THE THOUGHT OF REYNOLD PECOCK

IN ITS HISTORICAL MILIEU

by

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In all quotations given, the Old English has been rendered by 'th.' Modern English equivalents of words difficult to recognise have been placed in square brackets immediately following the word or phrase in the body of the quotation.

The spelling, punctuation and transliteration of the edition being quoted from is always maintained, except for the $\varepsilon$. Pecock's spelling varies within a paragraph in a given text.
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CHAPTER I

AT OXFORD AND LONDON

In a debate with a Lollard, the fifteenth century English bishop Reynold Pecock professes that he is the man who hath labored and done more in your spiritual avail that you may possess true knowledge and that your errors may be removed from you than you would have the knowledge or power to do for yourself. 1 Pecock had determined upon an apologetical career. Concerned with the spread of Lollardy and discouraged by the failure of both local ecclesiastical action and general councils of the Church to restore unity to Christendom, he felt this task to be imperative.

Confident of the truth of the faith as traditionally taught by the Church, Pecock sought to convince the Lollards of the truth of Catholic dogmas and thus restore these heretics to orthodoxy. He believed that the two basic causes of the Lollard deviation were "over myche leenyng to Scripture," which involved a reliance on Scripture for that which Scripture cannot properly do, and their refusal to "fowle the determaunacions and the holdingis of the

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1"If ye asken who ye ar, which makith him so bisi here ajens jou, forsothe, he is the man which hath more laborid and deon into joure goestli availe, as of trewe kunnyng to be had of jou, and errourto be removed fro jou, than ye jou sylf ben of kunnyng, and of power, forto so do to jou sylf..." Reginald Pecock's Book of Faith: A Fifteenth Century Theological Tractate. Edited by J. L. Morison. (Glasgow, 1909), 204-205.
chirche in the matter of faith. 2 His task as he conceived it involved both the overcoming of errors and the inculcating of the truths of Christian religion necessary for salvation. For this purpose a great number of works flowed from his pen. 3

In order to effectively reach the heretics the bishop wrote in "lay mennys langage". He even used the vulgar tongue to treat subjects as exalted as that of the Trinity and the Eucharist, in this way arousing much scholarly and ecclesiastical hostility. 4 But what good, he asks, does it do to refute heresies in Latin works so erudite that the heretics cannot read them? 5

Yet Pecock never oversimplified his material. He wrote difficult books on difficult subjects, but their language was such that laymen could have access to them and with diligent study master their contents for, as he often remarks,

2Ibid., 114. A full statement of the precise heresies and errors of Lollardy may be found in the text of the 1382 condemnation of Wyclif's works, printed in David Wilkins, Concilia Magnae Britannie et Hiberniae ab Anno MCCCL ad Annum MDXLV. (London, 1737), III, 156-159.

3In addition to the Book of Faith, Pecock's extant works include:


4As he often mentions in his writings, see, for example, The Donet, 4, 6-8 and The Folower, 7, 226-227.

5Book of Faith, 116.
they require no more intelligence than men use daily in matters of law and business. 6

His method was neither to arbitrarily expound nor to threaten with civil penalties, but rather to convince them by reasonable arguments. A testimonial to his Oxford days is his confidence in the use of the syllogism. For it is by syllogistic reasoning, a skill in which he instructs his readers, that he hopes to lead the Lollards from points they concede as true or from those self-evidently true to giving their assent to the points of dogma in dispute, such as the authority of the Church to interpret Scripture. Pecock's reliance on the syllogism is closely connected with his interesting epistemological position which we shall discuss in Chapter Three.

In his writings he meets, then, the problems of authority: the authority of Scripture, the authority of the Church, and the authority of reason. Pecock's interest in the proper function of reason in theology and his reliance on that tool of the logicians, the syllogism, have earned him the title of "rationalist." 7 It was not "reason" but "faith" to which Pecock devoted most of his discussion and it is his definition of faith and the jurisdiction of the three sources of authority that we will explore. While his "doom of ressent" is more likely at first to capture the historian's attention it is his notion of assent which is the most characteristic feature of his thought.

6The Repressor, 96.

7For example, Everett Emerson, "Reginald Pecock: Christian Rationalist", Speculum, XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1956), 643-669.
Reynold Pecock has received varying interpretations. His general historical position has been determined, it would appear, by the verdict of his famous heresy trial and on the estimation of the chroniclers, rather than on a study of his works. Yet, in order to discover whether or not Pecock was the reactionary court bishop embroiled in the politics of the day who, as the fifteenth century chronicler Gascoigne declared, put "the law of nature above

The basic account of Pecock is by his contemporary and opponent, Chancellor Gascoigne who, in his Theological Dictionary, makes many references to his life, writings and heresy. This very hostile narration portrays him as a "leperous person," conceited and above all a heretic. Gascoigne states that this heresy was based on Pecock's preference for reason instead of Holy Scripture and the writings of the Fathers. In Loci a libro veritatum passages selected from Gascoigne's Theological Dictionary. Edited by James H. Thorold Rogers. (Oxford, 1881), 15, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, 49, 99, 100, 104, 208, 209, 211, 216. Whethansteed in his Chronic Monastiri S. Albani gives a valuable chronology of the accusation and heresy trial, he recounts the heresies of Pecock in a manner closely resembling those of his recantation. Edited H.T. Riley (Rolls Series, No. 26, part 6)(London, 1872), 279-88. The sixteenth century Protestant Bishop of Ossory, John Bale, closely followed Gascoigne (a debt which is in part openly acknowledged) stating that Pecock preferred human reason to Scripture but additionally attributes 'modern' views of the Eucharist. Index Britanniae Scriptorum, (Oxford, 1902) for example, 337 (other works of Bale which treat Pecock are mentioned subsequently). With Bale the interpretation of Pecock as "protestant" in dogma although one who recanted becomes fixed; similarly Leland, De Scriptoribus Britannicis, (Oxford, 1709) 458-59. This view was continued by Foxe, who in his Book of Martyrs' withdraws the Protestant martyr's crown because he recanted notes that Pecock may, however, have earned it during his confinement, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe III, part 2, 734. (London, 1855). In the nineteenth century, John Lewis formally placed Pecock with Wyclif as one of the forerunners of the English Reformation in his The Life of the Learned and Right Reverend Reynold Pecock, S.T.P., Lord Bishop of St. Asaph and Chichester, in the reign of King Henry VI. Faithfully collected from the records and MSS. Being a Sequel to the Life of Dr. John Wyclif, in order to an Introduction to the History of the English Reformation. (Oxford, 1820) And Babington, the editor of The Repressor (1850) refers to the cowardice of Pecock in recanting after his trial for heresy. A variation of the view of Pecock as a Protestant is found in the writings of the seventeenth divine and Pecock scholar, Henry Wharton. Wharton saw him as an exponent of the "true English Catholicism," unjustly condemned by a handful of Romish bishops and urged the value of Pecock's thought for Anglicans of 1688. See especially his introduction to an
Scripture and sacraments, "9 we must examine his public record as well as his writings.

Because they are regrettable gaps in the chronology of his life and many of the key vernacular works and all of his Latin works are lost, the evaluation of Pecock will always remain somewhat tentative and will constitute a continuing historical problem. Yet with the evidence remaining we believe it is possible to discover the main outline of his thought, the particular character of his apologetic and perhaps to correct some misunderstandings regarding his

abridgement of Pecock's Book of Faith which Wharton published as a polemical pamphlet entitled A Treatise of Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, before the Reformation; (in the year 1450) Proving that Scripture Is the only Rule of Faith. (London, 1689)

Among twentieth century students of Pecock there is a tendency to see him as orthodox in religion but a rationalist in philosophy—a phenomenon in an age of intellectual sterility; for example, Emerson's article supra and Morison's introduction to the Book of Faith carried the charge of rationalism hinted at by the chroniclers to the ultimate limit imaginable stating that "had Pecock lived three centuries later, he might have headed the rationalistic Deists, for like them he found special manifestations of the supernatural unnecessary, and like them he saw his way to a well-ordered universe rules by a rational and complacent Deity," (p. 85). More recent scholars have removed such fanciful errors from the historiography of the subject but much debate still exists: Rev. Hannick sees Pecock as orthodox but recognises that his writings were tendentious and liable to be misunderstood. Rev. Emett A. Hannick Reginald Pecock, Churchman and Man of Letters: A Study in Fifteenth English Prose. A doctoral dissertation. (Washington, D.C., 1922) 12, 23, 51, and 71.

Green and Jacob, in the most recent accounts, picture him as being, while not very original, a proponent of reason and therefore regard him as an example of the hitherto unrecognized intellectual vitality of the age. V.H.H. Green, Bishop Reginald Pecock: A Study in Ecclesiastical History and Thought (Cambridge, 1945) 231-235, and E.F. Jacob, "Reynold Pecock, Bishop of Chichester." (Raleigh Lecture 1951) from the Proceedings of the British Academy, XXXVII (London, 1951), 121-122, 153.

Traditionally, from Cascoigne and Bale onward the political aspect of a bishop's role has been exaggerated to make of Pecock a court bishop, tying his rise and fall to the shifting fortunes of political factions. This interpretation is echoed to some degree in even the most recent works.

9"...qui propositus legis naturae supra scripturam et supra sacramenta, ...

" Cascoigne, Loci, 211.
political role. It is difficult to weave the factual details of Pecock's life and the sociological milieu in which he met the challenge of the Lollard heresy with a close examination of his thought. Both aspects are, however, important in any attempt to establish the thought of Reynold Pecock in its historical milieu.

Pecock spent the years from 1409 to 1424 in Oxford University as an undergraduate and then as a fellow of Oriel College. He received his doctorate of divinity when he was elevated to the bishopric of St. Asaph in 1444. While no one would doubt his erudition, question has been raised regarding the legality of his degrees. The chronicler Gascoigne, himself a chancellor of the University and advocate of tighter degree requirements, charged that Pecock's doctorate was granted per gratiam absentandi, claiming that the bishop responded to no doctor to complete his form and did not lecture afterwards as

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Pecock was born between 1392 and 1395, probably in Wales; it appears that he entered Oxford in 1409, graduated BA in 1413, and the next year was elected to an Oriel fellowship. He was ordained a priest on 8 March 1421 and in 1424 he left Oxford for the rectory of St. Michael's, Gloucester; in 1431 he was made master of Whittington College and rector of St. Michaels in London. He remained there until his appointment in 1444 to bishopric of St. Asaph, at which time he received his doctorate of divinity from Oxford. He was appointed to the see of Chichester in 1450. In 1451, his name appears in the Summons to the Great Council. In 1457 Pecock was tried for heresy, and given the formidable choice of abjuration or of degradation and delivery to the secular arm for burning. Pecock publicly abjured his heresies and his books were burned December 4 at Paul's Cross. Although absolved and reinstated, his enemies were not satisfied and after appeals to Rome he was declared a relapsed heretic and deprived of his see. He was confined at Thorney Abbey in 1459 where he died shortly afterwards; the precise date of his death is not known nor is the place of his burial. All the items in this chronology are mentioned in Jacob, Pecock.
the regulations required.11 In his writings Pecock often remarks that it would be well if school degrees were given only to men of "profound and groundly scoling in logik, philosophi, and dyvynyte and lawe...."12 This does not, however, indicate a specific adherence to university rule. The Oxford records for the period are such that it is not possible to determine the statutory correctness of his degree.

With Lollard and anti-Lollard propaganda in the air in the years of his intellectual formation we can be certain that by the time he completed his residence in the university he would have acquired a good knowledge of the basic positions of Lollardy, a heresy which stemmed from the teaching of another Oxford don and English cleric, the fourteenth century John Wyclif (d. 1384). While Wyclifism was still a subject of academic debate at Oxford during Pecock's student years it had become not so much an intellectual matter as a political one involving the freedom of the university corporation from episcopal supervision. A few years before Pecock arrived, Archbishop Arundel had summoned a meeting of the Southern Convocation (November 1407) at Oxford to try to prevent the continued reading and propogation of Wyclif's views and writings. This convocation resulted in the appointment of a commission of members of the two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, and the heads of the

11See Loci, 208 for example. Cascoigne goes over and over the subject of Pecock in his Theological Dictionary and one topic is mentioned in several places. "Per gratiam absentandi" is the corrected from suggested by Jacob who detected Roger's error in the printed edition.

12The Repressor, 90-91.
"Colleges, Halls and Entries," who were to make monthly inquisitions to see that the proscriptions were being followed. Further, the convocation required that lecturers were forbidden to make any book written in Wyclif's time the subject of their classes unless it had been licensed both by the university and the archbishop.13

Oxford's reaction to Arundel's assertion of primatial power over the university has often been regarded as an indication that Oxford was Lollard in sentiment. The university expressed the opinion that the Arundel determinations were illegal as well as discourteous, and when the archbishop further determined to include the university in his metropolital visitation of the see of Lincoln the suggestion was met with great university opposition.14 This opposition was not an expression of Lollardy but represents the resistance of a medieval corporation, the university challenging the right of another corporation, the archbishop, to be its overlord.15 Evidence indicates that while Oxford continued to respect Wyclif's erudition and sincerity, Wyclifism as an intellectual movement was somewhat discredited.16

13 Latin text in Wilkins, Concilia, III, 314-319.


15 Green, Pecock, 11, Green speaks of the Church as the corporation involved.

16 Gairdner, however, would argue that this is an indication of Oxford's Lollardy. He states, for example, that "in 1406 the influence of Wycliffe's teaching was still powerful at Oxford, and in October it would seem the University deemed it right to put on record their high sense of the purity of his life, the profundity of his thoughts, the gentleness of his demeanour, his constant literary labor, and his praiseworthy diligence in reading, preaching and discussion. It was added that he had never been convicted of heretical pravity and that the archbishop had not ordered his body to be burnt after
However, when Pecock became rector of Whittington College in London, he met Wyclifism as a popular movement. For this reason scholars now feel that the years in London were the formative ones in which the future bishop determined to meet the challenge of this heresy. Jacob, for example, states that "it was during this time that he plunged into the main work of his life: the attempt, by his writings in English and in Latin to win back the Lollards to the orthodox faith."17

On July 19, 1431 Pecock was made rector of St. Michaels Paternoster Royal and master of the then established Whittington College.18 St. Michaels, which stood on the east side of College Hill, upper Thames Street in Vintry Ward, was the parish church of wealthy Richard Whittington, a "great Mercer" and thrice mayor of London.19 This church had therefore, a special claim on Whittington and when, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, it was in need both of extensive repairs and enlarging, he determined to rebuild it

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17 Jacob, Pecock, 127.

18 Hennessy's Novum repertorium ecclesiasticum parochiale Londinens (the revision of Newcourt) (London, 1898), 333.

19 This is the same Richard Whittington who with his cat (of debated historical existence) were immortalised in the children's story "Dick Whittington and His Cat."
entirely. Accordingly he began in 1111 by adding a piece of ground to the
site.\textsuperscript{20} Whittington also planned to make the church colleges, but he died
before he could complete his project (d. 1423).

Whittington College, to which Pecock succeeded, was the work of Richard
Whittington's executors. These executors, with the consent of the king\textsuperscript{21}
and the archbishop of Canterbury, erected in 1424, in honor of the Holy Ghost
and St. Mary, a perpetual college of five secular priests, one of whom was to
be made master; two clerks and four choristers.\textsuperscript{22} William Brooke, then rector
of St. Michael's, was made the master of the college and it was ordained that
henceforth the office of master was to include the office of rector. When a
vacancy occurred one of their number was to be chosen by the chaplains and
presented by the wardens of the Mercers' Company to the prior and chapter
of Christchurch, Canterbury, who as patrons of the rectory were to present
him to the bishop for institution. Vacancies among the chaplains were to be
filled by the master and senior chaplains (choice was to be made of men who
had not another benefice or possessions). The clerks and choristers were to
be appointed and were removable by the master and chaplain and when these clerks
and choristers were past the age when they could carry on their duties they
were to be supported in the Whittington Almshouse. All the members of the

\textsuperscript{20} Letter Book I, fol. 86, as cited in The Victoria History of London.

\textsuperscript{21} Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of Patent Rolls, (London,
1909) I (1422-29), 259.

\textsuperscript{22} Dugdale gives the patent inspected and confirming the foundation.
Monasticon Anglicanum. (London, 1646) VI, 739-43.
college were to live in the house built by Whittington at the east end of the church.

Whittington College was not a lucrative piece of preferment: the master was to have a salary of 10 marks, besides the obligations of the church, each chaplain eleven marks, the first clerk eight marks, and the second a 100 shillings, the choristers 5 marks each; out of which they were to provide their food and clothes, the cook being paid out of the college funds. The dress of the chaplains was to be of one style and one color; residence was obligatory, no chaplain being permitted to be absent for more than twenty days in the year and then for good cause; the college was to have a common seal which was to be kept with the charters in the common chest; the goods of the college were not to be alienated by the master and chaplain except for urgent necessity; inquiry into debts was to be made at the general chapter held annually; the supervision of the college was vested in the Mercers.23

The property of the church became the property of the college but, as Dugdale notes, this property was insufficient. When the executors realised that a greater endowment was needed they granted, in February, 1425, to the master and chaplains an additional sixty three pounds a year from Whittington's possessions until lands and rents equal in value should be given.24 This sum was derived from property in the parishes of St. Michael Paternoster Royal, St. Lawrence Jewry and St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street and was settled on the

23Victoria History of London, 579.
24Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, VI, 743.
college permanently by the will of one of the executors, George Carveys in 1432. Land for enlarging the college and for making a new burial ground was also acquired at the same time. Yet Whittington still did not enjoy a really substantial endowment. In his biography of Pecock, Green recalled the poor endowment of this college and speculated that the practical hardships which he faced as its master may have helped to convince him of the advisability of adequate possessions and made him realise how such possessions would be an aid not an hindrance to the proper performance of clerical functions.

In view of Reynold Pecock's learning and literary tastes he was a choice well in keeping with the intentions of Whittington's founders. The charter had provided that the chaplains should be versed in letters and, as the Victoria historians note, the history of the college proves the observance of this rule. One of the masters, William Ivo, played a leading and successful role as the champion of the beneficed clergy in the controversy raised by the mendicant orders in 1465 and his statement of the case was sent to the pope with that of the Bishop of Lincoln and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Ives was at the time of the controversy keeper of Saint Paul's School. In 1490 the masters of Whittington College, under the mastership of Edward Underwood, founded the fraternity of St. Sophia for the reading of a divinity lecture. The reputation of the college was maintained till the end, the last master,

26 *Green, Pecock*, 18.
27 *Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, 739.
appointed in 1537, was Richard Smith, the first Regius professor of divinity at Oxford. Pecock was worthy of the Whittington tradition, devoting his whole life to industrious intellectual activity.

The location of Whittington is not without importance for a study of Pecock's apologetics because cities were in the fifteenth century centers of social and religious ferment. The literate classes eagerly consumed the new vernacular devotional treatises and both heresy and social unrest found fertile ground for propagation in the close contacts of the cities. London was in

28 Victoria History of London, 579.

29 The Brief Latin Chronicles, for example, described Pecock as "ingenio quidem et scientia satis clarus, et in praeava etate reputatus boni regininis et honeste fama" as cited in Jacob, Pecock, 126.

30 The fifteenth century chronicles and popular literature give ample evidence of the persistence of the Lollard menace. The chroniclers, anti-Lollard to a man, decry the actions of the Lollards, rejoice in their punishment and warn against the threat of heresy. Particularly relating to London: the Chronicle of London for the years 1415-1417 gives an account of the execution of Sir John Oldcastle and comments in conclusion "And so ther he made an ende off his cursedde lyff." C.L. Kingsford, Chronicle of London. (London, 1905), 71. Also William Gregory's Chronicle of London where the mass apprehending of Lollards in 1415 is described; printed in The Historical Collection of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century, edited by James Gairdner. (Camden Society)(Westminster, 1876), 108. In addition to variations on the themes of Chaucer and Langland such as a "Song against Friars"; "On the Minorite Friars" and the "Reply of Dom Topias" composed in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century and still popular in Pecock's day, the poem "To the King" merits special attention. Composed at the accession of Henry VI in 1429 it contains an admonition to the new king concerning the persecuting of Lollards after the manner of the "emperor worthy Sygesmounge" and the king's own father; note particularly verse 11. Printed in T. Wright, Political Poems and Songs, 2 volumes (London, 1859) II, 143. The Victoria historians of London summarise chronicle and trial evidence for the later half of the fifteenth century observing that while church history from 1400 to 1490 was uneventful, Lollardy still had its martyrs, 232. At the close of the century, a 1496 chronicle entry records the burning of four Lollards with their heretical books, Kingsford, 211. On the continuity of Lollardy, the recent study by A.O. Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509-1558. (London, 1959).
those years already a thriving commercial center and Kingsford observes that "London was not simply the political capital, but also became in an increasing degree (in the fifteenth century) the commercial and intellectual heart of the nation."31 He explains that while London never played a decisive role in national politics in that century, its support was always a great asset to the established government; and while in a sense the city governed itself as a state within a state, jealously guarding its privileges, it never stood apart from the current of national life.32 The importance of London to the Church may be seen in this statement of Bishop Brunton urging upon all the bishops of the realm the importance of preaching in London:

At London, because it is the principal city of England, and in that place there is a greater devotion and a more intelligent people, and therefore, it is to be presumed, greater fruit. Moreover, because each bishop of England has subjects or parishioners in London, therefore, when he gives instructions there, it is as though he were preaching to his own people...33

Allusions to London buildings and institutions play such an important part in Pecock's writing that one feels that he wrote primarily for the London audience. He refers often to the Church of St. Paul and its preaching cross;34 he defends the pilgrimages to St. Catherine College as being more efficacious for most people than the many books written in London on the life of that saint,

31C.L. Kingsford, Prejudice and Promise in Fifteenth Century England. (Oxford, 1925), 120.

32Ibid.


34The Reprressor, 32, 76, 194, and 215.
books which are not accessible to all. In distinguishing between infinite and finite space he explains that the distance between London and Rome is a 'great, long way' but no matter how you double the distance it still remains finite space. Pecock uses a story about an Alderman of London and his apprentice to illustrate the point that 'good work more truly honors both master and God than mere praise.' Frequent analogies are made, in discussions of authority, to the relationship "bitwix the citeseyns of Londoun and meirs of Londoun" and to the studies pursued at the Inns of Court.

London municipal and ecclesiastical government are referred to in answering the Lollard assertion that religious orders were objectionable on the ground that they were not appointed by Christ. Pecock points out that it would be just as reasonable to ask why Christ did not ordain and announce to us "who schal be meyr in London" in the next year and "who schal be bishop of London" after the death of the "bischop of Londoun now lyving" since it is profitable to the citizens and necessary that such men should be provided. He argues that God gave men the sense to perceive their needs and the power to supply them in both cases.

35 The Repressor, 215.
36 Haule, 50.
37 Ibid., 413.
38 Book of Faith, 183.
39 Ibid., 228.
40 The Repressor, 518-519; other references to mayor and alderman are found on 157, 215 and 216.
Occasionally his eagerness for concrete and familiar examples tend to prejudice his general argument. The London Bridge analogy illustrates this tendency: in answering the Lollard argument that the Church has declined ever since it was endowed with worldly goods, Pecock notes that the fact that the London Bridge has gradually deteriorated ever since it has been supported by rents does not mean that the rents caused the said deterioration. The unfortunate implication is, of course, that the Church has gradually and necessarily declined as did the bridge. On the whole, however, the bishop's illustrations give clarity to his ideas and must have had particular meaning for his London readers.

Men of the socio-economic status of the Mercers seem to be the particular audience of his tracts. He urges, for example, that an understanding of the truths that he teaches, even concerning such matters as the Trinity, requires no more "witt" than the great "Mercers of London" use in daily "bargayns making of great marchaundisys and in rokeryngis making therupon". And in the course of his treatises he discusses ethical problems of special concern to the business community, such as the correlative duties of craftsmen to his apprentice and apprentice to his master. In answering the Lollard objections to the religious orders wearing habits, he draws an analogy to gild costumes.

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1 The Bapressor, 338.
2 Boole, 94.
3 Donet, 71, 77.
sexes and the different crafts are distinguished by their different clothing:
in the city of London it is holds for reasonable and profitable, that
the persones of con craft have clothing dvers fro the persones of an
other craft. And all this is for lasse nude or for lasse good cause, than
is the cause for which religiose persones schulden be knownl openly fro
persones not religiose.\textsuperscript{44}

Pecock may have chosen to direct his apologetic to the Mercers and their
kind because he had come into close contact with the upper mercantile class
during his Whittington days and felt better qualified to teach them. His
choice may further indicate that this class was more susceptible to the se-
ductions of Lollardy then is generally thought. Historians such as Green,
for example, have asserted that Lollardy became a "proletarian movement" in
the cities "drawing its strength from the poorer and less literate members of
society."\textsuperscript{45} Trial evidence tends to support this conclusion for while a Lord
Cobham might represent the gentry on the gallows most of the convicted heretics
appear to have been men like Richard Truning, master baker, John Florence,
turner, John Beverly, laborer, John Skilley, miller.\textsuperscript{46} Such evidence does not
conclusively make Lollardy proletarian because it is generally the less well
educated who are found guilty of heresy, as those with more learning can take
refuge in subleties and argue their way out of the charge.

The more substantial and better educated merchants might well entertain

\textsuperscript{44}The Repressor, 545.

\textsuperscript{45}V.R.H. Green, The Later Plantagenets: A Survey of English History

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid.
some Lollard ideas with favor. Opposition to Annoiters which take money out of
the country were congenial both to their economic ideas and nascent national
feelings. But the lay spirit of these 'Jack Uplands'\(^\text{47}\) must not be exagger-
ated. Their great interest in vernacular religious tracts and the extensive
church building and repair which they financed is ample indication of their
genuine religious sensibilities. And Pecock sought to make certain that their
knowledge of their faith increased and was kept free from the taint of heresy.

\(^{47}\)The ballad of "Jack Upland" is the fifteenth century Piers Plowman. It
is indicative of the shift from the rural areas to the cities as centers of
religious and social criticism. Text appears in Wright, II, 16-39.
CHAPTER II

THE DUTIES OF A BISHOP

The master of Whittington College was elevated in 1444 to the see of St. Asaph in Wales.¹ All Pecock's biographers raise the question of how he obtained his bishopric. Gascoigne states that he was promoted at the instance of the secular lords,² and Lewis declares Pecock to be a court cleric for whom the "Popes bulls" for the bishopric were bought.³ The evidence is more than uncertain on this point and the safest conclusion is that we do not know who was responsible for suggesting that Pecock be given this preferment.

The see of St. Asaph was a poor place. In 1402 the stern vengeance of the rebel Owen Glyndwr visited the place and the church Cathedral of Saint Asaph, with the staple, bells, quare, porch, and vestiary, with all other containis, bokes, chalis, vestiments, and other


²And in the Calendar of Patent Rolls, June 8, 1444: Mandate to the es-heator in Salop and the March of Wales adjacent to deliver the temporalities of the bishopric of St. Asaph to Reynold, bachelor of theology, whom the pope has provided to be the bishop in the room of John, translated to Rochester. Writ de intendendo to the tenants of the bishopric. IV, 272.

³Loci. 10.
ornaments, as the bookes, stalles, dishes, altres, and all the aparaille longyng to the same churc, was brent and utterly destroyed, and in likewys the byshops' palays and all his other three manouns no styk left.4

Thomas, the historian of the see, indicates that this condition had not been remedied by the time Pecock was made bishop. There was, therefore, no proper place for him to live. There is, however, no documentary evidence by which we may determine whether or not he was a resident bishop. Only his antagonist Gascoigne pronounces on it and he states that Pecock never visited his bishopric at all, but resided in London.5

The Patent Rolls reveal that Pecock, like his predecessor, gained some concessions from the king because of the devastated condition of the see:

Whereas, by a petition of Reynold, bishop of St. Asaph, the king has learned that Edward, the late prince of Wales, granted to Llewellyn, then bishop, a parcel of meadow, 'wodeheth' and pasture called 'Glananties-moore'co. Flynys, at the rent of 20 marks in the exchequer of Chester on the condition that if wasted, he should have allowance thereof, and Henry V. pardoned Robert then bishop, the said rent in consideration of the waste done by the sea and the rebels of Wales, and the king in his fifteenth year pardoned John, then bishop:- the king, for like reasons, pardons Reynold the said farm.6

And on the fifth of May 1445

Grant to Reynold, bishop of St. Asaph, on his petition shewing that his cathedral church, the bell-tower, choir and vestry and all books, chalices, vestments and other ornaments thereto pertaining and the palace and other manors there have been burnt in the last welsh war, that, while he be


5Loci, 18.

6Calendar of Patent Rolls, IV, 294.
bishop, he quit of all tenths, fifteenths, quotas and parcels thereof granted to the king by the clergy of England. 7

Unfortunately the registers are missing for both St. Asaph and his later see of Chichester. We can, however, gain some idea of what he conceived his function to be by his description of the duties of a bishop in the Reule.

The bishop

is to over se that the loujer curatis fulfill her chargis, and to here the complayntes maade vpon the loujer curatis and for to helpe amende them, to gather togyder the loujer clergy forto determynye doutes reisid in thi law of kynde and of feith, and to devise what counselle may be Joum to pyncis and potestatis, and what good oportunytees move be devised and kept among hem whereby al this forseid officis in alle poynitis may be trulier kept and fulfilled. 8

In shepherding this flock he be dealing almost exclusively with Welsh-speaking people. Both the condition of the people and their language can be seen in this record of papal permission to preach in the see, granted during the administration of his predecessor:

To Henry Kirton, an Augustinsin friar, S. T. P.... who has for some time preached and proposes to preach, in the diocese of St. Asaph, which is mountainous and inhabited by rude people whose idiom he speaks... 9

With the aid of a clergy that spoke Welsh, as undoubtedly would be the case with the lower clergy, he would be able to fulfill his obligations to these people through the immediate ministration of his "loujer curatis". Jacob notes that Pecock's Book of Faith was closely related to a series of Latin works on

7Calendar of Patent Rolls, IV, 348.
8Reule, 327.
9Calendar of Papal Registers, VIII, 669.
the sacraments which he composed when he was bishop of St. Asaph. This series may have been written specifically to meet the need of instructing his Welsh clergy.

Some of his routine episcopal duties can be seen in the Patent Rolls. While most of the entries relate to the matter of admitting clerics to prebends within the see, one patent registered on 12 October 1446 shows Pecock in his relation to a typical medieval religious foundation: a chapel, gild and hospital. According to the patent, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Master John Somerseth had of late built a chapel ("on a piece of ground containing 200 feet in length and 60 feet in breadth, lying at the bridge of New Brayford, co. Middlesex, sometime of wood, between the present highway near the new stone bridge, which leads from Braynford to Houndeslowe, on the north, and a parcel of land of the said John on the south...")], the foundation stone of which the king had laid "with his own hands to the honour of God, the Virgin Mary and all the Holy Angels.""

John Somerseth, the entry continues, had intended to found "contiguous to the said chapel, a hospital for nine poor men and a gild in honor of the nine orders of holy angels." Therefore:

the king has granted in frank almoin to Reynold, bishop of Llandaff, Master John Somerseth, Master Peter Hynfod, Master William Lychfeld, Richard Hakaday, esquire, John Calop and Richard Plokyndon, their heirs and assigns.

10 Jacob, Pecock, 134.
11 Calendar of Patent Rolls, V, 519.
the property described

together with the said chapel and license for them to found a gild of a
master, brethren and sisters, of themselves and others in the said hospi-
tal and chapel. 12

The members of this gild may increase their numbers, and at Michaelmas
each year they are to elect one of themselves to govern the gild (after his
election, he "shall take an oath to do so honestly, with the divine worship
of a priest or clerk, the nine poor men, their two servants and all their
appurtenances, and if he resign or be removed, they may elect another for the
residue of the year."). This gild "shall be incorporate, having a perpetual
succession, capable of acquiring in mortmain lands, rents and services, having
a common seal and able to plead and to be impleaded in any court. They
further possessed a license for them to acquire lands etc. to the value of
"£40 a year for the sustenance of a chaplain to celebrate divine service in
the said chapel for the good estate of the king and Queen Margaret and of the
said founders and their souls after death..." That amount of money was also
to support a clerk to serve the chaplain and to support the nine poor men,
"weak or impotent, to wit, blind, lame or withered" and the two "sober,

12"Frank almain", the way in which Reynold and the others held these lands,
buildings and license, was the typical form of ecclesiastical tenure under
the feudal system. As we know, under the feudal system, in return for land,
justice and protection, the vassal owed the lord a great number of things, the
different kinds being called tenure because they were the methods by which land
was held. The ecclesiastical tenure seen here is called "frank almain", that
is free alms because no tangible return was required; the legal theory under-
lying feudalism was kept intact by the assumption that the churchmen would
pray for the soul of their feudal lord.
industrious men, servants to the said nine. Therefore among Pecock's varied ecclesiastical duties must be included the oversight of this and perhaps similar institutions.

Besides the overseeing of such establishments, preaching was generally held to among the many functions of a bishop, as is indicated in Brunton's exhortation to all bishops to take upon themselves the added duty of preaching in London. Pecock held quite a different opinion. In 1447 he mounted the pulpit of St. Paul's Cross, London to defend the remarkable thesis that a bishop as bishop is not bound to preach to the people in person. To this apparent defense of episcopal muteness he added a defense of non-residency and the paying of annates. His Pauls Cross sermon aroused a storm of controversy since, in this era of religious criticism and attempted reform, the bishops had often been charged with plurality, non-residence, luxurious living and of neglecting their pastoral duties in favor of worldly concerns. The bishops were as angry as the reformers about Pecock's tendentious assertions which the bishops felt tended to confirm the suspicions of the most radical critics of the Church.

The question of preaching in that age of heresy was a particularly sensitive one. The social and spiritual history of Europe in this era testifies to the popularity of sermons. They fulfilled, in addition to being a means of religious instruction and spiritual edification, a social need. Major

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13 Calendar of Patent Rolls, V, 519.

14 Quoted in Chapter I,
sermons were delivered apart from the mass, in the afternoons and usually out of doors at preaching crosses such as that at St. Paul's. They were great events. Before the preacher arrived the churchyard pulpit cross was "solemnie decked...with Tapestrie, and other furniture" such as a large embroidered pulpit cloth.\(^\text{15}\) Then the preacher comes escorted by the mayor and his fellow clergy, "with great solemnnetie, arrayed 'en un cloke, une taberd, et une chapon furres de pellure, and with a capp upon his head, as...a Doctor or Master of Divinitie."\(^\text{16}\) Oust observes, in his *Preaching in Medieval England*, that these robes were the crowning glory of pulpit pagantry as well as the outward badge of authority and learning in the preacher.\(^\text{17}\) It is easy to see the impact that such a scene would make upon the popular mentality. The power of the preacher was great and many competed for the ear of the people.

Lollard ideas sometimes were spread by the preachings of the 'poor priests'. Ecclesiastical authorities, therefore, wished to provide orthodox preachers while excluding the unorthodox. From the 1377 papal directive against Wyclif\(^\text{18}\) to the time of Pecock's speech in 1447 various action was taken.

\(^\text{15}\) Oust, 211.

\(^\text{16}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 212.

\(^\text{18}\) The letter of Gregory XI printed in Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 116-117. The 1382 condemnation, III, 157-158; see also W.W. Shirley's edition of *Pasciuli Ziganiorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum tritico ascribto to Thomas Netter of Walden* (London, 1853) 275-282 which relates that the archbishop of Canterbury wrote to Peter Stokys announcing that acting on the information that unlicensed preachers were spreading heresies through our province (p. 276), they called a provincial synod and condemned therein certain items which will be found enumerated below, some are heretical others erroneous. The archbishop charges Stokys with prohibiting the teaching of these points within the University of Oxford (p. 277) Then the heretical and erroneous points are listed (pp. 279-282).
against heresy generally and with special regard to preaching. A civil statute De Haereticō Comburendo in 1301 provided burning for persistence in maintaining views the Church deemed heretical;19 this was followed by the famous Arundel Statutes which the Church adopted. This legislation forbade preaching without authorization of the bishop in form of a license; forbade the denouncing of clerical faults before lay audiences lest criticism of an abuse might be mistaken for criticism of the institution; and ordered that all works of the Lollards as well as their translation of the Bible should be sought out and destroyed.20 Parliament, fully cognizant of the intimate connection between


20The text of Arundel Statutes in Wilkins, Concilia, III, 314-319. Ost's summarization of the provisions is helpful in clarifying some of the points relevant here: "The three main provisions are set out in its clauses. First there is to be a rigid tightening up of the system of licenses, by which no secular or regular might now venture to preach under any circumstance, to clergy or people, in church or outside, without prior examination by diocesans, and the subsequent issue of letters of authority. Moreover, there is further stipulation that licenses should be granted 'to one specified parish, or more, as seems expedient to the ordinary aforesaid, according to the quality of the person to be admitted.' Henceforth any 'curate' who admitted a preacher lacking adequate credentials was to be dealt with severely. Secondly, parish clergy, who continue quite naturally to enjoy the old privileges with regard to their own people, are yet to confine their discourses strictly to the simple topics of the layfolk's faith as outlined by the Recknham Decrees. This may be looked upon as a measure at once checking the more agressive and speculative spirits among them, and also urging the rest to fulfill their long-neglected duties, from omission of which the cause of heresy had grown and benefited. Lastly, comes that most significant order, 'Pradicator conformat se auditorio, alter perbegin.' That is to say, let him confine his attacks on clerical
heresy and treason and fearful for the peace of the realm both spiritual and temporal, passed in 13th legislation bringing the initiative in the prosecution of heresy more directly under the civil sphere, Lollards being treated as other criminals.21

Church authorities urged orthodox preachers to go forth against Lollardy. Arch bishop Kemp in his opening address to Parliament in 1427 drew attention to the part played by Wyclif's disciple, Hus, in the civil war in Bohemia and warned England that she could be similarly imperiled if Wyclifism were not stamped out.22 A papal bull of 1428 had pressed for the appointment of special "heralds of the Cross" without delay "in each separate city, diocese, estate, walled town and village of England, to combat Wyclifites and Hussites, with no less than a hundred days indulgence for anyone who will listen to them."23

This situation was still one of grave ecclesiastical concern when Pecock delivered his 1447 sermon24 and learned hearers were startled, displeased and aroused. Some historians join his contemporaries in describing the sermon

21 Text printed in Rotuli Parliamentorum, IV, 15-16.

22 Ibid., 335.

23 Printed in Wilkins, Concilia, III, 511-514; see also 491-492.

24 Pecock appears to have repeated his sermon on several occasions. E.F. Jacob states that evidence indicates that there were at least two sermons, in 1447 and 1449, and possibly a third either between those dates or after 1449. Jacob assures us that the argument was substantially the same on all these occasions. Jacob, Pecock, 132, note 2.
as a defense of the *status quo*, of all the abuses that bishops might deem 
privileges, a defense made in the spirit of *esprit de corps* by a member of that 
group habitually guilty of the charges raised against worldly bishops. Jacob 
presents a moderate form of this interpretation, pointing out that Pecock could 
not hope to maintain his position as merely a literary cleric against the 
determined efforts of the Suffolk party to create an influential following 
among the higher clergy. And "before long", Jacob continues, "he found himself 
one of a group of court bishops". Accordingly he describes the Pauls Cross 
sermon in this manner:

As a member of this court group, Pecock was exposed to criticism on a 
number of counts, such as absenteeism and neglect of preaching. These 
charges irritated him exceedingly and he set himself to repel the accu-
sations.25

One cannot suppose unanimity of opinion among all the bishops nor does the 
historical evidence indicate to what extent, if any, Pecock was intimately 
associated with the Court party. If he was or had been a member of this group 
it seems unlikely that he would have attributed the present evils in the Church 
to the fact that men "wantonly brou3t up in court" and "ignorant men of high 
birth" were being promoted.26

Nor on the other hand, should the sermon be interpreted as a blind and 
unskillful attempt to defend the Church from the fundamental attacks of the 
Lollards by refusing to criticise even abuses which should and did trouble


26 *Repressio*, 331.
orthodox ecclesiastics. This sermon is closely connected with Pecock's life-long attempt to convert the Lollards. The distinctions which he makes between 'preaching in the usual signification' and another kind of preaching that is not specifically mentioned suggest preaching by writing in the apostolic sense. His first three "conclusions" state:

Article I. Nobody knows how to prove, that a Bishop, because he is a Bishop, is obliged himself to preach to the common people of his diocese, taking the word preach in its most famous signification.

Article II. Bishops ought not to hold themselves obliged to preach in their own persons to the common people of their own dioceses: because Bishops are superior to other curates and are obliged to keep themselves free, and at liberty from that burden of preaching, the words used in that conclusion being taken in the most famous signification.

Article III. Bishops, on account of their being Bishops ought to have knowledge of those matters which inferior curates are to preach, and to have a greater knowledge in answering and solving the great questions, than inferior curates are obliged to have, because they are inferior curates.27

His defense of non-residency reads:

Article VI. Bishops may for divers causes be absent from their dioceses, and not reside on them, excusably, meritoriously, and cum gratiarum actions, in the sight of God; and that otherwise, or if they were resident on their bishoprics during the continuance of these causes, they would sin against God.28

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27The full text of the sermon is not extant. We have only the seven conclusions; the document, 'Abbreviatio Reginaldi Pecock', is printed as an appendix to Babington's edition of the Repressor, II, 615-619. The seven points are presented, in English, in Lewis's Life...of Pecock, 12; subsequent quotations of the conclusions are taken from this source.

28Lewis, Pecock, 12. The seventh article of Pecock's sermon is an answer to the contemporary attack on provisions and annates: Neither the Pope, nor the Bishops of England, are Simoniacs upon this account, that they received their bishoprics from the Pope by provision and pay first-fruits or annates for their bishoprics. Ibid.
This conclusion is as extreme as it is tendentious but it contains an indication of Pecock's recognition that the fifteenth century bishops' role had, in fact, a temporal side. Bishops were the spiritual lords of the realm and as such had political obligations which some of them fulfilled as chancellors or judges while others only sat in parliament from time to time. The higher ecclesiastics also had obligations to the universal church and some had to participate in the general councils of the Church. Bishops were, in other words, often forced to be absent from their bishoprics for long periods of time by virtue of their other duties. The determination of pressing causes could, of course, lead to abuse and this conclusion may even conceal a defense of Pecock's own absence from St. Asaphs in order to pursue his apologetical writings.

The complexity of a fifteenth century bishop's duties are well recognized and they seem sufficient to warrant excusing a bishop from ordinary preaching. But Pecock's argument is not simply to excuse them. In each conclusion relating to preaching he made it clear that he referred only to ordinary preaching in person. It seems evident that the bishop is urging his colleagues to use their "greater knowledge" in overseeing the curates' sermons, in answering the "greater questions" that arise and also that they preach in another than the usual sense, that is, by pen. Article IV asserts that they

may preach whenever they wish and here there is no mention of "usual significance of preaching". Pecock's own career amply illustrates his personal practice of preaching; of preaching by pen, so well known in apostolic and patristic times. His written instructions include in addition to the Rule, The Repressor, the Book of Faith, the Donet and the Folower many volumes no longer extant:

The Afore-Crier (preface to Pecock's works containing an apology to the laity with regard to the form and method of his writings, The Book of Baptism (in Latin), The Book of the Church (on optional faith among other matters—in Latin), Book of Counsels (dealing with the distinction between counsels and commands in view of striving toward private religious perfection), the Book of Compendious Logic, the Book of Divine Office (it appears to have been a service book with a commentary), Book of Eucharist, Book of Faith, Hope and Charity, Book of Matrimony, Book of Nature and Creatures in General (dealt with morals), Book of Orders and Pastoral Care, Book of Penance, Book of Priesthood or of Priest's Power, Book of Questions, Book of Sacraments (a major work from the number of references to it), Book of Sentences, Book of Usury, Book of Worshipping, Just Apprising of Doctors, and Just Apprising of Holy Scripture among others.30

Pecock was not desirous of seeing the pulpits empty but he was deeply concerned over the "pulpit bawlers", the poorly qualified or heretical preachers. And he often asserts that verbal preaching is not the most effective means of teaching, pointing out that written tracts, such as his, were preferable to sermons which were heard only once and might easily be misunderstood.31 Books, however, could be studied at length. His own Paul's Cross sermon could be and was misunderstood. Perhaps it was also ill-advised but

30Green gives a valuable list and discussion of these and other non-surviving works and the list of more book ascribed to Pecock's authorship by the chronicler Bale. Pecock, 238-245.

31Repressor, 88.
it was not inconsistent with his convictions as to the most effective means of combating heresy. It is not an indication that worldliness had "choked the Word" for Pecock was far from mute as his long series of Latin and vernacular 'epistles' testify.

Three years after this controversial sermon he was translated to the see of Chichester on the southern coast of England. Chichester had recently been vacated by the murder of the bishop, Adam Molayns at the hands of a mob. The papal order reads:

To Reginald, bishop of Chichester, translating him from the church of St. Asaph to that of Chichester, void by the death of Adam, during whose life it was specifically reserved by the present pope. Before taking possession of the administration etc. he is to take to the bishops of Rochester and Ely the usual oath of fealty.32

In the spring of 1450 he became bishop of Chichester.33

Pecock's register, as we have noted, has not been preserved.34 Reverend W.R.W. Stephens, the historian of the see, comments that the only notice of him in the cathedral archives consists of a few words placed against his name in the list of bishops, recording his resignation: "Reginaldus Pecokke sacrae theologiae professor qui de crimine haeresoe accusatus et convictus episcop-

32Calendar of Papal Registers, I, 509.

33And on 30 May, 1450 Rymer's Foedera shows the parliamentary notice of the restitution of temporalities, XI, 271; and the Calendar of Patent Rolls contains the order to the escheator in Surrey and Sussex and the escheator in Middlesex and the mayor of London to deliver all temporalities of the see, V, 334.

34Reinald Lane Poole in his article "The Muniments of the Bishop of Chichester," Historical Manuscript Commission Report on Manuscripts in various Collections, (London, 1901), I, 177-281, cites no material relating to Pecock. There is a break in the registers of the see during that period.
atum resignavit." Stephens adds, without citing any authority for the statement, that

In fact, the great vindicator of bishops from the obligation of preaching was himself an industrious preacher, as well as writer, and by his sermons in his own diocese, and by numerous treatises, he kept the flame of controversy alive [i.e. over the Lollard heresy].

References are made in the historical records to the consistory court at Chichester and we have some evidence of the bishop's judicial acts. A consistory court is not, of course, a peculiarity of the see of Chichester. This court appertains to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and is a power of all bishops, though some of the courts, as some of the sees, are more important than others. Pecock may not have exercised his judicial functions personally as the bishop's jurisdiction was normally exercised by his chancellor in the consistory court. However a bishop might, and often did, hear

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36 Ibid. (Material in brackets mine.), 153.

37 The jurisdiction was a very wide one; on the criminal side it included all the offences of the clergy that would otherwise be punishable at common law, and a number of other offences, whether committed by clerks or laymen, some of the offences were specifically religious, heresy, witchcraft, blasphemy and others which dealt with sexual misconduct, drunkenness, slander and usury. On the civil side it dealt with the proper forms of excommunication and the legality of ordination rites; they also heard disputes about church goods and finances that did not involve real property. Marriages and bequests were under this jurisdiction. M.M. Knappen, Constitutional and Legal History of England. (New York, 1942), 179-180. While statutes of the 14th and 15th centuries reduced this jurisdiction somewhat this is generally true.
cases himself or delegate his authority in different parts of the diocese to
a special official called a commissary. While the records of his court also
appear to be missing there is, perhaps, an architectural witness to the judi-
cial influence of the foe of Lollards at Chichester. A description of the
cathedral describes the muniment room as being the old consistory court and
adds that there is a small chamber above the south porch which is reached
through the old court room and which "has been popularly known as the 'Loll-
ard's Prison'." Rational persuasion was Peacock's avowed method for convert-
ing the Lollards but he also was a firm believer in the proper use of church
as is indicated by his defense of ecclesiastical judicial powers in the
Repressor. We know that Peacock kept prisoners from an entry in the Calendar
of Patent Rolls recording the fine he was obliged to pay for letting a prisoner
escape. The Close Rolls reveal that Peacock was also the recipient of fines;
an entry shows a list of a fine pro-rated over several years beginning in 1452:

Richard Heron otherwise Iren citizen and 'hater' of London to Reynold
bishop of Cicester. Bond in 80 marks payable at Midsummer day 1456...
The last of the yearly payments to be made is that of "40 marks payable on the feast
of the Purification 1458." From the entry we are not able to determine with

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38 Hubert C. Corlette, Chichester: the Cathedral and the See. (Bell's

39 Repressor, Chapter 11.

40 Calendar of Patent Rolls, VI, 32.

41 Great Britian, Public Record Office, Calendar of Close Rolls (London
certainty, however, that the fine is in consequence of actions settled in Pecock's court.

In 1450 the bishop was called upon to act as a commissioner for a tax.\textsuperscript{42} Most of the other public notices relate to the routine episcopal business of the appointment and admission of clerics to prebends in the diocese. A typical notice reads:

Presentation to R. bishop of Cicastr of John Penant, one of the chaplains of the household, for admission to the prebend which Gerald Hesyll, deceased late one of the chaplains of the said chapel, held within the castle of Hastyng, Co. Sussex.\textsuperscript{43}

As one of the Lords Spiritual, Pecock had something of a parliamentary career. The first official mention in this connection was that as Bishop of St. Asaph he attended a meeting of the Council 1 February 1445.\textsuperscript{44} The purpose of the assemblage was to discuss the Duke of Suffolk's forthcoming embassy to France. Almost all the bishops were in attendance. An entry in Rotuli Parliamentorum for 23 July 1455 gives an indication of the bishop's place in the political structure of the nation. Pecock, as Bishop of Chichester, with the Lords Spiritual and Temporal assembled at Westminster and took the oath to the King: "The Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in shewing their truth, faith and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{42}Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of Fine Rolls, (London, 1931), XVIII, 173.
  \item \textsuperscript{43}Calendar of Patent Rolls, V, 527. For similar notices see VI, 162, 195, 216 and \textsuperscript{43b}.
  \item \textsuperscript{44}H. Nicolas, editor, Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England. (Printed by Command of His Majesty King William IV under the direction of the Commissioners of the Public records of the Kingdom, 1834), VI, 32.
\end{itemize}
love that they have and bере to his Highnesse, every Lord Spirituell leyng his
hond upon his brest, and every temporal Lord taking cource said Soveraine Lord
by the hande, frely sware and promeitted in manner and forme that folowith:

I promitte unto youre Highnesse by the feith and trouth that I owe to
God, and to you, that I shall truely and faithfullly kepe the liegeance
that I owe unto you my most Soveraine Lord, and to put me in my devoir to
do all that may be to the welfare, honour and saufeguard of youre most
noble persone, and reiall estate, presemience and prerogative. And I
shall at no tyme will or consent to that that myght in any wyse be or
sorne to the hurt or prejudice of youre said most noble Persone, Dignitee,
Corone or Estate. And over that, I shall with all my power, resiste and
withstands all them that wold in any wyse presume to attempte the con-
trarie. So God me help and his Seyntes.45

This oath represents an important form of governmental security, one that was
still used in the seventeenth century, and indicates why the crown would view
with especial alarm the Lollard denial of the validity of oaths.

Jacob observes that Pecock never appeared in that small inner council
that transacted ordinary business.46 The few other items regarding Pecock's
parliamentary activities are enumerated in the Dictionary of National Biography
entry: he witnessed minutes of the council, signed the letters of credence for
the instructions to the commissioners appointed for the defense of Calais, was
ominated one of the triers of petitions for Gascony and the islands and signed
the document giving the Duke of York the power to act during Henry's incapaci-
city.47

45The entry concludes "nomina Dominorum juramentum and promissionem pre-
dictam in dicto Parliamento præstantium". Ninth in the list is "Episcopas

46Jacob, Pecock, 134.

47Dictionary of National Biography, XIV, 646.
During these years England was occupied with the last days of the Hundred Years War: English dominion in France ended the year of Pecock's appointment to Chichester, Cherbourg falling 12 August 1450, followed by the defeat of the English at Blanquefort, the fall of Bayonne and Bordeaux and the end of English control in Guienne. With the fall of Castillon in 1453 the end is in sight.

Europe as a whole was threatened when Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 but England felt more immediately endangered by the discontent raging at home. The early fourteen fifties were marked by Jack Cade's rebellion and the factional differences which would ultimately result in the Wars of the Roses.

This history is not especially relevant to our study because Pecock was neither an important participant in these events nor as far as is known particularly concerned over them. The bishop's writings are not political in character and enunciate no political philosophy. Only a few references to the contemporary political scene can be found. The comments of this nature in the Repressor, for example, are what we might expect from a conscientious clergyman. They express opposition to the war with France urging the Crown to devote itself to putting down heresy and improving the spiritual life of country instead of waging a war of aggrandizement:

But wolde God that the King of Englund wolde sette so myche bisynes forto conquer and reforme his land of Ingland fro this said wicked scole \textit{i.e.} school of heretica\footnote{Repressor, 90.} and fro othere defautis, as miche as he dooth aboute the conquest of his land of Normandie and of Fraunce, and peraventure he schulde thanne have more thanke and reward at his laste comyng hoom to the king of blisse, and more noble flauour of dine fame among alle the princis of the world and the worthi peeris of heuen, than he schal haue bi miche of his labour and cost doon abouti the worldi conquest of Fraunce.\textsuperscript{48}
The available evidence does not warrant the presentation of Pecock as a court bishop involved in the factional disputes and political maneuvers of his age. Green's attempt to utilize the above quotation in order to link him to the anti-war party led by the Duke of Suffolk is not substantiated. Without further evidence and none seems available, we cannot use these few words to prove that Pecock the theologian had become a political ally of Suffolk. The spiritual and moral burden of his admonition to the King are evident in this quotation and the other two of its genre.\(^4^9\) The political characterization given Pecock while given some slight support by a hostile chronicler, appears to be mainly the result of unwarranted assumptions made in the absence of facts. This type of faulty inference can be seen in the handling of the question of residency. Take Green for instance, regarding St. Asaph. He asserts that

> it is unlikely that Pecock spent much of his six years in his diocese, but he was probably more conscientious that Thomas Bouchier, who as Bishop of Ely is popularly supposed to have said mass in his cathedral on one occasion only.\(^5^0\)

As a matter of fact we do not know that Pecock ever set foot in his see. Much, if not all of the business on record could have been done from London as well as in Wales.

Yet his literary works give us ample indication of his main occupation

\(^4^9\) See also the *Repressor*, 21 and 516.

\(^5^0\) Green, *Pecock*, 30.
when Bishop of Chichester. His writing habits make it difficult to date his works with precision. Pecock did not write his works consecutively but several at one time because, as he says, this would enable him to make them more consistent in content. And because the writings were published only in the sense of their being sent to friends or those who would use them and make them known, we do not have any specific record of when they began to circulate. Pecock explains his literary method in a metaphorical comparison to the building of a fifteenth century house:

 furthermore, thou in this present prolog and thou after in this present book I allege others bokis which were bigunnen longe after the bigynynge of this present first book, jitt no man hath therupon to wondri, fforwhi y kepte this reule that the former bokis hadden not her fullist and parfitist filling and sending ear than the latter bigunne bokis were al most endid, and after that y hadde esndid the fornnre bok y esntesone ouer rame it after the making of the lateir bok, ther by y fillid ofte ajen into gretter plente the forner, so that y maad my cours fro bok to book that ech of her myte helpe the other to be mad, and that ech schulde accorde with other and leene to other and be joyned and knytt to other, rijt as chaumbres, parlouris and manye housis of offices answeren and cleeven to the chief balle for to make of alle hem so togidere placid and knytt oon formall, oon semely, beautiful, useful and confortable habitacioun.51

Jacob, drawing upon an English university thesis devoted to the dating of Pecock's works, states that many of the bishop's best known works date from the Chichester episcopacy, the Follower, a sequel to the Donet being written in 1453 the Book of Faith, in many ways a supplement to the Repressor being completed in 1455-56.52 (The Book of Faith, as we have previously noted, was closely

51Keule, 22.
52Jacob, Pecock, 135.
linked to the Latin series on the sacraments which he wrote when he was Bishop of St. Asaph.) Presumably he also wrote during this period, the Latin works, the Book of Matrimony, the Book of Baptism, the Book of Eucharist, the Book of Penance, and the Book of Priests. It is then Peacock as an apologist rather than as an ecclesiastical politician that warrants interest. While there are serious gaps in his extant writings as well as in the biographical details of his life, what does survive reveals a great deal of his thought.
CHAPTER III

THE APOLOGIST

Bishop Pecock's apologetical method for confuting the Lollards consisted in the use of reasonable arguments set forth in syllogisms. This rational answer to Lollardy can be seen both in the Book of Faith and The Repressor of over much Blaming of the Clergy, where he is obliged to appeal to a reason common to all men, since his opponents have rejected the traditional authority of the Church. Disputation based on reasonable arguments alone was not unique in the high middle ages; one recalls the public debates between Dominicans and Jews, Moslems or heretics. St. Thomas Aquinas' well-known Summa Contra Gentiles is considered a memorial to such an approach.

Pecock's confidence in the ultimate success of his apologetical method was based on two assumptions. His first assumption was that an syllogistic judgement of the reason was infallible:

that the power of resoun in him self is not ordeyned of God to be sure next and best and surest reuler or reule anentis [concerning] alle reasonable truthis but the doom of resoun [sic.] is ordeyned to so be; and hit not ech doom of resoun, but thilk doom of resoun which is a formal complete argument clepid a syllogisme in resoun, whos bothe premissis ben sureli or likeli known fro trewe, and that bi hem selif or bi sume otheres before had lijk syllogisme or syllogisimes prouyng the premisses hauyng nede to be proved, into tyms it become into premissis openist in suerti or openist in probabilite.¹

Secondly he maintained that the "reasonable power of the souls" in Lollards

¹The Repressor, 75.
as in all men is of such nature and kind that "he is not free from consent or
disent, standing the evyndencis movyng him; but he muste nedis consent to think
parti, in to which the strengre evyndencis moven him." Therefore if he ex-
presses the truths in convincing and well wrought syllogismes the Lollards
cannot be but convinced.

The bishop clearly expresses his disallusionment with the current conciliar
attempt at reconciliation with heretical movements. He wishes his apologetic
activities to take the form of a scholastic disputation in which the Lollards
may argue their position as, perhaps, Hus would like to have done at Constance.
After urging them that they are free from the weight of authority and penalty
of sin in doing this, he challenges them to prove their beliefs if they can. Pecock
states that he had had long experience in debating with "the wittiest
and cunningest" of these heretics, a group which had even "dakis amonge hem,
and which hav loved me for that y wolde pacientli heare her evyndencis, and her
matynes, without exprobracion". Yet none of the Lollards could offer any

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2 Book of Faith, 198; Pecock referred the reader to Chapter II of the Book
of Faith and to the first part of the Polever for his full teaching on this
point.

3 Book of Faith, 112. While I dissent from the Rev. E.M. Blackie's general
interpretation of Pecock, which portrays him as a "papalist" only because there
was no other position possible to him in the dark era in which he lived and as
one who, had he lived in a more congenial century might have been in every sense
a greater man, it should be pointed out that he makes a valuable point in
connecting his subject with the disallusionment which followed the failure of
the conciliar movement. 455-456. E.M. Blackie, "Reginald Pecock", The English
Historical Review, XXVI (1911), 448-468.

4 Book of Faith, 211. Note: Pecock makes no direct reference to Hus.

5 Ibid., 202.
evidence strong enough to move him to assent to their creed. He was able, in these past encounters, to readily offer answers to all their arguments. Their arguments were in fact so weak that any "clerk in logik, philosophie, and divinite, schulde some schewe her motive to be over feble to be clear and undoubtable proof." Pecock will, however, still hear their arguments. And in his dialogues he writes such convincing parts for his Lollard adversaries that this may have lead the casual reader among his contemporaries to suspect him of Lollardy.

Now in order that the people may understand his "clear and undoubtable proofs" which he will express in infallible syllogisms some knowledge of logic, he says, will be necessary. His readers would not, for the most part, be the "thrifti clerks" who had had university training but rather the people of business. He would, therefore, undertake to give them a brief course in logic. All the bishop's extant works contain explanations of premises and of the proper construction of the syllogism etc. After the logic lesson in *The Repressor* he again asserts his fundamental belief in the convincing power of syllogistic reasoning:

and this is a general reule, in every good and formal and ful argument that if his premisis be know for trewe, the conclusion ou3te be avovid for trewe, what ens: creature wole seie the contrarie.7

These syllogism's apologetic function is to lead from known truths to the

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7 *The Repressor*, 8.
unknown ones; from the easier ones to the harder ones. Syllogisms are necessary, he explains:

sithen [since] ech treuth of faith is a treuth which a man learneth and knowith, after that before he it not knowes for hardness and darknes thereof, it folowith that the learnynge and knowynge of ech treuth and conclusion of faith muste medis be hadde and gete bi argument, which is a syllogisme; or bi sum other reducible into a syllogisme, and be gete and had, without such said argument being in the understonding of the learner, whils he it learneth." ⁸

He is, incidentally, convinced that great and general intellectual good would be brought about if the common people and others having no logical training such as lawyers had access to a "compendious" treatise on logic in the vernacular. He adds that he hopes some day to write such a treatise. ⁹

The teaching of the art of logic is, however, but a means to his declared end of converting the heretics. In *The Repressor* he will deal with a series of specific errors of the Lollards. ¹⁰ His primary purpose is more than to bring the heretics into conformity with the Church on certain points of dogma.

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⁸ *Book of Faith*, 126. One more paragraph follows, then the text breaks off and two folios are missing.


¹⁰ A full statement of the heresies and errors of Wyclif is printed in Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 156-158. In *The Repressor* Fecock dealt primarily with what he thought to be those tenets prevalent in his day: the condemnation of the use of saints images in churches, pilgrimages to places hallowed by the saints, the possession of property by the clergy, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the promulgation of papal laws and ordinances, luxury and pomp associated with religious ceremonies and the mass, the sacraments, the use of the oath and the maintainance of war or capital punishment. The *Repressor* has derived its historical significance chiefly from the indication it gives as to the beliefs of fifteenth century Lollards. See for example, R. Heddle, "Lollards", *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*. (Paris, 1926), IX, part 1, 910-925, 920.
He hopes to get them to accept as well the authority of the Church in determining what is to be believed. The Lollards exalt Scripture, making it the sole determination of what is Faith. They feel that they interpret it rightly and that a church is in accordance with it only if it exactly reproduces the historical situation of the apostolic church, which was poor and peripatetic without a detailed hierarchy and a codified cannon law. Pecock must then explain what faith is, how we derive it, the place and function of Scripture, and how reason and the authority of the Church play a part in the establishing of articles of belief. When dealing with the Church and faith, he will stress less the precise dogmas defined by the Church, than seek to justify the church of his day as a valid successor to the apostolic church of the Wycliffite ideal.

Pecock neither doubts the truth of certain defined dogmas nor the Church's authority to define them. Yet in order to make his arguments palatable and get the Lollards to listen to them (which they must in order to be convinced) he adopts a conciliatory manner. He talks a great deal about faith as a kind of knowing because in it you conclude as to the truth of a proclamation.\textsuperscript{11} And because the question of authority was particularly sensitive, the bishop generally goes out of his way to avoid being arbitrary, suggesting that faith can also be considered as the power of accepting not the fact of acceptance.\textsuperscript{12}

In appreciating his definition of faith it is helpful to note his explan-

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Book of Faith}, 124.
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Folever}, 63.
otation of formal theology. He wanted his readers to understand this clearly since he had chosen to accent the reasonableness of the orthodox position. The author carefully shows, therefore, the relationship between revealed truth and truth arrived at by discursive reason in formal theology. Pecock declares that that part of "dyuzyte" which does not deal with faith in the sense of revealed truth, to which reason could not attain, has the same grounds as philosophy, for it is philosophy. But the source of that part of theology which deals with revealed truth, what he would call faith in the strict sense, is the "textis and processis of sum partii of hoeli scripture in her litteral undirstondyng."13 His full definition of Faith follows:

faith taken propirli is a knowyng wherbi we assenten to any thing as to a trouth, for as mych as we have sure euydencis, or full notable likli euydencis grettir than to the contrari, that it is toold and afferrayed to vs to be trewe bi him of whom we have sure euydencis, or notable likli euydencis grettir than to the contrari, that therinne he not lyed as isoure knowyng that god is thre persoones and oon in substaunce, that the second persoone is boths god and man, that he was born of a mayde, that baptym oujte be recayyd, and eukarist oujte tobe vaid, and so forth of uthire articolis, whiche alle we taken as for trouthis, and consenten hem to be treuthis, bi cause we have notable likli euydencis stronger than to the contrariis that crist, which is god, and of whom we knownen that he may not lie, afferemde hem to be treuthis and tauți hem to vs bi hise apostlis and bi his scripture, that we schulde take hem as for treuthis, not withstonding the same treuthis mowe not be prouyd to be treuthis in proces of arguyng open tooure resoun bi socisoun takun of the same treuthis without the seid to vs maad afferrayng or reuelyn.14

While Pecock often refers to the Lollards rather derisively as the "Bible Men" it is not to be supposed that he questioned the authority of Holy Scrip-

13Folower, 66.
14Id., 62.
ture. He objected to the Lollard's excessive reliance on it, to their confusing historical details with dictates as to the form of the fifteenth century church when they held, for example, that if the apostles had no possessions the Church should have no possessions. And he strongly opposed to their ideas of what might be termed private interpretation; he held that it was not the commonalty that had either the knowledge to understand Scripture or the authority to expound it.

It has been commonly supposed that Pecock placed reason above Scripture. This view began with his contemporary and hostile biographer Gascoigne who charged him, as we have noted, with putting the law of nature of Scripture. Subsequent students of Pecock, such as Morison, who make him a 'Renaissance Rationalist', may have been misled either by Gascoigne or by the provocative statement which the bishop himself makes in the Donet. In this dialogue the "son" asks the "father" (Pecock) "into what prupos and send was man made"? He answers:

Certiis, sone, forto reule his will and his outwad and inward wittis, with her appetitis, his doyngis and sufferings and movings in gourse-nunce of doable things, aftir the dooa of resoun, or of feith allowable bi resoun, whils he lyvith in this liif; that aftir the deeth of this

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15 This will be discussed in Chapter IV.

16 Logi, 211; quotation given in Chapter I.

17 Introductory essay to the Book of Faith. Historians of the Renaissance might well point out some misunderstanding of the thought of their period.

18 It must, in fairness, be pointed out that this may have mislead Gascoigne as well although that chronicler seems generally animated by his dislike for a fellow clergyman who stood in opposition to all which Gascoigne believed to be the solution to the problem of heresy and reform.
lijf, he be reysid ajen again into bodily lijf, forto lyve in body and soule to gedir euerlasting, in ioye and bliss, afore the presence of god."19

Exactly what he means by "faith allowable bi resoun" is not clear. Perhaps he refers here to ethical notions that are a part of revelation yet are attainable by natural reason. He does conclude this discussion with the statement that it is all one and the same to "lyve moraly vertuouely, and forto gourne cure dedis of doable thingis after resoun or feith, and forto lyue after the law of god and service to god."20 Yet his meaning is far from clear. While the statement might give the impression that reason controls and is superior to faith, such a position is not consistent with the main body of his thought. Pecock refers the reader to his Just Apprising of Hole Scripture for further explanation. This work, however, is not extant. It is particularly unfortunate that the Just Apprising does not survive as it is often referred to at critical junctures and perhaps contained the synthesis of his thought which was never achieved in the separate surviving works.

Actually Pecock and the Lollards were in agreement as to the importance of Holy Scripture. The bishop repeatedly asserts that it is the "ground of faith", the "rule" of faith and that any item of faith that contradicts Holy Scripture is false:21 As he has accused the Lollards of "ouer muche leening" on Holy Scripture he states what Scripture is designed to do:

19Donet, 14.

20Ibid., 15.

21Reule, 160.
The holy office and work into which God ordained Holy Scripture is forto
grounds articles of faith and forto rehearse and witnesse moral trouths of
law of kindes groundid in moral philosophie, that is to seie in doem of
resoun, that the reders be remembrid, stirid, and exortid bi so miche
the better and the more and the sooner forto fulfillle hem...."22

The question was in what did the "litteral understanding of scripture" consist,
how it was attained and who was able and authorized to do so.

Literal understanding of Scripture, he said, was not self evident. Against
the claims of these "Bible Men" that the churchmen set themselves above
Scripture because they presumed to determine its true meaning, he argued that
because Scripture needs an "expounder" it does not follow that Scripture is
inferior to its "expounder", any more than the judges or the king who appoints
the judges can be said to be above the law.23 The people should read the Bible
as it exhorts them to moral excellence24 but it should not be presumed that
every humble Christian man and woman will discover without error the true sense
of Scripture.25 But to most effectively learn the moral laws people should
have a guide such as his own "Four Tables" which will teach more ethical rules
systematically without possibility of erroneous interpretation.26

Pecock realises that the Lollards will argue that as Scripture is the
ground of faith and they "cleve to Scoli Scripture" as their guide in all things
they are not to be blamed because they "confoamm...to thilke reule which God

22The Register, 35.
23Book of Faith, 281.
24The Register, 21.
25Ibid., 5-7.
26The "Four Tables" will be discussed in Chapter V.
hath purveyed." In the Book of Faith when the bishop presents this argument in their name he definitely reaffirms his own assertion that Scripture is a rule of faith but asks:

If thou wolst thus followe Holie Scripture, whether wolde thou folowe Holy Scripture...in his rist and dawe litteral understanding, or ellis in his unrijt and undewe litteral understanding?27

He acknowledges that these Lollards desire to have the right and "due litteral understanding" but cautions them that they cannot obtain this understanding themselves nor from the multitude of lay people. The bishop declares that it is the clergy or the more knowledgable part of the clergy that should have much more skill in discovering and teaching this correct understanding of scripture. It is a question of specialisation. He cites as an example, that a man who wishes to understand a charter does not ask the advice of other men "unlearned in the kingis law" or trust his own wits but consults clerks learned in law. They do this because they realise how much error would cost them. Again, he continues, if you want a ship built you consult a shipbuilder, and if you have a doubt about "a text, or a processe, writen wthinne the bookeis of philosophis" you consult one learned in philosophy.28 That the

27Book of Faith, 226-227. The Lollards had faced this problem in their translation of the bible; the first translation was made according to the strictest school of translation that is word for word and the result was a huge text which occupied many folios and was both too expensive and too erudite for pastoral use; the second complete translation, the Purvey edition, was made meaning for meaning and admitted of allegorical interpretations etc., this really became the Lollard bible but many of Wycliffe temperament were concerned over its remoteness from literal interpretation. See Margaret Deansely, The Significance of the Lollard Bible, (London, 1951).

28Book of Faith, 228-229.
forgoing is true the Lollards must readily admit, and if this be true they
must also admit that in the very serious business of interpreting Scripture
they must consult those trained in theology. 29 These arguments indicate that
while the ecclesiastical registers of the period contain recantations of
clerks who have fallen into this heresy, 30 Pecock is directing his polemic to
the non-university person or to those trained in law not theology.

Certain passages do refer to the manner in which trained theologians
should interpret Scripture as is necessary to his full position. The bishop
explains that in order to understand Scriptural exegesis it must be realized
that its content is of three kinds. That portion of Scripture which contains
the revealed truths of faith is supernatural:

so hige and digne and hardy that to hym natural reasoun may not atteyne,
thouj noon of hym ben aijens reasoun—that is to seie noon of hym includith
repugnance if summe of hym be aijens nature, as is the tryne of per-
sones in oon hede of substantence with the propr e amyngis and with the
kindis of proceedings,—and therefer the knowing of hym muste be known
into reasoun bi reveulacioun and demuniciacioun of such a person to whom
we ouyte algetis Iesus credence bi cause we have sufficient eyndence to
trowe (Believe) that their ymes he not lied. 31

This "grettist faith" or Revelation is about such things as that a "maid bare
a childe" and that child was God. It concerns a "truthe...such that y may
not bi natural witte suffice" to know and we believe it on the authority of a
"teller" or proclaimer. We know because "God, bi him self immediately, or bi

29Ibid., 229.
30See, for example, Wilkins, Concilia, III, 493-503 (dated 1428).
31Reule, 461.
an angel, or bi oon of the apostlis of God hath tolde it, or in sum other
wise denounced it to be trewe, as bi writing or bi miracle therefor doyng or
bi any other signe occupyng sufficiently the stile of word,..."32

Some of the material of the Bible is historical. The historical material
is also beyond reason. But not for "the hijnnes of hem or for that thei ben
in her kynde aboue alle mennys resoun, but bi cause thei ben fetis, werkis
and deidis of creaturis" such as that some king had a certain victory or
concerning genealogies. The historical portions are not subject to speculative
reason because "the knowing of alle suche muste be take into our resoun bi
credence 3euynge to" the person telling it. This person or persons must be
such as we ou3te algatis [altogether] trowe [believe] and truste" for his
information.33 The third kind of biblical material is philosophical being of
suche maters as natural resoun may atteyne to forto knowe the verry
trouths of hem without any persoon or tellyng or affermig hem to vs,
as is that we schulde preise thes, preis to thes [i.e. God],...neither
lyve entemporately in vs silf...34

Concerning the exegesis of Holy Scripture as to the revealed truths,
matters of the first kind, the Bible should be taken literally, while making
exposition for the purposes of presentation and the reconciling of inconsis-
tencies:

In kynde of the firste maters, we schulen 3eue wel ny3e ful credence to
the precise literal pretencion of holi writt, and drawe our resoun and

32Book of Faith, 123-124.

33Reule, 661; regarding the criteria of assent to this class of material
see the Book of Faith, particularly 123-124.

34Reule, 661.
compelle our resoun into obeischaunce of it, and noon expositioun thereupon make but if it be to make accordaunce betwene thilke party and others parties of holi writt speaking of the same maters or of partinauncis therto.35

He urges, however, that the exegesis of the early church doctors who lived in apostolic times are of great value. As he refers, in this context to "holy dyonise" 36 it would seem that Pecock held to the old belief that this neo-platonic writer was a disciple of St. Paul.

We can be more critical of the historical material in the Bible and here Pecock gives some indication of his ability as an historian. We should believe this material if it is not unreasonable or, as we might say, historically inaccurate:

In kynde of the ij maters we schule such credence being not moost propirly feith 3jes to precise literal pretencioum of scripture, so that it be not contrarie to an other party of the same scripture, neither that it be a3ens resoun but that it may stonde with natural resoun, neither about resoun;...37

The philosophical portions of the Bible are subject to reason and exegesis is therefore permitted. He does not seem to imply that the philosophical portions of the Bible are unreasonable but rather that this matter expressed in syllogisms and explained in treatises will be evidently reasonable.38

Pecock claims it is the Church 'now living' which has the power to "ex-

35Reule, 461.
36Ibid., 462.
37Ibid.
38Ibid.
powne, and interprete and declare the trewe understanding of Holi Scripture. 39

What then is the relationship between the existing church, this church which
the Lollards had so attached, and the faith as expressed in the Scriptures?
The "Chirche of God" he explains "is mad, of the peple as of his material
cause, and of the faith as of his formal cause;" or at least, "the Chirche
is the seid peple, not as the seid peple is in himself but as and hou and
while, and whanne, and where the peple is ioyned and coupled togider in one
faith taut from God." 40

The relation of the faith to the Church is as cause to effect. If the
church is not the Church unless it has received its faith from God it follows
that "the Chirche knoweth not him self to be a chirch in lassse than he knowes
him self to have receyed his faith in the seid maner fro God." 41 This
knowledge is necessary to "teche autentikli feith to any persoone" and Pecock
must prove that the Church has received the faith from God. He says that
there are three ways in which we can know the faith has been received by the
Church: one is that "Holi Scripture witnessith and denouncith it...[that] is above the natural power of secon aloone forto fynde it and know it; sec-
ondly "a myracle is doon in to witnessing of it." And finally by continuity,
the holi chirche this hath bileved fro feith in tyme of the apostlis, and fro

39 Book of Faith, 279.

40 Ibid., 170. This passage is, as well, one of the most pleasing examples
of Pecock's literary style.

41 Book of Faith, 171.
then continueth hitherto.\footnote{42}

In regard to the first way, he warns the Lollards that it is incorrect to judge the Church's institutions by the strict content of Scripture, casting out as false those institutions not explicitly mentioned. Scripture does not contain everything that is lawful.\footnote{43} While innumerable miracles are witness to the Church's role, he finds the argument from continuity the most fruitful.\footnote{44}

The Lollards, following Wyclif, demanded a return to the material poverty and purity of doctrine of the primitive Church. To their ideas of a "New Galilee" Pecock argued that the Church now is essentially the same as that of the early church. Today's priests and bishops are the legitimate successors of the apostles and people now are subject to their authority.\footnote{45} Lapsing momentarily from the dialogue, he pronounces that it is sinful to stand against God and His ordinance. The Lollards, he claims, put themselves "into damnable synne and perel of damnable synne" if they stand in opposition to the "prelatis of the churche in cause and mater of feith."\footnote{46} Lest the burden of this authority seem unreasonably restrictive, he points out the Church's caution and restraint in using her authority.\footnote{47} But when they judge, determine and declare author-

\footnote{42}{Ibid.}
\footnote{43}{See the first book of The Repressor, especially 35.}
\footnote{44}{See Chapter V.}
\footnote{45}{Book of Faith, 134-35.}
\footnote{46}{Ibid., 139.}
\footnote{47}{Ibid., 294.}
itatively, their pronouncements must be accepted as true.

The Church is then authoritative in matters of faith and morals and Pecock exhorts them if they "be any thing wise" to obey the clergy of the Church not only for fear of Hell but "for the love and reverence and sake of Almiat Cod."\(^48\) The bishop’s purpose in writing was to "chastise" them from their "seid presumpcion, and fro the seid disobedience". Yet how can he advise them to obey all the clergy when some of these clerics are heretics? He understands this problem and relates the story of how simple people were led into heresy by their learned curate:

in a large, wyde parisch, up lond, be an old symple widowe, or an old symple husbands man, to whom a great fames kunnyng mayster of divinite is curat, and parsoun, and vikar. This husband man is enfoormed, and t taught of the seid his famose curat forto bileeve as feith a certeyn ar ticle, which in trouthe is an heresie. This man hath no motive, neither can fynde cause, whi he schulde not truwe to his seid curat, and whi he schulde walke wyde forto examine whether his curat techith him riijtli, or no. And therfore this man cleve to the seid doctrine of his curat, as stiffeli as he doith to any other article, which he hath learnyd of the same curat to be feith.\(^49\)

In Pecock’s day many pious people, not necessarily affected by Lollard sentiments, were concerned about problems of authority in religion. The twin evils of heresy and schism caused this uneasiness: some clerics were heretics but how were the simple faithful to detect this? The schism resulted in two or three sets of cardinals corresponding to the popes and people wondering as to which were true were led in consequence to question the validity of ordin-

\(^{48}\text{Book of Faith, 225-26.}\)

\(^{49}\text{Ibid., 223-24.}\)
ation and hence to question marriages and other sacraments performed by priests ordained in this era. By 1417 the great schism was ended yet a few antipopes would appear in the first half of the fifteenth century and the memory of the earlier situation still appears to have affected the popular mentality.

Realising this, Pecock states that it is indeed regrettable that the curate in the story he related had fallen into heresy. But, he assures them, the good people who believed this curate did not become heretics. God will understand the situation and reward them for their obedience, which is very pleasing to God:

In this case, it is holde of ful good clerke, bi greet skilis, that this man is excusid in his now seid errour, and not onli he is excusid but he pleasith God, and deserveth mede and blisse bi this errour lijk as he is excusid and serveth and plesith God, and deserveth mede and blisse, for bileswe of others articlas, which he bileswe bi doctrine takun of his curat, ... he, and not onli is this trewe, but also, stonding this case, this man were a martir, if he did for knowleching, and avowin, and defending of thilke same seid article, which in trouthe is erroneose, and he is bounde forte so bileswe thilke articale, stonding this seid case and his seid circumstanciis...50

Pecock's papalism is a distinctive feature of his thought; as the schism was settled he could appeal to the pope as the head of the Church and one who authoratively declares what is faith. While individual clergymen may make mistakes the people are to feel confident that the Church cannot err in her official pronouncements. But as the problem faced is one of the people's obedience to the Church as represented in their clergymen he urges them to obey and God will, in his Providence, take care of any difficulties such as

50 Book of Faith, 224.
their clergyman being, by chance, a heretic. The same, he says, is true of using one's reason:

therefore, if it like /as pleasing/ to ours Lord God that he submitte and undirputte alle Cristen personys to resoun and fre wil, as that it is true; it is before proved openli you3 in the Donat, and in his Folewer, and that thou3 therwith resoun and fre wil ben suche reulys whiche move erre and faile, what is this to thee?51

But what "querel maist thou make therajens to God", he asks, and how would this cause complaint. For if,

whanne resoun and wil not failen and thou bi hem doist rijtli, thou art medid and rewarded

but if reason and will should fail, due to no fault of your own:52

Thou art not onli excused, in the dedis comyng therid, but also thou art, for hem medid and rewardid, as thou3 resoun and wil in the dedis not faileden.53

And Pecock asks what cause they have "forto compleyne" because what is true in regard to the exercise of our reason and free will is true in regard to obeying the authority of the clergy. The discussion of reason was only by way of analogy. The point he is making is that they ought to give thanks that in a like manner,

it like /pleases/ God forto so ordayne, and submitte and undirputte the lay man to the Clergie in his hool universal chirohe, for to leerne and kunne /know/ thi feith, and al that perteysnteth to thi Cristen relig-


52 "whanne resoun and wil failin, whilis thou it not causist, neither it knowest, or desirist,..." Ibid.

53 Ibid.
He concludes that "thou3 the clergie may faile and erre in his tyching, and determynyng," the Lollards should not, therefore, "repugne" God's ordinance or refuse to obey it, since it is "here before undoutabili proved"

that bi obedience to the clergie, in case of the clergies erring, whils thou it not knowist, neither desirist, neither makist, noon hurte schal come, but the same good whiche schulde to thee therbi come, if the cler­gie in the tyching not errid...55

Much of this is very difficult to understand, he admits, but God need not explain his motives or mysteries to us. We must obey ordinances that we know God made. Pecock so firmly and unquestionably believes in the authority of the Church, that he occasionally loses patience and declares that the Lollards must obey the Church which God has made and that's an end of it. If they do not they are truly "so proud that [they] art worthy of felowshipid with Lucifer in helle".56

Yet in regard to theologians studying theology and their exploration of Scriptural meaning he was not rigidly conservative. While not denying the wisdom of the fathers he points up that even the most famous exegesis is subject to revision because the science of theology advances; what is evident to one man may have been hidden from those who went before.57 There will be,

55Book of Faith, 218. He states that the truth of this is proved in the seventh chapter of that book and this is more fully discussed in the Book of Preesthood, a work that is no longer extant.

56Ibid., 218-219.

57Reule, 465.
therefore, progress in our understanding of the Bible. This attitude seems to make him one in attitude if not in training with the biblical scholars of the late medieval and early modern period. It is, however, in regard to the use of historical criticism in studying the Bible and the history of the Church that Pecock makes his special contribution. He asserts that we are not as "Doubting Thomas" if we require evidences for our faith because Thomas had lived in Christ’s day and sufficient evidences for belief before “crist sherw to him his bondis and hisse feet.” But we who are now living only have as evidence of the resurrection, for example, that the apostles have related it. Not having Thomas’s evidences it is valid for us to convince ourselves that the “apostles weren trew and trusti men and not liers” which can be done and is a standard part of apologetics.58 He is, of course, satisfied that they were “trusty” but feels that it is a valid question.

In connection with the doubting Thomas passage Pecock quotes the "sentence" of Augustine which seems to offer an objection to his thought:

thou maist be drawn to the font a3ens thi wil; thou maist be baptisid a3ens thi wil; thou maist speke those wordis, y bileeve, et cetera, a3ens thi wil. But bileeve maist thou never, but with thi wil.59

Pecock agrees with “holi Austin” but urges that if a man “bi his wil suffre sufficient evydencis of feith forto entre suffecientli into resoun” if by his will he will allow the “resoun” to be moved if the evidences are strong enough to do so. The bishop is convinced that if he can get the Lollards to

58Book of Faith, 155.
59Quoted, Ibid., 160-161.
listen attentively to his arguments their reason will be so moved that they will be converted. 60

There is no problem, according to Pecock, that a person might know the Church to be the true church yet not be able to move his will to the acceptance of it. For the Lollards to rejoin the body of Christian believers involves no social revolution for all the citizens are nominally at least members. And man's reason is not free like the will, he declares, but it must accept any doctrine supported by the superior evidence. He felt confident that he could, by his logical prowess, fashion the infallible syllogisms necessary to attract their reason. While much of the content of the syllogisms was above reason, it was not unreasonable, he declared, because the veracity of those witnessing these truths could be established. 61 The bishop's apologetic included then the forming of the content of the faith into the infallible syllogisms, confident that the reason of his hearers would be convinced, the Lollards moved to assent and doctrinal unity would again prevail in Christendom. So confident is Pecock of this that he asserted that the Jews and heathen are unconverted because Christian clerks hitherto have not make them sufficiently clear arguments: 62

60 His position implies an intimate connection between reason and will and that the will acts in accordance with the dictates of reason.

61 [Footnote: foliover, 74.]

62 [Footnote: Rule, 429. From the twelfth century and even before volumes were written to convert the Jews and Heathens. Examples are found in such works as Alan of Lille's On Catholic Faith Against the Heretics. Discussed in E. Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages. (New York, 1955), 172-178.]
CHAPTER IV

A GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

In addition to his program for converting the Lollard, Pecock planned a series of works for educating the faithful in matters of faith and morals. Three of his extant tracts, as we have noted, were devoted to this task: the Rule of Crystal Religion, the Donet, and the Folower to the Donet. Certain aspects of his theology for the laity are intimately related to contemporary tendencies in the religious life of the people. Pecock's emphasis on an intellectual approach to religious life is primarily a product of his own personality and education. It may also, however be explained in terms of a reaction to the current separation of philosophy and theology and particularly to the irrational movement in religion which is sometimes called "popular mysticism".

The practitioners of popular mysticism must be clearly differentiated from what may be strictly defined as mysticism, that is "the habitual unity of the soul to the will of God."1 "Mystics" must also be differentiated from "theological contemplatives," persons trained in theology and who, in accordance with the teachings of the Church, attempt with the help of grace to contemplate God through prayer and meditation on theology and Scripture.

Perhaps the English popular mysticism against which Pecock seems to set himself in opposition is best defined by describing one of its leading luminaries and a contemporary of the bishop, Margery Kempe. While showing her to be a woman of piety, the Book of Margery Kempe reveals her to be a representative of a rather unstable religious attitude marked by excess and emotionalism and entirely devoid of a firm theological foundation. Margery is a city product but the countryside as well swarmed with anchorites, bare-foot, wandering apostles of religious revival. While persons of the Kempe or anchorite sentiment were associated with the attacks on the institutional church by virtue of their frequent and often eloquent denouncing of evils and abuses, only a very small percentage can be directly associated with the Lollard heresy. But if the new religious enthusiasm was ostensibly within the framework of orthodox Catholicism it was fraught with dangers that, in many cases, the ecclesiastical authorities were not slow to recognize.

It is these people Pecock seems to have in mind. While this movement awaits definitive study there is some evidence to indicate that it was greatly influenced by continental thought. Dom David Knowles in describing popular mysticism in England notes that:

there is some evidence that from the fifteenth century onwards it was contaminated by another current, that of a more emotional and idiosyncratic devotion, manifesting itself in visions, revelations and unusual behavior, deriving partly from one aspect of the teaching of Ruysbroeck.

2 The Book of Margery Kempe: the text from the unique manuscript owned by Colonel W. Butler-Bowden...Edited with Intr. and glossary by Sanford Brown Meech; with a prefatory note by Hope Emily Allen. (Early English Text Society-Original Series no. 212)(London, 1940).
and Suso and the other mystical writers, and partly from the influence of some of the women saints of the fourteenth century, such as Angela Foligno, Dorothea of Prussia and Bridget of Sweden.3

He sees Margery as the most familiar of this type of religious practice. The editors of the Book of Margery Kempe also suggest the possibility of continental influences but they opt for Margery's native originality.4 While there are no studies devoted to this question we do have some evidence of the influence. Ousl, in a footnote, states that "even the mystical treatises of the great fourteenth century preachers of the continent like Suso and Ruysbroek were made available for the English pulpit in English translations."5 Significantly for our study two of the translations bear the dates 1434-1435.

Popular mysticism was generally characterized by a distrust of learning. Pecock, on the contrary, stresses the studied, intellectual aspects of religion, especially private prayer. Sharing their reverence for the contemplative life he intimately and rightly associated it with theology. The bishop wrote quite extensively on the relationship between the active and contemplative life.6 He urged that part of the "lay persony's" day should be devoted to meditation, although most of their time, due to their state in life, must be taken up with the active pursuits of home and business. For even though


4The Book of Margery Kempe, liv.

5MS ADD. 37790, contains Ruysbroek's Tretes of perfection off the sonynys of God (fol. 115), Suso's Horolop Sapientiae (fol. 135 b– part only as in MS 37049, but all in MS Douce 111) as cited in Ousl, 286, note 2.

6Reule, 167-509.
"each man and woman" are not by vocation contemplatives he regretted that "prayer and praising" are so little practiced. 7 His marked preference for silent meditation helps to explain many of his views on the formula of worship. 8 He tells the reader that he must not be discouraged if the labor of silent meditation is hard at first, for, he assures them, the result is worth the pains taken and though silent prayer is much more difficult than outward praising and prayer, its fruit is greater. 9

The advantages of the meditation, Pecock suggests, is to strengthen a man in fighting sin:

wel is him that is to this craft and labours of meditacioun ordeynid and clepid, namely if he be learned sufficientli in eche poynct what is trewe and what is not trewe, and if he make his meditacioun reuly, ordinatly, bi rew and in cours, as the poynctis of maters in her processe and kindis ligen [lies], that he make not hise meditacion bi fals heedis and feynyd pointis in stede of trouthis and lest he make his meditacioun startlyng [capricious], heeding [thoughtlessly], tumbling and reeling, and therebi bryng not forth the ful availe of good affeccious, which myt ellis be fourth brouynte, if the meditacioun were wel reulid;...10

This warning against "startlyng, heeding, tumbling or reeling", religious expression seems clearly a reference to the forms of idiosyncratic devotion that were a feature of the religious life of his day. In contrast to such practices, he offers his "wel reulid" meditation:

7Donet, 214.
8See discussion of the Creed below.
9Donet, 212.
10Ibid, 212-213.
which affections /i.e. disposition of the mind/ wolen arme and strenghi
and chere a man forto stonde as a giaunt ajens temptationis, to not ouer
deintyli apprise any thing a this side god, forto not ouer moche cherisch
him self and pampre his fleisch; withoute which affections so to be
gendrid bi such meditations, ful hard schal be a manys battle /battle/
ajens synte to stonde, and into hard werkis of vertu to be into the eende
dou3te and strong.11

Due time given to prayer and praise would enable the days work to be
performed better as well as enable them to resist sin more readily:

And certis, than bi vertu and strengthis of these now seid bisynessis to
be doon, first in the moretwide /morning/ and after in the euentide
/evening/ the doers and users of hem schulden be strengthid ful wel to
ajenstonde temptationis and symmys, with the which thei schulden be
assailed whilis thi schulen turns hem into the seid worldli occupaciouns
in the same daie; and thei schulen be quykenid and strengthid to the more
dou3tilli /actively/ and perseverantli worche, do and suffer thoru3 al the
daie in the same worldli occupaciouns for god, and for his cause and his
sake and his charite.12

An English Carmelite of Pecock's era, called Scrope, is another example
of a pious person given to religious excesses and these excesses called down
upon him the wrath of his provincial Netter, the author of the Doctrinale.
Scrope (or Bradley as he is sometimes called) is said to have gone about in
sack cloth and chains crying that "the new Jerusalem, bride of the Lamb, would
shortly come down from heaven, and be prepared immediately for her spouse"
adding that "with great joy he saw her in spirit." Owst calls attention to
the last picture of him which Bale supplies before his death in 1491, as that
of a venerable figure, going the round of his native district "with bare feet,

11Ibid., 213. In regard to things of the "fleisch", Pecock's exceptionally
healthy and disciplined view of man's corporeal appetites can be seen in his
discussion of marriage in the Reule, 341-362.

12Ibid., 214. The Donet concludes with these words.
after the apostolic practice," preaching The Commandments of God to the common people. 13 Oust presents evidence of the curious devotion of other ascetics and mystics to the Decalogue. He cites manuscript evidence of enumerable treatises on the Ten Commandments; one written by a northern recluse carried the approximate date 1420-1434. 14 The type of thought which they represent is clear from Oust's description of such tract: its

appealing description of the sacred agony recall at once the language of the mystical Yorkshire school: "behold with thy gostly eye, his pitous passion!" In the sufferings of the Virgin, "the feers of Maudelyn and of her other frendes," the preacher reached his emotional climax: And I trowe amongs alle these thou shall have compa, and plente of teereys, whanne thyse cometh suche devocioun, than is tyse that thou speke for thyn owen node and for alle others lymes quye and dese, that tristeth to thyne prayer. Caste down thy body thanne to the groundes, and lyft up thyn herte on hy, with dolful chere thanne make thy sone...15

Oust continues his description by stressing that it is "the mosaic Decalogue above all else, self-controlling like the hermits' own life, that must be preached":

Prestes scholde teche thes commandementes of God, and publische hem with al here my3t to the commune peple...16

While Oust notes that some of the Decalogue tracts have been quite groundlessly attributed to Wyclif it is quite probable that Pecock and his contem-

13Oust, 118-119.

14ibid., 119.

15MS Harl. 2398, fol. 186. Oust notes cf. too the Passion scene in the St. Albans Cath. MS treatise on the commandments, fol. 20. As quoted and cited in Oust, 120.

16ibid., fol. 7b.
poraries would associate this thought with that of the Wycliffites, just as Scrope's vision of a New Jerusalem combined with his 'apostolic' costume would recall to their minds Wyclif's desire for a return to the primitive Christianaity of Galilean times. This helps to explain Pecock's effort to turn people from their devotion to the letter of the Ten Commandments when he provided a substitute in his "Four Tables", which we shall examine presently.

Preachers like Scrope ran afoot of the ecclesiastical authorities and in numerous instances their preaching was proscribed. In Pecock's era, therefore, the traditional Ten Commandments had come to be associated with the major 'dogma' of certain religious extremists, practitioners of that sensationalism which the bishop so despised in the popular pulpit of his day. In his pedagogic works centering around the *Rule of Cristen Religion* he attempts to turn the people's attention to the truths of traditional theology, promoting orthodoxy according to his new method. In the *Folower* Pecock prayerfully sets forth his immediate purpose:

"but enowore o lord grettist louser of men and grettist deserer that thi pepli schalden lous togiders and learen togiders, the vij cheif maters of my wriyngis deuyd for lay men, and that thei schulde speke therin togiders into ech of hem otheris edifying, perfoome thou such work in hem to be exercised and usid into thi pleasure and into her rewarding."

The seven matters of God's law which he will set forth in his theological works are: (1) what God is in Himself, (2) His benefits, (3) His punishments, (4) His laws, (5) our natural wretchedness, (6) our natural wickedness, and

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17 *Folower*, 8.
(7) the remedies against our wretchedness and wickedness. As the mystics sought to give laymen a brief set of essentials to follow in their accent on the Commandments Pecock presents Four Tables, containing thirty-one points which, he urges, sufficiently cover all God's commandments. He explicitly intends these Four Tables to supplant though not contradict the Decalogue; it appears that he did so both because the Ten Commandments had become associated with religious eccentricity and because he did prefer an approach to Christian living that demanded more of man than memorizing a list of 'shall nots' and one that included more than narrow fidelity to the Word, a word which was likely to be misinterpreted, and a guide to correct living which was self-explaining and cultivated virtues as well as warned against vices. He hopes that his Four Tables will provide such an orthodox guide and they form the principal motif of the Rule, Donet and Follower to the Donet. How necessary such an all inclusive, perfectly efficacious guide to Christian living is he explains in the Donet:

fferthir more, o my sone, I may not leave vnconsiderid and vnobethoujt-vpon how worshipful, how fair, how honest and according it were to all Christen peple, nameilich to clerkis, and speciali to clerkis of dyuynite, forto haue and knowe a ful foorme at the least vpon all the biddingis and forbodis of god to man and endentid [to make a covenant] bitwixte god and man,...

It is particular necessary for clerks to have the "ful foorme" of such

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18 Donet, 27.

19 Among the non-extant writings of Pecock is listed a work entitled the Spreading or Filling of the Four Tables.

20 Donet, 161.
a guide for their pastoral as well as studious activities. Pecock recognized
then the need for a formulation of God's law but he wishes to have a for-mu-
lation devoid of the connotation which the traditional Decalogue had received
from the mystics' exaltation of it. He also wanted one with some of the
antiquities removed and the virtues incorporated so that the same formula can
be used for the cultivation of perfection as well as avoidance of sin. The
bishop feels that the fact that the Four Tables are not as brief as the Ten
Commandments is an indication of the quality and usefulness of the former.
There is no fuller form of this information than the Tables whereby man may
live a truly Christian life and merit heaven. As he continues:

And if a fuller forume be had of hem vpon alls the vil metes named
bifore...in which vil metes is comprehened oure religioun, bi whose
keping cristen men schulen [shall] be trewe cristen and trewe servants
of god and schulen inherite perpetuall the kingdom of heuen, moche more
according to honest and faireness is theerti had to the said cristen men,
and specially to alle in dyuynite learned men; and elles contrary inho-
este, schame and reprove may be dradde forto be dawe to hem.21

The bishop realises that these tables which he will enunciate may be so
difficult as to serve only the needs of "duyne clarkis". Then some form like
to the Four Tables or better than them must be found for "greet wittid and
learned lay man or the least clarkis of dyuynite".22 Here he recognises that
religious knowledge existed at two levels, the high levels of university
theological training to which even a few priests attain, both from lack of
opportunity or ability, and the simple religious concepts of the common people.

21Donat, 161.

22Ibid.
The presentation of the first type of theologizing is to complicated for the great majority, while the simplicity of the second does not satisfy the needs of men like the Mercers of London, who fall prey to the ideas of Lollardy, or adapt their spiritual lives to the suggestions of popular mysticism. Pecock's educational mission, which we discussed in connection with his Paul's Cross sermon, is evident here. If some scheme like the Four Tables is not found, he warns, the school of divinity shall be in a plight from which it should be free:

\[\text{ellis I can not witte but that the scule of dyuynite schal ligge langir in an inconvenient of which it were beseemyng that it schulde bi cleene and free; and noche swete deuocioun, occupacioun and fair laboure of meny wittis aboute god, hise benefits, and hise laws schal be lette fales and lost.}^{23}\]

Pecock urges that studies be combined with devotion. Clerks especially should be taught to know God intellectually and not by 'throwing one's body on the ground and raising the heart on high' as the Northern recluse quoted above would advocate. The bishop realized that if men's "wittis" were not occupied, worldliness, among other things, would beset their idle minds:

\[\text{And tho same wittis schulden be bisette about fleischly and worldly occupaciouns more than medis askith, and therbi schulen be brouȝte forth manye medis about the worlde, which ellis schulde not growe into such medis, as I touche in othire writings.}^{24}\]

Here he seems to refer to his argument in the Repressor, that the contemporary evils of worldliness of the clergy flow not from the institution of ecclesias-

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\[^{23}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^{24}\text{Ibid.}\]
tical property but from the fact that some of the higher clergy are ignorant and their avarice flows from their habits of ease.

While he was willing to see a better treatment than this, he feels that his Four Tables are sufficient to cover all God's laws. These laws must be taught and they "schulde be fuli and paritly known".\(^\text{25}\) He is going to dwell on them at length so that they "schulen bring into remembrance of him" so that he who knows them will have in "nynde" all the commandments of God and all the "moral virtues of his laws, as openli and as sufficiently as so litle a number of XXXIJ names may do..."\(^\text{26}\) That the Four Tables contain thirty-four points and the traditional formulation of the commandments only ten, Pecock does not consider a handicap to the former's usefulness. And he does not think the thirty-four are over numerous, remembering what they will bring to mind; they are neither so many as to be over-burdensome to the memory or so few that they could not adequately bring to mind all God's laws.

The systematic statement of the Four tables is for the bishop equal to the two commandments of Christ and the teaching of St. Paul.\(^\text{27}\) The Tables consist of one table of "meenal moral virtues" and three of "sandal moral virtues". They are arranged as follows: **First Table**: the eight "meenal moral virtues" are the means or instruments in leading to the "sandal" virtues—"viij poyntis of meenal vertu: fort to governe vs leerningly, preisingly, dispreisingly,

\(^{25}\text{Ibid., 80.}\)

\(^{26}\text{Ibid., 80-81.}\)

\(^{27}\text{Ibid., 24-26.}\)
preyingly, thankfully, worshipingly, disworshipingly and sacramentingly.28 Of the meanest virtues only two appear to be confusing, "dispraisingly" means the rebuke administered either to oneself or others for faults or sins committed through inward or outward speech, so that one may repent of one's sins and amend one's faults in the future, and "disworshipingly" means the rebuke of faults such as occurs when a man puts on sack cloth and ashes.

The Second Table: the seven sendal moral virtues are those which have as their end the service of God—"vij poynitis: forto lyve and governe vs anantis god at the next [directly], goostly, obediently, ri3twisely, mekely, treuly, benyngnali and largeli".29 Pecock describes "goostlyness" as "for to ville to god al hise food, which is not in a creaturis power forto make him hane, or not hane, and lacks; as ben his my3t, his wisdom, his lous, his mageste";30 by largeness he means voluntary gifts to God of things which God does not demand, such as vows of poverty and chastity.31

The Third Table comprises the eight sendal virtues toward oneself: "for to lyve and governe vs silf anantis vs silf at the next, goostly, fleischely, worldly, clenly, honestly, paciently, dou3tili and largely".32 Here living

28Ibid., 2h.
29Ibid.
30Ibid., 36.
31Ibid., 41.
32Ibid., 2h.
"goostly" means the willing of ourselves toward heavenly goods, "cure blissful rewardis to be had in heuene and goddis fre gracis thirdward helping here in erthe". 33 "Fleshihood" and "worldlihood" are concerned with the possession of fleshy and worldly goods, such as wife, children, meat, drink etc. in so far as reason countenances it. These would be vices if "vmsesurable" or used "a3ens the doom of resoun". 34 Cleanliness and honesty are concerned with the "resonable vsing of the same goodis". 35 Doughtiness means being engaged "activalely in good deeds". Largeness means here, giving to God that which neither He nor the "doom of resoun" demands.

The Fourth Table contains virtues affecting our neighbor. The "vlij poynitis of sendal vertu; fortlye lyve and governe vs anentisoure beijboris at the next, goostly, attendauntly, rijtfully, mekely, accordingli, treuly, benynguely and largely". 36 Peacock holds that the good life is that life which is lived in accordance with the points of the tables and the sinful life is the converse.

Reynold Peacock's Four Tables do not represent a challenge to the authen-
ticity of the Ten Commandments although scriptural scholarship of that era was lead to question the precision and order of the statements of the Decalogue. Peacock is questioning the efficacy and appropriateness of the Decalogue as a

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33 Ibid., 42.
34 Ibid., 43.
35 Ibid., 45.
36 Ibid., 24.
comprehensive guide to individual salvation. This criticism parallels that of his position on Scripture as the all inclusive rule of life; the comprehensive guide he suggests offers the ten shall nots and more. He presents the positive fruits of weaving a rule combining the dictates of 'the law' with the development of the virtues and the counsels of moral philosophy on the good life. He is arguing against the preeminent place the Decalogue occupied in the minds of those under the influence of the mystical and ascetical movement in contemporary spiritual life. The relationship between English mysticism and an excessive reverence for the Commandments antedates the fifteenth century; Richard Rolle, the great fourteenth century writer, had a treatise on the Commandments.37

Pecock realized that his Four Tables would arouse a certain amount of antagonism and he defends himself by explaining his reasons for setting so high a value on his tables. He tells his readers that he does not mean to boast, though people may take what he says as "wordis of veyn glorye or of pryde and of presumpcioun vpon my silf" nor to despise others works or as "wordis of indignacioun or envye as antantis othire men and her writings".38 In one of the many little prayers that punctuate his works, he calls God to witness his motivation, for he writes merely to further the knowledge of God's commandments. He describes the precedents for extolling one's works noting that St.

37Gf. C. Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, (London, 1895-96), I, 95; reprints MS Thornton (fol. 192) the short "notabili Tretys of the ten Comandementys: drawne by Richerde, the herwyte of Hampull".

38Donet, 81.
Paul was not blamed for praising his teaching and for denouncing other men's imperfect teaching, and St. Gregory even confirms that Paul was in the right. 39 Parenthetically it may be observed that whatever the comparison between St. Paul and himself reveals about his personality or how many charges of vanity it drew upon the bishop it clearly indicates the apostolic character of Pecock's writing which we mentioned in connection with his Pauls Cross sermon. Why should he not extol his teaching, he continues, for how else will he be able to turn men's minds favorably toward accepting it. He uses a figure reminiscent of his days at the Mercers' Whittington College, likening this situation to that of a merchant who is not blamed for extolling the worldly goods he has to sell:

\[
\text{how schulde a man bring peple of englonde into wil forto bye or to freely receyve and haue preciouse and profitable chaffre } [\text{merchandise}] \text{ which he had felt fer from othire cuntrees bi3onde the see for her profite and eese, but if he wolde denounce and proclame that he had such chaffre, and which were the preciosite and profitableness of hit, for the loue and zeel which he had into her good avails; and 3it herbi and herfore ou3te, not this man be holde a proude auanter of him silf or of his chaffare.}\]

Pecock concludes that if the merchant is not blamed for extolling his wares, he should not be blamed for selling his "goostly chaffre" [spiritual goods] and no man should take it upon himself to accuse him of a fault because he vigorously sells it.41

Against the background of the religious eccentrics' use of the traditional

\[\text{39Ibid., 81-83.}\]
\[\text{40Ibid., 83.}\]
\[\text{41Ibid.}\]
Ten Commandments we can see the orthodoxy of the bishop’s attempt to substitute the Four Tables. While the thirty-four items in his tables are not understandable apart from his whole course of theology, their being difficult should not allow us to forget that he believed them capable of wide use. And because he does not deny the authenticity of the Mosaic Decalogue the tables, if unconventional, are not heretical. As we will note the items which he recanted make no mention of the Four Tables.

His unconventionality included, apparently, a somewhat independent approach to the Apostles Creed, for his recantation included several items relating to omissions in his teaching of the creed. He has even been accused by some of writing a new creed but there does not appear to be any evidence to support this claim. In the second part of the didactic dialogue, the Donet, the spiritual father replies to the son’s challenge with the statement that the twelve articles of the "commune crede" have already been taught in the first part of the book along with many more articles that are as much to be believed as are the twelve. Certainly Pecock is not denying the truth of these twelve articles but is asserting that he does not consider the creed an

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42 Scholars such as Babington who, following Gascoigne and Whetemstede, claim that Pecock wrote a new creed ("novum symbolum magnum et longum in Anglicis verbis") incline to the opinion that this creed was contained in the closing chapters of the Book of Faith which has not come down to us complete, (Repressor, xliii, note 1) The last extant section deals with the article of Christ’s descent into Hell and the assertion of Duns Scotus on the matter. Miss Hitchcock speculates that at least two chapters are missing and feels that they were probably devoted to Pecock’s opinion on the question of the apostolic authorship of the creed (Donet, 220-221, note 104/27). Pecock stated, however, his intention to treat that subject in the Latin Book of Faith which is not extant and was perhaps never written.

43 Donet, 103.
all-inclusive statement of belief, arguing here against the narrowness of a brief summarization that can be committed to memory without understanding the complexity of the whole faith and beliefs.

The full **Credo**, he urges, is given in his teaching. Pecock points out that the articles of the common creed were treated:

The first article of the commune crede, which article is this: "y bilevee into god the fadir, maker of heuene and of erthe, 'thou shalt fynde in the xiiij and xv chapitris ffor whi in the xiiiij chapitre it is tau3t that god is thre personys, fadir, sone and holi goost; and sett [yet] that therwith he is not but oon and the same substance in al the personys. Also in the bignymnyg of the xv chapitre, where benefetis vndirgracioso or lou3er than graciose ben tau3t, it is seid that god maad heuene and erthe and alle her contententis. And he concludes "and how manye mo articlis of bilevee touching the godhede, and touching his benefete in making creaturis, ben tau3t in the seed XIIIJ and XVC chapitres, which articles ben as necessary to be beleueid as this seed first article of the commune crede is to be bileueid."

As the bishop opposed a venerated Devalogue merely to be rattled off by the laity, he incorporated the articles of the creed in learned treatises on theology.

Pecock recited the eleven final articles, explaining that they have been previously taught:

Alle the othere xj articles of the commune crede, which ben these; 'And y bilevee into Jesus crist, his oon biegesten sone, oure lorde; which was conyued of the holy goost, and born of mary, the maide; which Jesus suffred vnder pounce pilate, was crucified, was deed and biered;45 and

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45Miss Hitchcock, the editor of the manuscript, says here: "Pecock omits the article of the Descent into Hell, as is noted in the margin in a later hand: *omittit descendit ad inferno*. This was one of the chief accusations brought against him."
rose in the iiij daie to lif, stizd [mounted] vp into heueve, sittith at
the riȝt side of the fader; fro whens he is to come for to deeme [judge]
quyk [living] and deede; I beleue into the holy goost; and y beleue
his holy univeral or general chirche to be; y beleue the comynyng
of seentis or of holy men to be; y beleue forjeuennes of synne to be; I
beleue the a3enrising [resurrection] of deed men, that is to seie, to be
or to come; and I beleue everlasting lyf to be or to come....And how
many mo articles of trew and necessary bileue than ben these now reher-
cid of the comune crede, thou schalt fynde in these same now seid xiiij,
xv and xvij's chapitris and in others chapitris of the first party afore
going, y committe to the judgement of thin owne wijsdom.46

His "comune crede" is like the Nicene and Athanasian creeds in omitting men-
tion of descent into hell. At Pecock's trial, Archbishop Bourgchier admonish-
ed him, "for as regards the descent of Christ into hell, the Tarentine doctor
in inquiry of his into the three creeds says that it was left out of the
Nicene and Athanasian creeds, because no heresy had then arisen against it,
nor was any great question made about it."47 Among the articles of his
recantation is one concerning this omission. It was an article of Christian
belief as I Peter 3, 19 would indicate but the rational explanation of the
phrase "he descended into hell" is debatable. Perhaps he did not include it
on the ground that it was not in the earlier formulation. Quasten has noted:

it is evident that the present text of the Apostle's Creed does not
appear before the beginning of the sixth century. It is found first in
Cassarius of Arles. The Roman Creed of the fifth century still differs
considerably from ours in that it does not include the words creatorem
caeli et terras—conceptus—passus, mortuos, descendit ad infernos—
catholicam—sanctorum communionem—vitam aeternam. However, all the
doctrinal elements to be found in the Apostles' Creed appear already
about the end of the first century in the numerous and varied formulas of

46Donet, 103-104.
47Quoted in Green, Pecock, 5h.
faith which are contained in early Christian literature. 

At his trial he was accused of denying that it was necessary to believe in the "Holy Catholic Church" and the "Communion of Saints", phrases excluded from the earliest formula mentioned above but, however, included in the version of Pecock's teaching on the Creed which we have quoted.

The reason he gives for omitting the article about the descent reveals another aspect of his contribution, the use of historical criticism. In the Book of Faith the dialogue form is retained and the son inquires

O fadir...On of the best clerkis and wisist divinis, and clepid therefore the Doctour Sutel seith in his writing, that this article—Crist in his deeth of bodi descendid into hellis—is an article of necessarie feith, and for as myche as it is putte in the commoun crede, which is ascrived to have be made of the apostlis; and 3itt [yet] this same article, as he seith, is not grounded in Holie Scripture. Wherefore 3oure doctryne stondith not, if this doctour was not in his now seid sentence bigilid. 

While Pecock is not going to engage in a discussion of whether or not the idea has a proper scriptural foundation he is going to take exception to what Dun Scotus says

O sone, he berith him ful wel which is never bigilid, namelich if he wrote myche or teche myche; for as holie scripture seith: In myche speche defaute is not absent. But that the seid doctour was in his conceit bigilid, lo y may scheve thus. In tyme of Austyn, and of tohere holie clerkis about Austyns tyme hadde not withynne him this seid article—Crist in his deeth of bodi descendid to hellis, as y prove in the book of feith in latin. And no man may seie that the apostlis settiden thilk article in the comoun crede, as this side the daies of Austyn: wherfore, nedis it is trewe that neithir before, neither aftir Austyns daies, the

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49 Book of Faith, 303; but see I Peter 3, 19.
apostles settiden thilk article into the comoun crede, &c. 50

At this point Pecock is not specifically denying the apostolic authorship of the Creed, nor do we know that he ever did. In the Donet, the son asked

"baadir, was not the commune crede maad bi the apostlis? And if it so were, whi schulde apostlis delyere to vs thilk crede, but if thei, in thilk making and deliueraunce of thilk crede, meneden and entediden that oonly tho articles y--sett forth in the same crede were sufficient to vs to bileeve as faith? 51

This refers to the traditional story of the Creed, which Pecock questions. The apostles, after having received the Holy Ghost and before departing upon their mission to the various nations and countries, agreed upon a brief summary of the Christian doctrine as the basis of their teaching and a rule of faith for believers. 52 By the sixth century it was commonly believed that each apostle contributed one of the twelve articles and this amended explanation remained the prevailing belief throughout the middle ages. Apostolic authorship would give added weight to a certain formula in an age awakened by the Wycliffites call for a return to apostolic fervor and poverty. While Pecock does not resolve the question in the answer of the spiritual father, he seems to anticipate the conclusion of modern scholarship that the essential content of the Creed is apostolic, but its present form was a gradual development. 53

50 Ibid., 304.
51 Donet, 104.
52 Migne Latin 21, 337 as related and cited by Quasten, 23.
53 Quasten, 23.
Sone, whether the apostlis maad the common crede, or no, schal not be
seid here, but it schal be treated in the 'book of faith' but this y dare
wel seie and avoew: the crede of the apostlis ben the al hool noumbre of
alle tho articles to be bilesuid which ben conteynd withynne the writing
of the new testament, fro the bigynnyng of the newe testament into the
sende of the newe testament. And theryfore the ful and hool crede of the
apostlis is moche lengir than ben the xiiiij, xv and xvj chaptris of the
first party of this present book. 54

Here again Pecock is criticising the Lollard view of apostlic times and he
indicates that there was much more to the teaching of the first priests than
the simple formula of a dozen or so articles. Even his longer exposition, he
explains, does not include all the beliefs of Christians. And these truths
deserve a fuller statement than the little Creed that may or may not have been
written by the apostles.

It would be interesting to have a full statement of his thoughts on the
subject of the Creed. 55 The question of the Creed appears in the records of
the time. Marcus Eugenicus, the Greek Archbishop of Ephesus declared at the
Council of Ferrara (1438) that the Eastern Churches knew nothing either of the
form of the Creed used in Western Church nor of its derivation from the Apostles.

And a few years later the Italian humanist, Lorenzo Valla denied emphatically
the apostolic authorship of the Creed. 56 However, it must be borne in mind that
to deny the wisdom of usefullness of the formulation of the Creed or even to
deny its apostolic authorship is not, necessarily, equivalent to a denial of
its doctrinal content.

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54Donat, 104

55As noted above, the question of the apostolic authorship of the Creed
may have occupies the missing final two chapters of the extant, English Book of
Faith but as references in that work are always to the Latin book I believe
that Pecock reserved the discussion for a separate and Latin, Book of Faith.

56Quasten, 23.
CHAPTER V

HISTORY AND THE DEFENSE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

Pecock's apologetic of the institutional church was, as in the case of the theological treatises, intended to reinforce the Church as well as to confute the Lollards. He is as interested in removing spurious arguments from the faithful's arsenal of defenses as he is in refuting erroneous charges made by the heretics. Basically he will argue that Christianity is a wholly reasonable religion because God does not ask us to believe anything which is not reasonable nor for which we have not been given sufficient evidence. It is easy to misunderstand the bishop on this point. He is not reducing Christianity to a rationalistic conception, a natural religion, since in his system Revelation is equivalent to evidence, a particularly persuasive evidence in view of the confidence we have in God who bears witness to it.¹

Because the Lollards use the Wycliffite criterion of judging all church institutions on the basis of their fidelity to those of the mendicant apostles of Galilean times, an important part of Pecock's task is defending the historically developed church. He utilizes two approaches, defending the historical continuity from apostolic times even though the practices are modified through the ages, and proving that certain practices, such as the papacy and sacraments, which do not have a specific scriptural foundation, nevertheless do not

¹See Book of Faith, 129, 132, 133.
contradict the intent of Scripture and represent a reasonable deduction from a scriptural foundation.

Scripture does not contain a detailed description of how to establish a church and it does not present a picture that will account precisely for the contingencies of historical development and the peculiarities of particular times and places. But we do have the key truths, the basic ingredients of the faith. In a passage which appears to refer equally to dogma and institutions Pecock speculates as to the marvelous results that would follow upon the clergy gathering together all the evidences:

if the Cristen clergie were wel avid of the evydencis whiche ny3ten prove her bileve of ech article, and if the seid Cristen clergie wolden gadere the evydencis togidere, ordynatli and formabli, in forms of silogismis, forto have redili and currauntli at honde and at mouthes, whanns ever dede were to make bi hem eny profis, and if herwith the Iewis and Sarracenes wolden 3eve audience, for to heere the now seid evydencis to be mynystriod to hem in the seid foormes, and bi sufficient leiser at dyvers tymes. The Cristen clergie schulde convicte, and in manner constrayne or ellis rede /compel/ the understanding, bothe of all Iewis and of all Sarracenes, to bileve aftir Cristen feith, and to be converted therto, wher thei wolden or nolden...[for] the resoun may not at his owne lust iuge and deme a thing to be trewe, but he muste nedis iuge aftir that tho evydencis to him mynystriod moven him to deme...2

And it is just such a syllogistic apologetic that Pecock presents. Among the truths based on faith alone was listed the article that Christ made the apostles priests. Meeting the Lollards on their Galilean ground Pecock uses the apostolic basis to deduce institutions and practices which they deny. He stated that article in this way:

the xiiij article is this: lord jhsu, thou madist actually or virtually

2Ibid., 130-131.
He noted that he would say no more of it at that point because it is treated in
the Repressor. Our study of his institutional apologetic will be drawn from
the Repressor and Book of Faith, volumes he specifically devoted to that pur-
pose.

He clearly and repeatedly sets forth his view of the continuity of the
apostolic tradition. Despite altered circumstances and occasional schisms,
today's pope is as Peter was and Peter's powers are his, "...because that the
pope is of llyk auctorite and iuresdiccioun with ech or with the grettist of
the apostlis." This particular observation is made in regard to showing the
power of pope and clergy in interpreting and enforcing the dictates of Scrip-
ture. But while the fifteenth century Church had the same powers as the first
apostles they do not and need not live in wandering mendicancy like these first
apostles. Pecock set out to defend the established, institutional Church
against the Lollard interpretation of 'goddis law' where the priests would be
poor but free of ecclesiastical officialdom as represented by canon law, pap-
acy, determinatio and other historical developments. But he would defend them
by arguing, not asserting, their reasonableness, appropriateness and validity
in that they do not contradict any essential part of Scripture. Recalling

3Reule, 203.
4Book of Faith, 278.
Pecock's division of the matter of Scripture we can readily see that the economic circumstances of the apostles, which are described in the gospels and acts, are not essential elements that must be maintained in all ages.

Pecock's argument is a long and many sided one which he develops at leisure and with full scholastic carefulness. We can but examine a portion of it. The section devoted to answering the Lollard demand for clerical poverty gives us a good sample of his reasoning as well as his talent for historical criticism, a skill which is so important in a defense of this character. This section is found in the *Repressor of the over much Blaming of the Clergy*, a work which specifically answered the eleven Lollard objections to the existing Church. Throughout he will show the relationship of the Church of his day, the historic Church shall we say, and the Church as pictured in the New Testament, the scriptural Church. He will not deny the existence of abuses but he claims that they flow from the evils of men not from the institutions.

Vindication of the endowment of the clergy is set forth in nineteen

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5The eleven matters are: the use of images; the going on pilgrimage; the holding of landed possessions by the clergy; the various ranks of the hierarchy, i.e. papacy and episcopacy; the framing of ecclesiastical laws and ordinances by papal and episcopal authority; the institution of the religious orders; the invocation of Saints and priestly intercession; the costliness of ecclesiastical decorations; the ceremonies of the mass and sacraments generally; the taking of oaths; and the maintaining of war and capital punishment as lawful. The Repessor is divided into five parts, the first being devoted to a general vindication of the eleven points objected to by the Lollards and the remaining four containing special answers to particular objections to the same points. Part two is a specialized defense of images and pilgrimages; the third vindicates the revenues of the clergy; the fourth part defends the variety and degrees among the clergy and the lawfulness of statutes and canons; and the fifth part is devoted to vindicating the religious orders and the remaining five matters. The third part which we shall treat in detail runs from 275 to 415.
chapters; the first three are devoted to Scriptural arguments from the Old Testament showing that the clergy may lawfully possess landed property, in this way refuting contrary arguments of the Lollards; the next three discuss the Scriptural foundations for the arguments of both sides; and the seventh chapter shows how the writings of the Church Fathers on this matter are discordant, and thus excluding them from being able to settle the point. In the eighth chapter he states the five arguments which some of the laity bring against the endowments of the clergy: that simony and avarice are the natural fruit of such endowments; Christ did not appoint them; that ecclesiastical history testifies that the Church became more corrupt; as it became richer; when Constantine made his 'donation' to the Church of Rome, an angel exclaimed that poison was that day infused into the Church; and finally it was argued by some of the laity that the power of the bishop's or abbot's court were most exceptional and cruel. Pecock refutes the first argument in the same eighth chapter; the second is answered in chapter nine; chapters ten and eleven reply to the argument from ecclesiastical history. The arguments concerning the Donation of Constantine are analyzed in the next two chapters and by a variety of historical criticism he proves the donation to be fictitious and disposes of the inferences drawn from it. In the fourteenth chapter which deals with objections to the power of ecclesiastical courts he explains their "true constitution". Pecock then gives other arguments from Scripture and reason to show the lawfulness of the endowments of the clergy and in chapter sixteen he states that some Lollards are of the opinion that while endowments are
lawful, if the clergy does not make a proper use of them, they may be taken away (i.e. Wyclif's theory of dominion). The bishop proves this opinion false from a consideration of the different kind of payments. In chapter seventeen he continues the discussion noting what he deems to be the proper punishments for various kinds of criminous clerks. The eighteenth chapter continues this theme and considers the historical circumstances attending the foundation of religious houses and how the clergy came to be possessed of their endowments. This section of the Repressor concluded by a further treatment of the same subject of dominion and confutes Wyclif's modification.

This brief survey of how Pecock handles his defense of endowments indicates how he relied on Scripture as an authority. Yet as we have indicated above he distinguished the different parts of Holy Writ according to the degree of assent which must be given to them. In the course of the section he will turn to the opinions of the Fathers but where they frankly differ (over matters that are not dogma) he notes this and urges that we can not rely on the Fathers as referees any more than we can test institutions according to a scriptural ipse dixit. If his arguments appear sophistical at times he is not making an excessive appeal to reason as the only criterion as we would expect from a 'rationalist'. Much of the alarm that his thought caused in its day must have been due not to his using 'reason' instead of 'scripture' but from the critical turn of his mind and his readiness to admit a weak argument on the Orthodox side, and to his abhorring of slavish adherence to authorities be they Aris-
Pecock's use of history is particularly interesting. In the fifth where he examines the testimony of the writers of the New Testament he shows that a history of the apostolic age makes it evident that the perils of poverty are at least as great as those of riches. The sixth text which he considers is Matthew V. wherein Christ counsels us to cut of the right hand if it offends us and he explains that this should certainly dissuade from riches those who are naturally prone to trust in them, but not those who make a good use of them. The bishop urges that riches are the instruments both of virtue and vice. He concludes by stating that he feels that it is now proven that no doctrinal text (this distinction is important) of the New Testament forbids the temporal endowment of the clergy:

thus miche, fro the bigynnynge of the iiiij chapter hider to, is ynoy 
\[\text{enough}\] forto schewe that Holi Scripture of the New Testament in his parti, which is of the ij\textsuperscript{e}, there said sort, (that is to seie, which is pure doctrinal) lettith \[\text{hinder}\] not the endewing of prestis bi immovable possessiouns.\textsuperscript{8}

No historical example recorded in the New Testament forbids the endowment of the clergy, he continues. After considering certain texts, he turns to the question of the example of Christ. No text, he declares, shows clearly whether the example of Christ's poverty was left to us under counsel or under command. Consequently we must have recourse to reason to determine the point.\textsuperscript{9} By

\textsuperscript{6}See the Folewar, 151-152, on the folly of slavishly worshipping Aristotle.
\textsuperscript{7}Repressor, 304-305.
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 306.
\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 309-311.
reason he does not mean to emphasise each individual reason but refers to the use of reason by which the Church has already determined the point. Of course, we can follow this process, as he intends the reader to do, and be convinced of the rightness of the position. Reason, he states, does not prove the example of Christ’s poverty to be a commandment. For if poverty be under commandment then every example of Christ’s life, such as perpetual celibacy, would become a commandment. But no assignable reason can be given why poverty any more than perpetual celibacy should be commanded of all Christians. The bishop claims that every argument of reason, Scripture, or “pretended revelation” to prove that poverty is commanded to priests or laymen may be readily enough answered.10 “And thus it may be seen, that the ensaampling of Cristis greet pouerti in abstenyng fro temporal vnmoveable possessiouns lettith [hinder] not preestis forto hem take, receyve, holde, and weel demene into gode usis.”11

Furthermore, even if Christ’s example of poverty had been binding on all priests, the circumstances under which it was given must be now as they were then in order that it may still be binding on them. But the times have changed since the days of Christ and his apostles so their example of poverty is not binding now.12 And no one may knowingly say that Christ’s refusal to be made

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10Ibid., 312. He seems to weaken his argument by grouping together priests and laymen when priests are generally expected to try to follow the counsels; it seems curious that he would equate celibacy and poverty in this context, but Pecock advocated having a married clergy in the Rule, 367.

11Repressor, 312.

12Ibid., 313-314. Pecock refers reader to his Just Apprising of Holy Scripture (not extant).
a king supplies an example to priests or anyone else not to accept temporal possessions or dignity. If Christ had consented to be king he would have sanctioned treason because they were the lawful subjects of the Emperor of Rome at the time.\textsuperscript{13}

When we consider the example of the infant church of Jerusalem, the ideal state of the Lollards, where all things were held in common; it is to be realized that their example was under counsel only and it applied alike to laity and priests. And perhaps it would apply to the clergy now if the present situation was like theirs. But the first Christians of Jerusalem must have lived in poverty by choice because if they had done so in accordance with a commandment of divine law the Christians of other places would have been equally bound and the Epistles of St. Paul make it plain that they were not living in poverty. If the Christians of Jerusalem lived in poverty by free choice no Christians are any more bound to so live than they were. And the endowing of the clergy, it may be added, is not forbidden by human law but fully sanctioned by it.\textsuperscript{14} Because the Church Fathers are not in agreement on this subject we can not appeal to them as greater authorities.\textsuperscript{15}

Pecock had first concluded that the institution of clerical property was not contrary to either the Old or New Testaments, and then demonstrated that

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, 315.
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, 320.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}
reason does not forbid it.\textsuperscript{16} To add further conviction to the pronouncement of reason the bishop marshals what he considers to be the only plausible arguments which can be drawn from reason against the position which he is defending and discusses them. With his fondness for scholastic logic and learned debate he frequently creates internal disputations in his works in which he does as well by the Lollard side as they would. This device, as we have noted, may, perhaps, have misled early critics in to thinking him the ally, not the foe, of Lollardy.

The first of these arguments considered here was that which charges that simony, pride and other vices spring naturally from the wealthy endowments of the Church, as bad fruit from a bad tree, and consequently such endowments are vicious.\textsuperscript{17} The bishop answers that on the contrary sins do not spring from riches as fruit from a tree: "for tho ricchessis ben not causis of tho synnes, but ben oonli occasiouns of tho synnes; and that oonli to the free and culpable wil of man, which is the verri wirching tho synnes."\textsuperscript{18} If riches were the cause of sin because sin comes by them, they would also be the cause of good, because good comes by them. But, he continues, contrary effects can only proceed from a free agent.\textsuperscript{19} Good and evil proceed from men's riches as they do from their tongues, both being only the instruments of their free will.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 275 and following.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 321.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 325-326.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 326.
Consequently, "...both the tungs of preestis and ricchessis of preestis ben instrumentis and occasiouns of ful michi good and ful michi yuel."20 Yet neither their riches nor their tongues are to be destroyed; but the fraility of their will is to be reformed. Pecock interrupts his discourse to pray "and God forbede that the vice of this preest l. e. Pecock] now lyuing schulde hindre the vertues of gode men after hem in tyne comynge!"21 Continuing he quotes a passage from Augustine as a confirmation of the argument he is presenting.22

Pecock is not, however, denying that evils and abuses connected with clerical endowment exist. As he deems the will responsible for these abhorrent faults he urges that "onli good men and well proved men in vertues be takun in to the preesthode and into prelacie..."23. For if bishops were learned and good men no evil would arise from their wealth, but, he informs his readers, ('now children') men "wantounli broujt up in court," and ignorant men of high birth are often promoted. And in the spirit of a reformer he calls for this "veryr cause of the yuel [evil] to be taken away".24

The next argument advanced against endowment is that if such endowments had been profitable to either the whole church or to the clergy Christ would have sanctioned them by example and by precept which He has not done. There-

20Ibid., 326.
21Ibid.
23Ibid., 331.
24Ibid.
fore they are not profitable. 25 Pecock grants the "first premisse"—Christ's exceeding great love for the Church, and the second that this was not ordained is true also. 26 But their argument falsely rests upon the assumption that Christ himself ordained everything necessary for the clergy of his Church.

This is a fundamental objection to the Lollard narrowness in making the Word the only rule of life as we have noted above. He points out that Christ never ordained for any man the necessities of life made by any man's craft 27 and he continues with similar proofs to page 334.

The third Lollard argument in this context was that Church writers testify to the fact that since the Church became richer it became more corrupt and a quotation from Jerome was given in this regard. 28 The bishop answers that Jerome's opinion is not infallible; his assertion is probably historically untrue, even if true it does not prove that the cause is due to the endowments or that rich endowments are evil or unlawful. 29 There have been, he argues, as many learned and holy prelates since the Church was endowed with worldly possessions, many more indeed; good preaching and profitable books have also increased since the clergy have been more richly endowed and better educated as well. 30 Throughout his writings he will note the expense involved in

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25 Ibid., 321-322.
26 Ibid., 322.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 334-335.
30 Ibid., 335.
education and in providing the leisure necessary for study; he was neither ignorant of how much his Oxford training cost or how difficult it was to study in the poorly endowed Whittington College where economic anxieties produced distractions. And alms, he continued, have been more plentifully distributed because there was more to give. He concludes that unworthy promotions have been the sole cause of any evil that has arisen in later days.\textsuperscript{31} He then offers a further statement of the good that can proceed from the proper use of endowments.

The fourth Lollard argument against endowment is drawn from the story of the "Donation of Constantine". It was a point much discussed in Pecock's day both by the political publicists and religious reformers and his treatment of it reveals his apologetic use of historical criticism. The donation, an eighth-century forgery, was originally used as an argument for the temporal suzerainty of the Pope over the western provinces of the empire. Although its validity was questioned within a century of its issuance it enjoyed a long life and in the fourteenth century came to be used as an argument against ecclesiastical property. This reversal of the original intent of the donation, now long spurned by canonists, was accomplished by adding a corollary to the original story of the endowing of Silvester. The narrative was made to read that when Constantine had largely endowed the Church of Rome an angel was heard in the sky and it exclaimed that "in this da
d venom is hildid into the chirche of God." The conclusion they drew was that "the seid endewing bi

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 337.
immovable god is unvertuose [vicious] and yuel [evil]. 32
Wyclif wrote of this happening and a contemporary manuscript entitled of
Clerks possess says "the angel said full sothe, when the church was dowed,
that this day is venym shed into the Church". 33 And in the Vision of Piers
Plowman it is related that

An aungel men herd an
An heigh at Rome Crye,
Dos ecclesiae this day
Hath ydronke venym. 34

Clearly the use of the Donation of Constantine to argue against clerical
endowment was a feature of contemporary English social and religious criticism.

Pecock began his attack on the Lollard version of the Donation of Con-
stantine by pointing out that the story about an angel's voice in the air at
Rome when Constantine endowed the Church is neither certain nor probable.35
He offers four reasons to prove this. First, none of the chroniclers write
of an angel they all speak of the "feend"; Giraldus Cambrensis in his Cosmo-
graphia Hiberniae is the fundamental account as all the others follow him and
he said "the cold enemy made thilk voice". If this be true, the bishop asks,
why should we believe the devil? His second reason is the most telling for he
says that in truth the whole story of the Donation is fabulous: Constantine

32 Ibid., 323-324.
33 John Lewis, The History of the Life and Sufferings of the Reverend and
Learned John Wicilif, D.D. Rarden of Canterbury Hall, and Professor of Divinity
in Oxford, and Rector of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, in the Reigns of King
34 As quoted in Babington, Repressor, 323, note 2.
35 Repressor, 350.
was supposed to have endowed the Church on the occasion of his baptism but, Pecock states, Constantine was not baptized at Rome by Silvester; he was baptized in Nicomedia by the bishop of that place, Eusebius. This bishop Eusebius, who wrote the "most famous and most credible story of the Bible, called the "Chirche Storie" and who wrote the "most credible Chronicle of alle others had among Cristen men", has expressly testified to this fact.36

Eusebius is so reliable an authority on this point because he knew Constantine personally and no one, Pecock stresses, would know better than Constantine who baptized him. The emperor told "in great secretness to the same Eusebi "many things such as the cross appearing in the air. This Eusebius, so credible, was a principle Church father in his day and he had the best, first-hand knowledge of the life, conversion and holiness of the said Constantine." Pecock always prefers 'eye witness' accounts when he can find them. This Eusebius took upon himself the task of writing the Book of Constantynys lijf wherein he "witnessith" these things. A further proff that the baptism story is erroneous is the fact that Silvester could not have baptised Constantine for he was dead by then, the baptism occurred in the "daies of Iulie Pope successour to Silvester". This fact, he adds, may be found easily in any of the chroniclers.

The bishop explains that Eusebius' account is to be preferred before the

36Ibid., 352.

37Pecock does not seem to be aware that Eusebius was an Arian. But it must be noted that it is not Eusebius' theology that is relevant here but his historical accuracy.
legends of Silvester's acts or Constantine's donation and to the history of
the Popes by Damascus or the long epistle which is "pretended to be the
Epistle of Constantyn". The latter was "set in the book clepid the decrees
of Hi3est Bishopis, of which now seid long epistle a gret porcioun Gracioun
putith in his Summe, Dist. xcvje, Chpiter (xive) Constantinus".38 Pecock
observes that regarding the "seid epistle putt attributed" to Constantyn"
special suspicion may be had. It is in his handling of this spurious epistle
that we can see evidence of Pecock's critical historical abilities:

for in others epistlis of Constantyn, which he wroth whanne he was in
his moost rialte i.e. at the height of his powers, is not such a stile
of him as in this now seid epistle, (as ech man may se which wole biholde
in the 1e and 19e bookis of the iiij departid storie;)39

And the Damascus story of the Pope is untrue which Jerome "weel aspied" and
dissented from in his book De Viris Illustribus. On the other hand, Eusebius'
account is confirmed by both Ambrose and Jerome. "Wherfore the storyng
Historical account of Eusebi in this mater of Constantynys babyrin is be
trowid Believed before al other storie affermyng the contrarie."40

The Repressor's critique continues by offering further evidence against
the "donation of Constantine" drawn from the Tripartite History which confirms
Eusebius:

Theodorities, Socrates, and Sogomens weren the moost famose storiers
Historians in the days of Theodosie the 17e Empour; of which iiij so

38Ibid., 354.
39Ibid.
40Ibid., 355.
famose storiers a worthi lettrid man and senatour of Rome clepid Cassiodor
lete make and compile the ful famose and credible storie [history] clepid
The iiij departed [divided] storie, the moost credible next to the storie
of Eusebie clepid the chirchis story,...

The Tripartite history was intended to be a continuation of Eusebius' history
and two of the continuators, Sozemenus and Theodoritus, witness with Eusebius
that the said Constantine was

baptisid oonli in hisse laste daies litle before his deeth, whanne he wiste
he schulde die, in the xxxj[6] 3eer [year] of his empire and even so long
aftir he was converted into Cristen feith and Cristen holf lyuying, and
in the same place which Eusebi spekith of.42

He concludes

Wherfore, if the reule of Crist in the Gospel be good and to be kept,
which he techith there to be kept, that "in the mouth of ij or thre schal
ach word of witnessing stonde," it folleth with that this parti is miche more
credible than is the contrarie partie; he, and that the contrarie parti
is an apocrif. And so fynali it is proved that the storie [history]
affermyng the seid voice to be mad in the eir seyng, This dai venon
is hilde into the chirche, is not credible.43

Pecock, when he first mentioned Giraldus' account of the voice of the old
enemy in the air, teasingly asked why we should believe the devil's pronounc-
ment now more seriously discredits it as an historical work. Giraldus' story is
not supported by any ancient authority now extant: "this that Girald writith
of this voice is ful sengil to be bileued [i.e. also unsupported by other
testimony].44 More fundamentally the bishop declares that Giraldus' only

41Ibid.
42Ibid., 356.
43Ibid. For quotation in text, Matthew XVIII, 16, Babington, 356, note 2.
44Ibid. Giraldus was notoriously anti-papal and the story might not be true.
authority seems to be that of popular rumor. Giraldus admits that he was not
the "fundamental story" (here Pecock uses it in sense of an historical
account written by an eye-witness to an event) and avers that he got his in-
formation from someone else but we cannot find an earlier historian. Bishop
Pecock concludes that we simply cannot believe his story. Girald must have
been "bigilid (as many other writers bi li3mes [thoughtlessness] and
unwisidnes [heedlessness] han be)" by simply hearing that something was done
they think that there are documents and histories concerning the deed, "not
withstanding that no storyng or writing is had therupon".45 Ironically Pecock
himself has suffered from just such historical practices.

The discrediting of Giraldus' account was the third proof he offered that
the Donation was fabulous. In the fourth he argues that if such a voice was
uttered it was either because the Church was then endowed for the first time
with immovable possessions or that it was a "grest habundaunt endowing". It
cannot be the first because the Church had in Urban's time (222-230 A.D.)--
"First Urban Pope, goostli [spiritual] fadir and techer of Seint Ceciie
Virgyn, which was mad pope bi an hundrid 3eeris [years] biforn the popehode of
Siluestre and the regnyng of Constantyn Emperour"--possessions.46 The chron-
iclers have evidently witnessed that the church was endowed in that day and
more conclusively it is evident in the writing of the same Urban in the "grest
book clepid the decrees of Higest bishops in the first and 1je [?] chapitres of
his decree". And even before Urban's time the Church of England was endowed in the days of "Pope Eleutheri and of Luci, King of Britons".

Pecock points out that Constantine's endowments were on a small scale, the large possessions of the Church being derived from Pepin, Charlemagne, Louis and Matilda of Tuscany in much later times. Therefore because there was not cause for an angel's or devil's voice to be made, "no such voice at all was in the air thean mad, though some corruption of leeting the fame of thilk voice hath long tyme been had and contnued."

He concludes this section of the Repressor with eight proofs that the Donation is fictitious: the silence of Damascus is conclusive because Damascus would have mentioned the great rather than small endowments of Constantine if he had known of them for he professed to send Jerome the most complete history he could, and Damascus would surely be more likely to know of his large rather than his small donations. And Damascus as pope would have succeeded to these possessions and therefore would have known of them. The silence of credible historians on the subject of the Donation is a strong argument against it; the Tripartite History, moreover, directly overthrows it by its account

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47 Babington, in the Repressor, notes that this is the same book that contained the spurious epistle of Constantine, this epistle is spurious too, being the forgery of Isidore Mercator, 358, note 2.

48 Repressor, 358.

49 Ibid., 359.

50 Ibid., 359-360.

51 Ibid., 360-361.
of Constantine's will and of the territories of his immediate successors. 52 The fifth proof is that Boniface asked Phocas to give him the Pantheon to be converted into a church (608 A.D., ed. note) which shows that Rome was not in his possession and also from the time of Constantine's death to the time of Charlemagne the Greek emperors reigned over the whole East and West including Rome. 53 The temporal dominion of the popes over Rome probably came in during the reigns of the first German emperors (i.e. Charlemagne). "But this my3te not haue bi trewe, if the seid greet endewing born upon Constantyn haddes be doon", therefore it was "neuere doon". 54

While he does not deny that Constantine may have made some small endowments as Damascus says, these are quite different from those named in "the greet endewing which in comoun fame is born upon the Firste Constantyn." 55 Returning to his list of evidences Pecock asserts that confirmation by the Greek emperor of the pope's election for some centuries after Silvester's death proves that the pope was not temporal lord over Rome. The Acts of Silvester are not confirmed by the Decretal epistle of Galasius. 56

The last evidence is that the Tripartite History proves the Epistle of Constantine to be spurious by the false account which it gives of the founding

52 Repressor, 361-362.
53 608 A.D., editors note.
54 Repressor, 363.
55 Ibid., 364.
56 Babington, citing Cave, asserts that this is a forged document too, 364, note 2.
of Constantinople. "And herefore the saide epistle is an vntrue apocrife, namelich sithen historiers, dwelling in thilk same cuntre and soone after the deede doon, kouthen knowe better the treute of the deede than othere men dwelling ferther fro them in rombe."57

The bishop closes this section by noting that the arguments which he has put briefly will be better understood by an examination of history which can be accomplished "if the reader of this wole encerce famose stories [histories] and cronicles diligentli."58

The historian Plummer has observed that "one of the first persons to study history in a really critical spirit was "our own Pecock". His disproof of the Donation of Constantine is a very notable piece of work, worthy to rank with Valla's famous tract on the same subject".59 Yet the Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla (c. 1406–1457) was not, of course, the first to definitively establish the long suspected falsity of the Donation of Constantine. Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa in the second chapter, third book of his De Concordantia Catholica,60 about 1433, established briefly and accurately the spuriousness of the Donation Valla's tract, published in 1439 or 1440, argued against the Donation on primarily philological grounds. His purpose differed sharply from that of both Pecock and Cusa for Valla intended his work on the Donation to be a pol-

57Repessor, 366.
58Ibid.
emic against the papacy and particularly against the pope having a temporal domain. Cusa's purpose seems to be to clearly indicate, as Gandillac explains in introducing his partial translation of *De Concordantia*, that "les catholiques n'ont aucun besoin de telles fables pour accepter la primauté du siège apostolique".

That Pecock derived his inspiration for his disproof of the validity of the Donation from either Cusa or Valla cannot be proven. He does not cite either of them in this context or refer to any of their works anywhere in his extant writings. This does not, however, conclusively argue against such influence as "footnote" citation was not the custom and Pecock rarely quotes from or refers to his contemporaries by name. Had he known of Valla's tract it would seem that he would have stated his disagreement with the Italian's conclusions. Because Cusa's work, in addition to being first, was historical in method as is Pecock's treatment, it would have been the work more likely to have influenced the English bishop. At present we do not know what currency Cusa's ideas had in England although the *De Concordantia* Catholica could have been known to those present at the Council of Basle as it was completed by that time. Pecock's treatment is both longer than Cusa's and somewhat different in purpose and development. The bishop's original intention, as we have seen, was

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61 The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine, Latin text and English translation by Christopher B. Coleman. (New Haven, 1922).


63 Green, Pecock, dismisses the possibility saying that there is no real evidence that he was influenced by either Valla or Cusa, 195.
to prove the corollary about the angel's voice to be false and thereby remove this from the Lollard's baggage of arguments against the temporal possessions of the Church. After doing this he went on to indicate that the Donation itself was false and demolished it, lest the Church be burdened with unnecessary and forged claims. Cusa did not utilize all the sources that Pecock mentioned.

The most significant indication, I feel, that Pecock had not read Cusa is the Englishman's position on Eusebius. Pecock, the great foe of heresy, was not aware that Eusebius was an Arian. Above he called Eusebius "a principle Church Father", while Cusa writing in regard to Constantine's baptism, clearly states that "et in extremo vitae ab Eusebio Nicomediae episcopo baptizatum in Arrianam haeresim declinasse". While this designation of Eusebius as a heretic is minor to Cusa's main theme it is unlikely that this item would have escaped Pecock's notice.

It would appear then that Pecock's attack is independent of Cusa and Valla. And neither his apologetic intent nor his lack of access to manuscripts available to continental authors should diminish our respect for the critical use of history which he revealed in regard to the Donation, in his defense of clerical endowment and elsewhere in his writings. It is his method that draws our admiration—his views on evidence, the value he places on eye-witness accounts, his search for corroborative accounts and the rigorousness of his desire to have Church history based on documents instead of rumors and forgeries.

64Above, 55.

65Cusa, Opera Omnia, XIV, Book III, 333.
CHAPTER VI

THE HERESY ACCUSATIONS

The numerous passages in Pecock's works which defend the purpose and method of his undertaking testify to prevalent opposition to his thought. He realised that his language left him open to suspicion, particularly in his vernacular works, where he was forced by the existing state of English to fashion a theological vocabulary as he wrote. This new vocabulary might sometimes obscure his meaning. In the prologue to the Donet the bishop elaborately protects himself against "ouer hasty and vnidscreet swaiters and backbiters" and asks that the critics of his works consider the meaning of the author and not the mere words employed.

Pecock explains also that, in many cases, his uncorrected theological tracts have become more generally circulated than they should have been or he willed them to be:

'the donet of cristen religioun' and 'the book of Cristen religioun' and othire suche of doctrine and of officivyng which, before the deuyce and setting of this present book, ben rumme abroad and copied a3ens my wil and myn entent, a y have openli prechid at poulis i.e. Paul's Cross and that bi the vncurtesis and vndiscrecioun of freendis, into who singular

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1Cf. Miss Hitchcock's introduction to the Folwer where she discusses the language and describes the state of the English language in the time of Wyclif, Chaucer, Pecock and Caxton, lx-li.

2Donet, 4.
107

sijt ye lousid released the writings to go, and forto not have go fertir
into tyume thei were bettir examined of me and approv'd of my lordis and
fadris of the chirche, y wol to be as noon of myn; but in as moche as in
me is, y wolde thei be rendrid vp a3en and bettir forms of the same be to
hem delivered, whanne deve deliueraunce therof schal be made.3

When he gets his works back he will correct them. In the meantime he prays
that God may amend the evil ways of his detractors.4

The bishop was well aware that the topics which he chose to communicate
to the laity were by their elevated nature technically in violation of those
conservative directives, the Peckham and Arundel legislation.5 He sought, for
example, to explain the theology of the Trinity because he felt this knowledge
would greatly enrich the spiritual life of the people. As to the propriety
of their possessing this knowledge he answers any objectors in advance by
stating that this topic is not "dangerous", and in view of the heresy prevalent
at the time urges that the common people are not so tempted to think inde-
pendently about the Trinity as they are about the article of concerning the
sacrament of communion.6 He continues by pointing out that many of the laity
err in their belief in regard to the Eucharist because they believe "summe
clerkis, namelich Johan Wiccliffe and hise disciplis" and pleads that a true
knowledge of the Trinity and like matters will lead the common people away
from their confidence in Lollardy.7 But while he wrote for the people he would

3 Ibid., 6-7.
4 Ibid., 8.
5 Regarding the Peckham and Arundel legislation see Chapter II, footnote
20.
6 Reule, 94-96.
7 Ibid., 96.
never popularize his material at the expense of the content. As Jacob summarizes the situation:

In any case he realized that he was running the gauntlet by writing theological argument in English, and warned his readers among the laity that it was not his intention to make theology too easy, for as it was, they would respect the superior learning of the clerks (Folewer, 7). It was never Pecock's plan to write down to his public; there are passages where, in an English work, he deliberately goes into Latin, because the matters discussed are of so high and theological a character that they cannot be expressed in the vernacular. He was too much in earnest to think of vulgarizing his material; he would wrestle painfully with words, and wind prosaically on till his meaning was clear. He had at least the courage to be tedious.8

In the Folewer Pecock laments that the malice of some clerks was so great against him that what he had written was little enough defense.9 And his explanations were indeed insufficient to stay the criticism against him. Doubt of his orthodoxy led in 145610 to a prosecution and trial. While the details of the proceedings are not easy to reconstruct the main outline is sufficiently clear. According to Gascoigne the immediate occasion of the attack was a letter sent by Pecock, in 1456, to the mayor of London, Thomas Canyng. Gascoigne terms this letter "valde suspiciosa perturbationis fidei et insurrectionis in regno Anglie."11 The mayor sent the letter on to Henry VI, and Gascoigne notes that there were to be found in it "likely persuasions" or evidences to change the fides in the kingdom of England and to greatly disturb

8 Jacob, Pecock, 135.
9 Folewer, 226-27.
10 Regarding the possibility of an earlier inquiry, Jacob states that "there seems to be no evidence to support Gascoigne's contention that he was summoned before Archbishop Kemp for examination some time between 1452-4." Jacob, Pecock, 135.
11 Loci, 212-213.
the people in the realm. Fides used to be felt to refer to political loyalty to the existing dynasty. Jacob comments that the "word fides certainly refers to the faith" but correctly notes that "in that highly charged atmosphere unorthodoxy might be suspected as lying very near rebellion."12

That people feared the faith to be in danger is evident from a description of the letter of John, first Viscount Beaumont of Folkingham, successively constable and chamberlain to the king.13 Beaumont began his letter with a tribute to Henry's reputation as a Christian prince and defender of orthodoxy: "most cristen prince our aller-most dread soverne lord after oppinion of longe before of oon of youre name and lyenage which for excellency of zele and love of God and myghty supportacion of Crysts faith and his Chirch in tyme of rede" etc. and continues that it is the king's duty to "represse the most execrable persones that by sotyll covyns and ymaginatyff wittes sett all these studies to hurt our faith." Nothing is more indicative of the theologizing of the day, when even laymen warn against the dangers of subtle and imaginative wit. The writer deemed it important that he write at this because of "that grete noyze" which "rennyth that ther shud be diverse conclusyons labored and subtilly entended to be empent in mennes herts by pryvy by also unherd meenes to the most pernicyous and next to pernicyon of our faith."14 Even those historians who ally Pecock with the Lancastrians state that the charges had little pol-

12Jacob, Pecock, 136.

13Beaumont's letter is in MS Peterborough, VII, fol. 43 - I rely on the description and portions quoted in Green, Pecock, 47-48.

14As quoted in Green, Pecock, 47.
itical animus behind them because Beaumont, a kingsman of the king and strong Lancastrian, and later Suffolk adherent, brings the complaint.15

Lord Beaumont asked for an examination of Pecock's teaching and for his punishment if his errors were established. His letter forms the background of the council meeting of 22 October, 1457, the last important event prior to the bishop's trial. Gairdner notes that all we know of the proceedings of this council is that some of them were of a pretty stormy character, the one point on which all parties were agreed being the exclusion from the council chamber of Pecock, bishop of Chichester, an ardent and honest-minded prelate who, having laboured hard to reconcile the Lollards to the authority of the Church by arguments of common sense instead of persecution, was at this time stigmatised as a heretic and sedition-monger, and very soon after was deposed of his bishopric.16

Our knowledge of the council sessions of this period is very meagre. The records for the reign of Henry VI are much less complete than for the reign both before and after his; the records of Henry VI's council rarely attain to anything approximating minutes and are in the main a collection of summons to sit, sitting records, some summary of action completed and a notation of any statutes which resulted. For our purposes, the only significant information that can be gained from these records is the fact that Pecock's name is omitted from the list of those present at the 27 January meeting; the summons for this sitting had been sent out very early with the declaration that not one of the

15For example, see Jacob, Pecock, 136.

16James Gairdner, intro. to the Paston Letters A.D. 1422-1509. 6 volumes (London, 1904), I, 175. Gairdner does not give any source for the expulsion story but Gascoigne contains the account, Loci, 210-211.
lords would be excused from attending. This information tends to support the expulsion story but the reason for the lord's refusal to transact business in Pecock's presence is not clear. Green conjectures that "Pecock had grown more tactless and intransigent in his political opinions" and the cry of the temporal peers was taken up by their spiritual counterparts who turned what was either a general or specific charge into an ecclesiastical examination. What actually transpired we do not have enough evidence to say. Jacob, who makes no mention of the expulsion story, states that Beaumont's request was brought before the council at one of its ordinary meetings, probably at the beginning of October 1457. As we have noted, Pecock did not generally attend the ordinary meetings. If the bishop had been excluded from any session, however, it may have been to give the members more freedom to discuss what disposition was to be made of the Beaumont charges. This is, of course, merely conjecture.

The council appears to have arranged with Archbishop Bourchier for an examination of Pecock's works to be made by a special tribunal which was to hear and consider the opinion of a number of expert examiners, to question Pecock himself and to report back. As Jacob points up "the Council controlled the proceedings, though the verdict of heresy, if it was to be given, lay with the authorities of the church". On 22 October Bourchier issued his mandate.

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17 Privy Council Proceedings, VI, 290-291.
18 Green, Pecock, 49.
19 Jacob, Pecock, 136.
20 Ibid.
for Pecock's accusers to appear and the case was handed to assessors who were to report on 11 November. Babington observes that a note on the title page of the Cambridge manuscript of the Repressor states that on this day the book was "displayed before the Lord Archbishop in his chapel at Lambeth."22

The assessors, who numbered twenty-four, included both seculars and regulars. One of them, John Bury, Provincial of the Austin Friars, was apparently commissioned by Bourchier to examine the Repressor and he subsequently recorded his conclusions in his Cladus Salamonis.23 Gascoigne relates that Pecock objected to the assessors, asking to be judged not by these doctors but by his peers: not by bishops like John Lowe of Rochester, Chedworth of Lincoln or Waynflete of Winchester but his equals in intellectual distinction.24 It would be of great interest to know who all the assessors were but neither Gascoigne nor subsequent chroniclers give any more of their names and no full text of the proceedings appear to be extant.25 This request, which probably further alienated his critics, was rejected. The process, which began on the eleventh, had by the twenty-first established a number of points against him to the satisfaction of the judge. Pecock agreed, in conformity with their


22 Babington, Repressor, I, lxii.

23 Babington gives the key passages from Bury's work in an appendix to the Repressor.

24 Loci, 212.

findings, to revoke certain of his conclusions. The full indictment was sent
to the Council which met at Westminster on 28 November.26

Archbishop Bourgchier addressed Pecock:

Dear Brother [Condilecte Frater], since all heretics are blinded by the
light of their own understanding, and will not own the preverse obstinacy
of their own conclusions, we shall not dispute with you in many words
(for we see that you abound more in talk than in reasoning) but briefly
show that you have manifestly presumed to contravene the sayings of the
more authentic doctors...27

The Archbishop then quotes "Lincoln doctor's"28 definition of heresy: "whoever
excogitates any opinion contrary to Scripture, if he be publicly teaching it
and obstinately adhere to it, is to be counted for an heretic." Yet he does
not here charge Pecock with teaching contrary to Scripture but rather with
"contradicting" the "authentic doctors":

Accordingly, master, seeing that you are convinced not only of holding
what is contrary to the sayings of all these doctors but moreover con-
tradict them; it behooves us, according to the doctrine of Jerome, to cut
you off from the body of the Universal Church as rotten flesh, and to
drive you from the fold as a scabbed sheep, that you may not have the
power to corrupt or inflict the whole flock. Choose, therefore, for
yourself one of these things: whether you had rather retract from your
errors, and make a public abjuration and so, for the future agree with
the rest of the faithful in your opinions; or whether you will incur the
penalty of the canons, and not only suffer the reproach of degradation

26 This appears to have been a meeting of the Great Council, see Jacob,
Pecock, 137.

27 As quoted in Green, Pecock, 54-55. Green prints, though without indi-
cating his source, what appears to be the full text of Bourgchier's address.
The printed edition of the Archbishop's register, Registrum Thome Bourghchier,
transcribed and edited by F.R.H. Du Boulay, Canterbury and York Society No. 54
(Oxford, 1957) does seem complete and it does not contain the address or any-
thing directly relating to the proceedings.

28 The archbishop probably refers here to Robert Grosseteste.
but also, moreover, be delivered over to the secular arm, that, because you have attempted to plunder the treasure of the faith by force, you may become according to the saying of the prophet the fuel of the fire as well as the food of burning...29

Faced with the formidable choice of abjuration or degradation and delivery to the secular arm for burning, Pecock elected to abjure. Some critics have called his choice an act of 'miserable cowardice', while modern critics, such as Green and Jacob, have defended his action as indicating that he was a true son of the Church and consistent with his continually expressed views of the authority of the Church in such matters.30 It is certainly true that Bishop Pecock was a staunch defender of the authority of the Church in matters of dogma, his own definition of heresy indicates his position:

Only therefore thanne is thilk caas a man is an heretik whanne he trowith a false bedef contraris to any article of feith or to any conclusion folowing out of an article of feith, he wol obstynatly cleeve to it thilk false trowing and wol not leve it for any sufficient schewing which is maad to hym that his trowing is fals...31

Earlier in that same work he had indicated his willingness to submit to proper authority:

Y schal be redy to leeve, forsake, and retrete mekely and deuotely at the assignementis of myn ordynaries fadris of the chirche after that thei han take sufficient avisjing therupon.32

While we may wonder if this court made a "sufficient schewing" and "sufficient avisjing" of the errors involved, he accepted their decision as the

29As quoted in Green, Pecock, 55.
30Ibid.; and Jacob, Pecock, 137.
31Reule, 97.
32Ibid., 29.
decision of the Church and recanted accordingly. His abjuration was in two phases: at Lambeth on Saturday, 3 December he repudiated six points in Latin; these points were included in the formal abjuration made the next day, Sunday, 4 December at St. Paul's Cross, London. To make the people cognizant of the gravity and import of the proceedings the Pauls Cross abjuration formula had an English prologue and conclusion. At this ceremony three large books and nine sets of quires were thrown into a large bonfire nearby. Gascoigne maliciously observes that had the bishop ventured a little nearer to the bonfire he might have been pushed in as well. Pecock pronounced the following abjuration, which cannot but surprise a student of his thought:

In the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, unworthy, of my own, pure, free will, without any man's coercion or dread, confess and acknowledge that I have before time, presuming of mine own natural wit, and preferring the judgment of natural reason before the New and Old Testaments, and the authority and determination of our Mother, Holy Church, have held, felt, written, and taught otherwise than the Holy Roman and Universal Church teaches and observes, and besides this against the true Catholic and apostolic faith, I have made, written, taken out and published many varying, perilous and pernicious doctrines, books, works and writings, which contain heresies and errors contrary to the catholic faith and determination of Holy Church.33

From his extant works it is far from evident that he ever "preferred" the judgement of natural reason before the New and Old Testament, and the determination of the Church. But he was in a poor position to argue the point and he then stated, in Latin, the particular "errors" of which he was accused:

In particular I have taught these errors:
(1) It is not necessary for salvation to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ descended into Hell after death.

33Wilkins, Concilia, III, 576.
(2) It is not necessary for salvation to believe in the Holy Spirit.

(3) It is not necessary for salvation to believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

(4) It is not necessary for salvation to believe in the Communion of Saints.

(5) That the Universal Church can err in matters of faith.

(6) It is not necessary to salvation to believe and hold those things which a general council of the Universal Church determines, approves or legislates in favour of the faith and for the salvation of souls, must be held and approved by the whole of those faithful to Christ, and that that which it reproves or condemns or holds to be contrary to Catholic faith or goodly customs are thereby held and believed to be reproved and condemned. 34

His recantation closed with the avowal, in English

Wherefore I miserable sinner, which here before long time have walked in darkness, and now by the mercy and infinite goodness of God reduced into the right way, and the light of truth, and considering myself grievously to have sinned, and wickedly to have informed and infected the people of God, returnne and come againe to the unity of our mother holy church and all heresyes and errours above, rehearsed, and also all other heresyes, and errours written, and contained in my said books, works, and writings here before this time, before the most reverend father in God solemnly and openly revoke and renounce; which heresyes and errors, and all other spices of heresy I have before this time before the most reverend father in God, my lord of Canterbury in due and lawful forme judicially abjured submitting myself, being then, and also at this time a very contrite and penitent sinner, to the correction of the Church, and of my lord of Canterbury. And on this exhorting and requiring, in the name and virtue of almighty God, into the salvation of your souls, and mine that no man give faith or credence to my said pernicious doctrines, heresyes, and errors, neither my said books keep, hold, or read in any wise; but that they bring all such books, works, and writings as suspect of heresy, dealing in all godly host, unto my said lord of Canterbury, or to his

34 Ibid. Whetehamstede has a seventh and apocryphal item: "It is quite lawful for any one to interpret holy scripture in the literal sense, nor is it to be maintained for salvation for anyone to cleave to any other sense." Whetehamstede, Chronica Monasterie S. Albanii, Vol. I of Registrum Abbatiae Johannis Whetehamstede, ed. by H.T. Riley (Rolls Series No. 28, part 6) (London, 1872), I, 286.
commissaryes, or deputyes, in eschewing of many inconveniences and great perils of soules, the which else might ensue of the contrary. And on this to declaration of my commission, and repentence, I here openly assent, that my seid books, works, and writings for consideration and cause above rehearsed, be deputed into the fire and openly be burnt, into the example and terror of all other. The end.35

And thus Pecock made his peace with the Church.

But, as the chroniclers record, his enemies though gloating over the depluming of the peacock, "sic deplumatus pavo fuit et spoliatus..."36 demanded more than this limited disgrace. In spite of the trial Pecock still held his bishopric. A letter of Calixtus III, June 1458, indicates that he had petitioned Rome to put an end to efforts to actually deprive him of his see. While we do not have a copy of Pecock's letter to the pope37 we can fairly well determine the contents by the wording of the answer; bulls of this

35Wilkins, Concilia, III, 576.
36Whetshamstede, 288.

37This document does not appear to be extant; Green and Jacob have not seen it, Hannick who used the Vatican Library quotes only Calixtus' reply and is likewise forced to conjecture as to the contents of Pecock's petition. However, Pastor in a footnote to his discussion of Pius II's action in the matter comments that "in a collection of bulls in the State Archives of Venice, I saw a copy of the document given by Raynaldus." History of the Popes (London, 1891), II, 286. The printed collection of Venetian materials relating to England does not contain the petition; Pastor referred the reader to Von Reinhold Pauli, Geschichte von England, (Gotha, 1858), V, 664 seq. and to Heinrich Reusch, Der Index der Verbotenen Bucher, (Bonn, 1885), I, 36; II, 1219. These two short accounts of Pecock contain no description of the document in question. Both of these are old accounts written before Pecock scholarship was flourishing and the texts were printed; they are based on chronicles and protestant interpretations, Reusch calls him "...psuedo-episcopus, Prof. Oxoniensis, Lutheranus", II, 1219. Neither account gives any clue to the missing petition. On the chance that Raynaldus might mean the author of the Annales Ecclesiastici, Ordojrico Raynaldli, I checked the entries relating to Pecock, X, 138, 190, 191-192, but the appeal to the pope is not printed.

38Calendar of Papal Registers, XI, 77-78. The full text is printed in this thesis as Appendix I.
Calixtus' bull makes it quite clear that Pecock had been absolved at the Archbishop's order and was now, in every way, "restored to his former state":

(...after an enumeration of the heresies, the bull continues) in all which things he confessed that he had erred and believed, held, written, preached and taught otherwise than Holy Mother Church holds and believes, and offered to undergo the satisfaction to be imposed upon him and awarded by the archbishop which he underwent and did penance (penituit); that, the bishop being penitent (penitenti) and returning to the unity of the Church, the archbishop gave commission to John Stockes, the archdeacon of the Church of Ely, absolved him from all sentences of suspension and excommunication, restored him to his former state, as is contained more fully in the process made against the said bishop Reginald by the Archbishop in the matters of the errors and heresies contained in the said books...and the articles confessed by him, and subscribed by the hand of a notary public and produced before the pope, the tenour of which and of the said libels and articles the pope wills to be expressed as if they were inserted verbatim in these presents.38

While Jacob, misreading the bull, asserts that "Pecock took steps to secure reinstatement, and at the pope Calixtus III's direction, John Stokes, Bishop of Ely, as the archbishop's commissary, absolved him...",39 it is evident from the bull that this had already been done.40 The pope is writing not to restore Pecock but to confirm the absolution, restoration etc. so that no question will arise:

The pope therefore, in order that there may be no hesitation in the future as to the validity of the absolution, dispensation, rehabilitation, restoration and other things done by the said archbishop and said archdeacon, on account of the defect of jurisdiction and because the said bishop

38Calendar of Papal Registers, XI, 77-78. The full text is printed in this thesis as Appendix I.

39Jacob, Pecock, 139.

40Hannick's quotation from the Latin records of the Vatican Archives confirms the wording of the printed text, Hannick, 19.
Reginald was not lawfully and duly absolved, restored or rehabilitated, desiring to provide for the state of the said bishop Reginald and to honour the said archbishop in the foregoing matters, etc., ratifies hereby the absolutions, dispensations, etc. and their consequences, and order the above absolved by the pope's authority the said Reginald anew from all perjury, heresy...\textsuperscript{41}

The pope does order Stokes to absolve the bishop "anew", not because it had not been done but as demonstration of the pope having confirmed by his authority, the previous absolution.

The pope terms his action a remedy for "defect of jurisdiction" on the part of the English authorities. Did Archbishop Bourchier and the court as constituted have the proper jurisdiction? Though it appears to have been conducted in the ecclesiastical precincts of Lambeth the trial certainly was not a purely ecclesiastical matter.\textsuperscript{42} Jacob observed that "...the council controlled the proceeding" though the verdict of heresy would lay with Church authorities.\textsuperscript{43} We do not know enough about it, however, to say to what extent it was controlled. There are no clear precedents to which we may refer as previously no English bishop had been tried for heresy. A 1411 parliamentary pronouncement\textsuperscript{44} in supplement to De Haeretico (1401) gave the initiative in heresy cases more clearly to the civil powers, which may explain the council's action in Pecock's case.

\textsuperscript{41}Calendar of Papal Registers, XI, 73. Cf. Appendix I for the extent of the rehabilitation and Pecock's power to sue in the civil courts for fulfillment of his rights.

\textsuperscript{42}A John Fox refers to the proceedings as taking place in the 'archbishop's court', Acts and Monuments III, part 2, 733.

\textsuperscript{43}Jacob, Pecock, 136.

\textsuperscript{44}Rotuli Parl., IV, 15-16.
Pecock had expressed dissatisfaction at the composition of the assessors.

If he wished to appeal the case to Rome he had, according to canon law, the right to do so:

the canon law recognized the Pope not only as the supreme legislator, but also as supreme judge of the church; and, as judge, he possessed not merely appellate but also original jurisdiction. He could be called in by a litigant at any stage in the suit;...45

Yet we have no record that he made such an appeal. We might speculate as to the influence of the various English statutes grouped under the titles of "praemunire" and "provisors" in making such an appeal impractical on Pecock's part.46 Of course, he may not have wished to appeal but an argument raised,


46Regarding Praemunire legislation it is, generally speaking, considered anti-papal in intent; in a parliament at Carlisle in 1307 a protest was entered Provisions (i.e. Pope appointed benefices and received annates or first fruits) and the rule was laid down prohibiting papal agents from collecting new payments but the king, realizing the benefits of 'cooperative sovereignty' revoked most of it. In 1351 the Statute of Provisors decreed that anyone who accepted a papal appointment to an English benefice should be imprisoned until he paid a fine and surrendered claims to office; 1353 the Statute of Praemunire was passed to strengthen the hand of the royal court in their jurisdictional struggle with the papal ones, it was not to affect established areas of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Whether these and subsequent statutes were enforced is the question here and it is debated. Cf. W.T. Waugh, "The Great Statute of Praemunire", English Historical Review, XXXVII, 1922, 173ff gives a summary of the conflicting opinions; see also E.B. Graves, "The Legal Significance of the Statute of Praemunire in 1353", Anniversary Essays in Medieval History of Students of Charles Homer Haskins, (New York, 1929), 56-80. S.B. Chrimes, English Constitutional Ideas in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge, 1936) comments, in reference to Praemunire that "even though the judges in the 15th century scrupulously avoided encroachment upon papal rights and recognized the authority of certain papal bulls, none the less that century and the preceeding saw a number of statutes which set limits to the exercise of papal authority, and therefore to the maintenance of canon law in England." (p. 286);"...there was no doubt that these statutes, when enforced, defeated canon law" (Ibid.) The question is whether the statutes were enforced and it cannot be answered yet; from Chrimes discussion and citations the civil law had not defeated the canons by 1450. And there was still some agitation on the subject, see "the clergies petition concerning the Statute of Praemunire" 1447 in Wilkins, Concilia, III, 555-56.
in the post-trial period, by the bishop’s enemies lends support to suspecting overtones of Praemunire. Utilizing an Ashmolean manuscript, Jacob makes the point that they represented to King Henry VI that Pecock had infringed the 'laws and statutes of provisours' by surreptitiously purchasing from the Pope for his 'declaracion and restitution' contrary to the royal prerogative. He comments:

to catch Pecock out in an offence against the Provisors legislation (clearly the Great Statute of Praemunire was the enactment they had in mind) was a clever move, and from the famous doctors in law as much as in theology his opponents got the answer they wanted. It was that 'Reynold distrueoth not only the pouair and jurisdiction of Regalite and Preasthode and so seemingly subuertethe all order and direction of the law positive and politique governauncis among cristen pouple aswel in spiritualite and temporalities, but also dispiseth and anhulleth thauctorite of al holy scripture...'.

The statute that his enemies accused him of violating in his post-trial appeal may explain the peculiarities of the trial itself. At present, we cannot definitely say.

The report which charged him with violating 'provisors' advised the king to acquaint the Pope with the facts and ask for Pecock's deprivation on the ground that it is dangerous to have "such an ungracious person to stonde in the state of prelacie." They argued that because the bishop had already been proved a heretic canon law, as they understood it, held the Church of Chichester already, ipso facto, vacant. And the report concludes by recommending that the king seize the temporalities of the see. From the Bourghier Register it is possible to see that Pecock was suspended during his trial, an

\[47\] Jacob, Pecock, 139.

\[48\] Ashmolean MS 799, fols. 322-323; Jacob notes that the document was undated in the formulary and was subscribed by Bird, Stillington, and twenty doctors consulted, Ibid., 140.
entry for 27 July 1458 regarding prebends states that the action was "author-
ized by the archbishop on account of the suspension of R. Pecock, bishop of
Chichester."49 Although absolved in December in July he was still deprived of
his see. But after the pope's letter of restoration he was again bishop of
Chichester and hence the occasion for the petition to the king to deprive him.
Jacob, again utilizing the Ashmolean manuscript, describes the commission sent
by the king to the bishop "suggesting resignation, with a promise of a compe-
tent pension, but adding that if the king was forced to report on him to the
Pope, the king would ask for the utmost rigour of the law be inflicted".50
It is presumed that Pecock resigned at this time. According to the Bourghchier
register the see was vacant as of 4 February "through the resignation of
Reginald, bishop of Chichester,"51 and the papal records show the appointment
of a successor on 8 January. Pope Calixtus, who had sympathized with Pecock's
intentions, was now dead and his successor, Pius II provided John Arundel,
archdeacon of Richmond to be the bishop of Chichester.

From the wording of the papal bull of provision, however, it is clear that
Pius had been informed that Pecock resigned at the time of his abjuration:"...
abjured his said heresy, and freely and of his own accord resigned before
the said archbishop and a number of other bishops, his suffragens etc., all
rights belonging to him in respect of the said rule and administration."52

49 Registrum Thome Bourghchier, 243-44.
50 Jacob, Pecock, 140.
51 Registrum Thome Bourghchier, 249-250.
52 Calendar of Papal Registers, XI, 377.
This does not agree with the established historical chronology, but it is nevertheless evident that Bishop Pecock, though at peace with the Church, was deprived of his see apparently by the malice of his enemies.

Yet even his resignation did not end the matter. It was alleged further that Pecock deliberately retained certain of his heretical books which he had not produced for examination. We do not know whether there is any truth in this charge. All the extant books appear to have been among those examined at Lambeth, some of the manuscripts, as Babington indicated, being so marked. The books referred to in this charge could possibly have been destroyed by subsequent ecclesiastical action. On receipt of the information about the concealed books, Pius II commissioned (7 April 1459) Archbishop Bourchier, Bishop Kemp of London, and Bishop Waynflete of Winchester (or Kemp and one of his colleagues and Francis, Bishop of Terni, "if he be in England and can easily take part") to investigate the charge, to ascertain whether that "son of iniquity and perdition Reginald Pecock" was properly penitent and to destroy the remaining books.53 Jacob asserts that as far as we know no action was taken on the pope's mandate. Nevertheless the Oxford scholar and bishop who had zealously devoted his life to converting the Lollards and teaching theology to the laity spent his remaining days in confinement, apparently without papal investigation to determine if he was a relapsed heretic. Some time in 1459 Bourchier gave instruction to the abbot of Thorney near Peterborough concerning the treatment of Reynold Pecock who was being placed in his charge:

53Ibid., 529; see Appendix II for the full letter.
he was to be provided with a secret closed chamber with a chimney [fire place] and a house of easement, within the abbey. He was to have a servant to make his bed and his fire, as should be necessary. He was to be made as physically comfortable as the circumstances of close confinement might permit, but he was to have no books to read except a breviary, a mass book, a psalter, a legend, and a bible, and was to have 'no thing to write with, ne stuff to write upon'. And there at Thorney, probably in his sixty-sixth year he died.54

We do not know the exact date of his death or the place of Pecock's burial and so ends the biographical details of his life. The destruction of his corrected theological tracts were a loss to his contemporaries but the extant works are a treasure trove for present day historians. From them we explore his thought, profit from his learning and appreciate his attempt to meet the peculiar challenges of his milieu.

54 Ashmolean MS 789, fol. 326 as quoted in Jacob, Pecock, 141.
Although records indicate that he died in confinement charged with being a relapsed heretic it is difficult to think of Pecock as a heretic. Recognition of the authority of the Church is central to his thought. If in trying to persuade the Lollards of the truth of the Church's position he fell into heresy, his recantation was quite in accordance with his attitude to authority. His relapse, if indeed he did relapse, must remain a mystery.

His scheme to convert the Lollards reveals not only the tenets of fifteenth century Lollardy but the importance of logic and epistemological questions in the thought of that day. The notion of assent which is the heart of his apologetic involves the interesting supposition that syllogisms are infallible and that reason, unlike the will, is not free but must be convinced by the strongest evidence. Pecock's theology sets him apart from the majority of his contemporaries by his opposition to popular mysticism. His conception of the function of reason in theology argues against the then accomplished fact of the separation of philosophy and theology. The bishop's overt expression of the disillusionment over the failure of the conciliar attempt indicates an opinion which must have been shared by many learned ecclesiastics at the mid-century.

Contrary to the traditional opinion Pecock appears to have been neither a rationalist nor a court bishop who was involved in the politics of his day as
a partisan of Suffolk. He appears on the contrary to have been a studious and
zealous clergyman who attempted to meet the intellectual and religious chal­
enges of his day. His falling into heresy on a number of points and the
resulting destruction of his theological works doomed his attempt to failure.
Despite this, his syllogistic apologetic, his vernacular scholasticism designed
to meet the needs of the intelligent laymen and his vigorous historical
criticism point to a richness in fifteenth century theological writing. That
there are serious gaps in the historical records makes it impossible to assess
Pecock with exactitude, but historians are correct in seeing him as a subject
of continued interest.
APPENDIX I

LETTER OF POPE CALIXTUS III TO ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

1 JUNE, 1458. IN CALENDAR OF ENTRIES IN

THE PAPAL REGISTERS. PAPAL LETTERS

VOL. XI (LONDON, 1921), 76-77

To the archbishop of Canterbury. Mandate etc., as below. The pope has recently learned that lately Reginald bishop of Chichester, Solicitous for the welfare of the people committed to him, compiled certain libels or tractates or quinternions, in English and Latin, of the Christian religion and a number of others concerning the contemplative life, and then, without having carefully corrected and amended them, as was becoming, gave them to divers persons, both clergy and lay, in the hope that they would derive therefrom salutary fruits, but that the said bishop remained frustrated in his hope, for, inasmuch as it was alleged by certain that the said libels etc. contained many things contrary to the catholic faith, the above archbishop caused him to be summoned before him to exhibit the said libels etc., which had been put forth by the bishop twenty-four years ago; that the said bishop reverently exhibited and produced before the said archbishop a number of libels under certain protestations, namely, that if any things were contained therein contrary to the catholic faith he did not wish to hold them nor obstinately to defend them, but held them null and of no effect, and that the archbishop committed in the said libels to certain masters in theology and doctors in canon and civil law to be examined; that subsequently, some things having been found in the said libels by the archbishop and the said masters and doctors contrary to the said faith and to the teaching (determination) of Holy Mother Church, the said bishop recanted and abjured the said erroneous things thus found and certain other articles which were objected to him in the presence of the archbishop and other bishops, some of which are contained in the creeds, namely, in the article 'He descended into hell,' also in the articles 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints,' also in the articles that the church universal may err in those things which are of faith, and that it is not necessary to salvation to give faith and credence to those things which a General Council determines in the matter of faith, in all which things he confessed that he had erred and believed, held, written, preached and taught otherwise than Holy Mother Church holds
and believes, and offered to undergo the satisfaction to be imposed on him and awarded by the archbishop, which he underwent and did penance (penituit) that, the bishop being penitent (penitenti) and returning to the unity of the church, the archbishop gave commission to John Stockes, the archdeacon of the church (of Ely), to absolve him etc., and that the said archdeacon absolved him from all sentences of suspension and excommunication, restored him to the unity and sacraments of the church, dispensed him on account of irregularity, etc. and rehabilitated him, and restored him to his former state, as is contained more fully in the process made against the said bishop Reginald by the archbishop in the matter of the errors (and) heresies contained in the said books, libels, tractates and quinterniones and the articles confessed by him, and subscribed by the hand of a notary public and produced before the pope, the tenours of which and of the said libels and articles the pope wills to be expressed as if they were inserted verbatim in these presents. The pope therefore, in order that there may be no hesitation in future as to the validity of the absolution, dispensation, rehabilitation, restoration and other things done by the said archbishop and archdeacon, on account of defect of jurisdiction and because the said bishop Reginald was not lawfully and duly absolved, restored or rehabilitated, desiring to provide for the state of the said bishop Reginald and to honour the said archbishop in the foregoing matters, etc., ratifies hereby the said absolutions, dispensations, etc. and their consequences, and orders the above absolved by the pope's authority the said bishop Reginald anew from all perjury, heresy, usury and other crimes and excesses incurred by him on account of the foregoing, absolve him from all sentences etc., enjoining a salutary penance etc., dispense him on account of irregularity, dispense him to minister in his orders and in the office of the altar, and to be bishop of the same or any other church, even metropolitan to which he may be transferred, and rule and govern the same in spirituals and temporals, and to exercise all things which pertain to order and jurisdiction, restore him to the state in which he was before the aforesaid, cause him to enjoy his former liberty, and rehabilitate him etc., the pope himself hereby absolving, dispensing, restoring and rehabilitating him by these presents; orders, moreover, the archbishop to cause Reginald to enjoy peaceable possession of his said church of Chichestor, and not to permit him to be molested in any way on account of the aforesaid, compelling obedience by ecclesiastical censure, deprivation of benefices etc., disability and other more formidable penalties, without appeal, etc., invoking if necessary the aid of the secular arm, in regard to all which the pope hereby grants him full and free faculty, etc.
APPENDIX II

LETTER OF POPE PIUS II TO ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

7 APRIL, 1459. IN CALENDAR OF ENTRIES IN
THE PAPAL REGISTERS. PAPAL LETTERS.
VOL. XI (LONDON, 1921), 529

To the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops of London and Winchester, mandate, as below. The pope has been grieved to learn from King Henry and queen Margaret and the prelates and nobles of England that although the son of iniquity and perdition Reginald Peckock, sometime reputed bishop of Chichester, who held opinions worthy of condemnation in respect of a number of the articles of the catholic faith, and had written against the said faith certain books or works in English and Latin, and therewith led many simple people astray, etc., and had confessed before the said archbishop and many other bishops and ecclesiastical persons that he had kept in the said errors and perpetuated the foregoing for twenty years, repenting, as it seemed, of the said excesses, publicly abjured his heresies before the said archbishop, bishops and persons, vowed and promised he would not fall into them again and would do penance for them, produced certain of the said books which, and no more, he admitted that he had put forth in the matter, and submitted himself to the severity of the sacred canons and laws, nevertheless the said Reginald, even after he, being seemingly penitent and unworthy, had freely and of his own accord resigned the rule and administration of the said church, of all right belonging to him therein or thereto, concealed a number of the said books containing manifest heresy, composed by him in Latin and also in English and not then published by him, to the intent that they might survive for ever, and thus, pretending to be penitent, fell again into the original error which he had made a show of abjuring, and contrived other times against the orthodox faith and against the tenets of holy Church, on account of all which there is a great danger lest the said heresies, thus spread in the said realm, give rise to great scandals etc. The pope therefore considering that the disease is contagious and full of danger, etc., hereby orders the above three, or the said bishop of London and one of his colleagues, and also Francis bishop of Terni, if he be then in England and can easily take part, to make enquiry about the foregoing, and if they find that the said Reginald has relapsed since the said abjuration, by concealing the said books or one of them, or
has made only a pretence of being penitent, to send him, if it can con-
veniently be done, to the pope and the Roman court under a good and sure
guard, to be punished and corrected in accordance with his demerits. If
not, they are to take to themselves a sufficient number of their fellow
bishops and, in order that he may be an example to others stained with the
same blemish, deprive him of the insignia of a bishop, depose and degrade
him alike from the episcopal and the sacerdotal and the other ecclesiasti-
cal orders, and otherwise ordain and degree with him in accordance with the
sacred canons. They are moreover to admonish all the inhabitants of the
realms and any others who have any of the said books or copies, of what-
soever rank etc. they be and wheresoever they be, especially in the city
and the diocese of Chichester and the places where the said Reginald lived
longest, to deliver them up within a certain time, under pain of excommu-
ication etc., and in case of their not so doing, to declare them to have
incurred the said pains etc., and cause those upon whom such books etc.
shall be found after the expirity of the said time to be examined on the
articles of faith as suspect of heresy, and to abjure heresy or be punished
as heretics. Such of the said books etc. as shall come into their hands
they are to cause to be publicly burned in the presence of the people.
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sue Sheridan Walker has been read and approved by a board of three members of the Department of English History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

March 26, 1961

Date

Signature of Adviser