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Was Luther Needed?

By **WILLIAM DALLMANN**

I

LEARNING

The fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century was followed by the fall of learning.

D. Magnus Ausonius, turned Christian, tutored Kaiser Gratian, tried to blend pagan forms with Christian ideas, told his grandson to go to school cheerfully, fearing neither stick, rod, nor thong. † 395.

At the Synod of Chalcedon in 403 some 40 bishops could neither read nor write.

By 450 the Church took over the lower schools, and lights glimmered and shimmered here and there in cloisters and cathedrals.

Pope Gregory the Great about 600 condemned "the idle vanities of secular learning."

"The study of letters has perished," wailed Gregory of Tours. † 595.

Kaiser Karl the Great could neither read nor write. Kaiser Otto I the Great, when up in years, tried to learn to read and write. Noted poets like Wolfram von Eschenbach and Ulrich von Lichtenstein could neither read nor write.

In 1291 no one in the famous convent of St. Gall could write.

In the thirteenth century the keen scholastics beat the air

with such questions: Could God make two hills without a valley? Could God make a stick without two ends? Can two angels be in the same space at the same time? What happens when a mouse eats consecrated bread?

Roger Bacon of Oxford bitterly deplored the ignorance of his day. † 1294.

* * *

Dante calls on Apollo and the Muses, has Centaurs and Furies. Minos judges at the door, and Charon is the boatman over the Stygian lake. He put Plato, Saladin, Avicenna, and Averroes in a place of half bliss, Cato of Utica to guard Purgatory, and Trajan in heaven, having been prayed out of hell by Pope Gregory I. Vergil had unwittingly prophesied the birth of Christ.

Aristotle was "The Grecian Doctor." Dante referred to him simply as "He," or "the Philosopher," "The Master of those who know." An anagram was made — Aristotle = *Iste sol erat, He was the sun.*

A man took the candles from the altar on which stood the crucifix and placed them by Dante's grave with the words: "Take them; thou art more worthy of them than He, the Crucified One."

Peter Gallant publicly declared Aristotle's teaching was closely related to the Christian religion and did not hesitate to follow him in all things and to adore him. He was approved by the Sorbonne, the theological faculty of the great University of Paris.

In these days Notary Francesco Barberini in prose and verse firmly opposed teaching reading and writing to girls.

* * *

Petrarch found at the University of Bologna: "Philosophy is so prostituted to the fancies of the vulgar that it aims only at hair-splitting on subtle distinctions and quibbles of words. . . . Truth is utterly lost sight of; sound practice is neglected, and the reality of things is despised. . . . People concentrate their whole attention on empty words." He had the courage to say Aristotle, after all, was but a human.

Augustine is "the sun of the Church, the philosopher of Christ," who believes the same as Plato; Cicero is a Christian.

Petrarch deplored that to make an open profession of the Christian faith and hold it higher than pagan philosophy was to gain a reputation for folly and ignorance. The pagan heaven displaced the Christian heaven. Petrarch founded his hope chiefly on "Scipio's Dream" and other sayings of Cicero and on Plato's *Phaedo*, without mentioning the Bible.

The secretary of Pope Urban V in his *Labors of Hercules* teaches a brave man enduring the great labors of earthly life justly deserves a dwelling among the stars. †1406.

* * *

The Council of Basel banned Pope Eugenius IV, and the Pope banned the Council and simply held his own Council. The Holy Father was stoned out of holy Rome and so held his Council at Ferrara and then in Florence — which offered more money.

Kaiser John VI Palaeologus was hard pressed by the Turk and sought help from the Pope.

With the Greek kaiser came 700 Greek prelates and scholars.

One was Georgios Gemistos, called Pletho, because it sounded so much like Plato. "The Sage" helped most to bring in the Renaissance. This anti-Christian lectured on a Platonism mixed with a mystical theosophy derived from Porphyrios, Proclus, and Jamblichos, veiled in allegorical language, and surrounded by a nimbus of mystery. This Plato was "the Attic Moses," the transmitter of a golden tradition which the secular Aristotle had tried to break and which ran back through Pythagoras to Zoroaster on the one hand, and on the other to Abraham.

He looked on Aristotle as a westernized Mohammedan speaking in the Latin schools ideas he owed to a Moorish interpreter.

Man was like unto God, named divine, destined to seek eternal union with God, from whom he came.

Gennadius accused Gemistos of paganism, yet Cosimo drank in his vaporings and founded the famous Platonic Academy, which met in the Badia Church.

Marsilio Ficino wrote: The mysteries of the ancients agree with Christianity. The ancient gods had foretold the coming of Christ, who was Himself a Platonist. Socrates and

Plato, together with the Evangelists, witnessed to the truth of Revelation; the same spirit inspired the laws of Moses and the Greek philosophers.

He believed in dreams and in astrology. "The Physician of Souls" comforted a mother grieving over her dead son with a pagan letter without a word of Christian comfort. The leader of the Platonic Academy preached to his "Brethren in Plato."

Plato's pupils had kept a yearly celebration, and after 1200 years this solemn feast was revived. The disciples underwent a sort of conversion, ceremonies were introduced, holy days were kept, celebrities became saints, candles were kept burning before the Virgin and the laureled bust of Plato, his birthday was a festal day and on his deathday there was a banquet, passages from the *Dialogs* were discussed, and stately and solemn eulogies were pronounced.

Ferdinand Schevill of the University of Chicago rated this adulterated Platonism "one of the most fantastic systems of philosophy that have ever been spun by mortal mind." Rafael Sabatini declared "the pagan age stripped Christ of His divinity to bestow it upon Plato." Rector Alfred Baudrillard of the Catholic Institute of Paris asserts Ficino "denied even the existence of God and the immortality of the soul."

Carlo Marsuppini, chancellor, highly esteemed as a teacher, an open heathen, at death in 1463 refused the Sacraments, yet received honorable burial and a statue in Santa Croce.

When Cosimo's conscience troubled him for some ill-gotten money, Pope Eugenius IV told him to rebuild the monastery of San Marco. Done for 70,000 florins and a splendid library.

Toward his end his wife often saw him "stand motionless for hours wrapt in thought." Why? "When you are about to go to your country villa, it takes a full fortnight of worries to order your going. And I, who have to depart from this life and travel to that other, do you not think that I, too, must consider?"

How did he "consider"? With books of devotion. Very good; what were these books of devotion? Plato and Aristotle's *Ethics*! He asked Ficino to read his new translation of Plato, and that "Physician of Souls" now read and now

talked of the "Only Good," the same beyond-life as it is here, and thus "the saint, and philosopher" set out on his journey on August 1, 1464. *Pater Patriae*.

In Bernardo Pulci's poem Cosimo was received by Cicero, Fabricius, the Fabii, and others, and with them would adorn the choir where only blameless spirits sing.

* * *

Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, was brought up in the Platonic Academy and said without Plato he could be neither a good citizen nor a good Christian.

Girolamo Savonarola wrote: "Some have so fettered themselves and surrendered their intelligence to the bondage of the ancients that they will say nothing contrary to their customs or what they have not said. The ancients have not said something, hence we must not say it. . . . Your Aristotle does not even succeed in proving the immortality of the soul; he remains so uncertain about points so capital that I do not understand how you can waste so much labor on his pages. . . . A simple old woman knows more of the true faith than Plato."

Francesco Poggio Bracciolini went as far as "barbarous England" for manuscripts but found the libraries "full of foolishness." He was shocked at Cardinal Beaufort's barbarism — gluttonous meals lasting four hours.

At St. Gall he found the *Institutions* of Quintilian "in the squalor of the prison-house, the savagery of his jailers, the forlorn filth of the place . . . covered with dust and filthy with neglect and age . . . lying in a most foul and obscene dungeon at the very bottom of a tower." He dug up others.

At Cluny and other places he dug up many other pagans.

In his *Infelicity of Princes* Poggio complains, popes and princes "spent their days and their wealth in pleasures, in unworthy pursuits, in pestiferous and destructive wars. So great is their mental torpor that nothing can rouse them to search after the works of excellent writers, by whose wisdom and learning mankind are taught the way to true happiness."

Francesco Barbaro reports: "No severity of winter cold, no snow, no length of journey, no roughness of roads, kept him from bringing the monuments of literature to light." No, nor theft! He letters Ambrogio Traversari his dealings with a monk for the fraudulent abduction of an Ammianus and a Livy from a convent at Hersfeld.

Lorenzo Valla claims to have "better deserved of the Latin language than all who have written during the last 600 years, whether of grammar, or of rhetoric, or of dialectic, or of civil and canon law, or of the meaning of words" — his modest preface to his *Elegantiae*, a Latin phrase book, reprinted about 60 times.

He was a fighter from Fighterville. Bartholomew Fazio found 500 faults of language in Valla — eight books of the most sulphurous invective were exchanged till they both died in 1457. One cried: "Oh, how is Valla silent, so used to spare nobody! If you ask me what he is doing, I say he is now biting the earth."

Valla rejected Christ's *Letter to King Abgar of Edessa* as a forgery; doubted the Apostolic origin of the Apostle's Creed; corrected Jerome's Vulgate in his *Annotations to the New Testament*, published by Erasmus in 1515; exploded the Donation of Constantine as "contradictory, impossible, stupid, barbarous, and ridiculous," published by Hutten, and received with the utmost indignation against the papacy by Luther.

Theodore of Gaza of Thessalonica came over about 1430, a zealous Platonist, wrote Panormita, "The scholars of our time hardly ever mention the name of Jesus in their writings."

His classic Greek grammar, printed by Aldus in 1495, was the second textbook used by Erasmus.

At the 1350 Jubilee no pope was in Rome. Grass grew on the pavement of St. Peter's; the Lateran was roofless; its windows had no shutters; rain made worship impossible in Santo Stefano Rotondo and in St. Paul's Outside the Walls; other churches were used as haylofts or cattle sheds. Of the 414 places of worship in the city 44 had no attendants; 11 were razed; many had no roofs or windows or doors; yet there was a clerical army of 1303, a fifteenth of the whole population. Petrarch says the city looked as if it had been pillaged by a barbaric host. Platina says Pope Nicholas V found Rome so ruined, it could hardly be held fit for habitation: whole rows of houses abandoned; many churches fallen to the ground; streets deserted and buried under heaps of refuse; traces of plague and famine everywhere."

Nicholas V made Rome the literary and artistic capital of Europe. Yet Stefano Porcaro sought to overthrow the papal authority. Timotheus Maffeus dedicated his works

against the monks to the Pope. The Holy Father had litanies recited against an eclipse of the sun.

Assemanni and de Rossi date the Vatican Library from the Gospel Mark wrote in Rome for the Romans and from the parchments Paul, in a Roman prison, asked Timothy to bring from Troas, 2 Tim. 4:13 — a bit of harmless Roman patriotism.

About 400 Jerome mentions the "chartarium ecclesiae Romanae," later called "scrinia sedis apostolicae," because the books were kept in closed cases. These archives, however, were lost. The secret Archives from Innocent VIII must not be confounded with the Vatican Library; this was founded by Nicholas V with his 5,000 volumes, valued at 40,000 scudi, for the use of all scholars. The jewel is the Codex Vaticanus of the Greek Testament.

In the funeral oration Filelfo said Apollo and the Muses were desolate at the death of the Holy Father of Christendom. Latino Giovenale Mannetti wrote: "If the immortals could shed tears over the fate of mortals, surely the sacred Muses and divine Camoenae would mourn over the loss of our Nicholas."

Frederick of Monte Feltro of Urbino spent 30,000 ducats on his library, now in the Vatican.

Giovanni Manzini reports Andreolo de Ochis of Brescia at 70 was ready to sacrifice house and land, his wife and himself, to add to his library.

Venice cared little for the interdict of the Pope, but in 1455 vainly offered 10,000 ducats for a seamless coat of Christ.

Siena and Perugia went to war over the wedding ring of the Virgin. About 1450 the Ghibellines of Milan tore Christ from the altar of the Cathedral at Cremona and burned Him because He turned His face to the Guelf shoulder.

Poggio copied a Livy and sold it to Beccadelli for 120 sequins — \$250,000.

Vespasiano Bisticci, the bookdealer, with 45 writers copied 200 volumes in 22 months. The writers were mostly Germans.

A change was coming.

In 1455 Johann Gensfleisch, called Gutenberg, at Mainz printed the Latin Bible, more humanizing than all the Humanism of all the Humanists. Before 1500 there were more than 1,000 printers, mostly Germans.

When the envoys of Cardinal Bessarion saw the first printed book in the house of Constantine Lascaris, they laughed at the discovery "made among the barbarians in some German town," and Frederick of Urbino "would be ashamed to own a printed book."

* * *

Sixtus IV was the Gran Fabricatore, the Grand Builder. He built the Sistine Chapel and had it decorated by Alessandro Filipepi, called Botticelli; Pietro Vannucci, called Il Perugino; and Domenico Bigordi, called Il Ghirlandajo.

He added to the Vatican Library and housed it in four new and beautiful halls and appointed Platina librarian, made immortal by the famous picture of Melozzo da Forli. Seventy-two abbreviators were appointed, and copyists, even for Hebrew, which now became more popular than Greek; the printing of Hebrew works began in 1475.

The Vicar of Christ re-opened the Roman Academy and let Pomponius lecture to his heart's content.

He had Platina write the first *Lives of the Popes*, which often condemns the vices of the clergy. It shows the influence of the Renaissance — Christ fully attained the four-fold Platonic "nobilitas" according to his "genus." The French Catholic Baudrillart reports: "At the service of the anniversary of Platina's death, held in Saint Mary Major, Pomponius Laetus (after Mass) ascended the pulpit and delivered the funeral oration of his friend; then, from the same pulpit, a poet read an elegy on the death of Platina. This was indeed the revenge and triumph of Humanism."

Canon Zanino de Solcia of Bergamo in 1459 said Christ did not suffer for love of man, but under the influence of the stars.

Sixtus in 1474 had to proceed against Bolognese Carmelites who preached there was no harm in seeking information from demons.

In 1483 the magistrates complained that Sixtus had sent to dying King Louis IX of France some relics of the Lateran.

Bartol. della Volta would sell the skull of St. Dominic to the king of Spain and use the money for some useful public object. † 1485.

Professor Pedro de Osma of Salamanca denied the power of indulgences, the divine origin and necessity of confession,

and the infallibility and irresponsible autocracy of the papacy. In 1479 he was condemned by the Council of Alcalá.

Professor Johann Buchenrath of Wesel at Erfurt placed the Council over the Pope; rejected the authority of tradition and of the Fathers; carried predestination to a point which stripped the Church of its power over salvation; struck the Filioque from the Creed. In 1479 he was condemned at Mainz by the inquisitor of Koeln and forced to recant. The reporter of the trial seems to think the only serious error was the one about the Holy Ghost and cites various men of learning who held most of the condemned articles of the Nominalist leader could be maintained.

Hans Holbein, Jr., in 1527, shows Aristotle and many other philosophers going down into the outer darkness.

II

MORALS

Pope Boniface VIII felt his oats when the Jubilee of 1300 drew 100,000 pilgrims to Rome.

Philip IV of France also dreamed of world power. Lawyer Pierre Dubois (?) advised him to take the Patrimonium Petri away from the Pope, for his business was to pray, preach, absolve, but not to wage wars like a secular prince and thereby set an evil example.

In the bull *Unam Sanctam* of 1302 the Vicar of Christ told the world the Church has two swords: the spiritual used by the Church, the secular used for the Church, at the nod of the priest, and "it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

William du Plessis in the name of France charged the Holy Father with twenty-four varieties of heresy, the crassest simony, idolatry, consorting with sorcerers and demons, incest with his niece, sodomy, murder of Pope Celestine, etc.

"Pope Boniface, you have sneaked in like a fox; you rule like a wolf; you will go out like a dog," said Jacopone da Todi, the singer of the gripping *Stabat Mater*.

Dante placed Boniface in hell, for he "turned the cemetery of St. Peter into a common sewer of corruption."

There he also found Popes Anastasius II, for heresy; Nicholas III and Alexander III and Clement V, for simony,

and many other popes for avarice. He revered his teacher Brunetto Latini, but sternly put him into hell for unnatural vice.

Dante deplored the Donation of Constantine as the cause of all the corruption in the Church, which he scourged with passionate invective. He cast his slings and arrows at the trade of indulgences, "with which St. Anthony fattens his pigs and many others worse than swine."

Pope John XXII burned Dante's *Monarchy* in 1326. He sold offices for 775,000 gold gulden; Villani says 25,000,000. The shrimp with the repulsive face died before he could be deposed for heresy. * * *

Petrarch, a cleric, despised marriage as a degrading bondage and burden, yet had a son and a daughter from a mistress whom he treated harshly, according to his own story. The Pope made the crowned poet a prior, a canon, and an archdeacon, gave him a living with nothing to do, yet the poet flattered the Pope for more money. What for? To support children, keep servants, three secretaries, two horses, and entertain many guests! A brazen beggar like later Aretino and Erasmus!

This virtuous clergyman called the Pope's Avignon "the Babylon of the West"; he said it contained everything fearful which had ever existed or had been imagined by a disordered mind, a hell on earth. "No fiercer satire on the Pope's court can be found than in his *Epistola sine titulo*." Monks were the only sure road to heaven. * * *

Giovanni Boccaccio was born in 1313 of a French wench and had three children by unknown women. In 1348 the Black Death came to Florence. It did not lead to repentance, but it did lead seven young ladies and three young men into a garden to tell 10 stories a day for 10 days—*The Decameron*. Most of them tell of clerical vice with elegant spice and the swinery it garnished with blood-curdling blasphemy.

The salacious filth is told to laughing young ladies, and by laughing young ladies to young men, and Europe roared with ribald shouting through many editions, translations, and imitations.

In 1573 Gregory XIII ordered an edition authorized by the

Inquisition, in which every phrase with a Lutheran sound is cut out, for instance, "the grace of God comes without merit." The licentious clergyman is turned into a layman and the lascivious abbess becomes a wife. Thus the good Catholic can obey the *Index* and yet enjoy the pure sewage, and Mother Church saves her face.

The *Contemporary Review* in 1878 commented: "This proves the impregnable position which had been taken by Paganism at the very heart of the whole civilized and Christian world."

Following the *Decameron*, the *Heptameron* of Queen Margaret of Navarre has bedtime stories for her maidens at which we stand aghast.

St. Catherine of Siena pictures the clergy as filled with selfishness, pride, avarice, careless about the souls, hard toward the poor, unjust to their underlings. They travel like worldly lords and courtiers on high horses, practice usury, in taverns gamble away the goods of the Church and their souls to the devil, decorate their she-devils, who come to the altar with a horde of children or commit unnatural sin! The monks tickle the ears of the people with fables. Their God is their belly. At night instead of singing the Psalms they have harlots come to them, and nuns have become public women. They that should give life, bring death.

She told her Holy Father, Gregory XI, at his court, which ought have been a paradise of virtue, her nostrils were assailed by the odors of hell. † 1380.

* * *

Since 1378 there were two sets of rival popes lustily trading papal curses. The Council of Pisa in 1409 deposed Benedict XIII and Gregory XII as heretics and schismatics and elected Alexander V, who died May 11, 1410, likely poisoned by "Diavolo Cardinale" Cossa, who was elected Pope John XXIII. Now there was a three-cornered holy war while there was a three-cornered unholy war for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Interesting times, those good old times!

The Council of Constance met on Nov. 1, 1414. To it came Kaiser Sigismund with 20 princes and 140 counts. Pope John XXIII came with 29 cardinals, 7 patriarchs, over 300

bishops and archbishops, 4,000 priests, 250 university professors, besides Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Russians, Africans, Ethiopians, in all from 60,000 to 100,000 strangers and 30,000 horses.

The Holy Father had been a pirate; at Bologna he had plundered and oppressed his people and sold licenses to usurers, gamblers, and prostitutes; his cruelty reduced the population; in his first year as legate at Bologna he had outraged 200 girls, wives or widows, and a multitude of nuns; at least so say Catholic historians.

The Holy Council accused the Holy Father of seventy-two crimes—the murder of Pope Alexander V, rape, adultery, sodomy, incest, simony, corruption, poisoning, denying the resurrection and eternal life, etc., etc., etc.

Though hostile to John personally, the Patriarch of Antioch quoted the Decretum of Gratian: If a pope, by his misconduct and negligence, should lead crowds of men into hell, no one would have the right to find fault with him.

The Council found the charges proved and on May 25, 1414, deposed the god on earth as “the supporter of iniquity, the defender of simonists, the slave of lasciviousness, a devil incarnate.”

When John was deposed, Hus wrote: “Courage, friends! You can now give answer to those who declare that the pope is God on earth; that he is the head and heart of the Church; that he is the fountain from which all virtue and excellence issue; that he is the sun, the sure asylum where all Christians ought to find refuge. Behold this earthly god bound in chains!”

The Bishop of Salisbury would burn him, but the devil incarnate was made a cardinal, and after his death at Florence on Nov. 23, 1419, they built a very fine monument by Donatello to his saintly memory.

The Council burned John Hus on July 6, 1415, and Jerome on May 30, 1416.

What kind of men were they in whose nostrils burning human flesh was a sweet savor?

In order to keep up the morale of these holy fathers, there were 1,700 artists, dancers, jugglers, actors, musicians, and — prostitutes, 700 public ones, not counting the private ones.

WAS LUTHER NEEDED?

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Hus wrote: "Would that you could see this Council, which is called most holy and infallible; truly you would see great wickedness, so that I have been told by Suabians that Constance could not in thirty years be purged of the sins which the Council has committed in the city."

Kaiser Sigismund condemned Hus for a heretic: the next year the Council condemned the Kaiser for a Hussite and heretic.

Pope John XXIII condemned Hus for a heretic. Soon after the Council flung him into the same prison with Hus the heretic.

John Gerson, "Doctor Christianissimus," of the great University of Paris, and Pierre d' Ailly, the great Cardinal of Cambrai, accused Hus of heresy; later the same Council accused them of heresy.

Gerson declared Hus had never been condemned had not a lawyer been denied him, and himself would rather be tried by Jews and infidels than before the Council.

* * *

Cardinal Guiliano Caesarini at the Council of Basel wrote Pope Eugenius IV about the corruption of the German clergy: "These disorders excite the hatred of the people against the whole ecclesiastical order; and should they not be corrected, it is to be feared lest the laity, like the Hussites, should rise against the clergy, as they loudly threaten us. The Bohemian heresy is extinct, but another, much more dangerous, will arise. For it will be said the clergy are incorrigible and will apply no remedy to their disorders; they will fall upon us when they shall have no longer any hopes of our amendment. The minds of men are . . . ready for the birth of something tragic. The rancor they have imbibed against us becomes manifest; they will soon think it an agreeable sacrifice to God to abuse and rob ecclesiastics, as abandoned to extreme disorders, and hateful to God and man. Men will blame these abuses on the court of Rome because they see in her the cause of all the abuses of Christendom, because it had neglected to apply the necessary remedy. . . . The princes of Germany will rise against us. . . . I see the axe laid to the root, the tree about to fall, and instead of propping it whilst in our power, we hasten its fall. Bodies and souls will perish together. God hides from us the prospect of our

danger, as He usually does with those whom He destines for punishment: we run into the fire which we see lighted before us."

Holy Father Nicholas V had Poggio write against the Council of Basel: "That sink of iniquity, a monstrous birth, conventicle of 19 reprobates, tumultuary of debauched men, apostates, fornicators, ravishers, blasphemers, rebels against God."

Pope Felix V was "another Cerberus, a rapacious wolf, a golden calf, a high priest of malignity, a perverter of the faith, and foe of true religion."

Pope Felix and his cardinals surrendered, and Pope Nicholas V gave them the red hat.

* * *

Pope Sixtus IV wanted Florence and favored the Pazzi and Archbishop Salviati, who would murder the Medici and his 18-year-old nephew, Cardinal Rafael Riario, was there on a suspicious visit. On April 26, 1478, at the tinkling of the bell, and the elevation of the host, and the cloud of incense under Brunelleschi's Dome, Bernardo Bernardini and Francesco de' Pazzi fell on Guiliano de' Medici, and he fell and his blood ran out of 19 dagger wounds.

Giambattista Montesecco agreed to kill Lorenzo, but refused to do so in a holy church. "Another man was found, who, being a priest, was more accustomed to the place and therefore less superstitious about its sanctity." But the priest bungled his job and Lorenzo escaped with a light wound into the sacristy. Women shrieked and fainted, men cursed furiously and went mad with lust of blood. Archbishop Salviati, his brother, his cousin, Jacopo Bracciolini, and others were soon dangling from the windows of the Palazzio Vecchio, and Botticelli's brush had to paint them. Jacopo Pazzi fled, was caught and hanged. A friendly hand cut down the corpse and buried it. The mob dug it up, dragged it through the streets, hooting as the skull bumped over the paving stones, and flung it into the Arno to the tune of a street ballad. Bandini fled to Constantinople, but the Sultan, "shocked by this murder in a church," handed him over, and he was hanged. Lorenzo had Leonardo da Vinci paint him hanging. The clergy called Pope Sixtus IV "Vicar of the devil, minister of adultery, leno matris suae."

Murders in church were not rare. Carlo Visconti, Girolamo Algiati, and Giannandrea Lampugnani took the Sacrament and prayed to St. Ambrose in St. Stephen's Church in Milan, and when Duke Galeazzo Maria came in, they daggered him to death on December 26, 1476.

Lorenzo married his Madalena to Franceschetto, the very dissolute bastard of Pope Innocent VIII in 1488 and next year wrote him: "Others have not waited so long to play the pope: they wasted no time on nice points of honesty. Your Holiness is . . . free before God and man to act as you will. . . . As man is immortal and a pope is only what he makes himself, his personal dignity cannot be bequeathed: his only patrimony is the honors and gifts he can bestow in his lifetime."

The Pope made Lorenzo's 13-year-old Giovanni a cardinal, to take effect at 17 — the future Leo X.

Lorenzo gave the people licentious carnivals, wrote lewd songs for them, and plunged into all the orgies. At 40 he fell a victim to a married woman, older than himself, without grace or beauty — "madness" it is called by Guicciardini.

Angelo Ambrogino, called Poliziano, "the Homeric youth," "the most perfect ape of antiquity," sang the mistresses of Lorenzo. His *Rispetti* "are inspired by Aphrodite Pandemos, and the joys of which they tell are carnal." He was given to the vilest vice for a time. He drew crowds from all parts of Europe from 1480 to his death in 1494.

Luigi Pulci was the court jester and between courses exchanged sonnets of ribald persiflage with Matteo Franco — the chaplain of Lorenzo's household. Accused of heresy, he was buried in unconsecrated ground in 1490.

Leo Battista Alberti, versatile, nowhere declares himself a Christian, never even names Christ. "The Renaissance had paganized the soundest hearts of the epoch." †1472.

The "Ecatomfila," or the lady of a hundred loves, from her large experience tells her female hearers what kind of love to choose. "Heliogabalus might have used her precepts in his *Concio ad Meretrices*."

Florence had 9,000 people and 110 churches, and yet Benivieni admits: "Iniquity and sin was multiplied in Italy because the nation had lost the Christian faith. . . . The future life was denied and religion was mocked. . . . In short, Italy, and especially the town of Florence, was given over to unbelief. . . ."

Even women denied the faith of Christ; and all, both men and women, returned to pagan customs, delighting in the study of the poets, and astrologers, and all the pagan superstitions."

Cardinal Briçonnet wrote Anne of Brittany Florence was the earthly paradise. * * *

Pope Eugenius IV in 1447 ended his hectic rule with the wail: "O Gabriel, how much better for your soul would it have been had you never been cardinal or pope!"

Tommaso Parentucelli's eloquent funeral sermon so electrified the cardinals that they at once elected him Pope.

With the brilliant new Pope Nicholas V "Humanism took possession of the See of St. Peter. . . . He surrounded himself with the most pagan Humanists and gave them without measure. . . . Eugenius IV refused to allow Lorenzo Valla, the author of *Voluptas*, to re-enter Rome: Nicholas called him to Rome and made him notary apostolic. Eugenius forbade the reading of Beccadelli's infamous book [*Hermaphroditus*: Nicholas spent nine days reading the satires of Filelfo, called by Symonds 'the most nauseous composition that coarse spite and filthy fancy ever spawned,' and rewarded the writer with 500 ducats.]

Nicholas remains one of the purest figures of the Renaissance. . . . "The study of the ancients" led to the appeal to the ancients — that is to say, to pagans — for the solution of the great problems which Christianity had solved for the preceding generations. It developed Latinisation of culture into its paganisation. . . . The Italian Renaissance at the antipodes of Christianity." So writes Rector Alfred Baudrillart of the Catholic Institute of Paris in his *The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism*.

The English Catholic Hilaire Belloc writes: "There was a reliance upon externals of religion at the expense of spiritual life. . . . The Papal court was turning into an Italian principate; skepticism was very rapidly spreading, and a sort of moral anarchy was beginning to appear." — *How the Reformation Happened*.

Father Ethelred Taunton in his *Wolsey* writes: "The greatest Pope of the Renaissance, Nicholas V, had said the Roman Pontiffs had 'extended their authority too far, left no jurisdiction to the other bishops; he firmly purposed not to invade the legitimate rights of bishops.'"

J. A. Symonds declares: "Humanism took the Papal Court by storm and installed itself in pomp and pride within the Vatican . . . paganizing the Papacy . . . their passion for a pagan ideal."

The Jubilee of 1450 brought loads of gold to the Pope, who put into the Medici bank alone 100,000 florins. Now he could buy books — pagan books.

Francesco Poggio Bracciolini, Apostolic Secretary, belonged to the "Bugiale," "Lie Factory." Rector Alfred Baudrillard of the Catholic Institute of Paris writes: "During the Council of Constance Poggio and several of his friends formed a society which met every evening to hold scandalous and obscene discourses and to shower mockery upon the clergy in the palace of the Pope, whom they spared less than all the others."

At the ripe age of 70 the old sinner published *Facetiae*, jokes about the vices of the clergy told with ruthless ridicule and sarcasm. "In the Curia everyone is occupied with matters secular; but few things bear any reference to religion. All vices enter in and abound there in such a way that it is a mirror of the universe."

Lapo de Castiglionchio adds: "Arrogance, insolence, avarice, hypocrisy, boastfulness, gluttony, luxury, perfidy, cowardice, roguery, and deceit are the only things to be found there."

Europe roared through 26 editions and called for three Italian translations.

Poggio had 14 bastards and said he only followed the example of the clergy. At 50 he married a girl of 18 and had four more children. He showed contempt for Christianity and yet held high office for 50 years under eight popes. In 1459 he was buried in Santa Croce, and in 1560 his statue was set up as one among the Twelve Apostles in the Cathedral at Florence.

Francesco Filelfo confessed to the world he was superior to Vergil and to Cicero: Vergil was only a poet and only in Latin; Cicero was only an orator and only in Latin; he was both a poet and an orator in both Latin and in Greek. Q. E. D.

Students from all over Europe flocked to him, 400 of them, among them Popes Nicholas V and Pius II.

By his sharp pen he wangled money out of the great to

keep the wolf from the door for his 24 children from three wives, several servants, six horses, many mistresses and bastards.

Filelfo urged the Signory to kill Cosimo and quarreled with others. He and Poggio engaged in "perhaps the most infamous libels that have ever seen the light," Tiraboschi judges. The polite and learned world stood on the sidelines applauding for years. Then the filthy filth flingers made up. "His *De Jocis et Seris* contain horrible obscenities and expressions from the streets and the brothels," reports Rosmini. Invoking Venus, the mother of Priapus, for help, he asked Pope Nicholas V for a bishopric!

In the funeral oration on Francesco Sforza the soul is proved immortal by Greek philosophers — "the Old and New Testaments afford additional evidence."

Antonio Beccadelli, Panormita, in his *Hermaphroditus* invested with voluptuous grace all the vices of Paganism. Pope Eugenius IV forbade it, and the stench was too strong for the nostrils of even — Poggio! Yet it took the world by storm. Kaiser Sigismund in 1433 crowned him with 800 scudi and King Alfonso of Naples created him a noble. Later he regretted his filth.

Rector Alfred Baudrillart of the Catholic Institute of Paris asks: "How comes it that the Renaissance enjoyed the protection of the Church? . . . The Pope's protection of Humanism is a fact well known. Poggio, Filelfo, and Aeneas Sylvius [Pope Pius II] delighted to publish the most basely scandalous narratives. Literature has never attained such a degree of obscenity. And the reality of life was in accordance with the current theories: the most infamous vices reigned without concealment. It was indeed the restoration of the flesh."

* * *

John Henry Newman wrote in 1833: "Rome is heretical now. If she has apostatized, it was at the time of the Council of Trent. Then it is to be feared the whole Roman communion bound itself by a perpetual bond and covenant to the cause of Antichrist. They have established a lie in the face of God's truth." In 1834: The Roman Church is "spell-bound as if by an evil spirit. She is in thralldom." "She may be said to resemble a demoniac possessed with principles,

thoughts, and tendencies not her own. We must treat her as though she were that Evil One which governs her." — *Tracts for the Times*, 15, 20, 38. Quoted by Constantine Labarum, pp. 159, 160.

"Luther found in the Church great corruptions countenanced by its highest authorities; he felt them."

Where all the world, the great in Church and State, had failed for centuries, Luther succeeded almost instantly. How? Mr. Newman says: "He adopted a doctrine original, specious, fascinating, persuasive, powerful against Rome, and wonderfully adapted, as if prophetically, to the genius of the times which were to follow. He found Christians in bondage to their works and observances; he released them by his doctrine of faith." — *Lect. Justif.*, p. 386. He became a cardinal.

The Catholic Lord Acton, professor of history at Cambridge and member of Gladstone's cabinet, writes: "The modern age did not proceed from the medieval by normal succession, with outward tokens of legitimate descent. Unheralded, it founded a new order of things, under a law of innovation, sapping the ancient reign of continuity. . . . Luther broke the chain of authority and tradition at the strongest link. . . . It was an awakening of new life; the world revolved in a different orbit, determined by influences unknown before. After many ages, persuaded of the headlong decline and impending dissolution of society, and governed by usage and the will of masters who were in their graves, the sixteenth century went forth armed for untried experience, and ready to watch with hopefulness a prospect of incalculable change." — *Lecture on the Study of History*, 1895, pp. 8, 9.

Again: "I have always had a liking for Luther. He supplied the force and energy to the Reformation, and the great idea of Justification." — *Corr.*, Vol. I, p. 202. 1918.

Acton and Gladstone loved and admired Doellinger, whom Lord Bryce calls "that glory of Catholic learning," who declared: "I see in Luther a great and noble character against whose person I would not cast one stone."

The notorious *Unam Sanctam* bull of Boniface VIII in 1302 was confirmed by Leo X at the Lateran Council in 1517, and 350 years later the eminent Catholic scholar von Doellinger sighed: "The last hope of a reformation of the Church was carried to the grave."

Was Luther needed? "As a Catholic, I am grateful to Luther. In the light of history, a Luther was needed, and needed badly. The surpassing courage of the man who faced the terrors of the stake and the gibbet; who openly defied the most powerful organization the world ever knew; who cared not a straw for kings and prelates as long as he felt his conscience was clear, must always be a source of admiration to every man, no matter what his creed. . . .

"Modern Catholicism owes a debt to Luther. He checked the recklessness that was hurrying the ancient religion to rank atheism. . . . I cannot withhold the tribute of an Irishman for Martin Luther, fighter." — *West Side Home News*, New York City, 1917.

Lawyer William Samuel Lilly, Secretary of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, in his *Renaissance Types* admits: "Luther's revolution was the salvation of the Papal Church. A Catholic historian has called the Council of Trent the greatest thing effected by him."

In other words, it was Luther who compelled the Papal Church to clean house and sweep out at least the most disgraceful public scandals in morals. When Cardinal Carafa was made Pope Paul IV, a medal was struck showing Christ driving the thieves out of the Temple. Quite interesting, this metallic and medallion Papal confession that there were thieves in the Temple. Only it was not the Pope who did the driving, it was Martin Luther.

Lilly goes on: "Luther's revolution served the cause of Catholicism in another way. . . . It quickened into new life both their theology and their philosophy. Nor is this all. The struggle for existence imposed there — in Germany — upon Catholicism by contiguous Protestantism has had the most salutary effect upon it. . . . It is a marvelous contrast to the intellectual decadence exhibited by Catholicism in countries where the Lutheran revolution never entered, or where it was repressed by the fires of inquisitors and the swords of dragoons."

Francesco Ruffini, Professor of Ecclesiastical Law in the University of Turin, Italy, in his *Religious Liberty* on page 405 quotes Johann Nepomuk Bartholotti, the Catholic professor of theology at Vienna: "The work of the Reformation was

providential because, without it, the world would have been sunk in superstition."

On page 407 he quotes Joseph Watteroth, later professor at the Catholic University of Vienna: "The Protestant Reformation has been of wonderful assistance in purifying customs and doctrines. Luther was right on many points, and if this had been recognized, a schism would have been avoided. We owe it to the Protestants that we are at last able to understand the genuine truths of the Gospel in our own language, so that they may become accessible to all. Their learned men have despoiled the history and religion of the Church of all monkish fancies and excrescences which had been added to it; they laid the foundation of a sane philosophy based upon experience and religion; they are far in advance of us in all branches of literature; their schools have supplied our universities with the best teachers and our institutions with worthy officials. We, it is true, have had many extremely able men; but they have been prevented from fully exercising their faculties by Catholic oppression, for which reason we are now far from being able to offer a counterpoise to Protestantism in Germany."

Oak Park, Ill.

The Interpretation of Difficult Bible Passages

By W. ARNDT

(A CONFERENCE ESSAY)

What a grand book we have in the Bible! While we are said to live in a new age since scientists have learned how to split the atom and there is preached to us the philosophy of collective action in national and international affairs in the labor world and politics — a philosophy which is definitely in the saddle and riding fast and furiously — we Lutherans cling to the old Book. We say it comes from God and it leads to God. In this world's wilderness we grope about, dark night hovers over us, we are lost in bogs and morasses, a lightning bug now and then appears, creating a false hope, and disappears as quickly as it came, and then, when every prospect of our finding the way home is gone, there comes from the