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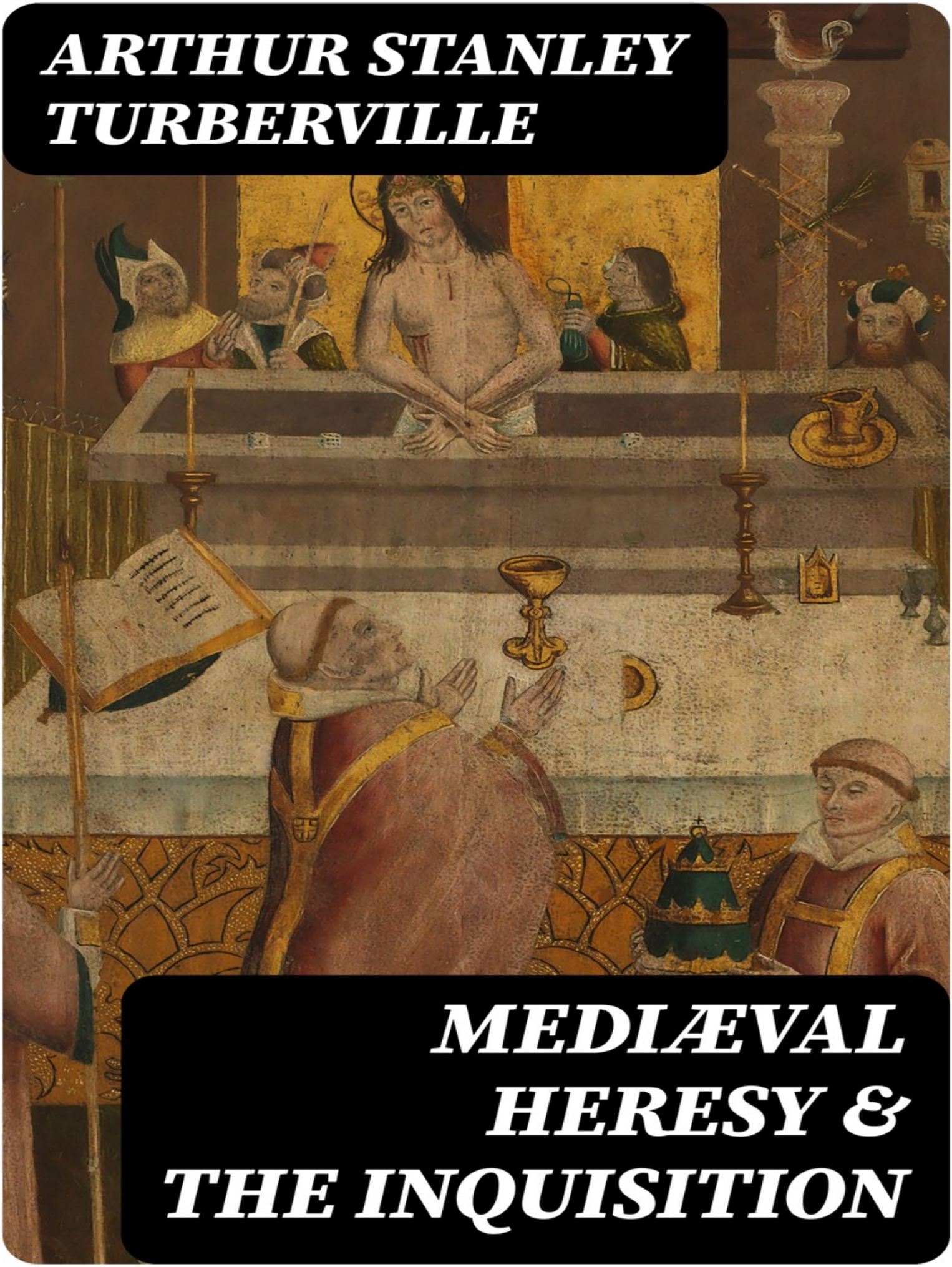

MEDIÆVAL HERESY & THE INQUISITION

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Mediæval Heresy & the Inquisition

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PREFACE

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The aim of this book is to provide, within a short space, and primarily for the general reader, an account of the heresies of the Middle Ages and of the attitude of the Church towards them. The book is, therefore, a brief essay in the history not only of dogma, but, inasmuch as it is concerned with the repression of heresy by means of the Inquisition, of judicature also. The ground covered is the *terrain* of H. C. Lea's immense work, 'A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages'; but that was published more than thirty years ago, and since then much has been written, though not indeed much in English, on the mediæval Inquisition and cognate subjects. As the present work has been undertaken in the light of some of these more recent investigations, it is hoped that it may be of utility to rather closer students, as well as to the general reader, as a review of the subject suggested by the writings of Lea's successors, both partizans and critics. At the same time this book does not profess to be a history, even the briefest, of the mediæval Inquisition. Its main concern is with doctrine, and for that reason chapters on Averrhoïsm and on Wyclifitism and Husitism have been included, though they have little bearing on the Inquisition.

The entire subject, on both its sides, is complex and highly controversial. Probably no conceivable treatment of it could commend itself to all tastes, be accepted as impartial by the adherents of all types of religious belief. It can, however, at least be claimed that this work was begun with

no other object in view than honest enquiry, with no desire whatever to demonstrate a preconceived thesis or draw attention to a particular aspect of truth. The conclusion arrived at in these pages is, that the traditional ultra-Protestant conception of ecclesiastical intolerance forcing a policy of persecution on an unwilling or indifferent laity in the Middle Ages is unhistorical, while, on the other hand, some recent Catholic apologists, in seeking to exculpate the Church, have tended to underestimate the power and influence of the Church, and to read into the Middle Ages a humanitarianism which did not actually then exist. Heresy was persecuted because it was regarded as dangerous to society, and intolerance was therefore the reflection, not only of the ecclesiastical authority, but of public opinion. On the other hand, clerical instruction had a large formative influence in the creation of public opinion.

This book inevitably suffered a prolonged interruption owing to the War. That there was not a complete cessation at once I owe to my Father, who most ungrudgingly devoted valuable time to making transcriptions from needed authorities in the British Museum, at a time when other duties debarred me from access to books. My friend and former colleague, Mr. W. Garmon Jones, Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Liverpool, gave me the benefit of his ripe scholarship and fine judgment in reading through the greater part of the work in manuscript, though I need hardly say that any errors in statement or opinion are to be attributed to me alone. I have to thank the Rev. T. Shankland of this College for generously undertaking the

thankless task of reading the proofs, and my Wife for the compilation of the Index and for other help besides.

A. S. TURBERVILLE.

BANGOR, *April*, 1920.

PART I - HERESY

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CHAPTER I - ORIGINS OF MEDIÆVAL HERESY

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Ages of Faith—the term has often enough been applied to the long era that separates the days of the Carolingian empire from those of the Italian Renaissance. Like most of the other generalizations that it is customary to make of the Middle Ages the statement is true only with important qualifications. It is with the qualifications that this book is concerned. But to appreciate the exceptions, it is first necessary to realize the full significance of the rule—the very pregnant reality concerning Church and State upon which the general statement is based. That reality, the understanding of which is essential to a grasp, not only of the ecclesiastical, but of any aspect of mediæval history, is the magnificent conception of the *Civitas Dei*. The Kingdom of God on earth was conceived, not as a vision of the future, but as a living and present reality—the Visible Church, Christendom. Church and Christendom were one, for the Church was catholic. The distinction which we of the modern world, as the Renaissance and Reformation have made it, are wont to make between Church and State, spiritual and temporal, was wholly foreign to mediæval thought. There was but one society, not two parallel societies. Society had indeed two aspects—one which looked to things mundane and transient, the other which looked to things heavenly

and eternal. To safeguard its earthly interests the world had its secular rulers and administrators; to aid its spiritual life it had as guides and mediators the sacred hierarchy. But the secular rulers, on the one hand, and the priesthood, on the other, were officers in the same polity. The secular authority of the Empire was in the days of Frederick Barbarossa acknowledged to be derived from the Pope by consecration; later, as in Dante, it was conceived as collateral with that of the Pope. But always the two authorities were regarded as essentially related. It is true that the reality never corresponded with the august theory, that the *Respublica Christiana* never was universal, that there were always those who disputed the authority of Emperor or Pontiff or both; worse still, that Christendom was distracted by bitter strife between Emperor and Pontiff. But always such warfare was regarded as domestic, not one between two different states, but between two officers in one state.

It is important to bear in mind that the conception of the universal church and empire was not regarded simply as an idea which the philosopher and the publicist wrote and disputed about, but as manifest in facts, which every eye could see and every mind realize. There actually existed an empire, an imperial crown and coronation; there actually existed a Holy See and a ministering priesthood. And the authority of the rulers of the universal state was not simply vague and theoretical; it was discernible in crusades, in pilgrimages, in the ‘Truce of God.’ Men realized themselves no doubt in an ever increasing degree through the Middle Ages, national characteristics becoming more and more pronounced, as Englishmen, Frenchmen or Spaniards; but

they also thought of themselves quite naturally as members together of the common society of Christendom.[1]

If we comprehend the *oneness* of human society in the Middle Ages, as actively believed in by the average thinking man and unquestioningly accepted as a patent fact by the average uneducated man, we can realize what is meant by the phrase ‘ages of faith’ and at the same time avoid some of the pitfalls that lie in the path of any one seeking to study the exceptions to the rule, namely, the heresies of these ages of faith.

What were the conditions that generated heresy? First, there were psychological conditions. In contrast to the bustling and multiform activity of the modern world the Middle Ages may at a first glance give an impression of inactivity and sameness. Such an impression, if it is encouraged by the intellectual dormancy of the ninth and tenth and, in some degree, of the eleventh centuries, is completely at variance with the facts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in which the mind of Western Christendom was very much awake indeed. The impression also ignores what is one of the most marked characteristics of mediæval history as a whole—the clash and conflict and the dissonances of it. While the idea of the universal empire still held sway, secular princes, pursuing purely separatist ambitions, made war one upon another and the nations of Europe were in the throes of parturition. Typical of the incongruities of mediæval life was the glaring contrast between the glorious minster and the mean and filthy hovels round it to be seen in every city; but that there was incongruity in spending immense wealth, time and labour

on building a house for God to dwell in, while housing themselves in dwellings rude and insanitary was not apparent to the occupants. There was another incongruity inside the churches themselves. Together with images that were sacred and beautiful there were hideous gargoyles, grotesque figures, whose inspiration was not Christian but pagan. Congregated together were saints and satyrs, and Pan is found in company with Christ. Art was made the handmaiden of religion: that did not mean that she was wholly consecrated. St. Bernard complained that the eyes of monks as they walked round their cloisters were too often assailed by pictures which could only awaken thoughts unsanctified. If the first of these two discords is eloquent of the faith which set the worship of God far before the common needs of men, the second is indicative of that alien spirit, untamed and powerful, which fights against the higher nature and the devoted life. From rebellious nature sprang all manner of unholy lusts and ambitions, productive of wars and enmities and other kinds of evil, which rendered the reality of human existence so divergent from the Christian ideal. But Christianity accepted these inevitable consequences of original sin, providing through repentance and penance reconciliation and the possibility of amendment. In the elemental passions, however, the Church found itself faced by a problem which presents one of the most interesting features of the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages.

It is ever a hard task to expel nature, and often, where she has been renounced and thwarted, she has her revenge by returning, clothed in her grossest forms. The literature of

the Thebaid and of mediæval hagiology is eloquent testimony to the fact that extreme asceticism and extreme profligacy are often found in close proximity. The fugitive from the insurgent passions of his own being, seeking to overcome the temptations of the flesh by severe macerations and scourgings, has only too often found his voluntary existence of self-discipline intolerable without the relief of an occasional wild debauch or has found that in his savage attempt to subdue the senses he has come to take a sensual delight in self-torture and that he is falling into the lowest depths of bestiality. The very fervour of religious zeal in the Middle Ages is a token of the fierceness of the passionate fires that tortured men's hearts. It was always doubtful what outlet these fires would find. Would they glorify God in the martyrdom of the lower nature or would they rage untamed, flames solely of desire, destroying the soul? Was it a pure religious passion or a depraved sensual passion that, when the Albigensian Crusade was being preached in Germany, drove women who could not take the cross to run naked through the streets in ecstasy? Which was it that was really evidenced by the practices of the Flagellants, who at one time obtained considerable influence in different parts of Europe? They were simply doing in public what the monk did in seclusion and in the perfect odour of sanctity. The idea of bringing the soul nearer to God by the wounding of the sinful flesh had the Church's fullest sanction. Yet the Flagellants were eventually declared heretics. Why? Because it became plain after a time that the motive of some of those who joined the sect was unholy—not a desire to seek salvation, but only a

perverted lust. Secondly, because alike the genuine and the false devotee were moved in the excess of their strange enthusiasm to build upon it a theory of the efficacy of flagellation which made it the only means to salvation, a sacrament, indeed the essential sacrament.

In yet another way the unregenerate part of man's nature might breed heresy. The lust not perhaps of the flesh so much as of the eye and the pride of life led men to take a delight in pleasure, in the sensuous pagan world, that was not a wholly hallowed delight. Such superabundant joy in life was apt to produce over-confidence in the individual's powers unaided by religion, leading to presumption and disobedience. The phenomenon of such rebelliousness in the later Middle Ages is sometimes forgotten. Yet the legends of the blossoming pastoral staff and of the Holy Grail pictured also the Venusberg and the garden of Kundry's flower-maidens. In remembering the figures of the anchorite and the knight-errant one must not lose sight of the troubadour and the courtesan. Eloquent of the movement of revolt is the famous passage in 'Aucassin et Nicolette' in which Aucassin, threatened with the pains of hell if he persists in his love for the mysterious southern maid, exclaims that in that case to hell he will go.

> For none go to Paradise but I'll tell you who. Your old priests and your old cripples, and the halt and maimed, who are down on their knees day and night, before altars and in old crypts; these also that wear mangy old cloaks, or go in rags and tatters, shivering and shoeless and showing their sores, and who die of hunger and want and misery. Such are they who go to Paradise; and

> what have I to do with them? Hell is the place for me. For to Hell go the fine churchmen, and the fine knights, killed in the tourney or in some grand war, the brave soldiers and the gallant gentlemen. With them will I go. There go also the fair gracious ladies who have lovers two or three beside their lord. There go the gold and silver, the sables and the ermines. There go the harpers and the minstrels and the kings of the earth. With them will I go, so I have Nicolette my most sweet friend with me.[2]

Comparable with the fearless scepticism of this romance is the outspoken unorthodoxy produced by the intellectual ferment of the twelfth century. That epoch which saw the new movement of monastic reform which gave birth to the order of Grammont, of the Carthusians and the Cistercians, is most notable in the history of the universities—of Paris, Oxford, Bologna. From one to another, from the feet of one learned doctor and teacher to another, flocked wandering scholars athirst for pure knowledge which, if it had a theological bias and a religious garb, nevertheless inevitably tended to produce a spirit of rationalism, to substitute freedom for discipline, the individual consciousness for authority. The philosophy of the day—the Scholastic Philosophy—sprang from the concentration of the thought of theologians trained in logic on the question of the relation between the individual unit and the universal, the εἶδος: for if the Middle Ages knew little of Plato they were conversant with his doctrine of ideas. The scholastic philosophers are remarkable for their great erudition within the limitation of contemporary knowledge: but still more for the extreme

acuteness and subtlety which came from their dialectical training. Such subtlety might at times be no better than verbal juggling; but it always indicated alertness of mind. Such intellectual nimbleness was generally at the service of the Church, to elucidate doctrine, uphold and defend the Catholic faith. On the other hand, the curious mind, even when starting with the most innocent, most orthodox intent, was sometimes beguiled into surmises and speculations of a dangerous nature. Logic, if untrammelled, has a way of leading to untraditional conclusions. When this happened it was possible to escape from an awkward dilemma by submitting that philosophy was one thing, theology another, and that there could be two truths, in the two different planes, subsisting together though mutually contradictory. But this convenient compromise was obviously only a pious subterfuge and grotesquely illogical. Unfortunately both of the two principal schools of thought were prone to lead to error. Realism, which found reality in the universal substance, subordinating the individual to humanity and humanity to the Godhead, logically led to Pantheism; while Nominalism, finding reality solely in each disjointed unit, if applied to theology, left no choice except between Unitarianism and Tritheism. In the year 1092 a nominalist philosopher Roscellinus was condemned at Soissons for teaching Tritheism and denying the Trinity. Another nominalist, Berengar of Tours, skilfully dissected the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which had grown up in its grossest form during the Dark Ages and was first really developed in an answer to Berengar by Anselm of Bec. There was a greater than either Roscellinus or Berengar,

who was neither a nominalist nor a realist, but a conceptualist, the greatest of all the wandering scholars of his time, gifted with extraordinary vividness of personality and brilliance of intellect. Abelard's love story in the world of actual fact is as wonderful as that of Aucassin in the world of romance. His teaching has the same note of freedom and fearlessness as that which sounds so clear in the old French story. There was nothing very alarming in his doctrines; his conclusions were generally orthodox enough. It was the methods by which he arrived at those conclusions that aroused the fear and the wrath of his adversaries. For he put Christian dogma to the touchstone of reason, accepting it because it was reasonable, not following reason just as far as it was Christian. To St. Bernard, Abelard appeared as a virulent plague-spot, a second Arius. But there were coming other heresies of a more disturbing nature, for the source of whose influence if not inspiration we must seek among facts of a different character.

Though their extent is certainly a matter of dispute, there is no doubt about the fact of serious clerical abuses in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There is no need here to trench upon contentious ground; and it should be said that when a catalogue of offences is produced as a picture of the mediæval church without giving the other side of the picture, only a most erroneous impression can be created. There was extraordinary greatness in a church that could produce a St. Bernard, a St. Francis, an Anselm, a Grosseteste. Yet even if we leave out of account the invectives of professed enemies altogether and only rely upon the unimpeachable authority of the Church's leaders

themselves, we are left with rather a dark picture. We must remember that would-be reformers are prone to indulge in highly coloured language with reference to the evils they seek to eradicate. Yet, simony must have been a crying abuse, or it would not have received so much attention from zealous pontiffs. We know too of many bishops who neglected their spiritual duties and were nothing more than feudal barons, sometimes fattening upon riches amassed by extortion. It cannot be denied that there were numerous instances of absenteeism and pluralities; while for the sexual immorality to be found among both regular and secular clergy we have the excellent authority of great men who were scandalized by it and sought to produce amendment, such as Honorius III, St. Bernard and Bishop Grosseteste. Monastic reforms had been tried, the Cluniac being followed by the Cistercian and others of a like severity. A fine attempt had been made to assist the endeavour of the parish priest to strive after personal holiness by the institution of the orders of the Praemonstratensians and the Austin Friars. And much good was unquestionably accomplished; yet order after order eventually fell away from its pristine purity and the seed of corruption remained uneradicated. At the very least, we can say that most men must have had from personal experience knowledge of some glaring contrast between clerical profession and accomplishment. That some such contrast should at all times in greater or less degree exist is only the inevitable result of the weaknesses of human nature. It has invariably been the case, however, that when the ministers of a religion have failed to proclaim their gospel in their lives

as well as in their preaching, they have sowed doubt and distrust and lost adherents.

Bishop Grosseteste told Pope Innocent IV that the corruption of the priesthood was the source of the heresies which troubled the Church.3 We may feel sure that it was *one* source at all events when we note in the twelfth century a most marked revival of the Donatist doctrine that the sacrament is polluted in sinful hands. By similar reasoning the score of a great composer might be regarded as tainted for our hearing because the members of the orchestra performing it were not all high-minded men. That would be similar reasoning: but it would not be the same. Skill in his art is what we expect from the musician; without it he cannot mediate between the composer and his audience, he cannot interpret the music, he can only jar and lacerate the feelings of his hearers. There is the skill also of the priest. He has to interpret spiritual things and needs therefore to be spiritually-minded. God may not be dependent upon the worthiness of His interpreters; none the less their unworthiness may jar upon and lacerate the feelings of worshippers, conscious of the scandal of such unworthiness. When, for example, priests are found abusing the confessional by actually soliciting their female penitents to sin, a moral revulsion against such a practice is inevitable. Such a revulsion may in some cases generate an attack upon the whole system of confession—and that is heresy.4

An intense dissatisfaction with the moral condition of the world, more especially as revealed in the Church, is one of the dominant features of the neo-Manichæan heresy, known as Catharism or Paulicinianism, of Waldensianism, of

Joachitism. The last actually postulated that Christianity had failed and that mankind stood in need of a new revelation and a new Saviour. Corruption in the Church was, then, one of the contributory causes of mediæval heresy, and anti-sacerdotalism was one of its features.

It must not be assumed, however, that because heretical sects protested against scandals in the Church, they necessarily exhibited a higher standard of morality themselves. The reverse is in some cases the truth. Among the heresiarchs and their followers are found men who were mere half-crazed fanatics, others whose passion was more of lust than for righteousness. We have to bear in mind that our knowledge of the heretics is almost entirely derived from their adversaries; unbiased contemporary testimony there is none. Yet, even remembering this, we can appreciate the repugnance which many heretical sects inspired in their own day. In the second place, the Church was itself alive to the need of reform. The best minds always were; and to all the outbreak of heresies in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though it was so ruthlessly and thoroughly suppressed, was a significant warning. Unhappily the abuses actually tended to increase in the fourteenth century, and the papacy in particular lost heavily in moral and spiritual authority when it allowed itself to become the mere catspaw of the French monarchy at Avignon, when it became rent asunder by the even greater disaster of the Schism.

But the task of the Church in reforming itself was one of very great difficulty. It was essential in purifying conduct to take the utmost precautions against adulterating the purity

of the faith, in reforming the papacy to maintain the fundamental continuity of the Church, of its orders, its sacraments, its traditions. Individual would-be reformers were carried away by their perfervid zeal, led into proposing the most unheard-of innovations. Wycliffe actually demanded the sweeping away of the higher orders of the priesthood and the monastic orders as a condition of the suppression of corruption. Such theories were clearly heretical, and it was no solvent of the spiritual troubles of the Church to weaken it still further by making concessions to revolutionaries, by invalidating sound doctrine. Such was the point of view of moderate reformers like Gerson, D'Ailly, Niem—men perhaps just as earnest as Wycliffe and Hus in their desire for purity, but anxious, as these were not, for the preservation of the Catholic faith untouched. And it is easy to understand the position they adopted. The general conditions of their time, political and social as well as religious, made a strong appeal to the conservative instinct. England and France were both suffering from the havoc of the Hundred Years War. There was schism in the empire as well as in the papacy. The terrible scourge of the Black Death laid all countries low. Social unrest was widespread and alarming. Vagrant, masterless men devoured with avidity any doctrines of a communist saviour, and to such the Wycliffite thesis of dominion founded on grace had an obvious and dangerous attractiveness. Just as in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so now in the case of Wycliffitism and Husitism, heresy was regarded not as a purely religious matter, but also as a social danger. Another phenomenon which conservatives naturally viewed with misgiving was

early translations of the Scriptures into the vernacular. Parallel to the peril of revolution from social ideas among the servile classes of the community was that of the ‘open’ Bible among the ignorant, uninstructed laity. For many reasons, then, the conservatives were prompted to be cautious. Their heroic attempt to secure reform from within —made in the great Conciliar movement—definitely failed. It failed in the main because it was not sufficiently drastic, and because, while it healed the Schism, it did not secure the moral elevation of the papacy. The Council of Basel proposed the most elaborate measures for reform; but they were never confirmed by the papacy. The loftiest aspirations were represented within the Church. They had always been. The Canon law had been clear and unequivocal enough on the subject of clerical conduct. The difficulty lay in making these aspirations, reflected alike in the Canon law and in the proposals of the Councils, thoroughly effective.

The history of mediæval heresy takes us as far as the Conciliar movement. There we stand on the threshold of the modern world, the scene changes, with new actors and a new atmosphere. The Protestant Reformation is much more familiar than the earlier movements. Yet the subject of these is one of great and manifold interest. For the heresies of the Middle Ages were of various types and arose from a variety of causes. Broadly speaking, we may say that any circumstances which tended to break up the unity of the *Civitas Dei*, whether in the sphere of action or of theory, might be productive of heresy. That is obviously a very rough generalization indeed; but only broad generalization can include such diverse sources of heresy as the

obsessions of fanatics like Eon de l'Etoile and Dolcino, the dialectical disputations of theologians like Roscellinus and philosophers like Siger, the anti-sacerdotalism of Waldenses and Cathari, the profounder searchings of heart and mind that inspired the revolts of Wycliffe and Hus. Nor must we forget the influence of the political factor, the contention between papacy and secular princes regarding rights and jurisdiction, which was a potent encouragement to controversy. Such strife, where in theory there should have been complete harmony, was in itself productive of doubt and unsettlement. The very heinousness of heresy to the mediæval mind lay largely in its challenge to the essential social, ecclesiastical, doctrinal unity of Christendom. Whether the springs of its being were an emotional afflatus, a moral revulsion, or an intellectual ferment, heresy was in any case a challenge to the existing order. Its adherents were always a comparatively small and unpopular minority. Society as a whole regarded it as dangerous and was convinced of the necessity of its repression. By far the most important, as it is the most notorious, instrument devised for the repression of heresy in the Middle Ages was the tribunal of the Inquisition.5

CHAPTER II - WALDENSES AND CATHARI

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In the year 1108 there appeared in Antwerp a certain eloquent zealot named Tanchelm. Apparently there existed in Antwerp only one priest, and he was living in

concubinage. In these circumstances the enthusiast easily obtained a remarkable influence in the city, as he had already done in the surrounding Flanders country. His preaching was anti-sacerdotal, and he maintained the Donatist doctrine concerning the Sacrament. He declared indeed that owing to the degeneracy of the clergy the sacraments had become useless, even harmful, the authority of the Church had vanished. He is also credited with having given himself out to be of divine nature, the equal of Christ, with having celebrated his nuptials with the Virgin Mary, with having been guilty of vile promiscuous excesses, with having made such claims as that the ground on which he trod was holy and that if sick persons drank of water in which he had bathed they would be cured. We need not necessarily take these stories seriously. Our knowledge of Tanchelm and his followers is derived mainly from St. Norbert, Archbishop of Magdeburg and founder of the Praemonstratensian order, who after the leader’s death undertook the task of winning back his followers to the true faith. The evidence comes, as usual in these cases, entirely from hostile sources, and may easily be based on credulous gossip. Certain it does, however, appear to be that the man succeeded in obtaining a remarkable influence, surrounding himself with a bodyguard of 300 men and making himself a power and even a terror throughout the neighbourhood. That he cannot have regarded himself as an apostate is clear from his having paid a visit to Rome in 1112 on the question of the division of the bishopric of Utrecht. On the way back he was, together with his followers, seized by the Archbishop of Cologne. Three of the disciples were burned

at Bonn; he himself escaped, to be killed three years later by a clout on the head administered by an avenging priest.6

Somewhat similar to Tanchelm, but indubitably a madman, was Eudo or Eon de l'Etoile, who created trouble a little later on in Brittany, declaring himself to be the son of God. The madman had convinced himself of his divine origin from reading a special reference to himself in the words: 'Per *eum* qui venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos.' Eon, in virtue of this high claim, plundered churches and monasteries, giving their property to the poor, nominated angels and apostles and ordained bishops. It is not easy to be certain as to the extent of his influence; for it is not possible to tell whether there was any direct connection between him and a sect who were spread abroad in Brittany about the same time, 1145-8, but were connected with others calling themselves Apostolic Brethren who, having their headquarters within the diocese of Châlons, were found in most of the northern provinces of France, their main tenets being that baptism before the age of thirty, at which Christ Himself was baptized, was useless, that there was no resurrection of the body, that property, meat and wine were to be adjured.7

Of much more serious consequence than either of these two fanatics was Arnold of Brescia, who, a pupil of the errant Abelard and accused of sharing his master's heterodoxies, was proclaiming a much more inconvenient heresy when he invoked the ancient republican ideals of the city of Rome, maintaining that the papal authority within the city was an usurpation; and indeed that the whole temporal power of the papacy and all the temporal concerns of the Church as a

whole were an usurpation—so that his crusade in Rome involved a larger crusade against the alleged secularism, wealth and worldliness of the clergy.8 After his death, there remained a certain obscure sect of Arnoldists, calling themselves ‘Poor Men,’ a devoted unworldliness their gospel, who no doubt provided a receptive organism in which the later culture of Waldensianism might thrive.

But it was neither in the Low Countries and northern France nor in Italy that heresy was first recognized as a formidable menace. The danger came from southern France, particularly from Provence, from the country of the *langue d’oc*. In the fertile and beautiful territories of the Counts of Toulouse, between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, a land altogether distinct from the rest of France, where there was a vernacular language and literature much earlier than elsewhere in Europe, there existed a civilization unique, vivid and luxuriant. It was distinctive in that it was not in inspiration and essential character Catholic, for it owed much to intercourse with the Moors from across the Pyrenees, whose trade, whose special knowledge and skill, in particular medical skill, were welcomed there. The population was itself of mixed origin, having in it even Saracenic elements. This Provençal country, peculiar in Christendom, was pre-eminently the land of chivalry, of the troubadour, of romance and poetry and the adventures of love, of all the grace and mirth and joyousness that were in the Middle Ages. Clearly the atmosphere was not religious, the Church had little influence and the priesthood were disliked and despised. It was an atmosphere in which any anti-sacerdotal heresy might flourish.

In this country there was preaching early in the twelfth century a certain Pierre de Bruys, denouncing infant baptism, image-worship, the Real Presence in the Sacrament, the veneration of the Cross. He declared indeed that the Cross—simply the piece of wood on which the Saviour was tortured—should be regarded as an object rather of execration than of veneration. As nothing save the individual's own faith could help him, vain and useless were churches and prayers and masses for the dead. No symbol had efficacy; only personal righteousness. Pierre de Bruys was burnt, but a small sect of Petrobrusians survived him for several years, their heresies being dissected by Peter the Venerable of Cluny.9

Much more numerous and more troublesome than the Petrobrusians were the followers of Henry, a monk of Lausanne, of whose original doctrines little is known save that he rejected the invocation of saints and preached an ascetic doctrine, with which was inevitably associated a denunciation of worldliness among the clergy. Later on he became more venturesome, rejecting the Sacrament and avowing many of the tenets of Pierre de Bruys. So successful was his teaching in the south of France that St. Bernard was wellnigh in despair. Christianity seemed almost banished out of Languedoc. With fiery zeal Bernard threw himself into the work of reclamation, and apparently met with much success, the refusal of Henry of Lausanne to meet him in a disputation going a long way to discredit his influence. His sect survived his death, the nature of which is uncertain. It is possible that the Apostolic Brethren found in

Brittany and elsewhere in France, if they were not connected with Eon de l'Etoile, were really Henricians.[10]

The chief interest of the heresies so far mentioned is the indication they afford of the potential popularity of any anti-sacerdotal propaganda. Apart from the crusade of Arnold of Brescia, which had a special significance of its own belonging less to the history of dogma than of politics, none of the movements had within them the power of inspiration and sincerity to make them of permanent influence and importance. It was otherwise with the movement set on foot by Peter Waldo, a wealthy merchant of Lyons, uncultured and unlearned, but filled with an intense zeal for the Scriptures and for the rule of genuine godliness. From diligent study of the New Testament and the Fathers he came to the conclusion that the laws of Christ were nowhere strictly obeyed. Resolved to live a Christ-like life himself, he gave part of his property to his wife and distributed the proceeds of the remainder among the poor. He then started to preach the gospel in the streets, and soon attracted admirers and adherents, who joined him in preaching in private houses, public places and churches. As priests had been very neglectful of that part of their duty, the preaching apparently had something of the charm of novelty.

The small band, adopting the garb as well as the reality of poverty, came to be known as the Poor Men of Lyons. At first their ministrations were approved, and even when the Archbishop of Lyons prohibited their preaching and excommunicated them, the Pope, Alexander III, appealed to by Waldo, gave his benediction to his vow of poverty and expressly sanctioned the preaching of himself and his

followers, provided they had the permission of the priests. This proviso, however, in time came to be disregarded, and the Poor Men, becoming more and more embittered in their denunciation of clerical abuses, began to mingle erroneous doctrines with their anti-sacerdotalism. The clergy, who naturally resented the onslaught upon their alleged shortcomings, resented also the usurpation of the function of preaching. It was not difficult to maintain that such usurpation was itself indicative of heresy. Richard, monk of Cluny, writing against the Waldenses near the close of the century, while admitting the merit of the rich man in voluntarily embracing poverty, on the other hand found that Waldo read the Scriptures with little understanding, that he was proud in his own conceit, and possessing a little learning assumed to himself and usurped the office of the Apostles, preaching the Gospel in the streets and squares. He caused many men and women to become his accomplices in a like presumption, whom he sent to preach as his disciples. They being simple and illiterate people, traversing the village and entering into the houses, spread everywhere many errors.11

That they were a heretical sect and no part of the true Church is demonstrated by Moneta, the chief authority on Waldensianism, from the question of orders. Who gave the Poor Men of Lyons their orders, without which there can be no Christian Church? No one but Waldo himself! From whom did Waldo obtain them? No one. Waldo ‘glorified himself to be a bishop; in consequence he was an antichrist, against Christ and His Church.’12 From preaching it was an easy transition to hearing confessions, absolving sins, enjoining

penances. The Poor Men came eventually to undertake all these offices. By the time of the Council of Verona of 1184, when the attitude that the Church ought to adopt towards the new organization was first seriously discussed as a matter of urgent moment, the points of importance were—that the Waldenses refused obedience to the clergy, held that laymen and even women had the right to preach, that masses for the dead were useless, and that God was to be obeyed rather than man.13

The last article is clearly a butting against sacerdotal authority. In fact, anti-sacerdotalism is still the real sum and substance of the teaching. There was no explicit doctrinal, intellectual error of the first magnitude. Implicitly, however, there was; for underlying the whole Waldensian propaganda lay a heretical principle: that which bestows authority to exercise priestly functions is not ordination at all, but merit and the individual's consciousness of vocation.14

The Church felt Waldensianism to be a serious menace because it speedily became popular and spread rapidly. The Poor Men later came to believe themselves the true Church, from which Catholicism had in its corruption fallen away. And in support of this they were wont to point to their own personal purity. To secure godliness was ever their main concern. A simple adherent of the Waldensian creed, interrogated as to the precepts his instructors had inculcated, explained that they had taught him 'that he should neither speak nor do evil, that he should do nothing to others that he would not have done to himself, and that he should not lie or swear.'15

It would be difficult to find an apter summary of the ideals of Christian conduct! On certain points of behaviour the Waldenses laid particular stress—perhaps most of all upon the necessity of scrupulous truthfulness; and like many people who have a keen sense of the compelling beauty of truth for its own sake, they strongly disapproved of the taking of oaths.

Simple goodness and high-mindedness have rarely at any time of history failed to make their appeal to men's hearts; and it is clear that in the Middle Ages especially a strict rule of life, particularly if it had something austere and ascetic in it, held a remarkable attraction and influence. A writer, inveighing against the Waldenses towards the end of the fourteenth century, admits the efficacy of their purity in promoting their teaching. 'Because their followers saw and daily see them endowed with exterior godliness, and a good many priests of the Church (O shame!) entangled with vice, chiefly of lust, they believed that they are better absolved from sins through them than through the priests of the Church.'16 An inquisitor bears testimony—and no testimony could be less biased in their favour—to the moral excellence of the sect. 'Heretics,' he goes so far as to say, 'are recognized by their customs and speech, for they are modest and well-regulated. They take no pride in their garments, which are neither costly nor vile. They do not engage in trade, to avoid lies and oaths and frauds, but live by their labours as mechanics—their teachers are cobblers. They do not accumulate wealth, but are content with necessaries. They are chaste and temperate in meat and drink. They do not frequent taverns or dances or other

vanities. They restrain themselves from anger. They are always at work; they teach and learn and consequently pray but little. They are to be known by their modesty and precision of speech, avoiding scurrility and detraction, light words and lies and oaths.'17 That the Waldenses should sometimes have been accused of hypocrisy and have met with ridicule from sophisticated enemies is not surprising; but generally there is striking evidence as to their simple piety. There were some stories told at times of sexual immorality among them. These we need not take very seriously. Similar stories were told against all heretical sects; and they can be accounted for easily in this case by a confusion found frequently between the Waldenses and the Cathari. The preponderating evidence in favour of the moral excellence of the former is strong. It is not perhaps too much to say that the distinctive dangerousness of the former lay in the fact of such excellence, such fruits of the spirit being brought forth among a sect which arrogated to itself apostolic functions without lawful authority.

The other great contemporary heresy—Catharism—has some striking points of resemblance with Waldensianism, but more important points of contrast. The new Manichæism emanated from the East, being found in the Balkans in the tenth century tolerated and flourishing under John Zimiskes, especially in Thrace and Bulgaria, after a period of attempted extirpation under Leo the Isaurian and Theodora. The Manichæan belief appeared in Italy about 1030, and speedily made its way into France, first entering Aquitaine, then spreading over the whole country south of the Loire. Early in the twelfth century it penetrated further north—into