

Spiritual Status

The remnant of Christian witness that is known to us is almost toally confined to the various monastic orders at different places. (Naturally there were some plain common believers whose names have not passed to us in the historical pattern.) Among the wandering monks we sometimes find someone who seems to preach the Gospel although more often than not the mendicants have a low reputation for truth and honesty. The church is very inclusivistic and this means that its membership standards or spiritual qualifications are virtually nil.

Superstition is almost the official posture of the church and the government. The famous "miracle" plays represent the better side of it while the practice of the "black arts" give the poorer picture. Close to this is the alchemist and the search for a simple gold making process. Fetishism was pronounced and the attention given to relics, etc., was great.

The church was divided east and west. The eastern church had fallen under the control or domination of Muslin governments. The Russian part had left the Grecian part and while there were some real stalwarts of the time, the general setting was one of confusion and difficulty. The Waldensians had maintained a "separate" church in northern Italy... albeit a badly persecuted one, and the Hussites still had their independence in Bohemia. Most of the west followed the order of Rome, however.

II.2.b.

The status of Rome at this time

Status
of Rome

The Roman church was, structurally, rather different from the church of more recent times. Much of what we have known as the Roman system was consolidated after or during the reformation and not before. Many of the more distinctive elements were set in force by the council of Trent. Some of the variance factors in the body before and after the reformation may be summarized thus:

--divergency in individual belief about such things as the apocrypha, purgatory, etc.

often limited real authority of church leaders of the Christian community in which they presided.