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THE CHURCHMAN

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ART. II.—DR. LOSERTH'S "*WICLIF AND HUS*."

Wyclif and Hus. From the German of Dr. JOHANN LOSERTH, Professor of History at the University of Czernowitz. Translated by the Rev. M. J. Evans, B.A. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884.

IT is strange that the one gigantic intellect which exerted, towards the end of the Middle Ages, the greatest influence over Western Christendom in opposition to the Papacy and the Church of Rome, should have remained for so long a time known only second-hand from the writings of opponents. And even after the greater part of his theological system had been adopted, and as it were reissued by others with comparatively slight modifications, it has been left to the present generation to rediscover the fact, and to show that a great contest was fought out with weapons from the armoury of WYCLIF (which Mr. Evans shows to be probably the correct spelling of the name), and that the chief merit of the principal combatant was the skill, the vigour, and the dauntless courage with which those weapons were wielded. The works of Wyclif provided a kind of encyclopædia of philosophy and theology, in which almost every question of interest during the latter half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries was fully and powerfully dealt with, and the various arguments and issues connected therewith were both thoroughly threshed out and exhibited in a concentrated form. Any cleric, animated with a sincere zeal for the reform of abuses in the Church, which during the great Papal schism attained vast and abnormal proportions, could scarcely fail to have recourse to the writings of Wyclif, when once they fell into his hands. Everything was there in readiness; he had but to select, to arrange, to connect, according to circumstances, and now and then to limit or modify. And such Dr. Loserth has shown beyond question to have been the case in the main with the Latin writings of the celebrated JOHN HUSS, or, as he himself wrote it, "*Hus*." Long passages from Wyclif are tacitly adapted and interwoven in Hus's Latin controversial works; and it is manifest that the philosophical and intellectual power exhibited in them belongs rather to Wyclif than to the writer.

This tacit adoption of another's words and sentiments was by no means an unusual method in that day. Dr. J. Kalousek, in the Bohemian *Athenæum* for March, 1884, in reviewing Dr. Loserth's work, draws attention to the fact that Cardinal D'Ailly, who was one of Hus's principal judges and most inveterate foes, borrowed three important dissertations, nearly verbally, from others, without making the slightest acknowledgment of

the sources from which they came. Ono (in 1380), in which he contended for the infallibility of the whole Church and the fallibility of any particular Church, even that of Rome, was taken from Occam. A second (in 1416), *De potestate ecclesiastica*, written for the benefit of the Council of Constance, was borrowed from a treatise, nearly one hundred years old, by John of Paris. And a third, *De reformatione* (also in 1416), was mainly taken from Henry of Langenstein. In acting, therefore, as he did, Hus was only following the custom of his day, and moreover such a course was an absolute necessity for him, though it could scarcely have been so for Peter D'Ailly. To quote Wyclif, except at quite an early epoch in the reforming movement in Bohemia, would have been to have courted condemnation at once. The good and true in Wyclif's writings must be defended and maintained without the use of Wyclif's name. And very dexterously and powerfully did Hus manage the dialectical and theological contest under these difficult circumstances.

That the ground must have been well prepared for Wyclif's writings by Hus's so-called "Precursors" is very manifest, and I do not think Dr. Loserth sets sufficient value upon their work. It is true that Hus is not in the habit of citing them, or indeed of citing any but recognised authorities; but there are coincidences, some of which I shall point out, but which I have no doubt are entirely unknown to Dr. Loserth, between passages in the writings of the first Bohemian prose writer, the philosophical and theological layman, Thomas of Stitny, and passages in the works of both Hus and Wyclif (though it was impossible for Stitny in 1376 to have any direct knowledge of Wyclif), which would render it doubtful whether Hus was adapting Stitny or Wyclif, or writing with recollections of both of them in his mind.

But it is immaterial whence Hus took commonplaces of theology, many of which will probably be found in writings anterior to Wyclif. In Wyclif Hus certainly possessed an encyclopædia, and used it to the uttermost. He adopted the predestinarian system of Wyclif in its entirety. Of one of Wyclif's cardinal doctrines he made an important limitation, which stood him in good stead at the Council of Constance; although for a notice of this important limitation I seek in vain in the pages of Dr. Loserth. Wyclif held that "a pope, priest, or prelate, in mortal sin ceased to be such;" but Hus, in his treatise against Palcz, qualifies and limits this in the following words: "We grant that an evil pope, bishop, or priest, is an unworthy minister of the sacraments, through whom God baptizes, consecrates, or works in other respects for the benefit of His Church." Again and again was this referred

to at Hus's trial before the Council of Constance, and again and again did it rescue him from his own unwise and ill-advised utterances.

Dr. Loserth is well acquainted with Wyclif, and is also acquainted with Hus's Latin works, though perhaps we may find reason to think that his acquaintance with the latter is somewhat superficial. But it would seem from the way in which he expresses himself, that he is not acquainted with the Bohemian or Czeskish language, and therefore with the major part of Hus's works in his native tongue, which have not been translated into German. It was not the Latin treatises *De Ecclesiâ*, etc., that stirred the heart of the Bohemian people; it was those Bohemian works, in which Hus brought his reforming views, and the crying abuses which had then attained their zenith, before their eyes. The importance of these Bohemian writings was well understood by the "iron Bishop," John of Litomysh, who called loudly, though happily in vain, for their suppression. Hus the philosopher was entirely, and Hus the theologian was mainly, dependent upon Wyclif; but Hus the dauntless reformer was dependent upon none but the Spirit of the Lord that anointed him. Here his necessary Precursor was the layman, Thomas of Stitny, who had brought philosophy and theology home to Bohemian hearts in the Bohemian language.

It is remarkable how differently Hus often expresses himself in Bohemian and in Latin. In his Latin works the Church is the totality (*universitas*) of the predestinate; in his Bohemian writings it is the assembly of the elect. He has no word in Bohemian for "predestination," neither can he find a word to express "material" in dealing with the question of the remanence of material bread after consecration in the Eucharist. Later writers have coined words for both these purposes, but it is noticeable that they do not agree in their selection of a word to express "predestination." It is curious, too, that Stitny at first found it difficult to express "quality" in Bohemian, and regretted his inability to do so, though later he adopted the word "*jakost*" as its proper representative.

Till the Wyclif Society, the poor support as yet received by which is a disgrace to our age and country, proceeds a great deal further with its work than it has as yet been able to do, we must labour under a disadvantage under which Dr. Loserth does not labour, viz., a very imperfect knowledge of the writings of Wyclif. Loserth's deficiency is, as I have already remarked, want of knowledge of the Bohemian writings of Hus and Stitny, and the balance cannot be satisfactorily struck without a full knowledge of all three. Meanwhile, let us do our best to examine the passages from Hus and Wyclif, placed in

parallel columns for comparison by Dr. Loserth. And here we find abundant evidence of Hus's adoption and adaptation of Wyclif's thoughts, to an extent far beyond what was formerly supposed to be the case; but we shall also find Dr. Loserth inclined to ride a good horse to death, as the common saying is, and to impute "Wyclify" to Hus, where there is really no ground for doing so, and where Hus would probably have used the selfsame terms if Wyclif had never existed.

Loserth must have glanced very carelessly over Hus's treatise against Palecz to have stated (p. 157): "As Palecz calls the adherents of Hus *Quidamists*, so the latter calls Palecz himself a liar" (*fictor*); "for which, however, he expressed deep regret at the Council." If we turn to the treatise against Palecz itself, we shall find that Hus called Palecz "*fictor*," i.e., *concocter*, not *liar*, because he had concocted (*confinxit*) the derisive nickname "*Quidamistæ*" to designate Hus and his adherents.

In pp. 287 and 288, Loserth tells us that a "*gaping contradiction*" will be found between the two tractates of Hus, that *De Sacramento corporis et sanguinis domini*, and that *De sanguine Christi sub specie vini a laicis sumendo*; and informs us that the second tractate belongs to an earlier date, Hus having composed it *before* he was cast into prison. It is true that such is the heading of the latter tractate in the printed editions of Hus's Latin works, but this view is not borne out by Hus's correspondence, and both Palacký and Tomek agree in considering it to have been composed in prison, and in answer to a request of Lord John of Chlum. The former tractate was also composed in prison, but either before intelligence of Jakaubek's proceedings with regard to the chalice at Prague had arrived at Constance, or else Hus specially avoided entering upon the question of reception *sub utráque* for the sake of the warder for whose benefit he is supposed to have written. In both tractates Hus admits that *the whole sacrament is contained in each kind*, so that there is no "*gaping contradiction*" between them, although Hus finally determines in the latter, "that, as a priest worthily receiving under both kinds does not so receive without reason, so too a devout layman may lawfully so receive, since the nature of the case is the same in each instance as regards the reception of the body and blood." The discussion of these two tractates is not creditable to Dr. Loserth.

Loserth's attempt in p. 287 to derive Hus's *De corpore Christi*, op. i. 166 (not 146) b, from Wyclif's *Triologus*, 248, is in my opinion a complete failure. It will be interesting to compare the extracts from Wyclif and Hus given by Dr. Loserth, with the treatment of the same subject by Stitny in 1400, which is,

in my judgment, very superior to that of either of the theologians, although more similar to Hus than to Wyclif. Stitny writes :

This, too, I say with regard to this Sacrament : its importance does not reside in its being gazed at and in doing obeisance to it, but it ought to be taken and received as nourishment. But there are three things to observe in connection with this Sacrament.

One is the visible Sacrament itself, which by its visible similitude signifieth an invisible spiritual grace ; that is, as visible corporeal food strengthens the bodily life, so does the invisible power of this Sacrament strengthen the spiritual life.

The second thing to be noticed in this Sacrament is what is in it ; for here is the very glorified body of the Son of God as it is in its glory, with both its soul and its Deity.

The third thing to be understood is this : that this Sacrament signifies something that is not in it ; for it signifies the whole body of the Holy Church—that is, the whole Christian community—but that is not there, but Christ Himself is there, Who is the Head of all the Holy Church. And it is by this similarity that this Sacrament signifies all the Holy Church, in that, as one loaf is made up of many grains, so is the whole Church one body made up of many people, the Head whereof is Christ. I have for this reason touched upon this, that it may be understood that some people receive the Sacrament itself, but not that which is in it, nor that which it signifies, and they, receiving the Sacrament thus, receive to themselves condemnation.

Others sometimes do not receive the Sacrament, but receive that which is in the Sacrament, and that which the Sacrament signifies ; that is, they receive Christ, and enter into the unity of the Holy Church, so that they will be one body with the devout.

A third class receive both the Sacrament and that which is in it and that which it signifies.

In p. 271, Loserth endeavours to show that a passage from one of Wyclif's "Sermons" is the original of one in Hus's *De Ecclesiâ*. Wyclif says : "Three Catholic virtues are necessary to the pilgrim (*viatori*) since *faith*, as a firm substance, is the *foundation* of the virtuous life of one on his pilgrimage (*viantis*)." Hus's words are : "The peculiar property of *faith* is that it is to the pilgrim (*viatori*) the *foundation* of arriving at the calm abode of the objects of *faith*." For my part, I can see no similarity between the passages, except that the words *faith* and *foundation* occur in both. The terms *viare* and *viator* are too frequent for any stress to be laid upon them. Had there been in Wyclif anything corresponding to the singular expression which Hus uses, "*veniendi ad quietam habitationem credendorum*," the connection between the passages could not have been disputed. As it is, Loserth weakens his case, which is in the main a good one, by overdoing it.

In p. 285, Loserth cites from Hus's "Elucidation of his Belief," op. i. 486 : "The foundation, therefore, of all virtues, whereby God is served meritoriously, is *faith*, without which it is impossible to please God." With this he compares three passages from Wyclif : (1) "Faith is the foundation of religion

without which it is impossible to please God;" (2) "The first foundation of the virtues is faith;" and (3) "Since it is impossible for anyone to sin, unless he fails in faith."

Let us again refer to our friend Stitny, writing in the Czechish language in 1376:

The Scripture saith: Without faith it is impossible to please God; yea, it is impossible to build a house without a foundation; wherefore he who wants to have a firm house, must first lay a firm foundation. And if there is to be any fruit, it must first proceed from the root. And though the root is not beautiful, yet all beauty of the stem and all good fruit proceed from it. Likewise, if there were no faith, there would not be other things useful for salvation, neither without faith could other good things exist. For faith is the foundation and root of all that is good, even if it be not itself so conspicuous in its beauty; nay, neither hope nor love will exist without faith.

Does not this extract from Stitny exhibit at once Loserth's absurdity in tracing to Wyclif expressions used by Hus which clearly belong to the general stock of commonplaces of theology of the day, at any rate in Bohemia, if not elsewhere?¹

In the same page, Dr. Loserth says that Hus has likewise borrowed his definition of heresy from Wyclif. In proof of this, he cites from Wyclif's *Trialogus*, 379: "Let those foolish disciples of Antichrist know that every *dangerous* error in matter of faith is manifest heresy." From Hus's reply to the eight doctors (i. 305 b) he also quotes: "Heresy is a *dangerous* but very useful thing." In the first place this is a description, not a definition of heresy on the part of Hus. In the second place, Hus gives in his Bohemian treatise on Simony (*O svatokupectvi*) his real definition of heresy, viz.: "Heresy is the obstinate holding of error contrary to Holy Scripture." And thirdly, when I give the entire passage from which Loserth has excerpted a fragment, we shall see what a careless blunder he has made. This runs: "Heresy is a *dangerous* but very useful thing. *Dangerous*, because many are seduced by it and perish. Useful, because the faithful are tried by it and separated from the unfaithful." There is no similarity whatever between the passage cited from Wyclif and from Hus, except that the word "*dangerous*" occurs in each; neither is Hus giving a definition of heresy at all.

In p. 223 there is an unfortunate misprint in both the passages quoted from Wyclif and from Hus towards the end of the page, which makes nonsense of each of them. Hus in his *De Ecclesiâ*, cap. ix., fol. 209 b, is clearly adapting a passage

¹ Should any one desire further information as to Stitny, he will find it in my lectures on the "Native Literature of Bohemia in the fourteenth century," delivered before the University of Oxford on the Ilchester Foundation in 1877. The fourth lecture is entirely devoted to Stitny. (George Bell and Sons, 1878.)

from Wyclif's *De religionibus vanis monachorum*, but "*circa* Christum" is a misprint for "*citra* Christum" (*i.e.*, around Christ for *except* Christ), as I find by reference to p. 438 in the only volumes as yet issued by the Wyclif Society.

In pp. 254 and 255 Loserth endeavours to make out that Hus's little dissertation on the Lord's Prayer, composed in prison, was reasoned out by Hus "in manifest dependence upon Wyclif." "As Wyclif carries out the thought," says Loserth, "that this prayer excels all others, and that alike by virtue of its authority, since it proceeds from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as also because, notwithstanding its brevity, it includes within itself all other prayers, so also has Hus expressed himself in analogous language." Now, Hus wrote as follows:

The Lord's Prayer is to be chosen and said above all other prayers. Firstly, because the most affectionate of Fathers composed it for His sons, and the best of Masters for His scholars. Secondly, because everything that it is necessary for a man to ask for is contained implicitly in it. And thirdly, because it is brief. For the great Lord composed the prayer brief, that His servants might learn it quickly.

The passage cited from Wyclif is twice as long and very involved, and is really not worth the space which it would take up. I shall therefore merely quote the corresponding passage from Stitny's *Vyklad patere*, written in 1376:

There is nothing neglected in it, for Christ, Who is the true wisdom of God the Father, invented it. Therefore, in whatsoever language a man asks for aught in other prayers, he always asks only for that which is in the Lord's Prayer, even if he asks for two or three things together. And thus the Lord's Prayer is the rule of all prayers, and it becometh not a Christian to ask for other things which cannot be understood in the Lord's Prayer. Specially too did Christ make the Lord's Prayer brief, that no one, who had but understanding, might be unable to learn it, or not have time to chant it.

In this case the correspondence between the words of Hus and Stitny is very close, while that between those of Hus and Wyclif is very distant. Doubtless Hus was as well acquainted with the Bohemian writings of Stitny as with the Latin works of Wyclif.

I have by this time, I hope, made it plain, that in order to form a satisfactory estimate of Hus, it is necessary to be acquainted not only with Hus's Latin works and with those of Wyclif, but also with Hus's Bohemian works and with those of Stitny, who rendered it possible for Hus to appeal to his countrymen in their own language.

Loserth passes rapidly over Hus's trial and condemnation, which he does not consider to fall within the scope of his work. But when he tells us that "only deep in the background [of the flames of Constance] has been discerned since then likewise the shadow of that man for whose doctrine Hus

went to the stake—John de Wyclif," he ought not to have passed over the remarkable fact that Hus was not required to recant any definite propositions, but everything that was articulated against him, whether truly or falsely. Loserth considers that the assembled Fathers at Constance were guilty of a mistake in not treating Hus as already condemned in the condemnation of Wyclif. But Wyclif rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, which Hus unhesitatingly accepted, evidently believing it to be a genuine Church doctrine; and the importance attached to this doctrine was clearly sufficient to separate the two cases entirely. And although Hus may easily be proved non-Catholic, if tried by the standards of the subsequent Council of Trent, yet there was no really authoritative formula existing in his day which he denied or rejected. Try him by the then existing standards, and we may safely accept the judgment of Lechler, when he writes: "The question is only whether Hus was really convicted of a heresy. And to this we answer decidedly, No."

That Hus was thoroughly permeated with both the philosophy and theology of Wyclif, that his theology may be properly termed a "modified Wyclify," and that there is no such thing as a separate Hussite theology, are propositions which are fairly proved to demonstration by Dr. Loserth, although he apparently claims to have proved considerably more than this. But Hus's little works, composed in prison without the aid of books, show him to have been possessed of theological powers and attainments of no mean order; and certainly in his Bohemian writings he left behind him intellectual and spiritual influences which ere long pervaded all classes of society where the Czeskish language was spoken, and eventually rose up against and successfully withstood the whole power of Papacy and Empire. Yet, such is human nature, that after all it is scarcely probable that Wyclif and Hus together would have effected the mighty work that was effected, had not Jakaubek or Jacobellus, after Hus's departure for Constance, raised the standard of THE CHALICE at Prague, and demanded the concession of its use for the laity as well as the clergy. Intelligence of his proceedings was received by Hus, who well knew that they would more or less disintegrate his followers, with doubts and misgivings, and his assent was at first but reluctantly given to them on the ground of the absolute supremacy of Scripture. "Wyclify" in England had no such outward and visible sign. It decayed and all but perished in the land of its nativity; and thus it came to pass that Wyclif himself has only lately—and in this respect a great deal of credit is undoubtedly due to Dr. Loserth—obtained the due recognition of his great and material, or, I may

almost venture to say, dominating influence upon the successful Bohemian or Hussite movement.

A. H. WRATISLAW.



ART. III.—THE TRANSFIGURATION.

AT the triennial Convocation of the American Church, which assembled in Philadelphia on October 3rd, 1883, it was resolved, on the recommendation of the Committee on enlarging the Book of Common Prayer, to make an addition to the Calendar by the insertion of "The Transfiguration" as a festival of the first class, provided with its own proper Psalms. I cannot but think that it is to be regretted that the compilers of our Calendar, in their reasonable anxiety to diminish the burdensome number of holy days superstitiously observed before the Reformation, omitted the recognition of this festival of very ancient observance; inasmuch as the event in the life of our Lord which it commemorated is very important and interesting, and its teaching most profitable.

I propose to endeavour to substantiate this claim by inviting attention to the significance, purpose, and teaching of the scene recorded by the Evangelists, matters which, it may safely be said, have too little attention commonly paid to them by readers of the Gospel narrative. It must be "good for us to be" there, in thought, at the foot of the mountain; for, as Bishop Hall says, "Nearer to heaven ye cannot come, while ye are upon earth." May both writer and readers feel that they are on "holy ground," and that a reverent and cautious spirit alone befits such an investigation.

I. The Narrative.—The three Synoptic Gospels give us very precise and strictly harmonious accounts. It was six days before our Lord's declaration in the last verse of Matt. xvi., which is closely connected with Peter's good confession and subsequent rash and mistaken expostulation with his Master, that Jesus took with Him the favoured three—the inner circle of the Apostles, who were privileged to be His companions on other special occasions, notably at the scene of His deepest humiliation (in which the strongest contrast to the glory of the Transfiguration was presented) in Gethsemane—"and brought them up into an high mountain apart." He went there, as St. Luke, the Evangelist of the true humanity of our Lord, tells us, *to pray*—no unwonted practice with Him.

None of the Evangelists give us the name of "the mountain," or enable us with certainty to identify it. It is enough to remark that the traditionary Tabor is out of the question, since