishops and too

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1. John Richard Green, History of the English People, Vol. II, p. 160.
2. A. H. Hore, History of the Church of England, p. 234.

often they remained his servants, enjoying the revenues of a Church they did not serve. In consequence the Church was deprived of her natural leaders and was led by men with a bias in favor of royal autocracy.[3] Thus the spirit of nationalism was engendered into the Church.

In the second place there was the New Learning(Revival of Learning -- the Renaissance). Through the discovery of the printing press and the influence of scholars who had gone to Italy and then returned, not only the clergy but also the laity began to know more and understand the true meaning of their Bible; they had become better acquainted with the history and rights and the independence of the national church in England. The Papacy which had recently been held by such Popes as Alexander VI and Julius II was rotten from head to foot.[4] There was a general feeling of intellectual impatience and a desire to learn more about God's Word.

In the third place, the conditions in the church itself prompted the immediate change. All the bishops might have been orthodox in belief, but the study of theology was at a discount, while the skill in civil law was at a premium, and ensured rapid promotion.[5] The bishops were by no means fathers of their flocks.

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3. H. Maynard Smith, Pre-Reformation England, p. 24.
4. Hore, op. cit., p. 227.
5. H. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 30.

Their knowledge of Scripture and of the teachings of the Church was in a pathetic state. The reports found in records on this matter are hard to believe.[6] Then, too, the worldliness of the clergy was very evident. (Care, however, must be taken not to place too much emphasis on this evil.[7]) Also the clergy in many places were unpopular because of their demands on the people, and the system of indulgences and the many ceremonies caused

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6. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 354. The report deserves study as a description of the condition of the clergy of the Church of England before the Reformation. The clergymen of the diocese of Gloucester were asked nine questions -- three under three separate heads.
1. How many Commandments are there? Where are they to be found? Repeat them.
2. What are the Articles of the Christian Faith(the Apostles' Creed)? Repeat them. Prove them from Scriptures.
3. Repeat the Lord's Prayer. How do you know that it is the Lord's? Where is it to be found?

Only fifty out of the three hundred and eleven answered all these simple questions, and of the fifty, nineteen are noted as having answered mediocriter. Eight clergymen could not answer any single one of the questions; and while one knew that the number of the Commandments was ten, he knew nothing else; and one said that he could not tell what was the Scripture authority for the Creed unless it was the first chapter of Genesis, not that it did not matter, since the King had guaranteed it to be correct. There is no reason to believe that the clergy of this diocese were worse than those in other parts of England.

7. H. M. Smith, op. cit., pp. 45-51. "Much has been written about the sexual immorality of the Pre-Reformation clergy; but the evidence is far from conclusive. We conclude that the bad examples of many of the clergy account for the low standards of more rectitude which is evident at the beginning of the 16th century; and also that the devotion and good examples of many priests may be assumed to account for the personal piety and parochial enthusiasm which was also so much in evidence."

the people to have doubts and misgivings.[8] Another of the grievances of the people was the "Benefit of Clergy", that is, their exemption from trial by the ordinary civil courts.[9] Thomas More, who wrote his book before he heard of Luther, paints a beautiful picture of theconditions in the church at that time. "He taxes the preachers of that age for corrupting the Christian doctrine and practising upon it;

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8. Carrick, op. cit., p. 234. The system of the Indulgences became very popular. To build St. Peter's the system was so boldly practised that at last the Reformation in Germany broke out. It spread to England and the Archbishop of Canterbury received power from the Pope to dispense them. About the middle of Henry VII's reign the bridge of Rochester was out of repair, and there were difficulties in the way of getting anyone to undertake the responsibility of putting it right, and the Bishop of Rochester was thus inconvenienced in his journeys from Canterbury to London. According an Indulgence was issued, granting release from purgatory for forty days to every one who would render assistance, and so the bridge was speedily completed. The mechanicalism and ceremonialism of the Church of the 16th century stiffened more and more. Not indulgences only, but the withdrawal of the cup from the laity, the introduction of new festivals, pilgrimages, confessional, images, and the like, became pronounced features of the mechanical age. The Archbishop of York enumerated 37 sins which only a bishop or a pope could pardon, and the greatest of these was heresy.

9. Ibid., pp. 239-241. A more practical question however arose regarding the immunity of ecclesiastical persons from punishment when convicted of crime. In 1512 an Act of Parliament was passed which exempted some Bishops and priests from the civil courts, but subjected inferior clergy to the civil laws. The story of the merchant in London, Richard Hume, and the results of his death helped cause the friction between clergy and laity.

for they, observing that the world did not suit their lives to the rules that Christ has given, have fitted his doctrine as if it had been a leading rule to their lives, that some way or other they might agree with one another."[10] And the late Dr. Dillinger, probably the most learned Roman Catholic of his time, in answer to the question, "Was a Reformation of the Church of England necessary under the circumstances of the times?" states, "The condition of things had become intolerable, and a great purification in the 16th century had become a pressing need."[11]

Finally the attitude which developed among the common people during this period helped the cause of the Reformers. The people as a whole were devout and zealous in the performance of their religious duties. Their religion interpenetrated every department of life until what was spiritual and what was material became so confused that there developed a multitude of superstitions. These superstitions were a contributary cause of the Reformation for they provided the Reformers with their most effective texts. The church at this time was ceasing to be the center of social life and the home was becoming more important. Family life was being exalted instead of celibacy, and the ideal for a good man was not

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10. Gilbert Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, Vol. III, p. 96.
11. More, op. cit., p. 227.

one who practised ascetism, but one who made life more comfortable for himself and others. Such being the tendency of the age, it was not surprising that the Reformers who denounced celibacy and sneered at the ascetic met with a hearty response.[12]

However, in the last analysis, when all the above reasons have been considered, one thought should be added. The great mass of the people had no desire for a change. 'Tis true that "many had various opinions concerning religion",[13] still the majority of the common people loved their church. It was the close relation between Church and State that made a difference in the manner of reform. In reality, the Reformation at its beginning in England was merely the discarding of "unlawful" authority. It was not until later that the matter of doctrine became an impelling force.

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12. H. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 517.
13. Gasquet, The Eve of the Reformation, p. 185.

VI. THE LUTHERAN ELEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITIES

The Lutheran movement in England had its beginning at the two great universities, Cambridge and Oxford. Unfortunately the pages of history do not reveal too much concerning this influence and most of the information has to be taken from statements of men who lived at that time. 'Tis interesting to see how Oxford again takes the lead in the spirit of reform, but this time Cambridge also comes to the front, in fact her scholars influenced the men at Oxford.

The University of Oxford had been the great center for learning and reform during the time of Wycliffe, but the "heretics" of the University who had been driven out and scattered throughout England were forced to become missionaries instead of academicians. Archbishop Arundel had succeeded in enforcing the mandates against the University around 1414 and from that time until the beginning of the 16th century no great men were found at Oxford. It is doubtful whether any Lollard spirit existed in the University during the 15th century as was the case in many local centers and in the homes of many people. Oxford probably remained a tool of the Roman Church throughout the century and exerted no influence on the common man as far as a spirit of reform was concerned.

At the close of the War of the Roses in 1485 English scholars left for Italy where they came into contact with the New Learning which developed in them a sympathetic heart for the newly awakened interest in learning. On their return to England and especially to Oxford, there arose a movement of reform at the university, not only for the revival of Literature, but also for a reformation of religion. As Sanford states concerning this trend at Oxford, "It was especially in England that the revival of learning gave a tremendous impetus to a spirit of religious reform."[1]

The leader of these Oxford Reformers was John Colet who is said to have influenced not only Erasmus, but also Thomas Moore, William Tyndale, and was a very close friend of Thomas Wolsey, the afterward celebrated Cardinal.[2] Colet had been in Italy and on his return to Oxford in 1496 showed tremendous enthusiasm for the Scriptures and especially for the writings of St. Paul. "Keep firmly to the Bible and the Apostle's Creed and let divines, if they like, dispute about the rest" was his advice to the young men of Oxford who came to him with perplexing theological problems.[3] In 1505 he became Dean of St. Paul's in London where he continued to preach boldly from Scriptures, to attack the

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1. Elias B. Sanford, A History of the Reformation, p. 42.
2. Beckett, op. cit., p. 105.
3. Ibid., p. 102.

the ecclesiastical wickedness in high places, and to forbid the worship of saints and relics. This won him the sympathetic admiration of the persecuted Lollards,[4] but it cannot be said that he had been influenced by them. Probably in the year 1513 he preached before a Convocation of bishops and clergy of high degree. His text was, "Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind".[5] He thoroughly reprimanded the clergy for their living, and no where is it reported that they disputed with him. No doubt these charges were true. John Colet died in 1519 before the Lutheran influence had a chance to help and develop his thinking.

Erasmus was another of these Oxford Reformers who helped pave the way for the Reformation. In 1516 his Greek New Testament appeared which was opposed vehemently by the priests who used as much power as possible to caution against it. He, however, lived to see the day of the development of the Reformation in England in many ways undreamt of as well as undesired by him, yet in ways that no more than he, excepting Luther, had helped to bring about.[6] But all these men at Oxford, and there were many more besides Colet and Erasmus, wrought mainly for reform within the Church, for a

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4. Ibid., p. 105.
5. Burnet, op. cit., pp. 90-92. He prints part of the sermon.
6. Beckett, op. cit., p. 113.

reformation of discipline.[7] It was not until the arrival of Lutheran influence that there was a reformation of dogma, a departure from the sacramental and sacerdotal system of the Roman Church.

Oxford began the spirit of Reform but it was Cambridge that actually took the lead in the "real" reform. Oxford never attempted definition of doctrine nor tried to enforce dogma. Cambridge on the other hand, which was under the influence of the Lutheran movement, developed reformers of doctrine who boldly attacked the dogmas which lay at the root of the worst corruption of the Church.[8] This is where the Lutheran influence manifested itself. Luther attacked the dogmas of the Church. He was not just interested in reform as proposed by the Oxford men, but he wanted to reform the very heart and core of Christianity. If the dogma was correct, then the other reforms would follow. Cambridge fostered such a Reformation.

At Cambridge during the time of Luther nothing seemed to stop the progress of the truth and the work of these scholars. Chief among them was Thomas Bilney. He gathered many students around him and they met very frequently at an inn known by the sign of the "White

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7. Ibid., p. 118.
8. Ibid., p. 120.

Horse", afterwards dubbed "Germany" from the Lutheran sympathies of those accustomed to meet there.[9] The circle of such men gradually became much larger. "There," viz. at Cambridge said a Bampton lecturer some few years ago, "even so early as 1528 had been seen a little society of religious men who encouraged each other in reading Scriptures in mutual confession and similar prescribed acts of piety. The names of 27 of these men have been preserved to us; and just as the early Methodists obtained honors of ridicule and social persecution, so the house where these first English Lutherans met was called 'Germany'."[10] These 27 men played a very important part during the next 30 years in the spread of Lutheranism.[11] Most important of these men were: Bilney, Tyndale, Barnes, Coverdale, Rogers, Cranmer, Gardiner, Latimer, and Ridley.

With the spirit of Lutheranism well established on the Cambridge campus, some eight or ten promising students of Cambridge, all of them more or less Lutheran in sentiment, left for Cardinal College, Oxford.[12] In the year 1521 Lutheran books were introduced at Oxford,[13] and Lutheranism increased daily in the

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9. Ibid., p. 120.
10. Curteis, Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England, p. 56, quoted in Jacobs, op. cit., p. 8.
11. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 9.
12. Beckett, op. cit., p. 121.
13. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 350.

University of Oxford and chiefly in Cardinal College. Ellis in his notes states(He received all his information from original letters of that period), "The chiefest Lutheran at Oxford at this time was John Clark, one of the junior canons, to whose private lectures and disputations in public, divers graduates and scholars of colleges reported.....Notwithstanding many eminent men did dispute and preach in the University against them, yet the Lutherans proceeded and took all private occassions to promote their doctrine."[14] Also at this time a monk of Bury Edmund's preached at Oxford a sermon in which he rallied against the cardinals and bishops and even defended some of the opinions of Luther.[15] Many of these men who leaned towards Lutheran belief helped in the future to promote the cause of Lutheranism.[16]

Now these heresies of Luther began to spread rapidly in both Universites and the bishops began to be troubled. As early as the March of 1521 Archbishop Warham writing to Wolsey complained that both Universities were 'infected' with the 'pestilent doctrine of Luther'.[17] Cardinal Wolsey soon began to take matters in his own hands and saw to it that a thorough investigation was made of Luther's work. A search was made for all Lutheran books, and when located they were destroyed. Wolsey's policy was to

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14. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 10.
15. Clark, op. cit., p. 68.
16. Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 11. 12.
17. Beckett, op. cit., p. 121.

prohibit the circulation of any books that contained "heresy". Bilney as well as many other Cambridge and Oxford scholars had to appear before a Convocation for their teachings. Bilney was induced to promise an oath 'not to preach any of Luther's doctrines but to impugn them everywhere'. However, by 1531 he was declared a heretic and was burned.[18] Tyndale who had been a student at Oxford and Cambridge[19] was forced to leave England in May 1524 because pressure was getting too great for him to carry on his work of translating the Bible. In Germany he came in contact with Martin Luther and when you compare his writings with Luther's and Zwingli's it is very evident how relatively thorough a Lutheran Tyndale was and remained throughout his life.[20] His writings were sent to England and they helped to disseminate the Lutheran view.

Thus the Universities helped the Lutheran cause in England. An "Index of Prohibited Books" of 1529 gives the names of the works which had been so diligently circulated by the young scholars of these two universities and their friends. In this list there are four books

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18. Beckett, op. cit., pp. 132. 133.
19. J. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 185. " At Oxford Tyndale was won over to Protestantism by studying Erasmus New Testament Greek. He then left Oxford and joined Bilney at Cambridge."
20. Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 24-26.

of Wycliffe and also works by Luther and other Reformers from the Continent. The publishing of such a list shows very clearly that the theologians of England were keeping abreast of the entire development of theological literature on the Continent.[21] It is very evident that through the circulating of these books many people became acquainted with the Lutheran and Reformed teachings. The Universities also prepared the men who later in their lives were the leading figures in the doctrinal reform of the Church of England.

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21. Ibid., p. 13.

VII. HENRY'S RELATION WITH LUTHERANISM

Many theories have been advanced concerning the English Reformation. One affirms that it was a movement within the English Church, another regards its religious change due to the quarrel of the King and the Pope, still another asserts that it must be attributed to the German Reformers on the Continent and the handful of English followers of these Reformers. To be unbias and to understand the entire development one must say that all three items mentioned had something to do with the results. As it was pointed out in the previous chapters the spirit of Wycliffe had prepared the minds of the people for a change; in the last chapter it was shown how the Lutheran movement exerted itself in the Universities; and the quarrel of the King with the Pope and the continued Lutheran movement will be pointed out in this chapter to complete the entire picture. All these movements must be considered in any discussion of the English Reformation. It would be a mistake to say that Henry's political ambitions and his divorce caused the Reformation. No king, however despotic, could have forced people into such a change unless they had been properly conditioned. And this conditioning was produced by the Lollard and the Lutheran movements.

Luther had posted his 95 theses on the church door of Wittenberg in October 1517 and that began the great Protestant movement in Germany. It wasn't long after that Luther's writings spread throughout the continent and even to England.[1] In England they spread very rapidly and many people were more than ready to read and talk about them. The feeling of unrest among the people, the dissatisfaction with the clergy and the papal rules, the undercurrent opinions of Wycliffe and the sentiment of the people caused this wide

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1. Froude, History of England, p. 40. In 1519 there was scarcely a village from the Irish channel to the Danube in which the name of Luther was not familiar as a word of hope and promise.

Lindsay, op. cit., p. 320. Writings of Luther found an early entrance into England and were read by the King and people. Erasmus, writing to Oecolampadius(May 14th, 1521), declares that there are many of Luther's books in England.

Jacobs, op. cit., p. 4. As early as 1530 Polydore Vergil mentions the importation into England of a great number of "Lutheran books". To such an extent were Luther's writings diffused and with such effect that in March 1521 Archbishop Warham wrote to Cardinal Wolsey concerning the condition of affairs at the University of Oxford, in a letter which Sir William Ellis, formerly librarian of the British Museum, has published.

Gasquet, op. cit., p. 188. Gasquet quotes from Roger Edgworth's Sermon(1557). After religious revolt had established itself in Germany "Luther's heresies arose and were scattered very rapidly in England". Sir Thomas More, Chancellor in 1532, attributes the rapid spread to the flood of Literature which was poured forth over the country by the help of printing.

P. Smith, op. cit., p. 281. Luther's Theses on Indulgences were sent by Erasmus to his English friends Thomas More and John Colet little more than four months after their promulgation(March 5, 1518). By February 1519 Froben had exported to England a number of volumes of Luther's works - one fell into the hands of Henry VIII. Many others were sold by a bookseller at Oxford throughout 1520, in which a government official in London wrote to his son in the country, "there be heretics here which take Luther's opinion."

circulation of Luther's doctrines and writings. The effect produced by these writings was great. On May 12, 1521 at St. Paul's in London in the presence of many high dignitaries and a crowd of over 30,000 spectators Luther's books were burned and his doctrine "reprobated" in addresses by John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Cardinal Wolsey. A little later it was forbidden to read, import, or keep such works; and measures were taken to enforce it. [2] Then the King entered the picture which gained for him the title, 'Defender of the Faith', bestowed on him by Pope Leo X. In July 1521 Henry had published his Assertio Septem Sacramentorum against Luther's De Captivitate Babylonica. This was where Henry began his life-long opposition to Lutheranism, and when in 1538 an attempt was made under the influence of Cromwell to affect a union between English and Lutheran Churches it met with his uncompromising opposition.[3] Doubt has arisen as to whether Henry was the real author. It was More, according to Henry VIII, who "by subtle sinister slights unnaturally procured and provoked him" to write against the heretic.[4] And Erasmus states, "I will not say that the King had no help, for the most learned men at times are helped by their friends; but I have no doubt in asserting that he is the father and author of the book".[5] Two years later Bishop Fisher followed

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2. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 282.
3. Hore, op. cit., p. 226.
4. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 283.
5. M. Smith, op. cit., p. 510.

his sermon by a treatise against Luther, and Henry wrote a long letter to the princes of Saxony telling them to repress the Lutheran teaching.[6] With one accord the leading Englishmen spoke against Luther. Although Luther's writings were hunted and destroyed, nevertheless, they continued to be imported and circulated through out the island. The King's controversy had done more than anything else to draw public attention to the writings of Luther. The rapid diffusion of Lutheranism is proved by many a side light and by the very proclamations issued from time to time to "resist the damnable heresies" or to suppress tainted books. John Heywood's The Four P's: A Merry Interlude of a Palmer, Pardoner, Potycary, and a Pedlar, written about 1528, though not published until some years later, is full of Lutheran doctrine, and so is another book very popular at the time, Simon Fish's Supplication of Beggars.[7] A long catalogue of prohibited books under date of 1529 shows the sympathetic interest with which in England the Reformation movement on the continent was watched and studied.[8] In 1530 the king by proclamation forbade the reading or possession of some 85 works of Wycliffe, Luther, and others.[9] The Reformation had now recommenced in England similar to the days of Wycliffe.

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6. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 6.
7. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 283.
8. Beckett, op. cit., p. 169.
9. Gasquet, op. cit., p. 190.

The Papacy and the Bishops were fighting this Lutheran movement as they were against Wycliffe in the 14th century.

Prior to 1530 the Reformation in England was still in its infancy and the King did all in his power to suppress it. In the first 20 years of his reign Henry maintained the supremacy of the Pope and even unto the end of his life he was rigidly orthodox in the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, celibacy of the clergy, and auricular confession. In his proclamation of 1530 he spoke of the determination of the English nation in times past to be true to the Catholic faith and to defend the country against "wicked sects of heresies and Lollards", and see to it that Luther's revolt in Germany may not happen in England.[10] The next decade changed the entire picture with the result that England was no longer connected with the Church at Rome.

Henry started the ball rolling when he wanted the Pope to grant him a divorce from Catharine of Aragon. (Catharine was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain and had been married to Henry's deceased brother Prince Arthur. Henry's marriage to her, contrary to the Laws of God, had been sanctioned by a Bull by Julius II.) When Henry said that he wanted to make this change, the

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10. Ibid., p. 190.

Pope tried to evade the issue. Henry then made an alliance with the reforming and anti-clerical parties in his realm.[11] He also received hearty support from the Parliament which has been called the Reformation Parliament.[12] Particularly at this period when a spirit

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11. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 290. "At Easter 1529 Lutheran books began to circulate at court -- books advocating the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and the reduction of the church to a state of primitive simplicity. To Chapius, the imperial ambassador, Henry pointedly praised Luther, whom he had lately called "a wolf of hell and a limb of Satan" remarking that though he had heresy in his books, that was not sufficient reason for reproving and rejecting the many truths he had brought to light. Henry in his entire policy was dictated by his own whims and fancies which changed in a moment and were brought about by political advantages and power."

12. The work of this Parliament was tremendous. It sat from 1529-1536 and brought about the complete break with Rome.

1529-A Bill declaring that any person who should procure at the Court of Rome any license or dispensation for holding a plurality of benefices should incur penalty.
1530-A Royal proclamation was issued forbidding the introduction of Papal Bulls into the Kingdom.
1531-Henry was made head of the Church. England no longer paid the Annates or First-fruits to the Pope, and that in case the Pope should persist in the exaction, England should withdraw from his allegiance.
1532-Complete submission of clergy under Henry.
1533-Act of the restraint of Appeals.
1534-Act of Succession which vested the inheritance of the crown in the issue of Henry and Anne. Act of Supremacy which placed Henry as complete head of the Church.
1536-Formed a Union with Wales.

of nationalism was strong, there was objection to any foreign interference. Parliament was ready to follow the king's wishes and in 1531 declared that the King of England was head of the English Church and that the Pope had no more authority in England than any other foreign bishop. In 1532 Henry had entire control over the clergy and with the vacancy of the archbishopric of Canterbury Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer who had been one of the Cambridge "Germans"; who had freely met with the Lutheran divines in Germany; who had begun to pray in private for the abolition of the Pope's power in England as early as 1525; and it was not without reason that Chapuys called him a "Lutheran".[13] In January 1533

Beckett, op. cit., p. 147. It was the Parliament which gave ecclesiastical independence to England without doctrinal change, and established for awhile a system described as 'popery without a pope'.

Froude, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 207. Of this Parliament Froude writes, "The election had taken place in the midst of great and general excitement, and the members chosen, if we may judge from their acts and petitions, were men of that broad, resolved temper who only in times of popular effervesce are called forward in prominence. It would probably have been useless for the crown to attempt dictation or repression at such a time. Under the actual circumstances its interest was to encourage the fullest expression of public feeling.

Constant, op. cit., p. 29. The ill-feelings, grievances, and jealousies against the clergy and their privileges had long been festering in the minds of a certain class of Englishman. To say that the Parliament which sat from 1529-1536 and which was responsible for the breach with Rome acted only under pressure from the king would be, to put it mildly, an exaggeration.

13. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 330.

the King married Anne Boleyn;[14] on July 11th the Pope excommunicated him. Parliament came to the rescue by passing the Act of Supremacy which declared that the King's majesty "justly and rightly" was and ought to be the head of the Church. That the abrogation of the papal authority was accepted so easily is proof of the extent to which the national feeling of the English Church had already gone.[15] Thus England was separated from the Church at Rome; the rupture with the Papacy was complete. The immediate results were:

1. One head of the Church, however, the King claimed the potestas jurisdictionis, not the potestas ordinis -- he never asserted his right to ordain or to control the sacraments.
2. At first there was no change in doctrine.
3. Thomas Cromwell was made Vicar-General, and the office to some small extent may be said to resemble that of the Papal Legate; he represented the King as the Legate had represented the Pope.

It was impossible, however, for the Church to maintain its same place. There was some stirring of Reformation life. Cranmer had been early attracted by the writings of Luther; Thomas Cromwell was not unsympathetic.[16] The Reformation did not stop here.

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14. Hore, op. cit., p. 231. There was no widespread objection in England to the King's divorcing Catharine; with the religious question people concerned themselves but little. On the contrary they wished Henry to marry some foreign princess, in the hope that an heir might be born to the throne.
15. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 293.
16. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 332.

In the meantime the Lutheran movement was growing in England. Lutheran tracts and hymns were translated into English and many of the writings of Luther, Melanchton, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Bullinger were circulated. The party now numbered powerful preachers like Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, and the politician Cromwell. Concerning Cromwell -- as his only object was to be on the winning side, and as he had not a bit of real religious interest, it makes it all the more impressive that, believing the cat was about to jump in the direction of Lutheranism, he should have tried to put himself in the life of its trajectory by doing all he could to foster the Reformers at home and the Protestant alliance abroad.[17] As Green states, "Though the King was still firm in his resistance to Lutheran opinion and at this movement endeavored to prevent by statute the importation of Lutheran books, the less scrupulous hand of his minister was seen already striving to find a counter part to the hostility of the Emperor in an alliance with the Lutheran princes in North Germany."[18] From 1535 until around 1540 attempts were made to unite England with the German princes of northern Germany. A study of these years shows how close Lutheranism came to the actual control of the English Church. Unfortunately King Henry sought an alliance with them only for political

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17. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 299.
18. Green, op. cit., p. 184.

reasons and thus the final outcome left the Lutherans out of England. As Lindsay states, "Neither Henry nor John Frederick of Saxony appeared to have been much in earnest about an alliance, and from the English King's instructions to his envoys it would appear that his chief desire was to commit the German divines to an approval of his divorce. Luther was somewhat scornful and seemed to have penetrated Henry's design. The German theologians had no doubt that the marriage of Henry with Catharine was one that should have never taken place; but they all held that, once made, it ought not to be broken. Determined efforts were made to capture the sympathies of Melanchton. Bishop Foxe selected as the theological ambassador was instructed to take him presents to the value of 70 punds. His books were placed on the course of study for Cambridge at Cromwell's order."[19]

In 1535 Henry sent an embassy composed of Foxe, Heath (on whom Melanchton set a high value), and Barnes to confer with the Protestant princes at Schmalkald. This was the first political move on the part of Henry.[20] After many

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19. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 334.

20. Green, op. cit., p. 185. On the political front the Emperor and Francis of France were getting together in 1535 by uniting the two houses by close intermarriage -- proposal being that Francis would join in an attack against England. Whether such a proposal was serious or not, Henry had to dread attack from Charles himself and to look for new allies against it. He was driven to offer his alliance with the Lutheran princes who also dreaded the power of the Emperor.

conferences the German princes were quite willing to give Henry the title "Defender of the Schmalkald League". But they insisted that for any alliance the English Church and the King must accept the theology of the Augsburg Confession and adopt the ceremonies of the Lutheran Church; and on these rocks of doctrine and ritual the proposed alliance failed.[21] The English embassy then went to Wittenberg and had conferences with Luther and Melanchton. Here they accepted the "Thirteen Articles of 1535" drawn up by Melanchton, but when they were sent to Henry, he did not submit to them.[22] The embassy remained in Germany for several months studying the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, but finally returned home. Their mission proved a failure.

Now this demand made by the German princes was backed by such Englishmen as Cranmer, Shaxton, Barlow, Hilsey, Goodrich, Fox, and Latimer -- all of them Henry's partisans among the clergy. Thus the influence of these men as well as an attempt to comply at least partly with the demand of the German Princes produced the "Ten Articles of 1536".[23] Under Cranmer's leadership these articles had been passed by the Convocation held in London. In their adoption the spirit of Wycliffe and the aspiration of the Oxford Reformers was very evident.[24] "These articles," says Professor Lindsay,

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21. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 341.
22. Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 63-67. The articles are recorded.
23. Green, op. cit., p. 185.
24. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 68.

"are anything but essentially Romish with the Pope left out in the cold. They are rather an attempt to construct a brief creed which a pliant Lutheran and a pliant Romanist might agree upon."[25] After Jacobs lists the Ten Articles and the corresponding items from Lutheranism, he concludes, "These citations could be readily multiplied; but what have been given are sufficient to establish the fact that the evangelical statements of the articles were taken not only from the Apology, but also from the Augsburg Confession, and the other writings of Melanchton."[26]

The Ten Articles, however, were not received by all for in the latter part of 1536 there was a revolt of the north -- called the Pilgrimage of Grace -- the people demanded a preservation of the ancient faith. And as Jacobs states, "The articles like all compromises inspired no enthusiasm. They were too Lutheran for the Hierarchists; they were too Romish for the Lutherans."[27] A new Convocation was summoned and approved the Institution of a Christian Man, known as the Bishop's Book of 1537. What the true nature of this Book is cannot always be obtained from history books. Both parties were present

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25. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 335.
26. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 95. Ranke approaches very closely the true solution of the origin of the Ten Articles when he says that the first five have their origin in the Augsburg Confession or in commentaries on it.
27. Ibid., p. 104.

in drawing up the book. Catholic writers claim it a victory for them; some Protestant writers state the opposite view.[28] The true picture seems to indicate another compromise; the King did the dictating; the results were that it leaned a little toward the Catholic viewpoint.

In 1538 Henry invited the Protestant princes to send delegates to discuss the contested points with him so that he might still enter the Schmalkald League.[29] This again was a political move on the part of

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28. Ibid., p. 105. "Although still retaining some Romish elements it was a great triumph for the Lutheran side, especially as all opposition was for the first time silenced and even Gardiner added his signature. By this work the Reformation was placed on the loftiest ground which it was ever destined to reach during the reign of Henry."

Beckett, op. cit., p. 151. As a contemporary styles it, "a rightly godly book of devotion." Cranmer was probably the moulding force.

Constant, op. cit., p. 408. "The catholic doctrine was more explicitly set forth in this than in the previous Confession. Despite the heretical character of the discussions, the Confession which resulted was orthodox(catholic sense) because the supreme head had willed that it should be."

29. Ibid., pp. 414-416. By order of the Elector of Saxony, the Germans brought the Wittenberg Articles with them and used them as a basis for their theological discussions. If these articles are compared with those of 1538, an evident concordance will be noticed which is also frequently a literal one. The 13 Articles of 1538 were the outcome of this conference. Henry did not accept them and would take no inspiration from them. Thus the Conferences ended in another failure. The destinies of the English Church were nevertheless not unaffected by that conference. It proved to be the channel through which Luther's doctrine infiltrated. The 13 Articles which emanated from that conference served as a basis for the 42 Articles of Edward VI(1553) and the 39 Articles of Elizabeth(1563).

Henry.[30] Three Germans composed the one committee and three Bishops and four doctors of divinity with Cranmer as president, of the commission were appointed to represent the English side, while Dr. Barnes was assigned by the King a place in the conference on the Lutheran side. The men came to an agreement on the doctrinal articles. There was, however, a conflict on the "Abuses". Here Henry steps in and the German Commission saw that political ideas were again being taken into consideration by Henry. If the question then be asked why was not the Church of England a Lutheran Church? the true answer is, "Because a wicked ruler interfered within a sphere that did not belong to him, and abruptly terminated the measures of the true representatives of the Church which clearly indicated a readiness to accept the Lutheran Confessions."[31] With the failure of this conference the possibility of uniting seemed hopeless. Attempts, however, were continued in the following year but with no success. Political reasons again motivated the action.

The influence which Cranmer and Cromwell exerted

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30. Ibid., pp. 412 and 413. It was the interest of Henry and the Lutherans alike to band themselves together against the common enemy and that was the Emperor Charles V. Charles was well aware of such an alliance. Henry invited the Protestant princes to send delegates to discuss the contested points with him so that he might enter the Schmalkald League. The London Conference lasted two months.

31. Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 132-139.

on Henry lost its effect in 1539. The King felt that the Bible was responsible for the many disputes and wranglings, that the Lutherans were influencing his people contrary to what he had in mind for a reformation.[32] Because of these reasons he saw to it that the persecuting Act of the Six Articles was passed. These Acts were against the wishes of Cranmer and Cromwell. All the articles were Romanist[33] and many people lost their lives. Cromwell was executed in 1540. The immediate consequence of this infamous Act was that many young zealous Reformers left the country where they could no longer remain without endangering their lives or compromising their consciences. Abroad in Germany and Switzerland their intercourse with ardent Continental Reformers, especially those of the Zwinglian school, had an influence upon the subsequent course of the English Reformation.[34] This Act was probably most destructive for the Lutheran cause in England because many men, who were sympathetic toward Lutheranism when they left England, did not return with the Lutheran view but with the Reformed doctrine.

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32. Hore, op. cit., p. 257.
33. The Six Articles were:
    1. Taught doctrine of transubstantiation.
    2. Withheld cup from laity.
    3. Prohibited priests from marrying.
    4. Enforced the vow of celibacy.
    5. Upheld private masses for souls in purgatory.
    6. Declared auricular confession good and necessary.
34. Beckett, op. cit., p. 155.

During the next six years Henry VIII continued to see whether he could form some union with the German princes. His first step was to marry Anne of Cleves, the sister-in-law of the elector.[35] Again another political move for both sides. At this time Melanchton sent a letter to the King and this was followed by a letter from the Wittenberg theologians denouncing the Six Articles. However, all attempts amounted to no permanent results. Henry divorced Anne in July of the same year and this brought many repercussions from the Germans. At this time there developed a period of Catholic action. Latimer was thrown in prison; Tyndale's and Coverdale's New Testament, as well as all the works of Wycliffe, were consigned to the flames. Heretics were rigorously persecuted; and the Continental Protestants compared Henry to Nero.[36] Early in 1541 there was a new negotiation proposed with the Protestant princes in Germany. Henry sent men to Germany to excuse for his action and tried to establish a league with relation to their common interests. Again the Lutheran princes demanded adherence to the Confessions; the English embassy returned home without any satisfactory

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35. Burnet, op. cit., p. 285. The elector of Saxony, who had married the other sister of Cleves had conceived so bad an opinion of the king, that he expressed no heartiness, neither in the marriage nor in any alliance with England; but he yielded to the importunities of others who thought that the prospect of the advantage from such an alliance was great.

36. Constant, op. cit., p. 382.

results.[37] One last attempt to make an alliance with Germany failed in 1544.[38] Because of their political nature Henry's propositions met with little favor. The breaking out of the Schmalkald War in the summer of 1546 interrupted all negotiations; and a few months later January 28, 1547 the reign of Henry VIII was at an end.[39]

During this last period of Henry's reign he ordered a commission of bishops and theologians to revise the "Bishops Book" of 1537. It took them three years to complete the task. Cranmer was again the leader and it is believed by some that he was tending towards Zwinglianism already at this time.[40] This second confession called the "King's Book of 1543", however, shows that the Lutheran element was still present in the thinking of the men that prepared the confession. At the time of Henry's death there seemed to be four parties active in England.[41]

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37. Burnet, op. cit., p. 274.
38. Ibid., p. 286. In 1544 the often-cited Seckendorf tells us that at this time they in Germany began to have greater hopes of the king than ever. Mont was again sent over to offer an alliance with them. He excused all the late proceedings. This did not move the elector; he looked on the king as an enemy to their doctrine. His whole design in what he had done was, to make himself the head of the church, to which he was not called by God.
39. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 197.
40. Constant, op. cit., p. 425.
41. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 308.

1. Anglicans
   orthodox and royalists, comprising the greater part of the crown loving, priest-hating and yet, in intellectual matter, conservative common people.
2. Pope's Followers
   still strong in numbers especially among the clergy of the north. Their leaders were among the most high-minded of the nation, but were also the first to be smitten by the king's wrath.
3. Lutherans
   an active and intelligent minority of city merchants and artisians led by men of conspicuous talents and generally of high character like Coverdale, Ridley, and Latimer. With these men were also Cranmer and Cromwell.
4. Zwinglians and Anabaptists
   small contingent of extremists.

Thus Lutheranism was an important part in the stages of the English Reformation. The question often has been asked, What value would it have been if Henry would have signed the Augsburg Confession? 'Tis true that England and Lutheranism at the time would have come closer together, and it might have resulted in the English Lutheran Church. However, when you consider the life of Henry, his views, and his political ambitions, such an alliance with Germany could not have lasted. Lindsay correctly states that the King and people were not very far apart. They both clung to medieval theology; and they both detested the Papacy and wished that the clergy be kept in due subordination. There was a wide spread and silent movement towards an Evangelical Reformation always making itself apparent when least expected; but probably three-fourths of the people had not felt it

during the reign of Henry. It needed Mary's burnings at Smithfield and the fears of a Spanish overlord before the leaven could leaven the whole lump.[42]

The English Reformation first began with England being separated violently from the ecclesiastical empire of Rome. The papal authority was cast off, but without any essential change being made in creed or form of doctrine. This was all accomplished under Henry VIII. The change in creed and ritual was effected chiefly under Edward VI. The presence of Lutheranism in England during Henry's reign helped tremendously to formulate such a change in Edward's reign.

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42. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 350.

VIII. CONCLUSION

At the time of the death of Henry VIII the English Reformation had gone a long way since its early beginning at the time of John Wycliffe. John Wycliffe was one of the first men to attack the evils in the church and have the people look to their Bibles for God's answer for Salvation. The people were not yet prepared for a complete separation from the Roman Church. A whole century had to pass before the people were really ready to accept the fact that the sacramental and sacerdotal system of the Roman Church was contrary to Scripture. During that century the Lollards instilled into the minds of the common people that spirit of revolt and adherence to the Bible so that when the Lutheran doctrines flooded England in the 16th century the people were not totally shocked, but were conditioned to accept the doctrines.

In closing one interesting item cannot be forgotten -- Wycliffe was active around Oxford and London; the Lollardy activity was most prominent in this same area of the country; and this is where Lutheranism gained its foothold in England.

APPENDIX I

With the death of Henry VIII many changes took place in the Church. It would seem that the Lutherans could now become the leading force because Cranmer was still the chief spiritual advisor to the King. However, this was not the case; in fact, the Lutherans finally lost out completely.

The Six Articles and the treasons laws were repealed and this brought back to England many of the refugees who had found a home in Germany and Switzerland. The victories won by Emperor Charles V led a large number of continental Protestants to seek refuge in England from the penalties of the Interim. Some of these men found places as teachers at Oxford and Cambridge and their influence became a leavening power.[1] But these Englishmen who had returned -- men like Ridley and Hooper, formerly Lutherans -- brought back with them the Zwinglian type of theology and Bullinger was their trusted advisor.[2] It is reported that Ridley was the man who influenced Cranmer in changing his views.[3] With many Calvinists and Zwinglians coming to England there was the growth of an anti-Lutheran element; there was no prominent Lutheran in England to pro-

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1. Sanford, op. cit., p. 183.
2. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 359.
3. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 215.

mulgate the Lutheran cause; thus the Lutherans were left out of the picture.

The Lutheran movement might have died out by the arrival of the Reformed men from the Continent, but it, nevertheless, exerted a wholesome influence in the formation of the teachings, creeds, confessions, and liturgies of the Church of England. In 1548 Cranmer translated Justus Jonas' catechism, which in English is usually designated Cranmer's Catechism, not only teaches most emphatically the Lutheran doctrine, but also contains verbatim Luther's Small Catechism.[4] In 1549 the Book of Common Prayer was formulated. It was a compromise between Lutheranism, Romanism, and Calvinism. This was revised in 1552 and the Lutheran element is very obvious in certain places. In 1553 Cranmer drew up the 42 Articles of Religion on the basis of the 13 Articles agreed upon by a conference with the Lutherans in 1538.[5] Although the articles contain Roman and Calvinistic elements, the greater part found its source in the Augsburg Confession. Later these 42 Articles of Edward VI were cut down to the 39 Articles of Elizabeth(1563) which are still in use today in the Anglican Church. The Lutheran element is also very evident in the worship of the

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4. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 216.
5. P. Smith, op. cit., p. 314.

English Church.[6] Had Cranmer become a strong and staunch Lutheran, probably the English Church would be Lutheran today. Thus it can be said that the work of Lutheranism in England was not all in vain; it did play an important role in the scheme of English Church History.

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6. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 218.

APPENDIX II

A little additional information should be added about some of the men who helped foster the Lutheran cause in England. This list is far from complete. The study could include about 20 men. That would be a thesis in itself.

Miles Coverdale 1488-1568

He is noted for his translation of the Bible which appeared on October 4th, 1535. His translation was made from the Vulgate with some assistance from Luther's version.[1] He was a student at Cambridge where he made a thorough study of Luther's works. He was a member of the group which met in the house called "Germany". The direct as well as the indirect influence of Luther may be traced in his works. He is noted for his translation of several of Luther's hymns and of Luther's Ten Commandments. Of Coverdale's 41 hymns, 22 are Lutheran.[2]

William Tyndale ?-1536

Tyndale was a student at Oxford and Cambridge and came in contact with the Lutherans. Comparing his writings it can be seen that he was a Lutheran. Probably in the later years of his life he tended towards Zwinglianism. Tyndale left England in 1524

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1. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 338.
2. Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 117ff.

and translated the New Testament and a small part of the Old Testament into English while he was on the continent. Here he came in contact with Luther at Wittenberg. It appears that if we had more knowledge of his whereabouts it would probably show that he had a very active part in the spread of Luther's teachings. Beckett states that his pen was beyond question, one of the great potencies of the time. His translations, his treatises, his tracts exercised an influence recognized by his adversaries as necessitating strenuous opposition, and rejoiced in by his friends as a leader in their cause.[3] Fisher in his book states that he and other young scholars fled to Antwerp -- on their return these men were bent on planting the Lutheran doctrine in their native country.[4] Luther exerted a profound influence upon Tyndale's writings. This is seen in Tyndale's Prologue to the New Testament, Prologue to the Romans, Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, -- but more so in the Shorter Prologues that the character of the dependence of Tyndale on Luther is best seen.[5] Through his translation of the Bible the Lutheran cause became more and more aggressive.

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3. Beckett, op. cit., p. 170.
4. Fisher, History of theChristian Church, p. 347.
5. Wescott, History of the English Bible, p. 148.

Anne Boleyn 1507? - 1536

She married Henry VIII, after Henry divorced his first wife, Catharine of Aragon. She was a Lutheran and helped foster the Lutheran cause in England. She had generously maintained a number of scholars at the Universities; and all of them, among was Heath, were during their lifetime earnest champions of the Reformation.[6]

Thomas Cromwell 1485 - 1540

He was no theologian but a politician. However, he did help the cause of Lutheranism throughout his life. It is doubtful whether he even held the Lutheran views. Froude says that it was his chief object to unite England with the Lutherans.[7] This was all based on political motives. Thus through his political moves he became a very important man in promoting the cause of Lutheranism in England.

Thomas Cranmer 1489 - 1556

His suggestion that the King ask the Universities on the continent for an answer whether his divorce was proper brought Cranmer into favorship with Henry. This was the royal favor which he never lost. At the death of Warham he was made Archbishop of Canterbury by the King

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6. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 74.
7. Froude, op. cit., p. 411.

in the year 1533. He didn't want this job but knew that he had to accept it. In the 20's he had been on the continent and came in touch with the Lutherans and married the niece of the Lutheran theologian Osiander. Thus he was inclined to Lutheran opinions and he aided the reformation tremendously in England as Archbishop of Canterbury. His first act as primate of the Church was to annul the marriage of Henry. This increased his favor in the eyes of the King and through this popularity he was able to promote the Lutheran cause without too much difficulty. Sad to say, he was not too strong in his belief. With Fox, Cromwell, and Barnes to aid him, he was a Lutheran; but when these men were no longer around he passed over to the adoption of the Reformed doctrine. He nevertheless played an important part in drawing up the English Confessions which show the Lutheran element; and he prepared the liturgy for the English Church which he had learned from the Lutheran theologians in Germany.[8]

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8. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 48.

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