

BEULAH HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY

LATE MIDDLE AGE THEOLOGY NEW SCHOOL THE CHRISTIANS

PROFESSOR: DR. A. PLANT

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENT OF

TH 602 HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT II

THERESA JOHNSON

ATLANTA GEORGIA

JUNE 20. 2020

DECLINE OF MIDDLE AGES THE GOLDEN PERIOD

During the time of Innocent III, it almost seemed that heaven had descended to earth. It was the time in which the great steeples of Gothic Cathedrals were raised to heaven. This was the time in which the inquisition was established, and Universities were developed. The decline began with Boniface ACE III, he was vigorously challenged by the emergent powerful monarchs of western Europe, especially Philip IV of France. John Duns Scotus, was a Scottish Catholic Priest and Franciscan Friar, University professor, Philosopher and Theologians. A key point of his was the Word of God did not become a creature, a human being because Adam and Eve sinned. Rather the divine word became flesh because of all. Eternity, God wanted Jesus Christ to be the creation's most perfect work. Christ was to be the model, and crown of creation, the most perfect work. Christ was to be the model and crown of creation and of humanity scotus set out to prove the existence of God on the basis of Metaphysics. There were many reasons for the downfall of the Middle Ages, but most crucial ones were the decline of the feudal system, and the declination of the church's power over the Nation - states

Conflict over power started when the Monarchs who resented Pope's interference had risen to power. Corruption of the clergy, such ideas destroyed confidence in many people's church goodness and their reverence of the church's authority.

Rising forerunners impacting Christian thought, John Wycliffe has been called "The morning star of the Reformation, darkness dominated the horizon in the fourteenth century, the century of Wycliffe, who was born in 1330 and died in 1384, almost exactly one hundred years before Luther was born. By his teenage years, Wycliffe was at Oxford, Thomas Bradwardine (known as "Doctor profundus") taught Theology and William of Ockham (famous for "Ockham's Razor") taught Philosophy. Before long, wycliffe took his own place among the faculty. Appointed the

master of Balliol College, Wycliffe lectured and wrote in the field of Philosophy. But the tugs of Biblical studies pull on him. He applied himself rigorously to the study of Theology and Scripture. As he did he realized how much the church veered off in so many wrong directions. In the 1370's, he produced three significant works as countermeasures to the church's corruption.

In the 1370's, he produced three significant works as countermeasures to the church's corruption. The first one, *On Divine Dominion* (1373-1374), took aim at Papal authority. Wycliffe was at a loss to find a Biblical warrant for the Papacy. In fact, he argued that Wycliffe was at loss to find a Biblical warrant for the Papacy. In fact, he argued that the papacy conflicts with and obscures the church's true authority, scripture. The second major work was *Civil Dominion* (1375-1376). Here Wycliffe targeted the Roman Catholic Church's assertion of authority over the English crown and English Nobility. He saw no reason for England to be obliged to support a corrupt church. In his third major work, *on the truth of sacred scripture* (1378), he further developed the doctrine of authority of scripture. These three works were crucial to setting the Wycliffe's writings to their home city of Prague, which in turn influenced Jan Hus.

He would go on to be a second "Morning Star" of the reformation. Martin Luther's early writing reveals the fingerprints of John Wycliffe. Yet, as important as these works are, they pale in comparison to his most important contribution, *The Wycliffe Bible*. Reformation began with the translation. In *On the truth of sacred scripture*, Wycliffe called for the Bible to be translated into English. According to Roman Catholic Laws, translating the Bible into a vulgar, common language was a Heresy punishable by death. It is almost impossible to imagine why a church would want to keep God's Word from people, unless that church wanted to hold power over the people. Wycliffe was more convinced of the power of the Word of God than the power wielded by the Papal office. Consequently, he and a group of colleagues committed themselves to making the Word of God available.

Not only did the Bible need to be translated; it also had to be copied and distributed. This was before the printing press (invented in 1440), so copies had to be made painstakingly by hand. Despite the challenges, hundreds of the Bible were produced and distributed to Wycliffe's troop of pastors, who preached across England as the Word of God Lollards. They were enclaves of reform not in England, but across Europe. These efforts in translating, copying and proclaiming the Bible in English was driven by a singular motive, expressed by Wycliffe this way: "It helps Christian men to study the gospel in that tongue which they know best. In his final years, Wycliffe endured falling out of favor with the church and nobility of England. Of course, he had long ago fallen out of favor with the pope. Yet, Wycliffe declared, "I am ready to defend my convictions even unto death." He remained convinced of the authority centrality of scripture and devoted to his life's calling to help Christians study the Bible. Having suffered two strokes, John Wycliffe died on December 30, 1384.

John Hus was a preacher in the chapel of The Holy Innocents of Bethlehem, in Prague, and rector of The University of the city. He was deeply influenced by Wycliffe's writings, and sought reformation in ways similar to those of the English scholar. Since at that time there was considerable Anti-German Sentiment in Bohemia. The anti-German Sentiment did two things. First, it motivated Anglo-American to push back against anything German. States banned German Language Schools and removed German books from libraries. German-Americans began to change their names to English sounding ones renamed streets and only spoke German in private.

Hus became the symbol of that sentiment; Political considerations were not entirely alien to the course of this new movement as indeed they had not been alien to Wycliffe and the final outcome of his movement. John Hus led one of the first movements for independence from the established Christian church. After a long struggle of trying to defend his views. Hus was

summoned to appear before the council of Constance, and to that end was granted a safe-conduct by Emperor Sigismund. But in spite of that safe-conduct, and partly through the intervention of such otherwise notable reformers as Pierre d'Ailly and Jean de Gerson, Hus was condemned by the council and burned at the stake.

The Italian religious reformer Savonarola became dictator of Florence in the 1490s and instituted there, in the middle of the Renaissance, a regime of purity and asceticism. Asceticism is defined as a severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons. After the overthrow of the Medici in 1494, Savonarola was the sole leader of Florence, setting up a democratic republic. His chief enemies were the Duke of Milan and Pope Alexander VI, who issued numerous restraints against him, all of which were ignored. He was educated by his paternal grandfather, Michele, a celebrated doctor and a man of rigid moral and religious principles. From this elderly scholar, whose own education was of the 14th century, Savonarola may have received a certain medieval influence.

In his early poetry and other adolescent writing the main characteristics of the future reformer are seen. Even at the early date, as he wrote in a letter to his father, he could not suffer "The blind wickedness of the people of Italy." He found unbearable the humanistic paganism that corrupted manners, art, poetry, and religion itself. He saw as the cause of this spreading corruption a clergy vicious even in the highest levels of the church hierarchy. In his early poetry and other adolescent writings the main characteristics of the future reformer are seen. Even at that early date, as he wrote in a letter to his father, he could not suffer "The blind wickedness of the people of Italy." He found unbearable the humanistic paganism that corrupted manners, art, poetry, and religion itself. He saw as the cause of this spreading corruption a clergy vicious even in the highest levels of the church hierarchy.

Savonarola interests us here as proof that even in Italy, where the Renaissance was taking a turn toward a revival of ancient pagan art and toward an emphasis on aesthetics over religion, there was sufficient concern for religious reform to make possible the repeated "Burnings of Vanities" what was burned in the bonfire of the vanities? In 1497, the bonfire took place in Florence, Italy, as supporters of the dominican Priest Girolamo Savonarola burned thousands of objects deemed to be associated with vanity, temptation, and sin. Artworks, books, cosmetics, dresses, mirrors, musical instruments and much more were burned. If one were to turn to Spain, Poland, or any other section of Latin Christendom, one would find there the same search for renewed spiritual life. It was this search that would eventually lead to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century and to the Catholic movement usually known as the counter - Reformation.

REFERENCE

Cairns, E.E. (1996). Christianity Through The Centuries 3rd Ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Conciliarism. (2020, February 15). Retrieved <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?Q=Conciliarism>

Gonzalez, J.L. (1987). The History of Christian Thought Revised Ed. Vol-1-3, TN:Abingdon Press

Gottfried, P. (1999). William of Ockham. World & 1 14 (2), 20.

Nominal. (2020, February 20). Retrieved, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nominal>

Nominal. (2020, February 20). Retrieved <http://www.britannica.com/topic/nominalism>

Nominal. (2020, February 20). Retrieved,

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?Q=nominalism&docid=608001956551789455&mid=cced61C63093F9CCed61C>