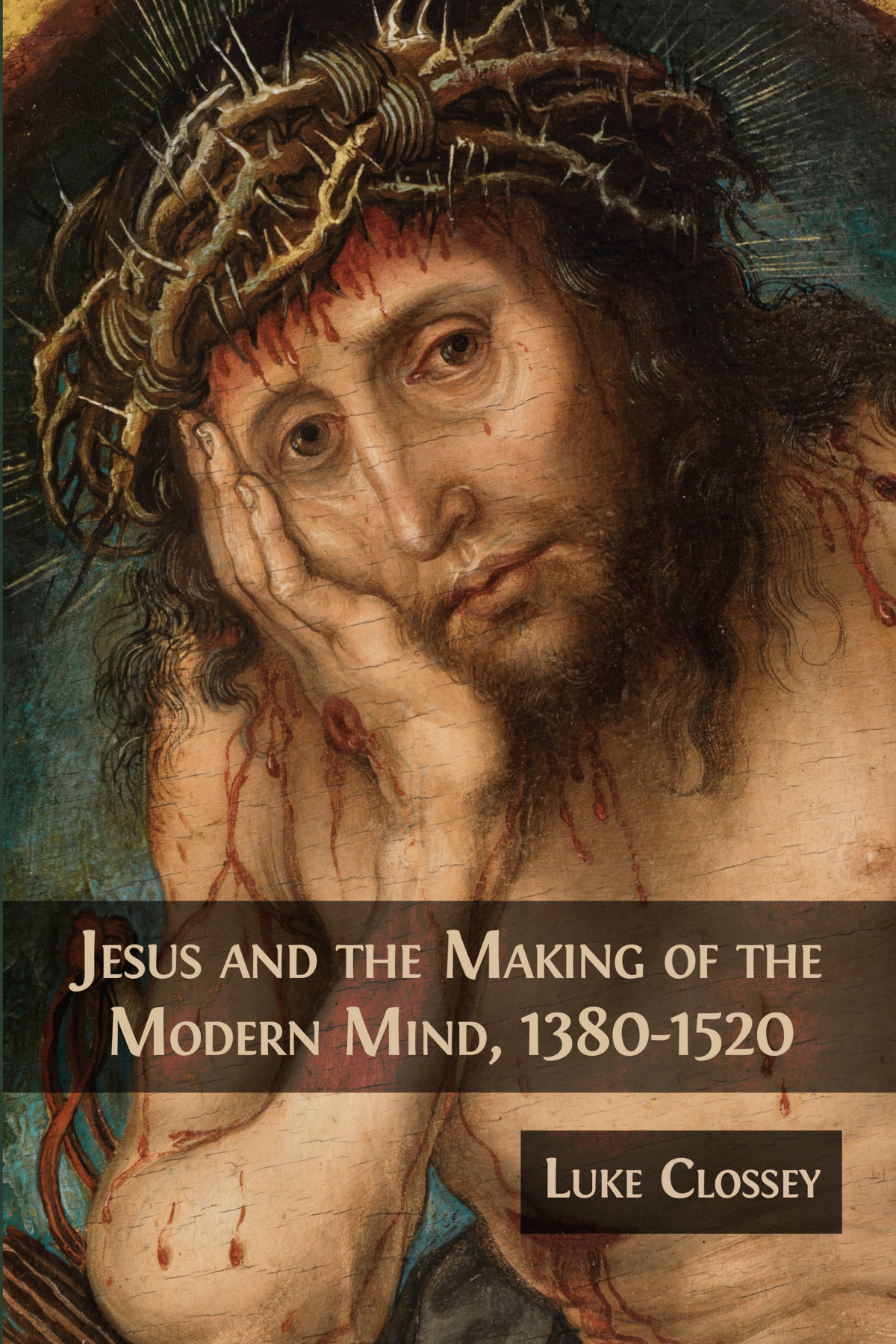

Jesus and the Making of the Modern Mind, 1380-1520

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21. Ethics, Pacifism, Vegetarianism

> What profits it that other men be peaced with thee when battles of vices be in thy soul?
>
> —Wycliffite Gospel commentary[1]

On 27 May 1988, the sportscaster Cookie "Chainsaw" Randolph announced that Larry Bird had two sprained ankles, "which is the maximum number of ankles you may sprain in the National Basketball Association." In fact, the National Basketball Association (NBA) rulebook does not mention ankles at all. Here the humour comes from the slippage between rules created by the NBA and the uncreated and unchanging "rules" inherent in human physiology.

Fifteenth-century thinkers had similar questions, many revolving around ethics. Who makes the rules? Do ethical rules change over time? How can humans learn them? Each ken has distinct answers to these questions. The deep ken searches for an eternal set of rules that must be deduced, whether from nature, human bodies, or facets of Jesus's life beyond his explicit teachings. Today, people might say that humans are "not designed" for running, for eating meat, or for having three broken ankles. In contrast, the plain ken constricts ethics to human history. Rules are made in time, and are delivered to us in time, explicitly as rules, whether by an ethics professor, a sports organization, or Jesus in a sermon from the Gospels. Each culture might have its own moral norms; the NBA updates its rulebook each year.

The dominant approach to ethics in the fifteenth-century Jesus cult was oriented towards the deep ken. This chapter begins with an overview of what such ethics looked like, and then zooms in on two particular themes, investigating the deep-ken approach to issues of pacifism and vegetarianism. Neither resembles our modern attitudes towards ethics, and deep-ken vegetarianism—unlike vegetarianism today—was only tenuously linked with ethics at all. We then shift to tracing the plain ken's gathering strength, with a focus on Jesus's Sermon on the Mount (SOM) and its consequences for the fifteenth century. Turning from

1 Exposition on the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. John, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.1.38, fol. 15r.

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theory to practice, the rest of the chapter looks at case studies, at a series of people who taught, and sometimes lived, varying sets of ethical values between the two kens.

Jesus Ethics and the Deep Ken

In the fifteenth century, it was not obvious that Jesus's ethical instructions should be followed. Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1340s–1400) recognized a rare person who put Jesus's teachings into practice in his Parson: "Christ's lore and his apostles twelve / He taught; but first he followed it himself."[2] Extraordinary among Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the Parson's Tale was less a narrative than a pastiche of thirteenth-century penance literature. In it, we learn how to be good, and much of the instruction derived from Jesus, but not in a way we might expect, not from his moral teachings. Thinking, speaking, and doing sinful things were wrong because they angered Jesus. Sowing discord was wrong because Jesus hated it. Similarly, greed was wrong because it suggested you loved your possessions more than Jesus.[3] These behaviours did not upset Jesus because they were bad; they were bad because they upset Jesus.

For Chaucer's Parson, ethics also came through the deep ken from convergence and dissonance with aspects of Jesus's life. Virginity was good because both Jesus and his mother were virgins. Nobles with expensive horses erred because Jesus only rode a donkey. Although nature would have us love our friends more than our enemies, the example of Jesus dying for his enemies supplemented an SOM quotation to remind us that our enemies needed our love more than our friends. At length, the text condemned short jackets "that through their shortness cover not the shameful members of man, to wicked intent," or that "show the bulge of their shape, and the horrible swollen members, that seem like the malady of hernia," by which "the buttocks of them fare as it were the back part of a she-ape in the full of the moon," all because they were incompatible by the modesty exemplified by Jesus.[4]

None of these ethical requirements derived from Jesus's teaching, but from Jesus's preferences, his examples, and his christology; actions spoke louder than words. The Parson quoted Jesus's SOM injunction "you shall not swear" (Mt 5:34), but rested his argument on the assertion that swearing dismembered Jesus,

2 Geoffrey Chaucer, *General Prologue*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987), lines 527–28.

3 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parson's Prologue and Tale*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson, lines 110–11, 642–43, 741–48. I have modernized the language slightly in my quotations.

4 Ibid., lines 422–35, 521–31, 950.

and ripped him apart, which one did not want to do, because the Jews already had. The Lord's Prayer was valued less for its actual content than because it was short, inclusive—containing all other prayers—and was given to us by Jesus.[5]

For Chaucer, there was no obvious and explicit "Ethical Code Taught by Jesus." The Dominican preacher Johann Herolt (d. 1468) had a similar understanding. He acknowledged that human circumstances facilitated a chain of bad behaviours: gambling led to cursing (when the gambler lost), theft (to fund the habit), and parental disobedience (presumably the gambler's parents had forbidden it). What made gambling especially wicked, however, was the deep-ken consonance between a dice-player's rolling a five and the number of Jesus's five wounds.[6]

One reason for the absence of a Jesus-Taught Ethical Code was that his law was unwritten, which caused consternation among some thinkers. Alonso de Espina (ca. 1410–64) noted that although once the Jews had a divine Mosaic law while non-Jews had natural law, with Jesus the Mosaic law became dead letter, and the new law was both divine and natural. Why did Jesus not write out his new law? Alonso supplied a variety of reasons. Some of these were plain-ken appeals to human psychology and to the historical customs of kings. Writing it out would imply an undignified arrogance. Great teachers, such as Socrates, and kings did not themselves write down their laws, but had witnesses record them instead.[7]

In general, however, Alonso approached the problem of Jesus's law from the deep ken. Did Jesus's law's non-written nature show consonance or dissonance with goodness and mildness? Because the universe was intentional, the fact that Jesus performed relatively few miracles proved that few were necessary, which in turn demonstrated that his law was easy to accept. In fact, Jesus did write his law, but in an abstract sense, in our bowels and hearts, since it was a law of love. Mt 28:20's "I will be with you always" proved that the Eucharist, and therefore the Church its steward, would endure as long as the world endures, which illustrated the excellence of the new law. Strikingly, his deep ken allowed Alonso to work outside of a normal linear time sequence. Part of the reason why Jesus's law was superior to Moses's was because it predated Moses: God

5 Ibid., lines 587–604, 1038–44.

6 Ian Kingston Siggins, *A Harvest of Medieval Preaching: The Sermon Books of Johann Herolt, OP* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corp., 2009), 252.

7 Alonso de Espina, *Fortalitium fidei contra Judeos et Sarracenos* (Lyons: Gueynard, 1511). See Steven J. McMichael, "Alfonso de Espina on the Mosaic Law," in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Susan E. Meyers and Steven J. McMichael (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 199–223.

revealed Jesus's law at the moment Abraham accepted God, four hundred and thirty years before he revealed Moses's law.[8]

One example of John Wycliffe's (ca. 1328–84) logic was an even deeper embedding of Jesus's law, in the very structure of truth. Jesus, he explained, could have exercised something like the absolute powers of God to threaten *comminatorie* [warningly] an eternal punishment that did not exist: "Christ could have been lying through his entire scripture about the perpetual punishment of sin, saying this only to terrify his church." In that case, however, every rational creature would be saved, which was impossible.[9] That is, lying being allowable implied the possibility that Jesus lied, which implied the possibility that there was no eternal punishment, an obvious untruth. Therefore, lying was forbidden.

Pacifism

Uncertainty had long haunted understandings of Jesus's attitude towards violence. Mt 10:34 suggested Jesus's approval: "I came not to send peace, but the sword." Still, the medieval scribe who penned the Book of Kells was so startled by this that he understood it as an error and corrected the word *gladium* [sword] to *gaudium* [joy]: "I came not [only] to send peace, but [also] joy."[10]

Because Jesus's law was untaught, and ancient, it could avoid the inconvenient peace-celebrating passages of the SOM. Peace was not necessarily desirable. In theory, war was an instrument of the state, organized by the king for the common good, and not for glory. Wars were normal, and could be seen as tools to achieve a more favourable peace. If you won a war, God supported your cause; if you lost, God was punishing you for your sins.[11]

Peace appears to have been no more obvious to Richard II (1367–99). Philippe de Mézières (ca. 1327–1405) (once Chancellor of Cyprus, then advisor to Charles VI) wrote a treatise (ca. 1394) to Richard II asking that he end the war with France. The value of peace was far from self-evident. Mézières had to cite examples from the Bible, the Church Fathers, and history. More pragmatically, he insisted that a ruler was better off surrendering two thirds of a desired object than to fight over it and perhaps lose it entirely. Nor was this peace intended as a good in itself: it was good because it sets the groundwork for a crusade against

8 Alonso de Espina, *Fortalitium*, fol. 14r, 57v, 100v.
9 John Wycliffe, *De veritate sacrae scripturae*, ed. Rudolf Buddensieg, 3 vols. (London: Trübner, 1906), II, 53.
10 Trinity College Dublin, MS 58, fol. 58v.
11 Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years Wars: England and France at War c. 1300–c. 1450*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1989), 53, 72.

Jerusalem by the Order of the Passion of Christ.[12] The presentation copy of this treatise has powerful illustrations, including the Crown of Thorns shining light onto the Crowns of France and of England which flank it, attended by a "Pax vobis" [Peace with You] and a giant YHS dominating fields of French fleurs-de-lis and of English lions.[13]

Warfare and violence had their real and rhetorical attractions, often expressed in Jesus terms. The English Taborite Peter Payne (ca. 1380–1455) referred to Jesus as "a most invincible soldier and Prague Warrior."[14] There was a glory and manliness in battle, even in spiritual battle: one fifteenth-century sermon manual, a translation of a work composed two centuries previous, described St. Anthony in the desert surviving two attacks by demons, the second with Jesus's assistance. When Anthony asked Jesus where he was during the first attack, Jesus answered that he had wanted to just watch, and was pleased that Anthony "has manly overcome thy enemies."[15] The Irish poet Tadhg Óg Ó Dálaigh (fl. 1520) praised Jesus as a peace-maker who galloped into the midst of battle only to be heroically wounded.[16] This was a violent peace linked up to the suffering of Jesus.

We can also see deep-ken attitudes towards violence by looking at the actual fighting of the Hundred Years War, and in particular at the attitude of Joan of Arc (ca. 1412–31). The Maid of Orléans waged a war with powerful deep-ken associations between heaven and earth that would have eluded a plain-ken general. She carried her Jesus banner into battle "to avoid killing anyone." Joan worried that her army's sins might be a military disadvantage, by provoking God's disfavour. On Ascension Day, she decided that a good ritual was the best offence: she took Communion rather than engage the enemy, and ordered her

12 Philippe de Mézières, *Letter to King Richard II*, trans. G. W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1975), 51–53, 124–27.

13 BL Royal MS 20 B VI, fol. 1v.

14 Thomas A. Fudge, ed., *The Crusade against Heretics in Bohemia, 1418–1437* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 259–61. For context, see Martin Pjecha, "Spreading Faith and Vengeance: Human Agency and the 'Offensive Shift' in the Hussite Discourses on Warfare," *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 10 (2015): 157–84 (173).

15 Étienne de Besançon, *An Alphabet of Tales: An English 15th Century Translation of the Alphabetum Narrationum*, ed. Mary Macleod Banks (London: Early English Text Society, 1904), 55.

16 Salvador Ryan, "'Scarce Anyone Survives a Heart Wound': The Wounded Christ in Irish Bardic Religious Poetry," in *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, ed. Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 291–312 (301), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004306455_015

men to confession. She asserted that anyone fighting against her was fighting Jesus.[17]

War, in the mainstream view, was not necessarily a bad thing, and was sometimes a necessary thing. The benefits of peace were uncertain. Pacifists were not idealists, but social and political subversives.

We can see both the hesitation about peace, as well as its deep-ken conceptualization, in the writings of a representative, respectable establishment figure. Thomas Brinton (d. 1389) was well and widely liked. After years of service to Urban V (1310–70) at Avignon and Rome, Urban's successor Gregory XI (ca. 1329–78) appointed him Bishop of Rochester (1373), a small diocese perhaps chosen so that no large administrative burden would distract the papal favourite from preaching and diplomacy. Brinton served as royal confessor, and thus gave the sermon at the coronation of Richard II. Parliament sought his advice, and the rebellious peasants of 1381 asked him to be their spokesman.[18]

Brinton is most useful to us for his many extant sermons, often preached at St. Paul's Cross in London; these give us an idea of what a mainstream Christian teacher thought of peace. Around 1400 in England, there was a general shift of focus from the glories of war to its miseries, but still many shared the mainstream attitude to the causes of war: God used war to punish a sinful people and a corrupt Church.[19]

Brinton did not assume his audience had a positive attitude towards peace, and he had to argue that God and Jesus favoured it. He noted that God the Father so loved peace as to have his angels announce "Peace on Earth" upon the Nativity of his Son. His Son also loved peace, even ending the farewell to his disciples with "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" (Jn 14:27). After the Resurrection, Jesus reappeared to them—"like a sun in the middle of a universe to be illuminated, like a heart in the middle of an animal to be brought to life, like the centre in the middle of a circle to be joined together"—and greeted them with a "Peace be with you!" Brinton points out that we bequeath to our heirs

17 Jules-Étienne-Joseph Quicherat, ed., *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, dite la Pucelle*, 5 vols. (Paris: Renouard, 1841–49), I, 78; V, 127; Régine Pernoud, ed., *Joan of Arc By Herself and Her Witnesses*, trans. Edward Hyams (Lanham: Scarborough House, 1994), 62; Joan of Arc, *Joan of Arc in Her Own Words*, ed. Willard Trask (New York: Turtle Point Press, 1996), 35.

18 Henry Summerson, "Brinton, Thomas (*d.* 1389)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (24 May 2008), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3442

19 Richard W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 339–40.

whatever we hold most dear, and so Jesus's wishes that his disciples have peace proved its great importance for him.[20]

Brinton was aware of the plain-ken, human mechanisms of peace and its failure, and described a chain from "scornful and contemptuous words to lashes, from lashes to wounds, from wounds to murder." However, the reality remained much more complicated than that, and he could see a fuller picture. At a more profound, deep-ken level, peace was about two things: God and Unity. Peace was something that God made. Jesus came to earth to make peace between God and man, and between men. Jesus then "taught peace by preaching, perpetuated it by living, exhibited it by resurrecting, and left it by ascending." Jesus was the unifying sun from which all peace shone.[21]

What we have come to think of as peace—brotherly peace regulated by justice—was, for Brinton, but the last part of a stratified trinity, alongside (first) the peace a soul had when unburdened by conscience and (second) the peace achieved by obedience to God. Even the third peace was linked to God, for the one "who through discord stains the unity of brothers" in fact, like Judas, "betrays God, who is love." Instead, "a true penance makes a confirmed peace." To the deep ken, the problem was not that "discord" divided us from each other, but that it divided us from the truth of God. The Church was crucial to unity and peace: baptism and the mass made unity possible, and the priest performing the mass, when turned to the people at the elevation, "reveals himself the mediator between God and the people."[22]

In Florence, Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98) urged his audiences to strive for a more ethical life through imitation of, and love for, Jesus. Savonarola urged his audience to replace hatred of neighbour for love of Jesus. If we forgive our enemies, God will forgive Florence. Such loving relations should not be "simulated, but with heartfelt simplicity and truth." Replacing anger with love would allow Jesus to rule in your heart. This sentiment caught on in popular song. One anonymous laud, probably set to music from the 1496 carnival, asked "Jesus king, leader, and lord" to "live, live in our heart." Denouncing the practice of holding vendettas, Savonarola urged aggrieved Florentines to imitate Jesus, who had humbled himself, by letting go of past injustices. He advised his audience to "Let Christ be your captain, and let him be the one who gives you the reform of holy living. That reform is nothing other than union—that is, the love of God and the love of neighbour. This is nothing other than the commandment

20 Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester (1373–1389)*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, 2 vols. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1954), II, 274 (sermon 60), 337–38 (73).

21 Ibid., I, 16–17 (7); II, 273–74 (60).

22 Ibid., I, 16–7 (7); II, 275 (60), 336–38 (73).

of God and of Christ." One of Savonarola's verses had Jesus saying "leave your sinning, since without me peace cannot be found."[23]

The rightness of following Savonarola's advice to forgive was not obvious. In his Lenten sermon on "love your enemies," Giovanni Dominici (ca. 1355–1419) explained how difficult it was to love and pardon an enemy, especially when an injury was done in public or when the injurer was inferior in strength or family. In those cases, you would be justified, though not necessarily excused, for seeking vengeance. He told the story of a widow whose three sons, encouraged by their friends, asked her permission to make peace with their father's murderers. She produced their father's bloody shirt, declaring, "When this shirt be washed, [only then] make peace" with your enemies. This was not the story of a grieving widow's bloodlust. Instead, as Dominici explained his allegory, the widow was the Church, the husband was Jesus crucified, the sons were ourselves, and the friends urging peace were demons. He applied this set-up to ethics by linking the enemies with our sins. Because of Jesus's Passion, we should not make peace with our enemies, despite the demons' urging. Thus, in Lent, we should not "make peace with these [our] miserable vices."[24]

Vegetarianism

Before turning to the issue of eating meat, we will consider how the fifteenth-century West thought about animals generally, and how Jesus conditioned that thinking. Medieval bestiaries had been mostly illustrative moral tracts, but by our period both zoology and ethics attracted writers' interests.[25] Richard Rolle of Hampole (ca. 1300–49) wrote his "Nature of the Bee" not just about morals, but also about bees.[26] Some of this attention was positive. Kamal al-Din al-Damiri (1341–1405) wrote on animal psychology; he reported a conversation between Jesus and a snake who asserted that his master's unethical behaviour makes

23 Savonarola, *Poesie di Ieronimo Savonarola*, ed. Audin di Rians (Florence: Baracchi, 1847), 21–32, 39–40; Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, ed. Luigi Firpo (Rome: Belardetti, 1965), 423. See John Koenig, "Mary, Sovereign of Siena, Jesus, King of Florence: Siege Religion and the Ritual Submission (1260–1637)," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 115 (2008): 43–163 (113–15); Patrick Macey, *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 63–65.

24 Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence MS 1301, fol. 37r, 43r. See D. R. Lesnick, "Civic Preaching in the Early Renaissance," in *Christianity and the Renaissance*, ed. Timothy Gregory Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1990), 208–25 (217).

25 Ronald Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages* (London: Courtauld Institute, 1998).

26 Richard Rolle, "The Nature of the Bee," in *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, ed. Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921), 41–42.

his—the master's—venom worse than the snake's.[27] William Langland's (ca. 1332–86) Piers Plowman described animals as intellectually superior: Reason "ruled all beasts, save man and his mate; many times and often no Reason followed them."[28] The thirteenth-century Servasanto of Faenza considered animals morally superior to humans.[29]

Because of its special relationship with Jesus, the donkey stood out as extraordinary among non-human animals. The nun Alijt Bake (d. 1455) invited her readers to imagine Jesus's Passion through the eyes of the donkey he rode on, a "simple, plump, scorned beast."[30] In 1417, 'Abd Allah al-Tarjuman (1355–1423) (see Chapter 6) wrote a fable-like piece that involved a dispute between animals and a human—portrayed as al-Tarjuman himself—on a fundamental question: should humans rule over animals, or vice versa? The animals, sportingly giving the humans an advantage, chose for their spokes-animal a "vile and miserable" donkey, "snotty-nosed, mangy, without a tail." To support the dominion of humans, al-Tarjuman offered many reasons, ranging from our moral law and nice clothes, to astrology, to our pleasant odour. The donkey rebutted every argument: those nice silk and wool clothes were stolen from animals! Finally, however, the donkey's fear was realized when al-Tarjuman happened upon the only winning argument: Jesus was incarnated as a human, not as a donkey.[31]

Some, often women, warned against animal cruelty, but their motivation did not come from modern ethical sensibilities, much as their contemporaries' pacifism did not come from modern ethical sensibilities. Bridget of Sweden (ca. 1303–73) had a vision in which Jesus explained the suffering of animals:

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27 Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Jeesus, Allahin Profeetta* (Helsinki: Suomen Eksegeettisen Seura 1998), 108, 228; Tarif Khalidi, ed., *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001), 208–10.

28 *Piers Plowman*, Text B, Passus XI, lines 369–71.

29 S. Bonaventure [attributed], "Sermones de sanctis totius anni," in *Opera omnia*, ed. A. C. Peltier, 15 vols. (Paris: Vives, 1868), XIV, 1–138 (2, 92). Elsewhere, Servasanto notes that animals, like pagans and publicans (see Mt 5:46), love their neighbours. *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr., E.VI.1046, fol. 40v. See Antonio Del Castello, "La tradizione del Liber de virtutibus et vitiis di Servasanto da Faenza" (PhD thesis, University of Naples Federico II, 2013), 188–92.

30 Alijt Bake, "De weg van de ezel," ed. B. Spaapen, *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 42 (1968): 5–32 (11).

31 Anselm Turmeda, "Disputation of the Donkey: Selections," ed. Neil Kenny, in *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1997), 3–16 (6, 14–15). See Miguel Asín Palacios, *El original árabe de la "Disputa del asno contra fray Anselmo Turmeda"* (Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando, 1915); Lourdes María Alvarez, "Beastly Colloquies: Of Plagiarism and Pluralism in Two Medieval Disputations between Animals and Men," *Comparative Literature Studies* 39 (2002): 179–200.

partly, they suffered so that they might die quicker, partly, because human sin disrupted all of creation: "if human sins did not demand it, animals, which are under human charge, would not suffer in so singular a manner." Her Jesus urged that "people should therefore fear me, their God, above all things, and treat my creatures and animals more mildly, having mercy on them for the sake of me, their Creator."[32] In a parallel direction, Catherine of Siena (1347–80) explained that a follower of Jesus should love God's creatures because Jesus loved them, and "it is the nature of love to love what the beloved loves..."[33] Of Margery Kempe (ca. 1373–1438) it was said that "if a man beat a child before her or hit a horse or other beast with a whip, if she saw or heard it, she thought she saw our Lord being beaten or wounded, just as she saw it in the man or in the beast, either in the fields or in the town, and alone by herself as well as among people."[34] The three disjunctions at the end of that sentence indicate that this was understood as a miraculous event, and something similar happened when Kempe saw a crucifix. She was not motivated by an ethical empathy for the horse, but because of a deep-ken consonance between a beaten horse and the Passion of Jesus. With the deep ken, Bridget defended animals because God made them, Catherine because God loved them, and Kempe because they suffered as Jesus suffered.

In general, animal lovers loved to eat animals. Most vegetarians declined to eat animals only because their flesh was luxurious and worldly.[35] Debates about the consumption of meat, such as that between Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420) and Jean Gerson (1363–1429),[36] were often linked to the Lenten fast. Refraining from eating meat was an act of asceticism, not inter-species love. Such asceticism was controversial, not least because it suggested pride. One might argue that avoiding pork was bad, since God, in Genesis, affirmed that all of creation was good.[37] The Russian Sergius of Radonezh (1315–92) gave his bread to Arkuda, a hungry bear that came daily; this was generosity unattended by goodwill, for

32 *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden*, trans. Denis Searby, ed. Bridget Morris, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008–12), II, 309.

33 Catherine of Siena, *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, 4 vols. (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), I, 167.

34 Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 1985), 104.

35 Rod Preece, *Sins of the Flesh: A History of Ethical Vegetarian Thought* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 142.

36 Pierre d'Ailly, "Tractatus pro Carthusiensibus, quod rationabiliter abstinent ab esu carnium, sive Tractatus de non esu carnium," in *Zur Geschichte der grossen abendländischen Schisma und der Reformconcilien von Pisa und Constanz*, ed. Paul Tshackert (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Pertehes, 1877), 25–28; Jean Gerson, "De non esu Carnium," in OC, III, 77–95. Also Palémon Glorieux, "Gerson et les Chartreux," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 28 (1961): 115–53.

37 McMichael, "Alfonso de Espina on the Mosaic Law," 216.

the bear was "like a wicked creditor who wishes to collect his due."[38] After four years of abstaining, Kempe was ordered to eat meat by her confessor, who had heard complaints about her vegetarianism. She did begin to eat meat, but soon requested him to allow her to restart her fast.[39] Members of the strictly observant Carthusian order did not eat mammalian meat, and their refusal to give meat broth to members in ill health led to their reputation as "murderers of their sick."[40]

On occasion, contemporary scholars wondered whether Jesus was himself a vegetarian, and usually concluded that he mostly was. Nicholas Love (d. ca. 1424) noted that "we find not" that Jesus ever ate meat, except at the Last Supper, which was "more for mystery than for bodily food."[41] A deep-ken attitude towards canon underlies Love's reasoning: the Bible did not mention Jesus eating meat (with the noted exceptions), so he did not. That Jesus made exceptions for symbolic reasons tends towards the deep ken, not because Jesus was especially hungry. Again, this is born of ascetic modesty, not a desire to be harmless. Joan of Arc was a pescatarian (except for the Eucharist), not out of love of animals but to consonate with Jesus.[42] Unusually, Johann Herolt took up the plain ken to contextualize Jesus's diet within first-century Jewish culture: Jesus was as vegetarian as he could be at the time, but did eat lamb each year during Passover.[43]

The fifteenth century's greatest friend to animals was Francis of Paola (1416–1507),[44] who—imitating Francis of Assisi (d. 1226), who was imitating

38 Dmitrij Ciževskij, *History of Russian Literature: From the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 174.

39 Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, 97.

40 Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), xlii. An exception can be found in the ca. 1400 moral treatise *Dives et Pauper*, which took "eat yet no flesh with blood" (Genesis 11) to forbid eating "cruel" meat. See Henry Parker, *Here Endith a Compendiouse Treetise Dyalogue. Of Diues* [*and*] *Paup*[*er*], *that is to Say, the Riche* [*and*] *the Pore Fructuously Tretyng Vpon the x. Co*[*m*]*mañmentes* (London: Pynson, 1493), fol. Qiii v. (precept 5, chapter 15).

41 Love, *The Mirror*, 147 (lines 33–35). Love was a Carthusian, which was a vegetarian order.

42 Colette Beaune, "Jeanne la Pucelle," *Perspectives médiévales* 27 (2001): 21–36 (25–26).

43 Ian D. K. Siggins, *A Harvest of Medieval Preaching: The Sermon Books of Johann Herolt* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corp., 2009), 129.

44 My main source for Francis is "[Vita] de S. Francisco de Paula," in *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, ed. Godfrey Henschen and Daniel van Papenbroek, 68 vols. (Antwerp: Cnobarum, 1675), I, with translations from Gino J. Simi and Mario M. Segreti, *St. Francis of Paola* (Rockford, IL: Tan, 1977). See Ronald C. Finucane, *Contested Canonizations: The Last Medieval Saints, 1482–1523* (Washington, DC: Washington Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 117–66.

Jesus—combined a love of asceticism with a love of creation. His opponents mocked him as the *homo herbarius* [botanist man].[45]

In the Kingdom of Naples, on the Calabrian coast, in 1400 the godly farmer and Francis of Assisi devotee Giacomo Martolilla married a woman named Vienna. He, motivated by Francis, was vegan. Their efforts at procreation were unsuccessful until one night in 1415 an aurora borealis appeared directly over their house, to the confusion of their neighbours. Nine months later their son was born, named Francis after the saint.[46]

Francis's inherited vegetarianism informed a series of miracles. He resurrected his friends Martinello the Lamb and Antonella the Trout after they had been cooked—Martinello had also been eaten. He later restored to life another served fish in Bormes, France. He carried out, by hand, a nest of snakes that workers were about to immolate. When his host, Ferdinand I of Naples (1424–94), had him sent a plate of cooked fish, instead of eating them Francis resurrected the fish to life and turned the faux pas into a teaching moment: "Carry these dear little animals back to the King and tell him how I restored life to these poor fish. In this way I want him to restore liberty to those unfortunates who are unjustly kept buried in his prisons!"[47]

At Lauria, Francis asked a blacksmith to make shoes for another Martinello, a donkey. The smith obliged, but when he asked for payment, he was decidedly unimpressed with the poverty-embracing saint's attempt to put the work on Jesus's tab: "Rest assured that the blessed Jesus will recompense you generously for your act of charity." Unable to persuade the furious blacksmith, Francis told Martinello to remove the shoes, which he miraculously did. The blacksmith suddenly decided Jesus's credit was very good indeed, and was then keen to shoe Martinello, but Francis instead pressed on the 20 km to Lagonegro, where the local blacksmith did the work for free, without miraculous intervention.[48]

Already in 1435, when Francis was nineteen years old, he had attracted followers, and through his life he established hermitages for what became a new order, the Minims ("the least"), or more correctly the Poor Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Paul II (1417–71) declined to approve the Minims' diet for fear that it would not supply sufficient nutrition, but Francis gave his followers, without papal approval, instructions to maintain the vegan regime.

45 Finucane, *Contested Canonizations*, 123.

46 Simi and Segreti, *St. Francis of Paola*, 15–17; Henschen and van Papenbroek, ed., *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, 106–07, 195.

47 Henschen and van Papenbroek, ed., *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, 109–10, 117, 121, 130, 139–40, 153, 184, 199–200; Simi and Segreti, *St. Francis of Paola*, 26, 111, 128, 158.

48 Henschen and van Papenbroek, ed., *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, 203; Simi and Segreti, *St. Francis of Paola*, 103.

After Francis's death—on Good Friday, with its deep-ken significance—Pope Julius II (1443–1513) later approved this, in 1505–06.[49]

With Francis of Paola, we see a harmlessness-vegetarian combination rooted both in asceticism and in friendship with animals. Still, neither Francis nor the other people in this section approached eating meat as the right-or-wrong ethical debate it is today. Instead, it was about sense restraint and consonance with Jesus's diet.

Developing a Plain-ken Ethics

The previous pages described a deep-ken attitude towards ethics, and pacifism and vegetarianism in particular: ethical truth was not taught by a wise, first-century Jewish rabbi, but was embedded in the intentional universe and amplified in the life of the living God. The rest of this chapter explores an alternative, plain-ken perspective that strengthened during this century. In Christianity, Jesus had been associated with ethical wisdom since the composition of the Gospels. In Islam, a number of traditions had long associated Jesus with ethical advice. Baha' al-Din al-Ibshihi (d. 1487) wrote anthologies that included Jesus giving moral teachings, such as "When someone turns a beggar away empty-handed, the angels will not visit his house for seven days" or "I treated the leper and the blind man and cured them both. I treated the fool and he made me despair. Silence is the [best] reply to the fool."[50]

In our period, some extremists among the Jesus ethicists experimented with a palpably plain-ken approach that emphasized history. Some Franciscans quested for the historical Jesus, understanding his life literally, because they wanted to live his ethics in their own human spacetime. A number of thinkers sought to historicize the Church. Essentially, plain-ken ethics were about understanding history to involve fundamental change. In particular, the plain ken saw two breaks: the first—within the canon itself—broke the Old Testament away from Jesus's call for perfection and completion in the New Testament. The Old Testaments' ethics could be identified with the "righteousness of old times" (Mt 5:20, 21, 27, 33) identified by Jesus in the New. For the extremists, the Old Testament entered plain-ken history—in a sense, it was pushed there by the New Testament, which captured Truth and combined the deep and plain kens into a new kind of earthly perfection to be achieved morally in the imitation of Jesus.

49 Simi and Segreti, *St. Francis of Paola*, 63, 122, 187, 208.
50 Quoted in Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus*, 211.

The second break was the space between Jesus's New Testament and contemporary times, between which humans' ethical norms and tendencies collapsed. Henry of Langenstein described the transfer of authority from Moses's law to Jesus's, and then on to the Holy Spirit's, "like shadow into light."[51] The chain of authority between Biblical times and the fifteenth century was dubious, as illustrated by the failure of pope and emperor to live up to Jesus's ethical teachings. Therefore, it was necessary to jump back to the New Testament. Looking at these breaks, the plain ken could see human customs change over time but still sought to recover ethical teachings from the Jesus (New Testament) period. Petr Chelčický (ca. 1390–1460), to whom we turn below, spoke of a house burnt to the ground and warned against mistaking the ruins—human custom—for the true "foundation." We should instead seek the original intention of Jesus, best expressed in the SOM. A few located this second break specifically in the Donation of Constantine, the alleged fourth-century transfer by the Emperor Constantine of his plain-ken power over the western Roman Empire to the pope. Wycliffe, for example, recognized that transfer as the beginning of the ruin of the Church.[52] The plain ken opened Jesus's commandments up to a new circumstantial interpretation. Strict interpreters insisted these rules always held, but more liberal views made their validity dependent on circumstances—they applied at some times and not others.[53]

The Sermon on the Mount

In the New Testament, many of the radical ethical teachings that forced a historical break with Old Testament mores are found in Jesus's Sermon on the Mount (SOM). Described in Matthew's Gospel, this sermon began with a series of beatitudes specifying who was blessed (the poor, the meek...), before launching into a series of moral instructions that called for a high level of acceptance and non-retaliation ("turn the other cheek").

In our period, the SOM teachings appeared in unexpected ways. The medieval *Evangelium secundum marcas argenti* [Gospel of Silver Mark] was still popular at the beginning of our century. The title punned on the two meanings of "Mark," as the name of the evangelist St. Mark and as a kind of coin, as in the

51 Henry of Langenstein, "Contra quendam eremitam de ultimis temporibus vaticinantem nomine theolophorum," in *Thesaurus anecdotorum novissimus*, ed. A. R. P. Bernardo Pezio, 6 vols. (Augsburg: Philippi, Martini, and Joannis Veith Fratrum, 1721), I, col. 522.

52 Wycliffe, *Tractatus de ecclesia*, ed. Johann Loserth (London: Trübner, 1886), 360–70.

53 Bernardino of Siena, *Le prediche volgari* (*Firenze 1425*), ed. Ciro Cannarozzi, 3 vols. (Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1940), II, 278–79.

now defunct Deutschmark. This playful, or mocking, attitude oozed throughout the work. Flipped around, the beatitudes reported how things actually were, not how Jesus wanted them to be: "Blessed are the rich, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are they that have, for they shall not be empty-handed. Blessed are they that have money, for theirs is the curia of Rome. Woe unto him that does not have it."[54]

The SOM was also a common inspiration for the spiritual development of self and the spiritual correction of others. Sister Margareta of Kenzingen gave away her possessions to become a beggar, following Jesus's instruction at Mt 19:21: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." Presumably drawing from Jesus's blessings on the hated and persecuted (Mt 5:11–12, Lk 6:22), Margareta's goal was to become "the most scorned person on earth."[55] In contrast, Camilla Battista da Varano (1458–1524) used the "judge not" passage of the SOM ("Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" Mt 7:1–5) to justify her advice to the man she loved, that he act more like a "lovable bride" than a servant fearing punishment or a prostitute seeking reward.[56]

In his *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* (see Chapter 4), Nicholas Love developed his own approach to Jesus and his teachings. When treating the SOM, Love emphasized poverty, and when treating the Passion, he emphasized meekness: "Our lord began this sermon first at poverty, doing us to understand, that poverty is the first ground of all spiritual ('ghostly') exercise. For he that is overlaid and charged with temporal goods and worldly riches may not freely and swiftly follow Christ, that is the mirror and example of poverty." Love had his audience contemplate Jesus's patience during his Passion: "Now take heed diligently to him, and have wonder of that great profound meekness of him, and in all much as thou may conform thee to follow him by patience and meekness and suffering of wrongs for his love." He encouraged us to follow Jesus by noting how the disciples followed him: "Now behold how the disciples follow him and in [the] manner of chickens that follow the hen," and snuggled up under her wings. Contemplating the Passion of Jesus with all your heart yielded joy and compassion and bliss.[57]

54 Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 323, 330–31.

55 Johannes Meyer, *Women's History in the Age of Reformation: Johannes Meyer's Chronicle of the Dominican Observance*, trans. Claire Taylor Jones (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2019), 170.

56 Camilla Battista da Varano, *Le opere spirituali*, ed. Giacomo Boccanera (Iesi: Scuola Tipografia Francescana, 1958), 180–81.

57 Love, *The Mirror*, 82, 156, 160, 171.

Of course, beyond the SOM other canonical passages expressed Jesus's teachings and life, and, beyond personal ethics, those teachings were applied to broader social challenges. We see expressions of a Jesus-based hostility to the powerful's abuse of their power. Jesus being executed did not slow capital punishment—Jesus was very different from a criminal—but Gerson noted that Jesus did die among criminals, the "poor Christians our brothers, for whose salvation he had received death."[58] Henry of Langenstein (ca. 1325–97) used Jesus's expulsion of moneychangers from the Temple as a jumping-off point to argue that a merchant must not inflate the price of something he was selling because of expenses incurred in maintaining it.[59] One Glagolitic poem (ca. 1400) from the Balkans compared the monks' and Church officials' devotion to their "fat bellies," in contrast to so-called heretics condemned for imitating Jesus.[60] In Newbury, the fuller Thomas Taylor (d. ca. 1491) described the Church elite as thieves, for they seized worldly goods in the name of Jesus.[61] Lorenzo Valla (1407–57) contrasted the Gospel with power, and put into Pope Sylvester's (285–335) mouth a hypothetical speech in which he scolded Constantine: "Truthfully, how will the innocence of priests possibly remain untarnished amidst riches, offices, and the administration of the affairs of the world? Have we then renounced worldly goods in order to acquire them in even greater abundance?" The Pope then quoted Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."[62]

Similarly, Nicole Oresme (ca. 1320/25–82) used a plain-ken approach to Jesus to settle a debate about the ownership of money. If you sold something and received money in exchange, did you own that money, or did the ruler who coined it? One school of thought looked to Jesus's instruction to give back to Caesar what was Caesar's—that is, money (Mt 22:21, Mk 12:17, Lk 20:25)—which suggests that Jesus understood the ruler owned the money. The deep ken also noted the consonance between the ruler's actual face, and his face depicted on the coin. Oresme countered this argument with an emphasis on

58 Jean Gerson, "Requête pour les condamnés a mort," in OC, VII, pt. 1, 342.

59 Odd Langholm, "The German Tradition in Late Medieval Value Theory," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 15 (2008): 555–70 (559), https://doi.org/10.1080/09672560802480914

60 Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, trans. Nikolina Jovanović (London: Hurst and Co., 2019), 29.

61 Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 4.

62 The Jesus quotation is from Acts 20:35. Lorenzo Valla, *The Profession of the Religious and selections from The Falsely-Believed and Forged Donation of Constantine*, trans. Olga Zorzi Pugliese, 2nd rev. ed. (Toronto: Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 1994), 97–98. See also Salvatore I. Camporeale, "Lorenzo Valla's Oratio on the Pseudo-Donation of Constantine: Dissent and Innovation in Early Renaissance Humanism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 (1996): 9–26 (21–22).

looking at the historical circumstance: it was clear that Jesus is speaking in a situation involving a convention of tribute payment. The ruler owned the money not because of his image on the coin, but because of the fiscal context.[63]

John Wycliffe used the SOM to develop criticisms especially of the papacy, using both the plain and deep kens. With the plain ken, he contrasted the "poor particular church cramped in a corner" of the western part of the Far West, headed by the pope, with the dissimilar Holy Church of all Christians. Numerous Christians—even, thinking of the first-century context, Jesus—were in the latter, but not the former. The papacy was holy, and popes who followed Jesus and modelled Peter were real popes and should be obeyed as such. In his own day, however, Wycliffe observed that popes more closely matched the Matthew 24's description of false Christs, those "false messiahs and false prophets" who would "appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive." A deep-ken solution could address this plain-ken breakdown: we should ignore papal claims to authority superior to Jesus, but respect papal deeds that suggested consonance with Jesus, "for," Wycliffe explained, "it were a great wonder that Christ should make his vicar the man that most contraries him in manner of living." At the end of the day, Wycliffe emphasized ethics over the hollow authority of high office.[64]

Could you kill someone who slapped you? In general, Jesus's instruction in the SOM, to turn the other cheek, was difficult for Christian minds in this period to accept fully. There was general agreement that it was usually good to flee someone who had slapped you. "Of course," there were also exceptions: a fifteenth-century Sicilian theologian decided that only social inferiors were obliged to flee in order to avoid killing; the elite, of course, could fight back.[65]

The association between Jesus, the SOM, and ethics was so strong as to resonate even in Islam. We do see harmlessness esteemed in the Muslim subcult, but even there it was usually explicitly associated with the Christian subcult. Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) cited "their book": "Whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him your left cheek." He thus explained that Christians had

63 Nicholas Oresme, *The* De Moneta *of Nicholas Oresme and English Mint Documents*, trans. Charles Johnson (London: Nelson, 1956), 10–11.

64 John Wycliffe, *Tractatus de potestate pape*, ed. Johann Loserth (London: Trübner, 1907), 79–87, 118–26, 147–52; John Wycliffe, "The Function of the Secular Ruler" [*Tracatus de Regibus*], in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. Anne Hudson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1978), 129.

65 Nicolò de' Tudeschi (Panormitanus) (1386–1445), *Abbatis Panormitani Commentaria in Tertium Decretalium Librum* (Venice: 1571), 5.17.1 (137v–38r), 2.25.8 (17rv). In contrast, Gerson felt that social status did not matter here. See Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 223.

"outlawed strife."[66] Additionally, we might look to the poems of Hafiz (1325–90) (see Chapter 20). In one, he flexed his harmlessness while showing off his weak biceps: "Very grateful am I to my arm / Because I lack the strength of an injurer of men." Hafiz's inspiration here likely came from Amin al-Din al-Balyani (d. 1345), who wrote in *Tark-i azari* [Avoiding Causing Distress to Others]: "Whoever causes distress and annoyance [*azar*] to God's servants proves himself devoid of faith in God. There is no greater sin [*gunah*] than distressing someone's heart, nor is there any more meritorious act of devotion than bringing joy to someone's heart." Al-Balyani might have been Hafiz's Sufi master, and Hafiz used the same key terms *gunah* and *azar* in his own writings. In turn, al-Balyani's inspiration originated with Jesus, even from the Jesus of the Christian Gospel. After citing 'Abdullah Ansari (1006–88), al-Balyani went on to cite and quote a verse from the SOM (Mt 5:44).[67]

Ethics in Theory and Practice

We can get a better sense of how these overarching themes—obedience to Jesus's SOM instructions, historical breaks between the Old and New Testaments, and between the New Testament and contemporary times—play out in practice by considering a series of case studies: the Waldensian "Poor" of southern France, John Wycliffe and Nicholas of Hereford (d. 1420) in England, Jan Hus (ca. 1370–1415), Nicholas of Dresden, Petr Chelčický, and Luke of Prague (d. 1528) in Bohemia, and Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) in the Netherlands.

The Poor

We find a more plain-ken perspective in some socially marginal thinkers' embrace of an extreme, non-violent peace, usually linked to the SOM. To see the origins of this movement in the Late Traditional Far West, we need to back up a few centuries.

The Poor's origins were obscure. In twelfth-century Lyons, in France, a man named Vaudès (or Valdo, or Valdes) had read the Bible and realized the importance of sharing the Gospel. He identified obstacles to its spread—his own

66 Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Quranic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1991), 224–25.

67 Hafiz, *The Collected Lyrics of Hāfiz of Shīrāz*, trans. Peter Avery (Cambridge, UK: Archetype, 2007), 395, ghazal 318. See Denise Aigle, "Sainteté et Miracles: Deux Saints Fondateurs en Iran Méridional (XI^{e} et XIV^{e} S.)," *Oriente Moderno* 93 (2013): 79–100; Leonard Lewisohn, *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015).

wealth, the Gospel being kept in Latin, and priests' monopoly on preaching—and moved against them. He embraced voluntary poverty and sent out lay teachers, male and female, equipped with the Gospels in the vernacular. In those days, the importance of being a priest was so great that legend gave Valdes a churchly first name, Peter, and made him into a priest. The brothers of the Poor of Christ, or the Poor of Lyons, were usually called Waldensians by their enemies and their historians.[68]

Church authorities did not necessarily object to poverty, but they did object to preachers without even the basic competence guaranteed by priestly training—or even by literacy, as many Poor preachers could not read and relied instead on their memorization of scripture, especially the Gospels: seeing a potential for error, and a potential for that error spreading widely, the Church made violent efforts to prevent this, killing thousands of Poor who refused to recant. Nonetheless, the Poor spread across central Europe.[69] They moved west to Gascony, and south through the Dauphiné, to Provence. In the east, the movement travelled even further, firstly into Piedmont and down through Lombardy into Apulia and Calabria, secondly along the Rhine into the Low Countries, and finally following the Danube into Württemberg, Bavaria, Styria, Austria, and thence northeast into Saxony, Bohemia, and Moravia, and further north through Brandenburg, Silesia, and even to Pomerania on the Baltic Sea.[70]

Early in the fourteenth century, inquisitions had been set up in Piedmont, and in Styria, Bohemia, and Moravia. Despite the persecutions, the Poor survived into our period. We know of their existence mostly because the Church continued to try to reclaim them, and its inquisitions kept records. A new wave of persecution occurred as our period began. In the 1392–94 inquisition alone, inquisitor Peter Zwicker (d. 1403) processed thousands of suspected Poor; almost two hundred depositions survive. Because of the tremendous expansion earlier, not all the Poor caught up in inquisition records were converts: many suspects at Stettin said they had inherited the beliefs from their parents. In Piedmont, the Poor

68 See Edwin A. Sawyer, "The Waldensian Influence on the Moravian Church," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 25 (1988): 47–61; Reima Välimäki, *Heresy in Late Medieval Germany: The Inquisitor Petrus Zwicker and the Waldensians* (Woodbridge: UK York Medieval, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787444232; J. K. Zeman, "Restitution and Dissent in the Late Medieval Renewal Movements: The Waldensians, the Hussites and the Bohemian Brethren," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44 (1976): 7–27.

69 For example, Stephan Bodecker, Bishop of Brandenburg (1421–59), "Item pro maiori parte sunt illiterati et scripturam in corde retinentes," in *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte Brandenburgs und Pommerns*, ed. Dietrich Kurze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975), 280.

70 Gabriel Audisio, *The Waldensian Dissent: Persecution and Survival, c.1170–c.1570*, trans. Claire Davison (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999), 61–62, 146, 150.

seems to have grown up rooted in older Cathar beliefs, for, by 1400, pockets of Catharism might have still existed in Piedmont valleys. Cathars saw Jesus and the devil as both sons of God, and the devil as this world's creator. They perhaps influenced the Poor, although the Cathar emphasis on theology did not resonate with the Poor, and in time sprouted into unorthodox magical practices.[71]

The Poor imitated Jesus. In the fifteenth century, in the southern regions their preachers were called "barbes," perhaps a reference to their beards. Because Jesus renamed Simon "Peter," barbes took new names when they became barbes. They travelled in pairs because Jesus had thus dispatched his own disciples.[72]

What did they believe? The more skilled inquisitors, after interrogating Poor, discerned that rumours of sexual deviance, devil worship, and hidden wealth had no basis in reality. At Stettin in 1392, one Herman Gossaw, born Poor, explained to the inquisition the core beliefs his parents had taught him: "Do not take oaths, do not lie, do not speak ill of others, do not get angry, do not testify falsely."[73] Another manuscript, the *Noble Leyçon* [Noble Lesson] (ca. 1400), explained, with some exasperation, "If there are some who love and fear Jesus Christ, who wish not to malign others, nor to take oaths, nor to lie, nor to commit adultery, nor kill, nor steal from another, nor seek vengeance, they say he is a Waldensian and worthy of punishment."[74] From these values, loosely tied to the SOM, came two general clusters of beliefs which most, but not all, Poor held.

The first cluster of Poor beliefs was to resist evil and to oppose capital punishment and war. The Poor (as would, later, Wycliffites and Hussites) looked to the Donation of Constantine as the Church's great disaster. The SOM idea that most commanded the Poor's attention was the teaching against swearing oaths. This became their most easily detected belief, as it could out them immediately in court when they refused to swear to tell the truth.[75] Their aversion to oath-swearing was such that some avoided even saying "truly" or "certainly" in conversation, and preferred to follow Mt 5:37 by sticking with yes

71 Audisio, *Waldensian*, 40–41, 68; Peter Biller, *The Waldenses, 1170–1530: Between a Religious Order and a Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 146–55, 195; Peter Biller, "The Waldenses 1300–1500," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 217 (2000): 88–93; Peter Biller, "Goodbye to Waldensianism?" *Past & Present* 192 (2006): 3–33 (19), https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtl004; Kathrin Utz Tremp, *Von der Häresie zur Hexerei: "Wirkliche" und imaginäre Sekten im Spätmittelalter* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2008), 167–274, 441, 531.

72 Gabriel Audisio, *Preachers by Night: The Waldensian Barbes (15th–16th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 80–81; Audisio, *Waldensian Dissent*, 128–29 (Mk 6:7).

73 Kurze, ed., *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte*, 88–89.

74 See Audisio, *Waldensian*, 153; Biller, *The Waldenses*, 109–10; Biller, "Waldenses," 84–86.

75 Audisio, *Waldensian*, 48–49; Biller, *Waldenses*, 205.

and no answers.[76] Because German, like English, used the same verb to refer to swearing either a judicial oath or an injudicious curse word, some orthodox Germans would ostentatiously swear obscenities to avoid being mistaken as Poor.[77] The Poor's aversion to killing was also derived from the SOM. One sermon (Prague, 1384) noted their reluctance to kill.[78] Under interrogation, one suspect reported hearing that it was better to pray for criminals than to execute them.[79]

The second cluster of Poor beliefs was against ecclesiastical overreach, purgatory, confessions, and priests in mortal sin attempting to perform the sacraments. The Stettin Poor believed the Lord's Prayer to be the only proper (not "irritating and inane") prayer, presumably because it was explicitly endorsed by Jesus.[80] They were taught to also say the Ave Maria as cover. This did not always work: two suspects, asked to recite the Ave Maria, began in Latin but due to their unfamiliarity with its text had to transition into German before the end.[81] The Poor did not recite fixed numbers of prayer repetitions, but instead said "long or short prayers, according to what seemed most expedient."[82]

The Poor show little consistency in their beliefs about, and practice of, the Eucharist (see Chapter 9). Some Poor celebrated the Eucharist using wine, bread, and fish. Many believed there was no real presence. Pointing out three-dimensional spatial issues, Jacques Ristolassio in 1395 explained that Jesus could not be alive in a consecrated host enclosed in a box any more than could a cow survive being buried underground.[83] Laurent Bandoria (a Piedmontese, then in Osasco in the Cluson valley) in 1387 declared that a "bad priest cannot create or consecrate as good a host as a good priest could make." Jean Pruzza believed any Poor could consecrate a host, but he held in any case a rather low christology: "Christ was not the true God, because God could not be killed."[84] In the 1390s,

76 Alexander Patschovsky and Kurt-Victor Selge, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Waldenser* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), 74.

77 Johannes Nider, *De visionibus ac revelationibus* (Helmstadt: Typis Salomonis Schnorrii, 1692), 425.

78 Biller, *Waldenses*, 92.

79 Kurze, ed., *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte*, 124.

80 Petrus de Pilichdorf, *Cum dormirent homines*, in *Lucae Tudens Episcopi Scriptores aliquot succedanei contra sectam Waldensium*, ed. Jacobo Gretsero (Ingolstadt: Angermarius, 1613), 257–59. The document, named for Mt 13:25 ("But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came…"), has been attributed to the Inquisitor Peter Zwicker. Biller, *Waldenses*, 233, discusses the question of authorship.

81 Audisio, *Waldensian Dissent*, 52–53, 106.

82 Kurze, ed., *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte*, 280.

83 Giuseppe Boffito, "Eretici in Piemonte al tempo dal Gran Scisma (1387–1417)," *Studi e documenti di storia e diritto* 18 (1897): 391–402.

84 Girolamo Amati, ed., "Processus contra Valdenses in Lombardia Superiori, anno 1387," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 37 (1865): 3–52 (24, 39).

one Poor who consecrated the Eucharist was corrected by the others.[85] In 1388, Antonio Galosna, in the southwestern Alps, even denied the Incarnation.[86]

It is reckless to use interrogation records to reconstruct how people understood knowledge, but there was an odd disconnect within the Stettin Poor's comments on purgatory. They consistently denied its reality, but they also prayed for the dead in it, "hoped" for and "believed" in its existence.

At Stettin in 1393, Mette Döryngische said she had two faiths, contradictory on some points, simultaneously. Such secrecy and ambiguity annoyed the inquisitors, but it may reflect a sophisticated combination of a skeptical epistemology and a careful concern for the well-being of the deceased. The inquisitor Zwicker argued that religious beliefs should be displayed openly, but one Poor pointed out that Nicodemus met Jesus secretly at night.[87]

John Wycliffe

If Thomas Brinton (see above) was the mainstream, the opposition had found an equal voice in the reforming theologian John Wycliffe. Jesus commanded fleeing persecution, not self-defence. It was impossible to wage war for fraternal charity, and so war was necessarily sinful. Anyone who participated in war lost, for war cultivated anger rather than patience. Wycliffe saw an ethical-historical break with Jesus. War was more "dangerous" now than in Old Testament times, before Jesus's new teachings; God no longer led us into battle to avenge injuries unto Him. "What, I ask, does it sound like but that the evangelical law is a law of patience and love, but the old law is a law of carnal exemplification and rigor?" Jesus never taught—Wycliffe's emphasis on Jesus's teachings should not be taken for granted—that a shepherd should use his crook to slaughter his sheep and lambs, for that is the "lore of Antichrist." Wycliffe did, however, give examples of where charity—in a sense much extended beyond our own sense of the word—permitted violence: one could defend the fatherland from an invasion if that defence benefited both the invader and the invaded. In addition, this "charity" allowed invasion of non-Christian lands for punishment or for conversion (see Chapter 7).[88]

85 Pilichdorf, *Cum dormirent homines*, 206.

86 Audisio, *Waldensian*, 94; Euan Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 175.

87 Kurze, ed., *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte*, 155; Pilichdorf, *Cum dormirent homines*, 210–11. See Audisio, *Waldensian*, 48–53, 100.

88 John Wycliffe, *Tractatus de civili dominio*, ed. R. L. Poole and J. Loserth, 4 vols. (London: Trubner and Co., 1885–1904), II, 236–39, 249–50, 255–56, 260; Wycliffe, *Tractatus de officio regis*, ed. Alfred W. Pollard and Charles Sayle (London: Wyclif, 1887), 272–76; John Wycliffe, *Select English Works*, ed. Thomas Arnold, 3 vols.

Wycliffe's pacifist leanings occurred in a broader Jesus-based social vision. The rational, natural society Wycliffe imagined had no war, nor even the private property that could spark war. Wycliffe also used Jesus to justify obedience to tyrannical rulers, for Jesus obeyed Herod and Pilate, and paid taxes to Caesar, but Wycliffe authorized withholding taxes if that would trigger the downfall of the tyrant. He also employed Jesus's Golden Rule to conclude that slavery was rarely acceptable: Jesus legislated that we should love our neighbours as ourselves. A slave was a neighbour of a civil lord, who must therefore love him. Because "through natural instinct" lords hated slavery, a loving lord could not enslave his people.[89] Events like Despenser's Crusade (1383) against the forces of Clement VII (1342–94) annoyed Wycliffe, who insisted that the Pope "agitated a war against Christ himself."[90]

In 1382, Archbishop Courtenay (ca. 1342–96) summoned bishops and theologians to Blackfriars Monastery in London, a mile away from Bedlam Hospital, and laid before them twenty-four propositions drawn from Wycliffe's writings.[91] Ten propositions were condemned, including Wycliffe's teachings on the Eucharist. The Archbishop invoked Jesus's image of wolves in sheep's clothing (Mt 7:15) to urge vigilance against the "false prophets" that were heretics. In particular, they condemned the article that "God ought to obey the devil."[92] Wycliffe had indeed explained that Jesus obeyed Judas (by washing his feet), Pilate, and the devil (as during the Temptation), all actions that happened in history and were demonstrated by reference to canon. This should not shock, Wycliffe soothed his reader, because obedience was a property of the goodness of the one obeying, not of the one obeyed.[93] Dominion could be given even to the devil, if God so willed it. In any case, an earthquake disrupted the trial. The deep ken sought meaning in the earthquake. Wycliffe roared that

(Oxford: Clarendon, 1869), I, 367 (sermon 72). See Rory Cox, "Natural Law and the Right of Self-Defence According to John of Legnano and John Wyclif," in *Fourteenth-Century England VI*, ed. Christopher Given-Wilson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 149–70 (162–67), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781846158025.009; Ben Lowe, *Imagining Peace: A History of Early English Pacifist Ideas* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 38–41.

89 Wycliffe allowed for some exceptions to this. Wycliffe, *De civili dominio*, 199–206, 227–28, 235.

90 John Wycliffe, "Cruciata," in *Polemical Works in Latin*, ed. Rudolf Buddensieg, 2 vols. (London: Trübner, 1883), II, 595.

91 Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Trial Procedures against Wyclif and Wycliffites in England and at the Council of Constance," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 61 (1998): 1–28.

92 David Wilkins, ed., *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 4 vols. (London: Gosling, Gyles, Woodward, Davis, 1737), III, 157–58.

93 Wycliffe, *De officio regis*, 40–41, 98–103, 188–93; Wycliffe, *Sermones*, ed. Johann Loserth (London: 1887–90) II, 310–12 (sermon 43); III, 467–68 (sermon 54); Wycliffe, *Select English Works*, III, 434–38.

this council had "put a heresy upon" Jesus, and therefore the earth quaked to repeat the earthquake that had marked the Crucifixion.[94] On the other hand, the Archbishop airily explained that the earth was merely farting out the fowl air in its bowels, just as the Church was trying to expel its heresies.[95]

Nicholas of Hereford

Wycliffe's many followers did not escape Courtenay's efforts. The Archbishop had sent the Carmelite friar Peter Stokes (d. 1399) to Oxford to spy on the Ascension Day sermon delivered outdoors at the cross of St. Frideswide's churchyard by a provocative recent Doctor of Theology: Nicholas of Hereford spoke at the invitation of the university's Chancellor Robert Rygge (d. 1410). Courtenay had written Rygge to scold him for "without hesitation" inviting Nicholas to give such an important sermon and told him to cooperate with Stokes. Rygge, annoyed by external interference in university affairs, as his first act of "cooperating" gave the friar a treacherous bodyguard of a hundred armed men with instructions to take him out—kill or restrain—if necessary. While criticizing another sermon, Stokes noticed that some scholars near him had weapons sloppily concealed under their robes.[96]

Neither the Archbishop nor his Carmelite spy could stop Nicholas from preaching. Nicholas denounced the avarice and materialism of the religious clergy—the "possessioners," he called them—and argued, with the plain ken, that reforming the Church could lessen the tax burden on the poor, thus reducing rebellion. Nicholas urged his audience to limit the money they gave to the religious orders, whose members should in fact lose their endowments and do manual labour. He appealed to his lay audience to act with confidence, "because I know certainly that the almighty God himself wants it to happen."[97]

94 Wycliffe, *Select English Works*, III, 503. See Herbert B. Workman, *John Wyclif: A Study in the English Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1926), II, 268; Kelly, "Trial Procedures," 9.

95 Thomas Netter, *Fasciculi Zizaniorum Magistri Johannis Wyclif cum Tritico*, ed. Walter Waddington Shirley (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), 272–73; John Wycliffe, *Trialogus*, trans. Stephen Lahey (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2013), 9, 269 (4.27), 298 (4.27), 349 (sup. 8).

96 See Hudson, *Premature Reformation*, 71–73; Simon Forde, "Hereford, Nicholas (*b. c.*1345, *d.* after 1417)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (24 May 2008), https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20092

97 Simon Forde, ed., "Nicholas Hereford's Ascension Day Sermon, 1382," *Medieval Studies* 57 (1989): 205–41 (240–41).

This do-it-yourself emphasis in the ending of his Ascension Day sermon was more fully developed in the treatise *Seven Deadly Sins*, in a specifically pacifist direction.[98]

Nicholas's peace spoke to both kens. He pointed to the bad reasons that motivated people to fight, which were many, given rulers' stupidity: "And certainly an earthly prince is commonly proud, and lacks the wit to teach when men should fight." Anger causes us to lose the friendship of our friends and the love of God. People attack their enemies to achieve peace. Such foolishness is understandable, as fighting comes naturally to humans (as an adder strikes the heel that stomps him) and had been lawful under the Old Law.[99]

Jesus, however, taught peace: "Jesus Christ, duke of our battle, taught us law of patience, and not to fight bodily." With the deep ken, Nicholas could extrapolate a wider rule from a specific action of Jesus. For example, Jesus's injunction to sell clothing to purchase swords (Lk 22:36) was actually, Nicholas interpreted, an instruction to "speak meekly, both in cause of God and worldly causes." Nicholas used Judas as a counterexample, pointing out that even Judas's betraying kiss was "more a token of charity" than riding into battle against an enemy. Christians should not seek their own good, but the common good in heaven. It was precisely the failure to preach Jesus's law that "makes strife among men. God's law teaches subjection and peace, and teaches the means hereto, and forbids the contrary." Even papal approval did not justify war, because the pope was an "Antichrist, that by hypocrisy reverses Jesus Christ in his false lying." "Battle," Nicholas condemned, "is cursed."[100]

Inviting imitation, Nicholas also used Jesus's example as an argument for peace:

> For well I read that Christ blamed St. Peter, for he would defend Christ's life by smiting of sword. Also I read that Christ would not take vengeance of Samaritans, when they held his own goods from him and his apostles, and denied him thus both food and shelter. But Christ said he was not come to let thus men's lives.

98 Wycliffe [prob. Nicholas of Hereford], "On the Seven Deadly Sins," in *Select English Works*, III, 119–67. This work had long been attributed to Wycliffe, although now scholarship prefers Nicholas, given that it lacks Wycliffe's obsession with the Eucharist and was written in a delightful western dialect. Wycliffe was from the north, born a mere eighty miles from the Scottish border, while Hereford (not necessarily his birthplace, but perhaps a clue) is less than twenty miles from the Welsh border.

99 Ibid., 135–38.

100 Ibid., 137–40, 148.

> Also Christ is a good herdsman for this condition, that he puts his own life for saving of his sheep.[101]

The key was patience. Even animals (except snakes) taught patience; therefore, we should "vanquish by patience, and come to rest and to peace by suffering of death." If people took our kingdoms and our goods, we should suffer in patience. God loved Jesus's suffering and hated his tormenters, and we should follow God's preferences. Nicholas explained the final goal, that "men have peace, and strifes should sleep."[102]

Nicholas developed an extended argument against those who claimed, or were seen to have, the right to kill. First, he attacked the idea that knights' violence was praiseworthy. Fighting to reclaim a title against a just man was wicked—even if he had inherited it from a usurper. We praise neither hangmen nor butchers, and these kill more frequently than knights, for better reasons:

> Why should not this butcher, for his better deed, be praised more than this knight […] And so it were better to man to be butcher of beasts than to be butcher of his brethren, for that is more unkindly. The passion of Christ is much for to praise, but slaying of his tormentors is odious to God Lord…[103]

Second, once he had shown that knights should not kill, he argued *a fortiori* that others had even less justification. If lay people should not fight, priests—vicars of Christ—*obviously* should not fight. If knights should not fight, then their subjects *obviously* should not fight. If crusaders should not fight, then the pope *obviously* should not fight, just as the Jewish high priests (analogous to the pope) were more guilty than Pilate or Jesus's torturers (analogous to the crusaders) for having authorized that torture in the first place. Nicholas thus set up, rhetorically, a hierarchy based on the right to kill—

> butchers and executioners
> knights
> priests, popes, and subjects
> —before collapsing it into a universal prohibition on violence.[104]

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Courtenay, saw the potential danger in Nicholas's ideas. In June 1382, he summoned Nicholas to appear before the Blackfriars Council, where the young theologian alternated between principled

101 Ibid., 141.
102 Ibid., 137–39, 147.
103 Ibid., 139–40.
104 Ibid., 141–47.

stands and moderation. He was found guilty, excommunicated, and fled to Italy, where he appealed directly to Pope Urban VI (ca. 1318–89). That pope, no less aware of the potential danger, sentenced Nicholas to life imprisonment. In 1385, the Charles III (1345–86), King of Naples, besieged the Pope in Nocera, which sparked a popular insurrection. In the chaos, Nicholas escaped back to England and (1387) into the clutches of the Archbishop, who arrested him. King Richard ordered Nicholas's writings confiscated (1388–89).[105]

Such persecution encouraged Nicholas to reconsider his non-violence. In or just before 1391, he recanted his heresy at St. Paul's Cross and, now under royal protection, became a heresy-hunter for the Church. The Church needed his help, for Nicholas's recanting had not entirely smothered out the idea of non-violence. Citing the Bible, William Swynderby (d. 1392) and Walter Brut contrasted Jesus's pro-love law with the pope's pro-war law and were brought to trial for heresy in 1393. Against Swynderby and Brut's pacifism, a group of Cambridge professors composed a defence of war: the defence of the kingdom, of justice, and of the Church all justified violence. Brut and Swynderby's idea that even self-defence was illicit was condemned as "against the good of the common peace, and against all government [*policiam*] and all reason." As an authority the professors, annoyed, cited "almost the whole Old Testament." Nicholas joined the persecution against the pacifists.[106]

In 1395, the Lollards, Wycliffe's followers, presented Twelve Conclusions to the English Parliament, the tenth of which prohibiting "manslaughter by battle or pretense [of a] law of righteousness for temporal cause or spiritual[,] with out special revelation." Such killing was "contrary to the New Testament," which "most[ly] taught for to love and to have mercy on his enemies, and not for to slay them."[107] Impressed by their uneducated and dangerous potential, Parliament asked the Dominican friar Roger Dymmok (fl. 1370–1400) to respond. Dymmok's greatest horror was that the Lollards had misapplied the SOM, for Jesus had clearly intended (according to Dymmok) his teachings for civilians, not for rulers—for personal behaviour, not for the affairs of state. Citing a Jesus parable (Mt 22; Lk 14) in which a dinner host, enraged at no-shows, used force ("compel") to recruit replacement guests, Dymmok wrote that Jesus just intended to forbid evil mental states and motivations, not actual killing.[108]

105 Netter, *Fasciculi*, 274–329; Wilkins, ed., *Concilia*, 158–67. See Beryl Smalley, *Wyclif and His Followers* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984), 33.

106 William W. Capes, ed., *Registrum Johannis Trefnant, episcopi herefordensis* (Hereford: Wilson and Philips, 1915), 231–393, esp. 359, 377–78, 394–96.

107 H. S. Cronin, ed., "The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards," *English Historical Review* 22 (1907): 292–304 (302).

108 Roger Dymmok, *Liber contra XII errores et hereses Lollardorum*, ed. H. S. Cronin (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1921), 237–42, 276–71.

Thus, the first chapter of the history of non-violence in England collapsed. Its most articulate spokesman had recanted, and the authorities had persecuted, refuted, and smothered its last embers. The stage then shifted to central Europe.

Jan Hus

Fourteenth-century Bohemia, at the heart of the Holy Roman Empire, enjoyed a cultural and religious flowering. The latter took the form of a series of religious reformers, climaxing in Jan Hus, who argued for translating the Bible into vernacular languages, and against indulgences and a variety of Church prerogatives.

For Hus, Jesus acted in certain ways because he wanted his followers to imitate his behaviour. For example, because Jesus swore an oath at Jn 3:11, oaths could not be intrinsically bad; Hus knew of many occasions when we should take oaths, such as when swearing to be truthful or obedient. He recommended oaths of obedience especially for Bohemia's German immigrants, but that would happen only when hell froze over ("when a snake warms itself on ice"). At the same time, Hus could defend a priest, named Nicholas, who had refused to swear an oath on the Bible, since Jesus had warned against swearing. Even Jesus's instructions to his disciples directly inspired Hus's preaching in the first place: Hus identified preaching as the first duty of Jesus's followers.[109]

On the walls of Hus's Bethlehem Chapel hung pairs of instructive images looking with a plain ken at the Jesus of history, not at his divinity but at his actions and teachings, not at this glory but at his humility: a rich pope on a horse paired with impoverished Jesus carrying a cross, a pope crowned by Constantine paired with a Jesus crowned with thorns and fleeing from the crowd keen to king him, the pope getting his feet kissed while Jesus knelt to wash his disciples' feet.[110] These images were probably adapted out of a work by Nicholas of Dresden (see below), tables of authorities pointing out similar thesis-antithesis pairings. Thus, Jesus contrasted with Constantine, Baby Jesus being wrapped

109 Jan Hus, The *Letters of John Hus*, trans. Matthew Spinka (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1972), 67–68, 85; František Palacký, ed., *Documenta mag. Joannis Hus vitam, doctrinam, causam in Constantiensi Concilio actam* (Prague: Tempsky, 1869), 3–4. See Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1968), 205.

110 There is some confusion in historical sources as to the existence, nature, and authorship of these images. They may have been painted by Nicholas of Dresden. See Thomas Fudge, *Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia* (Florence: Routledge, 2018), 228–29, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315238531; František Šmahel, "Instead of Conclusion," in *A Companion to Jan Hus*, ed. František Šmahel (Brill: Leiden, 2015), 370–409 (391), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004282728_013

in swaddling clothes contrasted with the pope being crowned, Jesus being whipped contrasted with the pope's calling for the execution of anyone who injured the priesthood.[111] These juxtapositions with papal splendour placed Jesus in a plain-ken light: here, the crown of thorns and the manger were not awesome relics with deep and deep-ken meaning, but merely a torture device and a trough for foddering smelly and drooling livestock.

The humility of Bethlehem's plain-ken Jesus commanded attention. One popular song counselled, "If you want to know the Bible / you must go to Bethlehem / and learn it on the walls / as Master Jan of Husinec preached it." Hus admonished, "if thou wilt not believe it, learn it on the wall in Bethlehem." Even Hus's opponents recognized the importance of the chapel; one complained, "Its pulpit is Hus's triumphal chariot, and the paintings upon the walls are the blazonry of his armour." Queen Sophia of Bavaria (1376–1428), King Wenceslaus IV's (1361–1419) second wife, frequently came to Bethlehem to hear Hus's sermons—and ostentatiously wrote letters to the pope in 1411 to tell him so. She also helped install Hus-influenced preachers in various Church offices around Prague. She eventually, in 1419, had to meet with the outraged papal legate, but somehow avoided any punishment for her support of the controversial preacher.[112]

The Council of Constance (1414–18) declared Hus a heretic following Wycliffe's teachings (which he denied) and burned him at the stake. This radicalized the "Hussite" Bohemian reformation movement and led to a break with both the papacy and the emperor, who combined military forces to bring heretical Bohemia back to obedience.

Nicholas of Dresden

However radical mainstream Hussite opinion became, they usually had a wing even more radical, especially away from Prague where the movement's leadership could police the movement more closely. One of the radicals in Bohemia after the execution of Hus was Nicholas of Dresden. He had probably studied at Prague, where he was influenced by Wycliffite ideas generally and by Matthias of Janov (d. 1393/94) in particular. References to him as a "master" suggest he had completed academic degrees. As a German he would have been an outsider in Prague, and perhaps he had links to the German Poor, or the Germans of modest means long settled in the countryside of southern Bohemia. He had

111 Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 40–49; Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 226–28.

112 Jan Hus, *The Church* [*De ecclesia*], trans. David S. Schaff (New York: Scribner, 1915), 273. See Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 77, 207, 232.

been a moderate radical (ca. 1412–15), close to the Hussite leader Jakoubek of Stříbro (d. 1429) in ideas and friendship, until Nicholas's radicalism radicalized in the fall of 1415. Where Hus and Jakoubek wanted to reform a corrupted Church, Nicholas saw no point in reforming a Church ruled by the Antichrist, and so sought to destroy what was unredeemable. Thus, Nicholas became the first reformer to write from *outside* the Church. In an astonishing mental act of historicism reminiscent of the Poor, but radical even by Bohemian standards, Nicholas removed himself from the Church and from Church tradition entirely. In one work, he referred to an inquisitor as not a doctor of law, but a "doctor of custom and present practice," that is, someone whose beliefs were merely conditioned by plain-ken circumstances. The University of Prague's mainstream radicals forced him into exile, and soon (my best guess is 1417) he was martyred in Meissen.[113]

His radical teachings, explained for a Hussite audience around 1415 in a series of treatises, revolved around three ideas: Christians should not take oaths, Christians should not venerate images, and Christians should *never* kill. When Jakoubek needed the early Church Fathers to prove that killing was acceptable in some circumstances, Nicholas insisted that those Fathers had no authority beyond what they could find in the New Testament. Emphasizing the gap between the to Testaments, Nicholas held that "Truth teaches through itself" that we should love our enemies. In fact, Nicholas identified the Fathers' early acceptance of killing as the "righteousness of old times" that Jesus mentioned in the SOM before presenting his own, new, perfect righteousness: turn the other cheek. Nicholas thus used the SOM to historicize, and used Jesus to develop a sense of plain-ken change which allowed him to distance, and then dismiss, earlier theologians' teachings. Nicholas inserted a parenthetical expression into his retelling of the SOM: two words into "But I say to you: Do not resist evil," appeared his "taking this change (from Old Testament Law) and inviting you to gentleness and to the perfection of love." Nicholas loathed the violent Old Testament-fuelled authorities who "beat their enemies with the retribution of hate," who were "bulls who strike their enemies' bodies with their horns of virtue." Love your enemy meant no death penalty. True Christians were virtuous, suffering, and non-violent—and in the minority.[114]

113 Nicholas of Dresden, *The Old Color and the New*, ed. Howard Kaminsky (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1965), 9–10, 17–21; Nicholas of Dresden, *Querite primum regnum Dei*, ed. Jana Nechutová (Brno: Universita J. E. Purkyně, 1967). See Howard Kaminsky, *History*, 204–20; Jan Sedlák, *Mikuláš z Drážďan* (Brno: Benediktinské, 1914); Zeman, "Restitution and Dissent," 12.

114 Nicholas of Dresden, *Querite*, 67, 89–90; Nicholas of Dresden, *Old Color*, 22.

Nicholas's most influential work was his *Tabule* [Charts], lists of authorities contrasting decretals and canon-law commentary with the Bible. A common trope at the time, this format and agenda echoed Wycliffe's *De Christo et suo adversario Antichristo* [On Christ and His Adversary the Antichrist], and in his own sermons Hus had contrasted the pope on a caparisoned horse with Jesus on a humble donkey. Nicholas's version paired the Donation of Constantine with Jesus fleeing an attempt to make him king (Jn 6:15), the legal requirement that forgery of papal letters be punished with life imprisonment with Jesus's instruction from the SOM to "bless those who hate you" (Mt 5:44), and kissing papal feet with Jesus washing his disciples' feet (Jn 13). At some early point it was illustrated, but it is not clear if Nicholas was writing to the images or if the images were later made for his text. In Prague during the 1410s, street processions reenacted such scenes or carried placards of them.[115]

Petr Chelčický

Ethics on the Eve of War

With Petr Chelčický we find a new kind of pacifism, deeper, more systematic, and more consequential. In southern Bohemia in 1413, he had crossed paths with Hus, whom he respected, but he bitterly opposed as unbiblical Hus's failure to condemn violence and oaths. Wycliffe he revered—he owned Czech translations of Wycliffe—but Chelčický denied the Englishman's vision of a divided, hierarchical society. The Poor Chelčický applauded, but found they stopped just short of truth.[116]

Chelčický took his name from and spent most of his life in Chelčice in southern Bohemia, some 20 km from Hus's Husinec. His origins were obscure. He called himself a peasant but had wealth and freedom enough to interrupt a farmer's life with a sojourn in Prague, the study of Latin, and writing treatises. Later in life, Chelčický met with Bishop Nicholas of Pelhřimov (ca. 1400–52),

115 Petra Multová, "Communicating Texts through Images: Nicholas of Dresden's Tabule," in *Public Communication in European Reformation: Artistic and other Media in Central Europe 1380–1620*, ed. Milena Bartlová and Michal Šroněk (Prague: Artefactum, 2007), 27–34 (28–29).

116 Peter Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines of the Unity of Czech Brethren in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries* (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), 36, 56; Petr Kreuz, "Heinrich Kramer/Institoris and the Czech Lands," *e-Rhizome* 1 (2019): 23–59 (34–35), https://doi.org/10.5507/rh.2019.002; Enrico C. S. Molnár, "A Study of Peter Chelčický's Life and a Translation from Czech of Part One of His Net of Faith" (BDiv thesis, Pacific School of Religion, 1947), 19–20.

the most important spiritual leader of the Taborites, who had come to visit him at Vodniany, a small county seat near Chelčice, where they cordially argued about the Eucharist while perched on the dike of a pond. Some scholars have thought Chelčický must have been a nobleman to attract the presence of a bishop to the backwaters, but perhaps the bishop was drawn by the nobility of Chelčický's ideas. His Latin was never great: one censor made fun of one of Chelčický's spelling errors—such as *kopyta* for *kapitola* [chapter], which resembled the Czech *kopyto* [hoof]—and called him *doctor kopytarum* [the doctor of the hooves].[117]

In 1419, as papal and imperial forces prepared to move against the Hussites, Chelčický and others from southern Bohemia travelled to Prague to ask the university professors an alarmingly relevant question: if necessary, could Christians attack their enemies? Jakoubek said yes, adding the condition of non-cruelty to the traditional requirements of just cause, right intention, and legal authority. In 1420, as the imperial troops converged on Prague, Chelčický again met with Jakoubek at the Bethlehem Chapel to stress that Jesus forbade resistance. Jakoubek, still in favour of war when just, disappointed Chelčický by being able to provide only "old saints" in his support, rather than New Testament passages. Knights were honourable, and knights killed, Jakoubek explained, so not all killing was dishonourable. Jakoubek called Chelčický a heretic for opposing resistance even when the situation was so dangerous.[118]

Chelčický remembered their second meeting: "After many people had been killed on both sides, Jakoubek excused those who had done the killing," for he "could not tax their conscience with such things, since otherwise the whole estate of knighthood would stand condemned." Jakoubek's hypocrisy flabbergasted Chelčický, as the "master would have flown out against anyone who dared eat pork on a Friday, and yet now he cannot make the shedding of blood a matter of conscience." Chelčický continued,

> I say to you that one alone is not able to give chase and kill because he has too little strength by himself. But if a nobleman

117 Henricus Institoris, *Sancte romane ecclesie fidei defensionis clippeum adversus Waldensium* (Olmütz : Baumgarthen, 1502), fol. 4r. See Howard Kaminsky, "Nicholas of Pelhrimov's Tabor: An Adventure into the Eschaton," in *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky and Frantisek Smahel (Prague: Historisches Institut, 1996), 139–67; Molnár, "A Study," 22; P. J. Šafařík, "Studie o Petru Chelčickém," *Časopis Musea Království Českého* 48 (1874): 91–109 (92–93). Nicholas of Hereford was also known for a weak command of Latin grammar and pronunciation.

118 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 32; Molnár, "A Study," 13–15; Murray L. Wagner, *Petr Chelčický: A Radical Separatist in Hussite Bohemia* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), 77.

> gathers a great army of peasants and makes of them warriors who can kill someone with the power of the army, they will in no way be [called] murders, neither will it be held against the conscience; but it can be [wrongly] boasted that they make of themselves brave men and heroes by murdering heretics. And this poison is poured out among Christians by doctors who in such matters did not have the counsel of Jesus the meek, but the counsel of the Great Whore, and thus the land is filled with blood and abominations.

Unimpressed and unconvinced, Chelčický withdrew to Chelčice to develop his ideas further. Jakoubek's conscience had been stolen by the Church Fathers.[119]

Church History

Chelčický's main treatise was the *Sie' viery* [Net of Faith]. As the Council of Basel concluded (last session in May 1443), Chelčický, sorrowful at that show of hypocrisy, was composing this treatise against it. Some fifteen of its ninety-five chapters explicitly denounced the Council. The "net of faith" represented the Christian religion, which had been entered by "two monstrous whales"—the pope and the emperor—that "turn about in the net" and "rent it to such an extent that very little of it has remained intact." The fishes it once had held—the Christian faithful—escaped from the net to their doom.[120]

Chelčický criticized the theologians who provide the justifications for war, by which the Church "abandons the command and discipleship of Christ, bathing herself in blood and returning evil for evil." He especially condemned the use of violence by the state, the secular rulers turned murderers for Jesus. The evils of the state were ancient. The downfall of the Church came with Constantine. The pope should not have accepted his Donation, as Wycliffe had asserted, but instead should have insisted on the emperor's resignation, as no Christian could hold state office, let alone supreme rule. The Pope "rather likes a wicked king," who would "fight for her better than a humble Christian" would. In accepting the Donation, Pope Sylvester "mixed poison with Christ's gospel."[121] Unlike the humanist Lorenzo Valla, whose attack on the Donation appeared only a

119 Wagner, *Petr Chelčický*, 78–79.

120 Chelčický, *The Net of Faith*, 43–146; translated in Molnár, "A Study," 73. The idea that a net, a tool used to murder fish, represented the fish's salvation paralleled Jesus's own metaphorical use of the shepherd, whose professional concern for sheep was limited to preserving them for later exploitation or murder.

121 Chelčický, *Net*, 94–97. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 45–46; Wagner, *Petr Chelčický*, 96, 123.

few years earlier, Chelčický accepted the Donation's authenticity, but showed its disastrous consequences: with the Donation, the two whales entered and destroyed the Net of Faith.

What did authority teach? Chelčický presented the teaching of Augustine (354–430), who, he said, "wallows in blood": "When a soldier kills a man while serving under the state of authority, he is not guilty of murder. On the contrary, if he refuses to obey the order to kill, he is guilty of insubordination." Chelčický expressed amazement at Augustine's twisted logic: "So, the soldier is obeying the law when he mercilessly murders people but is a transgressor of the law if he should show mercy! This is what he says, he who is supposedly filled of the Holy Spirit!" Chelčický recounted how Aegidius Carlerius (d. ca. 1472) had employed Augustine and other early theologians at Basel "to justify the right to spill blood by the secular authority," but they have only shown "how much Christendom has been stained by blood through these learned Doctors." He concluded that these sophisticated theologians "are making God as having two mouths, with one saying 'you shall not kill,' and with the other, 'you shall kill.'"[122]

How did history work? Chelčický's understanding of history contrasted dead customs with true foundations: "The straying people do not seek (truth) but only follow dead customs, walking in the (footsteps) of their fathers who have invented the customs; the people are born unto customs just as pagans are born unto idols." Therefore we should "look for the foundation that the apostles had made for the original Christians, in order that they might continue their good works." His plain ken made him keenly aware of the vagaries of history, which he denounced, urging, "let us not follow desire, or custom, or law, or man, and let us not come to terms with this world." Violence was merely custom, a historical accident, like an error entered into the manuscript stream. Developing an extended simile to illustrate our relation to history, Chelčický imagined "the burning out of a house which has fallen down making a pile of ruins: here and there we see by some signs that there stood a chamber before—but everything fell onto the foundation, which, buried, is grown over by a forest where animals graze and dwell." History had buried truth. "Who," he asked, "will then find the buried foundation of the burned house that is in ruins, and which is deeply covered (with debris) and the top of which has long since been overgrown with defiant weeds?" The problem was complicated because foolish people mistake the weeds and debris for the actual foundation, and they, "pulling to themselves the growth on top of the house ruins, declare, 'This is the foundation

122 Chelčický, *Net*, 124–26, 131.

and the way, all should follow it.' And with many of them we see that their new foundation sinks into soft ground, the floor settling at different levels."[123]

Criticisms of Church, State, and Society

Chelčický discounted Wycliffe's partial defence of war as outside of the Bible, and discounted Jakoubek's as outside the New Testament. The "saints of old" could not suffice: even if St. Peter "himself should suddenly appear from Heaven and begin to advocate the sword and to gather together an army in order to defend the truth and establish God's order by worldly might, even then I would not believe him." He objected to the devil "taking on the guise for blameless lives, virtuous acts, many scriptural texts—both in their lofty meanings and in the simple meanings of the letters alone." The virtuous, blameless theologians have used the Bible to justify their violence. They "milk it violently out of various passages in the Scriptures."[124]

Like Sylvester, the fifteenth-century popes continued to make bad decisions. In particular, in the pope's lust for power he "arrogated to himself all the prerogatives of Christ." This made Jesus redundant, for "of what use is Christ to us, indeed, if the great priest, his vicar, can forgive all our sins and remit all sufferings, sanctify us, and make us just? What more can Jesus add to this?" The pope had created a legal complex, opposed to God, and "behind these laws the people have forgotten the true law of God." In fact, the people "do not even

123 Chelčický, *Net*, 49, 56, 60; Howard Kaminsky, ed., "Peter Chelčický: Treatises on Christianity and Social Order," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance* 1 (1964): 105–79 (118). Chelčický also used history, confusingly, as an antidote to scepticism, specifically regarding what Jesus believed: "Whoever harbours any doubt in this matter and says, 'I do not know what He believed or disbelieved,' should use right reasoning: for if it could not be known, nobody could ever have believed. There have been many, however, who have believed the way He desired it; many have been the followers of the faith once given to the saints by its author and perfecter, Jesus Christ." This is odd logic, but Chelčický seemed to believe it. Let us break it down:
1. Many have believed what Christ believed [so, history]
2. Thus, what Christ believed can be known
3. Thus, the doubtful can know what Christ believed
Point 1 assumes the conclusion, and neither 2 nor 3 follow from it. However, from a certain deep-ken perspective, if truth is simple, monistic, and powerful, Chelčický's argument makes sense: If a pond has ripples, the doubtful can imagine a central location where they came from. Jesus' beliefs caused the ripples. See Chelčický, *Net*, 56.

124 Kaminsky, ed., "Chelčický," 121, 154. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 59–60; Wagner, *Petr Chelčický*, 76.

suspect that there exists another faith but that which is presented by the laws of the great priest," the pope.[125]

Reports from what was happening at the Council of Basel offered ammunition to expand this critique of the papacy to the Church as a whole: according to Chelčický, the Church's representatives "abolished" Jesus's commandment to take Communion in both kinds. Church authorities "abolished" and "amended" according to their own whims. Moreover, the priests were incompetent, "unable to pray or to serve mass otherwise than by mumbling out of the Books of Hours." The mass was the devil's disguise, for such extravagant rituals, especially music and singing, distracted from true worship. Chelčický used Juan Palomar (fl. 1431–43), the "Master Auditor at Basel," as a ventriloquist's dummy to explain the orthodox perspective: "The original Church was stupid," he had Palomar sneer, "because she worshipped without vestments, without altars, and without church buildings, and knew naught but to say the Lord's Prayer." The "present church," in contrast, "knows how to honour God because she built great and costly cathedrals and altars out of stone, she ordered rich vestments and blessed everything [...] honoured God bountifully with ornamented churches, walls painted and dressed up with tapestries, with lights, bells, and organs, with singing in high voices, plainsong, and melodies with polyphonic notes." God preferred the present Church, "Palomar" continued, "For He yearns so much to be honored: yes. He is sad if there is not enough wax to burn and if the walls do not shine with resplendent colours!"[126]

Chelčický's attack on the Church did not distract him from attacking the state. That the ruler was Christian gave him no special authority: "No one may stray from the way of Christ and follow the emperor with his sword, for this way is not changed just because Caesar has become a Christian." Christianity and dominion were intrinsically incompatible, because authority and cruelty were intrinsically linked: "Authority cannot exist without cruelty. If it ceases to be cruel, it will at once perish of itself, since none will fear it... Therefore, authority is far removed from love." This cruel authority was the opposite of what Jesus taught, for he "forbids his disciples all lordship with its pride and cruelty and compulsion" (Lk 22:26). For Chelčický, the state held authority only over non-Christians, among whom he included those people only nominally Christian.[127]

Chelčický expanded his criticisms from the state to society more broadly. To Chelčický, as with the early Taborites, commerce and its havens—markets,

125 Chelčický, *Net*, 79–81.

126 Ibid., 69–70, 81; Kaminsky, ed., "Chelčický," 122. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 68.

127 Chelčický, *Net*, 102. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 46–48; Wagner, *Petr Chelčický*, 51.

fairs, taverns—as well as usury and profit, all stood condemned. Chelčický took up Wycliffe's social vision—a theory of the clergy, nobility, and peasantry together making up the three parts of Christ's body—only to denounce it: the nobility and the clergy hold themselves "over the common people so that they can ride the latter at their own pleasure, and even consider themselves thereby better members of the Body of Christ than the common people whom they ride, and whom they subject to themselves not as limbs of their own body but as beasts whom they think nothing of tearing apart." He thus found Wycliffe's fundamental society-as-Jesus's-body metaphor useful, but found in it not harmony but discord: "The crooked limbs that hold down the sword oppress the other, lesser limbs, afflicting them, beating them, putting them into prison, weighing them down with a forced labor, rent and other contrivances, so they go about wan and pale…" He then expanded beyond the metaphor:

> If the body of Christ is divided by such an order of things, what inequalities are there present! Naturally, this order is agreeable to the first two classes who loaf, gorge, and dissipate themselves. And the burden for this living is shoved onto the shoulders of the third class, which has to pay in suffering for the pleasures of the other two guzzlers—and there are so many of them! […] It is these two groups of lazy gluttons who, for their own pleasures, drain the working people of their blood, and tread on them contemptuously as if they were dogs.

Nobles and priests rush to rule like pilgrims on a hot day rush for shade.[128]

Turning to Jesus

In particular, for Chelčický, this Jesus-based anarchism created problems for jurisprudence. Jesus's teachings made the human legal apparatus redundant, at best superfluous. The SOM specifically disallowed the Christian any recourse to the courts (e.g., Mt 5:40's "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also"), and in a Christian society this would shut down the legal system. In a rare concession from Jesus's teachings, Chelčický admitted that the first Christians did create courts to deal with the imperfections of people necessarily new in their faith, but those were staffed with commoners and so in no way resembled or justified the aristocratic judicial system of Chelčický's own day. Citing the commandment to love one's neighbour, as well as the parable

128 Chelčický, *Net*, 75; Kaminsky, ed., "Chelčický," 158–63. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 67.

of the wheat and tares, Chelčický paralleled Nicholas of Dresden and many Taborites in condemning capital punishment, but went further in pointing out the total incompatibility of love with punishment that was non-fatal but merely cruel.[129]

Jesus stood at the centre of this social revolution. God announced his birth first to peasants. Because Jesus redeemed mankind with his blood, no serfdom could exist. It was Jesus, not the lords, who had bought the peasants:

> And if you who are heavy and round with fat object saying, "Our fathers have bought these people and those manors for our inheritance," then, indeed, they made an evil business and an expensive bargain! For who has the right to buy people, to enslave them and to treat them with indignities as if they were cattle led to slaughter. You prefer dogs to people whom you cuss, despise, beat, from whom you extort taxes, and for whom you forge fetters [...] while at the same time you will say to your dog, "Setter, come here and lie down on the pillow." Those people were God's before you bought them! [...] Christ bought this people to himself—not with silver and gold—but with his own precious blood and terrible suffering. [...] Look, you fat one, what a sodomitic life you have prepared for your people!

The reference to sodomy suggests the peasants' passive victimhood; twenty-first-century English also has a vulgar colloquial expression linking victimhood to sex, "to get screwed over." Chelčický linked this social catastrophe to the Crucifixion, specifically through the image of the Great Whore of Babylon (Rev. 17), "who has taken all the world to mate and has sucked out its fatness through the bleeding side of Christ" and has "spread the pleasures of her fornication in the sign of his painful wounds." A representation of the papacy, she had even "made it her joy to walk in delightful coolness in the shadow of his dolorous suffering; she has used Christ's cross and Christ's faith to prepare an eternal slumber and sleep in hell for the world, soothing the world in her poisons."[130]

Chelčický disapproved of using violent efforts to expand Christianity. He maintained that conversion to Christianity could not be forced and compared such efforts to priests ordering an old woman to give birth, or to learning Czech by studying German. A ruler forcefully encouraging Christianity turned himself into a sinner, without creating any new Christians.[131] (See Chapter 7.)

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129 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 44, 52–55.

130 Chelčický, *Net*, 105; Kaminsky, ed., "Chelčický," 161. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 64.

131 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 47–51.

Chelčický concluded his social examination by looking ahead to the Last Judgment, when Jesus would say to the social elites, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. Go to hell!" On that day, "no high titles, no archives, no records, no documents with seals [...] will save you from perdition."[132]

In an extended treatment, Chelčický brought together all of these threads and propelled his argument into new terrain: the nobility, he says, "are all Christian and at least some of them have, on account of faith, a bad conscience when they kill, do violence to others, and rob them of their property. But (on the whole) they do not hold these things to be sinful." Nobles fight "for worldly honour, and if someone touches their property, immediately they declare war, round up the people like cattle, and drive them to war where all murder and rob one another. How can it not be dangerous, therefore, for good Christians to live under such powers, which force them to do evil and to trespass the divine commandments!" It is better "to be willing to be killed by his overlord rather than to commit such an evil thing."[133] Non-violence and suffering necessarily involved each other, for it was better to be killed than to kill.

Although Chelčický was annoyed by people who considered Jesus-based law as too "impractical," his Christian society was profoundly at odds with the world. His good Christian would not fare well: "Only a fool will come after Christ and be ridiculed by all and sundry." Still, the state's oppression did not license armed rebellion. There was no solution; indeed, there was no reason to seek a solution—the rulers oppressed, and the ruled suffered. The problem was not the suffering, but that society linked Jesus to the oppression rather than to the suffering. The solution would wait until Jesus, no longer long-suffering and peaceable, would return to crush the oppressive, cruel rulers. There was a place for violence, but it belonged to the future and to Jesus.[134]

Chelčický was after Truth, not after a workable solution. He noted that the execution of Hus showed not only that the Council of Constance authorities had no interest in Truth but also that the state maintained a bottom-line monopoly on learning. How did Chelčický think to get at Truth?

Distinguishing between the divine and the historical, Chelčický historicized the Bible: Although we must obey scripture, "not everything in the Scripture is divine... Some portions do not lead us to follow Christ for [they] were written by some only as an [historical] record, and they were never [intended] to have a power." As an example, he mentioned Jesus's curing lepers and telling "them to

132 Chelčický, *Net*, 105.
133 Ibid., 90.
134 Ibid., 87–88, 133; Chelčický, *Postilla*, ed. Emil Smetánka, 2 vols. (Prague: n.p., 1900), I, 20. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 47–48, 65.

go and to show themselves to the priests and to offer gift in accordance with the Law of Moses." Here, Chelčický stood against so many previous scholars urging the imitation of Jesus: despite Jesus taking this action, there was no expectation that his followers would subsequently cure lepers and send them to offer gifts: "This was written as an [historic] act of the power of Jesus and of a custom of the priests of the Old Testament, but not for an imitation by coming generations of Christians." The key was discerning Jesus's intention:

> Even though faith is founded on every word of God, it is valid for us Christians only if it agrees with the original intent of Christ. For the Jewish law has an insufficiency (when judged by) the law of Christ since it observes material sacrifices and other physical requirements that the old law showed them in material parables. And as these parables foreshadowed Christ, they become true in Christ.[135]

Chelčický's teachings consistently emphasized non-violence. His opponents admitted the undesirability of war; Jakoubek had demanded that soldiers fight "with great love toward God" and that "every brutality, every avaricious excess, and every other irregularity be excluded." Chelčický, however, taught that so long as war was allowed for any reason, his opponents were wrong. Their prayers for victory were "a terrible blasphemy," and the soldiers defending the Hussites, soldiers to whom they gave, outrageously, the Eucharist, were "murderers and robbers."[136] Jean Petit (ca. 1360–1411) (see Chapter 11) and Chelčický both followed a plain-ken road to opposite conclusions. Petit understood law with the plain ken, in that it recognized exceptions in different times, places, and circumstances. There were special, psychological, circumstances in spacetime that excused or required a murder. Chelčický thought that Jesus was teaching a law that worked as an actual ethical teaching that we must obey in human spacetime. Both men opposed any deep-ken idea that we could participate in some awesome thing Jesus had said regardless of the "literal" content of his saying or of our behaviour in human spacetime—and all the more opposed an extreme deep-ken mentality that would just admire the no-kill rule, perhaps by counting the number of letters in it, reciting it in the appropriate part of the liturgy, or listening to it at mass while torturing prisoners. Both thinkers looked at all the multitudes of possible spacetime circumstances; Petit saw one that allowed murder, but Chelčický did not.

135 Chelčický, *Net*, 55, 107. See Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 68.
136 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 60; Wagner, *Petr Chelčický*, 77.

Luke of Prague and the Broken Unity of Brethren

By the 1430s, the long wars had made the Hussites, especially the lower social classes, increasingly receptive to Chelčický's teachings. By the 1450s, their Archbishop-elect Jan Rokycana (d. 1471) used Chelčický in his own attack on war. Brother Řehoř (Gregor), often considered one of the main founders of the Unity of Brethren, the enduring radical branch of the Hussites, met with an aging Chelčický in the 1450s, and by 1461 could agree that the state was "not entitled to use force in matters of faith, but they should also refrain from defending the faith by the sword. For Christ sent out his apostles into the world to preach the Gospel without the help of civil power, of magistrates, of hangmen or of armies." As a result, Chelčický had an early influence on the Unity.[137]

By the end of the century, however, even that Unity of Brethren was tiring of peace. In his youth, Luke of Prague had read Chelčický, which attracted him to the Unity of Brethren, in which he took up a leadership position just as it was disunifying into two branches. Luke went with the majority, less strict "Major" branch. The Major Party denied that the New Testament justified perfectionism and dismissed the Minor Party as perfectionists. Vavřinec Krasonický (1460–1532), attacking the Minor Party, said Jesus "is not the creator of new commandments, but refers back to the old. [...] Christ never said or intended that another Christian righteousness be contained in these injunctions" of the SOM. Jesus never wanted, Krasonický continued, "that Christian righteousness should be higher than the Jewish in these moral commandments, which are ever pure in themselves, for the will of God is eternal." This was essentially the deep ken, rejecting the break between Old and New Testaments, and not allowing any historical Jesus to develop upon previous commandments.[138]

During meetings at Brandýs nad Orlicí (1490) and Rychnov (1494), the new Brethren watered down the old ideas. Wars, oaths, and magistrates were bad, but if you could not avoid them then you could accept them as long as you did nothing specifically "against God." Return to the particularizing rules that Chelčický had argued against, the latter meeting concluded helplessly, "We cannot give uniform instruction and teaching how one should conduct oneself [in such cases], on account of the divergence of cause, place, time, and persons." At Rychnov, Luke had Chelčický's writings condemned and became committed to a mainstream Christianity. Traces of pacifism vexed Luke, as when the Minors

137 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 39–41, 89.

138 Ibid., 183; C. Daniel Crews, "Luke of Prague: Theologian of the Unity," *Journal of Moravian History* 18 (2018): 1–46, https://doi.org/10.5325/jmorahist.18.1.0001; Edmund de Schweinitz, trans., *The Catechism of the Bohemian Brethren* (Bethlehem: Clauder, 1869).

ostentatiously carried wooden weapons to proclaim their nonviolence—"vain Pharisees wandering around with staffs, who display their righteousness." Luke denounced the Minor Party for their hypocrisy in denouncing violence but not denouncing the protection they drew from it. Society needed violence for stability. If the Minor Party's adherents truly thought Christians could not use violence, then, Luke held, the unavoidable social need for violence would force them to live with non-Christians, who would be allowed to use violence freely. There were ways to use violence well, Luke argued, for even execution or torture was acceptable when carried out by executioners and torturers with love in their hearts. Chelčický had lost his authority because of his "immoderately lofty" attitude.[139] He died in obscurity. We do not know the year, or even the decade, of his death.

The Major branch of the Unity desperately wanted to reestablish the authority-chain of apostolic succession, and the connection with the past that came with it. Luke sought the salvation of a shattered chronology: if Rome had broken its link to a reliable past, the Unity hoped to save history by exploring geography—they sent out ambassadors to search widely for an uncorrupted apostolic Church, primitive Christians who could clear up obscure passages of scripture. Luke travelled via Kraków and Lviv with three companions to Constantinople in 1491, and there they split up. Luke went to Greece and Wallachia to investigate Orthodox Christianity, but was not impressed with what he perceived as a certain selfishness, or self-centeredness, in monastic asceticism, as Jesus had preached sacrifice of self for others. One of his companions went to Russia, another to Egypt with the intention of reaching India, and the third into the Ottoman Balkans. None found what they had sought, and the Unity would have to rely on the Holy Spirit alone to interpret the Bible.[140]

At Constantinople, Luke appreciated the Muslims' morality and tolerance, relative to the Catholics'. He converted a Jew fleeing Reconquest Spain, who died en route to Bohemia.

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139 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 128, 161, 254; Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren* (Paris, AR: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2000), 63–94

140 Jan Blahoslav, "Summa quaedam brevissima collecta…," in *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Böhmischen brüder*, ed. Jaroslav Goll, 2 vols. (Prague: J. Otto, 1878–82), I, 123; Joachim Camerarius, *Historica Narratio de Fratrum Orthodoxorum Ecclesiis in Bohemia, Moravia, et Polonia* (Heidelberg: Voegelin, 1605), 119–21; John Amos Comenius, *Historia fratrum Bohemorum* (Halle: Orphanotrophius, 1702), 20; Andreas Wengerscius, *Systema Historico-Chronologicum ecclesiarum Slavonicarum*, 2 vols. (Utrecht: Waesberge, bibliopolae, 1652), I, 36–37. See Antonín Gindely, *Geschichte der böhmischen Brüder*, 2 vols. (Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1868), I, 67–69; Amedeo Molnár, "Luc de Prague à Constantinople," *Communio Viatorum* 4 (1961): 192–201.

In 1497–98, Luke travelled through Italy, to investigate reports of the pagan facet of humanism. He visited Rome, Bologna, and Florence, where he witnessed Savonarola's execution. He met with the Waldensian Poor in Fabriano, north of Assisi, but was not impressed with their worldliness, or with the moneychangers in Roman churches. By this time, the Poor in the Cottian Alps near Paesana had established links to the Bohemian Hussites, abandoned pacifism, and sent colonists to Apulia and Calabria. By 1510, they were looking to a Bohemian king to come liberate them and "destroy the churches; kill all the priests."[141]

An early-sixteenth-century Major Unity decree advised that members should avoid war, but if they could not, they should at least avoid active combat roles by getting assigned to guard duty—and if even that were impossible, they should at least avoid the bravery and cruelty that comes from a lust for glory. This retreat was tied to an increased sophistication—sensitivity to attitude and historical context—perhaps due to the increased number of city dwellers and university educated among the Unity, which, by the century's end, numbered around 10,000. Chelčický's pacifism was essentially a dead letter, and would have no influence for the rest of the period.[142]

Erasmus

Erasmus wrote two treatises that focused on questions of peace and war: *Dulce bellum inexpertis* [War is Sweet to the Inexperienced] (1515) and *Querela pacis* [Peace's Grievance] (1517). While we tend to see peace as an absence of war, Erasmus saw war as a privation of peace. Like many we have seen above, Erasmus wrote for an audience that did not reflexively understand peace as an obvious good. He marvelled that "war is now such an accepted thing that people are astonished to find anyone who does not like it, and such a respectable thing that it is wicked and, I might almost say, 'heretical' to disapprove of this." Like Thomas Brinton, Erasmus used the Bible to support peace by citing the angels' "Peace on Earth" cry at the Nativity.[143]

141 Jean Gonnet and Amedeo Molnár, *Les Vaudois au Moyen Âge* (Torino: Claudiana, 1974), 276–81; Amedeo Molnár, "Les vaudois et l'Unité des Frères tchèques," *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 118 (1965): 6–9; Amedeo Molnár, "Luc de Prague et les Vaudois d'Italie," *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 90 (1949): 40–64.

142 Brock, *Political and Social Doctrines*, 103, 218–19.

143 Erasmus, "Complaint of Peace," in *Literary and Educational Writings*, trans. Betty Radice, CWE 27, 300; Erasmus, "Dulce bellum inexpertis," in *Adages Volume 6, III iv l to IV ii 100*, trans. Denis L. Drysdall, ed. John N. Grant, CWE 35, 401, 417. See especially Hilmar M. Pabel, "The Prince of Peace: Erasmus's Conception of Jesus," in *The Unbounded Community*, ed. William Caferro, Duncan G. Fisher, and

In general, Erasmus took a moderate position on war, one that changed its emphases as he lived and as the contemporary context evolved. A ruler might wage war to maintain order, but not to advance his own agenda. He was initially (1515) cautious about crusades against the Muslims, for "the kingdom of Christ was created, spread, and secured by very different means." War was "alien to Christ" and "so monstrous that it befits wild beasts rather than men." Like Chelčický, Erasmus was specifically pained by the presence of the Eucharist, the cross, and the Lord's Prayer in the military camps of Christians. Relying on the Bible and ancient scholarship, he argued that even wars classified as just should be fought in ways to moderate their unintended consequences. He would grant that "in some cases" not warring against the Turks was a "betrayal of Christendom," but such crusades should be fought well, "to conduct an armed campaign in such a way that they will be glad to be defeated."[144]

While Erasmus was addressing contemporary social and political circumstances, the main thrust of his writings on war sought a deep spiritual peace, grounded in Jesus, not merely a political peace. He explained:

> on earth nothing else is to be wished for but the peace that takes away sins and reconciles us to God, the peace that cements us together in mutual love. For such peace is not the world's but God's peace that passes all understanding and outweighs all the world's blessings. It is offered freely through the mediator of God and men, not by the intervention of our merits but from the loving-kindness well disposed towards us on God's part, who

Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Garland, 1996), 128–33. See also Fred Dallmayr, "A War Against the Turks? Erasmus on War and Peace," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34 (2006): 67–85; Ronald G. Musto, "Just Wars and Evil Empires: Erasmus and the Turks," in *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Eugene F. Rice, Jr.*, ed. John Monfasani and Ronald G. Musto (New York: Ithaca Press: 1991), 197–216; John C. Olin, "The Pacifism of Erasmus," *Thought* 50 (1975): 418–31; Hilmar M. Pabel, "The Peaceful People of Christ: The Irenic Ecclesiology of Erasmus of Rotterdam," in *Erasmus' Vision of the Church*, ed. Hilmar M. Pabel and Erika Rummel (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal, 1995), 57–93; Nathan Ron, "The Christian Peace of Erasmus," *The European Legacy* 19 (2014): 27–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2013.859793

144 Erasmus, "Complaint," 309–11; Erasmus, "Erasmus to Francis I, December 1, 1523," in *The Correspondence of Erasmus. Volume 10, Letters 1356 to 1534, 1523 to 1524*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors and Alexander Dalzell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 113–26; Erasmus, "The Education of a Christian Prince," in *Literary and Educational Writings*, trans. Radice, CWE 27, 286–87; Erasmus, "Praise of Folly," in *Literary and Educational Writings*, trans. Radice, CWE 27, 139; Erasmus, "On the Turkish War," in *Expositions of the Psalms*, ed. Dominic Baker-Smith, CWE 64, 232, 265. See Ronald H. Bainton, "The Querela Pacis of Eramsus, Classical and Christian Sources," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 42 (1951): 32–48.

> thought it best to see to the salvation of the human race in this amazing fashion.[145]

Like others we have considered, Erasmus found a justification for peace both in the life of Jesus, and in specific passages from the New Testament: "Survey the life of Christ from start to finish," he tells us, "and what else is it but a lesson in concord and mutual love?" He wondered, "Why do we drag Christ into this when he would be more at home in any brothel than in a war?" In fact, "the sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord." Erasmus argued that the parable of the tares (Mt 13:24–43), which were to be tolerated, not destroyed, showed the obligation to tolerate those who commit religious error. Erasmus pointed to the SOM's beatitudes, and invited his audience to "search the whole of his teaching; nowhere will you find anything that does not breathe peace." That peace, and love, required us to "declare" Jesus, "not by wearing his name and badge," but by effecting his teachings "in our deeds and lives." Jesus was the model "in whom alone are all the patterns of the holy life."[146]

At times, Erasmus could make deep-ken arguments for peace. He saw dissonance in two Christian armies, each under the cross, in battle with each other. Similarly he identified a contradiction between the weakness of the human body—God gave humans neither claws nor tusks—and our species' ferocity.[147]

More striking in Erasmus's approach to peace, and to his ethics more generally, is his plain-ken fracturing of time and emphasis on changing times creating different obligations. He could use the historical context of a teaching to liberalize it: "Let us examine when, to whom, on what occasion it was said, and perhaps we will discover the true and authentic [*germanam*] meaning." When discussing peace, Erasmus spoke of the "great difference" between the Old Testament God and the New Testament God, who was merely "by his very nature" the same God. God had given permission for the Old Testament Jews to wage war, but Jesus's teachings consistently opposed war. He was equally sensitive to the difference between Jesus's time and his own. New circumstances meant new laws, and these "seem to fight with Christ's decrees unless we reduce

145 Erasmus, *Paraphrase on Luke 1 to 10*, trans. Jane E. Phillips, CWE 47, 74.

146 Erasmus, "Complaint," 299; Erasmus, "Dulce," 412–17, 438; Erasmus, "Erasmus to Jean de Carondelet, January 5, 1523," in *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1252 to 1355, 1522 to 1523*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors, CWE 9, 252; Erasmus, *Paraphrase on Matthew*, trans. Dean Simpson, CWE 45, 217–18; Erasmus, "The Handbook of the Christian Soldier," trans. Charles Fantazzi, in *Spiritualia*, ed. John W. O'Malley, CWE 66, 1–127 (86).

147 Erasmus, "Dulce," 401–02, 411.

the scriptures into concord, in accordance with the differences among different times." The New Testament historical and cultural context was crucial.[148]

Erasmus used the plain ken to attenuate Gospel teachings. Consider Erasmus's understanding of Jesus's understanding of adultery. The SOM, taken literally, made it difficult for a husband to divorce his wife: a divorce was only permitted if she had been adulterous. However, Erasmus argued that this should be liberalized, for two reasons, referring to the human customs (plain-ken) of the first and of the sixteenth centuries. In the latter, oath-swearing in general was widely practised.[149] Therefore Jesus's "don't swear" rule must only refer to swearing recklessly. Therefore, the adultery rule could be liberalized too. Chelčický would have disdained such moderating logic: X was common, so X was (mostly) allowed, so Y was (mostly) allowed. Erasmus allowed liberalization of Jesus's commandment if it contradicted his sense of fairness, of the dictates of natural law. Because it was unfair to be stuck in a marriage with a criminal spouse, Jesus's strict requirements could be broadened.

Erasmus emphasized the alienating distance of first-century customs. In his own day, people would not abandon their family, give away their possessions, or castrate themselves. Considering the context clarified that Jesus's emphasis on chastity was only intended for eunuchs. Therefore, Jesus's life and teachings could not be required of humans today. Laws and people had only the weakest link to his requirements, because times had changed. The present times were like a "pool of muddy water" that only imperfectly reflected the Gospel's light.[150] Erasmus thus took an alternative approach to the break between the New Testament and contemporary times. Instead of arguing that his own time had abandoned first-century standards, he argued that they no longer applied,

148 Erasmus, "In epistolam ad Corinthios priorem annotationes," in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami, Ordinis sexti tomus octavus* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2003), 160; Erasmus, "Complaint," 299–300; Erasmus, "Education," 286; Erasmus, "Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam [1519]," in *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Annemarie and Hajo Holborn (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1964), 201. See Christine Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 210–16, 213–14, 225–28, https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442665712

149 However, Erasmus noted on Mt 5:33–37 that "in matters of faith and piety even Christ and the apostles swear." That is, the laxity of his own century even occurred in Jesus's. Erasmus, "Annotations," in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Jean Leclerc, 10 vols. (Leiden: Lugduni Batavorum Vander 1703–06), VI, col. 29.

150 Erasmus, "Ratio," 200–04. See Christ-von Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, 211. Building on Erasmus's liberalization of the SOM, Claudius Cantiuncula argued that the many inoffensive contradictions he saw in scripture allowed that human weakness on earth justified a "moderation" of Jesus's law. Claudius Cantiuncula, "Oratio apologetica, in Iuris ciuilis patrocinium," in *Lexicon juris civilis*, ed. Jakob Spiegel (Lyons: Gryphius, 1549), 743.

echoing earlier ethicists' assertions that the Old Testament's authority had ended with the New.

Envoi

This period saw two major ethics-related shifts from the deep ken to the plain: from a time-transcending history to one that fractured in the first century (and bent once or twice after that), and from an ethics based on consonance to a constructed, articulated ethics.

Of course, deep-ken impulses resisted this change. More mainstream scholars objected that, because readers' attitudes conditioned texts' meanings, Chelčický's arrogance undermined his conclusions. Krasonický insisted that Jesus never intended to update Jewish law—he never intended a break between the Old and New Testaments—but even this was undermined by Krasonický's plain-ken interest in Jesus's intentions. Even when the New Testament was read with the deep ken (e.g., the Bible does not often mention Jesus eating meat, so he did not often eat meat), the awareness of historical, ephemeral, human customs could be understood to colour Jesus's behaviour (e.g., Jesus's vegetarianism was limited by the first-century Near West diet).

The decades around 1400 saw an onslaught of peace. The idea of Jesus preaching peace was a big deal, and to enter the period's mentality we have to consider it odd that one should follow his peace-teachings generally in society, and odd that one would expect peace to directly end war.

That Jesus taught ethics, and we should follow those teachings, was the main result of this plain-ken revolution. More than in our earlier discussions of canon interpretation and visual arts, this chapter is about various deep-ken and various plain-ken approaches to peace and ethics, rather than a singular trajectory. In some people, in some attitudes, the two kens overlapped. Ethics encoded in history speaks to both—the deep ken looking for subtle meaning, the plain looking at historical action. A historical being can proclaim eternal laws, and an eternal law can proclaim that everything changes. The plain ken might focus on Jesus as a historical being, and then the deep ken urges consonance with that historical being's life and deeds. The deep ken understood Jesus's life as defining morality, and the plain ken saw his teachings as explaining morality. When Jesus taught by example, he might have spoken to both kens.

By the 1520s, Claudius Cantiuncula (1490–1560), Law Professor at Basel, was complaining that students avoided his lectures, for contemporary "laws are

prophane and in conflict with the Gospel."[151] In 1518, a young Martin Luther asserted that, in contrast to human law, what Jesus taught was divine law.[152]

Nicholas of Hereford outlived his pacifism, and Nicholas of Dresden's pacifism swept him to his death. Only with Chelčický do we get a committed and explicit Jesus-Pacifist whose cry commanded the attention (though rarely the assent) of his peers and reached all the way into nineteenth-century Russia, into Tolstoy's perked and waiting ears—an encounter which would set in motion a process leading to Gandhi, Abdul Gaffar Khan, Martin Luther King, Jr., and beyond.

Over the last three chapters, we have seen deep-ken imitation creating consonance, a simultaneous consonance, between Jesus and the imitator. Jesus never taught people to strip naked and whip themselves, but enthusiasts did so to consonate with his torture before the Crucifixion. The English King Richard II could consonate with Jesus by having his deputy wash the feet of the poor; the deputy consonated with both the king and Jesus, like a note consonates with those an octave higher and lower. Gambling was a sin because rolling dice might produce a five, which consonates hideously with the number of Jesus's wounds. War was caused by God punishing you for your sinful anger. The modesty of Jesus's humble birth has a deep meaning which dissonates with displaying your genitals through your hose.

On the other hand, plain-ken imitation is about *following*, subsequently in time, centuries later, Jesus's actions and teachings. The plain-ken revolution broke apart the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the now, with Jesus's teachings in the New Testament taking on more powerful significance. Now the moral intention of the teachings became important. Viewed with the plain ken, Richard II followed none of Jesus's humility by ordering someone else to wash filthy feet. Paying more attention to human psychology, Italian municipal authorities re-categorized naked self-whipping, from pious demonstration to sexual deviance. Gambling was a sin because it could create a psychological addiction and disrupt your family life. War was caused by your anger sparking a chain of escalating conflicts.

For the deep ken, we should consonate with Jesus—exist simultaneously with a timeless Jesus. For the plain ken, we should follow after Jesus, using his first-century model as an exemplar for our twenty-first-century lives.

151 Claudius Cantiuncula, "Oratio apologetica," 737.

152 Martin Luther, "Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute (1518)," in Martin Luther, *Werke*, 120 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1833), I, 533.