

**WYCLIFFE BALLADS; A  
BIOGRAPHY IN VERSE WITH  
OTHER POEMS AND BALLADS  
OF PROTESTANTISM**

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Wycliffe ballads; a biography in verse with other poems and ballads of protestantism by T. Clifford O'Connor

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**T. CLIFFORD O'CONNOR**

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WYCLIFFE BALLADS;  
A Biography in Verse,  
WITH OTHER  
POEMS AND BALLADS  
OF  
PROTESTANTISM.

BY  
T. CLIFFORD O'CONNOR, B.A.

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"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare!"

"These harbingers of good, whom bitter hate  
In vain endeavoured to exterminate."

WORDSWORTH.

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## CONTENTS.

“ Within this frail form lay a temper quick and restless, an immense energy, an immovable conviction, an unconquerable pride. The personal charm which ever accompanies real greatness only deepened the influence he derived from the spotless purity of his life. As yet indeed even Wyclif himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual power.”—*J. R. Green.*

### WYCLIFFE BALLADS.

<i>PRELUDE:—</i>	PAGE.
1. WYCLIFFE AND ENGLAND, . . . . .	1
<b>I.—WYCLIFFE, REFORMER IN CHURCH &amp; STATE:—</b>	
2. THE GREAT PRESTLENCE, . . . . .	5
3. THE FRIAR'S MENDICANT, . . . . .	9
4. PAPAL EXACTIONS, . . . . .	15
5. THE TEMPORAL POWER AND ENGLAND, . . . . .	17
6. AT BRUGES, . . . . .	21
7. THE GOOD PARLIAMENT, . . . . .	23
8. ALIEN DIGNITARIES, . . . . .	25
<b>II.—WYCLIFFE, ECCLESIASTICAL WITNESS AND CONFESSOR:—</b>	
9. AT ST. PAUL'S, . . . . .	27
10. AT LAMBETH, . . . . .	32
<b>III.—WYCLIFFE, DOCTRINAL REFORMER:—</b>	
11. THE GREAT SCHISM, . . . . .	26
12. THE FRIARS BY WYCLIFFE'S SICK BED, . . . . .	41
13. RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT, TRACTS, TRANSLATIONS, AND “GOSPEL PRIESTS,” . . . . .	43
14. FREE AND FREING OTHERS, . . . . .	47

IV.—WYCLIFFE, DOCTRINAL WITNESS AND CONFESSOR:—		Page
15.	BEFORE COUNCIL OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY, . . . . .	52
16.	THE EARTHQUAKE SYNOD, . . . . .	56
17.	BEFORE CONVOCATION IN OXFORD, . . . . .	59
18.	CITATION TO ROME, . . . . .	63
V.—WYCLIFFE, TEACHER, TRANSLATOR AND MARTYR:—		
19.	LAST DAYS AND LABOURS, . . . . .	65
20.	PEACE, . . . . .	72
21.	HIS SECRETS OF STRENGTH, . . . . .	74
22.	POST MORTEM, . . . . .	80
	(1) CONSTANCE. THE INQUEST, . . . . .	80
	(2) LUTHERWORTH. THE EXHUMATION, . . . . .	82
EPILOG:—		
23.	WYCLIFFE AND THE WORLD, . . . . .	87
	(1) GOD'S PROVIDENCE, . . . . .	87
	(2) WYCLIFFE'S SERVICE, . . . . .	88
POEMS AND BALLADS OF PROTESTANTISM:—		
24.	LUTHER'S PILGRIMAGE FROM WITTEMBURG TO WORMS, . . . . .	95
25.	"JESUS CHRIST AND HIS ENSIGNS," . . . . .	121
26.	LOUIS DE BERQUIN, . . . . .	126
27.	A MARTYR OF TELL, . . . . .	140
28.	JOHN LEAF, CHANDLER'S APPRENTICE AND MARTYR, . . . . .	143
29.	RAWLINS WHITE, FISHERMAN AND MARTYR, . . . . .	148
30.	MRS. CECILY OSMES, MARTYR, AND TWO OTHERS, . . . . .	151
31.	ROWLAND TAYLOR, VICAR OF HADLEY, AND MARTYR, . . . . .	159
LAYS OF LONDONDERRY:—		
32.	THE APPRENTICE BOYS' "NO SURRENDER," . . . . .	185
33.	KING JAMES IN DUBLIN, . . . . .	190
34.	THE FLIGHT NORTHWARDS, . . . . .	193
35.	KING JAMES BEFORE DERRY, . . . . .	195
36.	THE GARRISON'S "NO SURRENDER," . . . . .	198
37.	THE FIRST SABBATH OF THE SIEGE, . . . . .	205
38.	THE RELIEF, . . . . .	209
39.	THE SYRO-PHENICIAN, . . . . .	225
40.	NEHEMIAH, . . . . .	231
NOTE,	. . . . .	224



## Prelude.

### I.

#### WYCLIFFE AND ENGLAND.

JOHN WYCLIFFE was born about 1324 in Wycliffe village, near Richmond, Yorkshire. At age of 14 entered Oxford University. Became successively Fellow of Merton, Warden of Balliol, Head of Canterbury Hall, and Lecturer in Theology. Was made rector of Fillingham, 1361, rector of Lutgershall, 1368, and in 1375 rector of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, where he died, 1384, having received the Master's call while celebrating Divine Service in his parish church.

PILGRIM to our Isles of England, drawn, for love of  
England's name,

To her fields of former conflict, to her fanes of ancient  
fame,

To the great ancestral mansions of her nobles and her  
squires,

To the marvels which the genius of her modern life  
inspires,

To the homes and haunts seclusive of her sages and her  
bards,

Where his time-transfigured legends lone age-dim  
Tradition guards,



To her birthplaces of heroes, to her sepulchres of kings,  
To her towers and squares whence martyrs pass'd to  
Heaven on torture's wings ;—

Not in Yorkshire, far-famed Yorkshire, thou of such  
shalt fewest greet,  
Nor in Leicester county, either, thou of such shalt  
fewest meet.

Pilgrim to these Isles of England, drawn, for love of  
England's name,  
To the haunts and tow'rs and temples consecrated to  
her fame,

Fail thou not in thy pleased wand'rings till where, fed  
by numerous rills,  
Tees flows hard by Wycliffe village hid 'mong Yorkshire's  
frontier hills.

Nor yet fail thou till thou comest where the Swift  
stream, winding down  
Through flat Leicester fields tow'rds Avon, passes  
Lutterworth's old town.

*There* was Wycliffe—first Reformer, latest of the school-  
men—bred ;

*Here* for four-and-forty winters slept his bones among  
the dead.

*There* the hills stand, fall the waters, sweep the storms,  
the calm vales lie,  
In whose midst the boy was nurtured ; *here* the man's  
last years went by.

---

*There* the church wherein, a babe, he to Christ's Church  
on earth was given ;  
*Here* the church in which his summons came to join the  
Church in heaven.

So, when treading Oxford's classic courts, forget not all  
the years  
Of his student-life, although to-day no trace of these  
appears.

Merton's Fellow, Balliol's Warden, eke of Canterbury  
Hall,  
Theologic Lecturer—his Oxford honours there recall ;  
For herein lies certain token England's worthiest, who  
knew  
All his life, esteemed him worthy ere he rose to public  
view.

But thou, wanderer through England, drawn for love  
of England's name,  
Pilgrim to her shrines historic, hoar memorials of her  
fame,

Count thy grateful task unfinished till thou bless God on  
bent knees,  
Where by Lutterworth the Swift rolls and by Wycliffe  
Glen the Tees :

For, I say it as I think it, in the roll of England's  
fame—  
Of her soldiers, sages, martyrs,—Wycliffe shines the  
noblest name !

