

LUTHERAN HAND-BOOK SERIES

---

# THE REFORMATION DAWN

F. V. N. Painter, D.D.

300



6.15.23,

From the Library of  
Professor Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield  
Bequeathed by him to  
the Library of  
Princeton Theological Seminary

BR 307 .P33 1901

Painter, F. V. N. 1852-1931.

The reformation dawn





# THE REFORMATION DAWN.

Price 40 cents.

BY F. V. N. PAINTER, A. M., D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF MODERN LANGUAGES IN ROANOKE COLLEGE AND AUTHOR OF  
"A HISTORY OF EDUCATION," "LUTHER ON EDUCATION," "HISTORY OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE," "INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE," ETC.

Lutheran Hand-book Ser.

---

PHILADELPHIA, PA.:  
LUTHERAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

---

COPYRIGHT, 1901,  
BY  
THE LUTHERAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

---

## PREFACE.

It is believed that the present work is not untimely. In parts of the Protestant Church there has been, since the days of the Tractarian movement in England, a turning toward Rome. The righteousness and benefits of the Reformation are questioned among those who owe their culture and freedom to its liberating achievements. In recent years the Papacy, in its zeal to re-establish its waning power, has attempted to re-write the history of the great Protestant movement, and, in the interests of the Roman Church, to overthrow commonly accepted facts. In our country the Papal power, with smooth plausibility, is aggressive and contemptuous in its attitude toward Protestantism.

Under these circumstances, it has been thought well to go over the ground once more, and in a judicial spirit investigate the facts. The character and tendencies of Romanism have been inquired into, and plainly set forth under the illumination of history. The principles of the reformers have again been brought under examination in the light of modern progress. The results of this investigation are presented in the present work. In its preparation, recognized Roman Catholic as well as evangelical Protestant authorities have been freely consulted and quoted. Agnostic or skeptical writers, who make a point of depreciating the Reformation in favor of the Renaissance, have not been neglected.

This investigation, which has not been hasty, has led to the firm conviction that the Protestant Reformation was not a mistake, but a righteous and inevitable movement demanded, not only by the errors and tyranny of Rome, but also by the intellectual, civil, and religious progress of our race. The facts upon which this conviction rests are clearly but briefly presented; and their perusal, it is believed, will hardly fail to demonstrate that the politico-religious organization known as the Papacy is to-day, as it has been for more than five hundred years, a dangerous foe to the intellectual, political, and religious freedom of man.

If, in spite of the overwhelming testimony, the picture here given of the corrupt state of the Roman Church at the beginning of the sixteenth century still seems almost incredible, it is only necessary to read the report of the Philippine Commission as submitted by the Secretary of War to the Senate of the United States in Document 190. In that report it will be seen that the Roman Church, especially through its religious orders, exercised in the Philippine Islands the same greed and tyranny, deliberately kept the natives in the same helpless ignorance, and shamelessly exhibited the same gross immoralities, against which the Teutonic nations of Europe rebelled in the Reformation. The condition of the Philippines under Spanish control affords a striking proof that the Papal system, when unrestrained by Protestantism, naturally leads to-day, as at the close of the Middle Ages, to popular ignorance, ecclesiastical oppression, and insolent immorality.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7

### PART FIRST.

THE PAPAL SYSTEM, OUT OF WHICH NATURALLY  
AND INEVITABLY GREW THE EVILS LEADING TO  
THE REFORMATION.

#### CHAPTER I.

Growth and Organization of the Papacy . . . . .	17
---	----

#### CHAPTER II.

The Doctrinal System of the Papacy . . . . .	33
--	----

#### CHAPTER III.

State of the Church . . . . .	47
-------------------------------	----

### PART SECOND.

INEFFECTUAL EFFORTS AT REFORM BEFORE THE  
REFORMATION.

#### CHAPTER I.

The Mystics . . . . .	64
-----------------------	----

#### CHAPTER II.

Biblical Reformers . . . . .	78
------------------------------	----

	PAGE
CHAPTER III.	
The Reformatory Councils . . . . .	103
CHAPTER IV.	
Literature and the Papacy . . . . .	114
PART THIRD.	
THE CIRCUMSTANCES PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE REFORMATION AND ITS BEGINNING.	
CHAPTER I.	
National Growth . . . . .	135
CHAPTER II.	
The Renaissance . . . . .	146
CHAPTER III.	
Preliminary Conflicts . . . . .	162
CHAPTER IV.	
Beginning of the Reformation in Germany . . . . .	176
CHAPTER V.	
Beginning of the Reformation in Other Parts of Europe . . . . .	217
CONCLUSION . . . . .	235

# THE REFORMATION DAWN.

---

## INTRODUCTION.

THE progress of humanity cannot be permanently stayed. It may be hindered or checked for a time by formidable obstacles ; but, like a strong river stopped for a season in its course, the tide of progress bursts forth sooner or later with resistless momentum. A divine breath lives in humanity ; and with irresistible power mankind is moving forward to greater intelligence, freedom, and goodness.

✓ The Church, by which is meant the communion or congregation of saints, is a divine institution. It was founded by Christ, and, like the individual Christian, it is a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. By reason of its divine origin and the presence of divinity within it, the Church cannot perish. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In its outward manifestation and organization, it may, in large measure, exhibit human infirmity. Its official representatives may be led by erroneous or unholy motives. Its splendors may be hidden for a time ; but because the Church, in its essential nature, is divine, it will rise, like its Lord, from the tomb of error and sin.

The great religious movement of the sixteenth century, which shows the indestructible, recuper-

ative energy resident in the Church, strikes its roots deep in the life of the Germanic race. It was associated with the earnest and sturdy character of the people. It had, like the coming of Christ, many favoring circumstances, which constituted a new "fullness of time." Without these favorable circumstances, in appearance accidental, but in reality providential, it would have been impossible. After a long period of ecclesiastical oppression, the long-suffering Teutonic mind, urged on and directed by a divine impulse, rose in resistance, and achieved intellectual, civil, and spiritual freedom.

No greater movement had taken place since the advent of Christ. The Reformation stands as the greatest achievement of the Germanic race. It may well be taken as the principal event separating the larger life of the modern world from the narrow limitations of the Middle Ages. There is scarcely an important human interest that it has not touched with a beneficent influence. It has secured greater purity and spirituality in religion; it has contributed to the elevation of the laity and the advancement of woman; it has confirmed the separation of the secular and the ecclesiastical power; it has brought intellectual freedom, and given an extraordinary impulse to education, science, and literature; it has established the right of freedom of conscience; and, in a word, it has been favorable to all that distinguishes and ennobles our modern civilization.

The causes of the religious revolution, which rescued the Teutonic nations from subjection to the See of Rome, are found in the doctrinal errors, oppressive tyranny, and wide-spread corruption of the Papal Church. Toward the close of the Middle Ages, the Papacy had succeeded in building

up a monstrous system of usurpation and oppression. On the basis of false teachings, which will be considered later, it sought to establish a universal spiritual and temporal dominion. In western Europe, for a time, it succeeded in realizing, in large measure, this supreme aim of the Bishops of Rome. But unlimited, irresponsible wealth and power are intoxicating. And in the exercise of its immense power the Papacy displayed so much avarice, luxury, and vice that it frequently aroused censure and resistance. It failed to command the confidence and reverence of a large part of the people; and finally, in the great revolt known as the Reformation, it lost its sovereignty over the north of Europe and the fairest portion of the New World. Of ecclesiastical organizations, as well as of individuals, the divine law holds good that "the wages of sin is death."

The central point involved in the reformatory conflict was the supremacy of the Pope. According to Roman Catholic assumption, the Pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth; and in virtue of this exalted position, he is entitled to supreme authority in Church and State. The entire Papal system is but a logical development of this prime assumption. The Pope is made an absolute monarch or despot, from whom emanates, directly or indirectly, all authority and truth. He is invested with divine prerogatives, possessing the keys of heaven and hell. In his governmental administration he surrounds himself with a graduated hierarchy, which constitutes a special class or order, and mediates between the central despotism and the subject laity. It becomes the official agency for the transmission of all spiritual blessings. The princes and officers of this ecclesiastical despotism surround themselves with an im-

posing ceremonial and the insignia of authority. To bind them more closely to the central power, they are excluded, through the law of celibacy, from the beauty and tenderness of family ties. Various ceremonies have been shrewdly devised, through which, in an external way, the blessings of salvation are officially communicated. The religious life of the laity is made to consist chiefly in observing the external rites and regulations imposed by the hierarchy. The Papacy demands absolute submission of intellect, heart, and life; and the rejection of this central, supreme authority is the most flagrant of all heresies.

Though the full significance of their work was not at first fully understood, it was in reality the authority of the Pope that was called in question by the reformers. Instead of accepting his official utterances as final, which acceptance would have speedily ended the Reformation, they appealed to the Scriptures as the ultimate rule of faith and practice. The Word of God was placed above the Pope. Instead of finding salvation in the performance of external rites of hierarchical invention, they taught the great truth of justification by faith. Spiritual obedience to God was substituted for external subserviency to the priesthood. Instead of a priestly order or caste mediating between God and man, they maintained that all men through faith become kings and priests unto God. The reformers, rejecting the colossal ecclesiastical despotism that had been built up in imitation of the Roman Empire, returned to the teachings of the New Testament, which presents the Church of Christ as a spiritual kingdom of righteousness and truth. If the fundamental principle of the Papacy is the authority of the Pope, the fundamental principle of Protestantism is the authority of the

Word of God. The Reformation was an evangelical reaction—a return to the principles, and, in a measure, to the forms of primitive Christianity.

But the reformers would not have been able to carry their work through to success, if they had not been favored by attending circumstances. These favorable conditions have been admirably summarized by Macaulay: "The clergy were no longer the sole or the chief depositaries of knowledge. The invention of printing had furnished the assailants of the Church with a mighty weapon which had been wanting to their predecessors. The study of the ancient writers, the rapid development of the powers of the modern languages, the unprecedented activity which was displayed in every department of literature, the political state of Europe, the vices of the Roman Court, the exactions of the Roman Chancery, the jealousy with which the wealth and privileges of the clergy were naturally regarded by laymen, the jealousy with which the Italian ascendancy was naturally regarded by men born on our side of the Alps, all these things gave to the teachers of the new theology an advantage which they perfectly understood how to use." \*

This great religious movement, which liberated the most progressive and powerful nations of the modern world, has sometimes been ascribed to insignificant and utterly inadequate causes. There have been writers of high rank, like Hume and Voltaire, who have alleged the rivalry between the Augustinian and the Dominican friars as the origin of the Reformation. "You are not unaware," says the Frenchman, "that this great revolution in the human mind and in the political system of Europe began with Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk,

\* Macaulay's "History of England," I., p. 52.

whom his superiors deputed to preach against the traffic in indulgences, which had been refused them. The quarrel was at first between the Augustinians and the Dominicans." \* Great social and religious revolutions do not spring from trifling causes. Tetzels blasphemous auction of indulgences was not the cause of the Reformation ; it was merely the occasion of its beginning—the accidental spark that fired the mine which had been preparing for a century.

To the Roman Catholic, who recognizes the Papacy as a divine institution, and regards the Pope, in his official utterances, as infallible, the Reformation is not intelligible. He cannot speak of it without prejudice and injustice. It appears to him as an indefensible revolt and schism. He is trained up to detest Protestants as heretics. The Roman Catholic writer, in treating of the Reformation, exhibits a bias and subserviency of spirit unworthy of an honest inquirer after truth. He starts out with assumptions and presuppositions that distort his vision and invalidate his conclusions. He is bound by his Papal devotion to discredit the reformatory movement, and to justify the Roman Church in its beliefs and acts. He misunderstands and maligns the reformers. He writes under the baleful shadow of ecclesiastical authority, and, with servile spirit, subjects his conclusions to clerical revision. At the order of the Pope, he is ready to declare light darkness and darkness light. All this is exemplified in Balmes, whose able work on "European Civilization," written in reply to Guizot, did much to arrest Protestant tendencies in Spain. "I am not aware," he says in the closing paragraph of his book, "in the multitude of questions which have

\* Voltaire's "Essai sur les Moeurs," chap. 127.

presented themselves to me, and which it has been indispensable for me to examine, that I have resolved any in a manner not in conformity with the dogmas of the religion which I was desirous of defending. Before publishing my work, I submitted it to the examination of ecclesiastical authority ; and, without hesitation, I complied with the slightest hint, on its part, purifying, correcting, and modifying what had been pointed out as worthy of purification, correction, or modification. Notwithstanding that, I submit my whole work to the judgment of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church ; as soon as the Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth, shall pronounce sentence against any one of my opinions, I will hasten to declare that I consider that opinion erroneous, and cease to profess it.”

The treatment of the Reformation by Roman Catholic writers is an interesting and instructive study. It illustrates the dwarfing and blinding influence of the Papal despotism. Fair-minded Protestant historians are charged with partisan prejudice ; the teachings of the reformers are misrepresented and their characters traduced ; the corrupt condition of the Church at the beginning of the sixteenth century is minimized or denied entirely ; and outrageous cruelties and persecutions—even the horrors of the Inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s eve—are excused or explained away. Thus, in a book published under Episcopal authority, it is said that Luther “rejected many articles of faith which the Church had received from Christ and His apostles ;” \* that being “of a quarrelsome, imperious disposition, and full of presumption, he was much incensed at the indulgences granted by Leo X., because their

\* Deharbe’s “Full Catechism,” p. 42.

publication was intrusted to the Dominicans, and not to his order ;” \* that “he was proud, immoral, impatient, and wholly shameless ;” † and that “the ‘Reformation’ was engendered in beastly lust, brought forth in hypocrisy and perfidy, and cherished and fed by plunder.” ‡ Even Alzog, one of the ablest and fairest of Roman Catholic historians, uses every opportunity to discredit the Reformation, and says that “Luther’s *religious system was a pantheistical mysticism*—not indeed the outcome of his controversy on indulgences, but the result of his *youthful stubbornness* and perversity, and of his subsequent *wayward and erratic religious exercises.*” §

It is not uncommon for skeptical writers to depreciate the Reformation. They seek to minimize the influence of the great religious movement by magnifying its attendant and favoring circumstances. A recent German writer declares that “the Reformation is over-estimated ; for, besides being an effect itself, it left Christianity unchanged, and made only unessential modifications in Catholicism ; it set up in Protestantism the Bible as authority, which stands in contradiction with the results of modern science.” || Apart from its misapprehension of the facts, this statement shows only a superficial insight into the nature of the Reformation. In addition to momentous changes in doctrine, that movement placed man in direct personal relations with his Maker, impressed a moral significance upon his daily duties, and, in matters of faith, freed him from ecclesiastical and civil tyranny. With true insight, Michelet char-

\* Noethen’s “History of the Church,” p. 414.

† Spalding’s “History of the Prot. Ref.,” p. 100.

‡ Cobbett’s “Protestant Reformation,” p. 26.

§ Alzog’s “Universal Church History,” III., p. 27.

|| Kolb’s “Culturgeschichte der Menschheit,” II., p. 293.

acterizes Luther as "the restorer of liberty." "If he did not create," the Frenchman continues, "he at least courageously affixed his signature to that great revolution which rendered the right of examination lawful in Europe. And if we exercise in all its plenitude at this day this first and highest privilege of human intelligence, it is to him we are most indebted for it; nor can we think, speak, or write without being made conscious at every step of the immense benefit of this intellectual enfranchisement. To whom do I owe the power of publishing what I am even now inditing, except to the liberator of modern thought?" \*

It is the purpose of this work to present a study of the Reformation in its causes, circumstances, and beginning. A glance at the table of contents will reveal the plan and divisions of the investigation. In Part First, the Papal system, out of which naturally and inevitably grew the evils leading to the Reformation, is presented on the basis of recognized authorities and official documents. In Part Second, the various ineffectual efforts at reform during the later Middle Ages are grouped and studied. This will reveal to us more clearly the character and methods of the Papacy. In Part Third, the circumstances preparing the way for the Reformation, and the beginning of that great movement up to the point where the issue was fully joined, are given with some fullness of detail. The period covered is chiefly the fifteenth and the opening decades of the sixteenth century. Most prominence is given to the Reformation in Germany, for both in point of time and extent of influence that country was the principal storm-centre. But the general char-

\* Michelet's "Life of Luther," p. xii.

acter of the movement is not forgotten, and the dawn of reform in Switzerland, England, Scandinavia, and elsewhere is briefly discussed. In the Conclusion there is a brief survey of the causes which checked the progress of the Reformation.

# PART FIRST.

THE PAPAL SYSTEM, OUT OF WHICH NATURALLY AND INEVITABLY GREW THE EVILS LEADING TO THE REFORMATION.

---

## CHAPTER I.

GROWTH AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPACY.

IN tracing the origin and growth of the Papacy, it is important to distinguish three things. The first is Christianity, which as a form of religion brings the individual into a relation of love and cheerful obedience to God. Its source and power are found in the Gospel of Christ. The second is the development of theological doctrines in systematic form. This development is a result of the scientific instinct of man. The third is the external organization of the Church, which depends largely on surrounding conditions. The religious life is, in a measure, independent of systematic theology and of ecclesiastical organization; and thus it happens that in every part of the visible Church, and even under the Papacy in its most degenerate days, we find examples of saintly, consecrated men. The true, invisible Church, in which vital and spiritual Christianity finds its abiding-place, is to be distinguished from dogmatic systems and particular forms of Church ritual and government.

The Papacy—the oldest and most powerful of existing organizations—rests on a doubtful interpretation of Scripture and on a doubtful fact of history. It assumes that our Saviour's words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," bestowed upon that apostle an official pre-eminence over the other disciples, and made him, together with his successors, the visible head of the Church. It accepts as an established fact that Peter founded the See of Rome, from which he exercised control over the Christian communities of Europe and Asia. This interpretation and this statement of facts are both alike disproved by the New Testament; for it shows that Peter never claimed or exercised a Papal primacy over the other apostles, and it makes no mention of his presence in Rome. Furthermore (and this fact ought to be conclusive), the hierarchical idea did not exist at all in the Apostolic Church. "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" \*—this is the fundamental principle laid down by the Lord Himself.

The Papacy is a gradual growth, the process of which can be clearly traced. It required nearly a thousand years to reach maturity. The primitive Church was an exalted democracy, in which all true believers, to use the language of Peter, became "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." † The sacerdotal idea of the ministry is utterly foreign to the Apostolic Church. The presbyters or bishops—different names for the same office—were chosen by the local congregations. But as the Church grew in extent and power, it was found expedient, for the sake of better administration, to have, in

\* Matt. xxiii. 8.

† 1 Peter ii. 9.

imitation of the civil government, different grades of officers. The bishop was raised above the presbyter. Jewish ideas of the priesthood crept in; and hence, as early as the middle of the third century, Cyprian maintained that the bishops are the successors of the apostles, possess the same divine authority, and are amenable to none but God.

Under the emperor Constantine, when Christianity became the State religion, the Church assumed the character of an immense visible organization. At the head stood the emperor himself as "bishop in externals." Next under him were the patriarchs of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople; then came the exarchs, who presided over several provinces; the metropolitans, who governed each a single district; archbishops, who watched over a more limited territory; and, lastly, ordinary bishops, whose jurisdiction had variable limits. These various dignitaries naturally affected a style of living in keeping with their station. They lived in palaces, dressed in magnificent attire, and surrounded themselves with the insignia of power.

The hierarchical tendencies, which had been insidiously at work during the two preceding centuries, became firmly established. The bishops became a mediating priesthood, dispensing life and death, and exercising authority as the vicars of Christ. Thus in the so-called "Apostolic Constitutions"—a work dating from about this time—we read such passages as the following: "The bishop is the minister of the Word, the keeper of knowledge, the mediator between God and you in the several parts of your divine worship. He is the teacher of piety; and next after God, he is your father, who has begotten you again to the

adoption of sons by water and the Spirit. He is your ruler and governor ; he is your king and potentate ; he is, next after God, your earthly god, who has a right to be honored by you." \*

As a result of the new organization and condition of the Church, public worship underwent a change. Magnificent basilicas, in rivalry with the splendor of heathen temples, were erected. An elaborate ritual was substituted for the worship in spirit and in truth commended by our Saviour. Ceremonies were borrowed from heathen worship in order to attract people to Christianity. "There was little difference," says Mosheim, "in these times between the public worship of the Christians and that of the Greeks and Romans. In both alike there were splendid robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases, and numberless other things." †

This externalizing, sacerdotal, monarchical tendency a little later reached its complete development in Rome. By virtue of its wealth and prestige in the political centre of the world, the See of Rome claimed a primacy over all other bishoprics. "It was in the atmosphere of Rome," says Adams, in his interesting work on the Middle Ages, "where every influence was of empire and all the traditions imperial, that the idea first took shape that the one great Church should find its head, its divinely ordained primate, in the Bishop of Rome ; vaguely at first, no doubt, and with slowly growing consciousness, but definitely enough to form a consistent working model, through all the varying circumstances of their different reigns." ‡

\* Apostolic Constitutions, Book II., chap. 26.

† Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," I., p. 276.

‡ Adams' "Civilization During the Middle Ages," p. 118.

By means of far-sighted diplomacy and ceaseless aggression, the Bishops of Rome, in spite of earnest and prolonged resistance, at last succeeded in making good their pretensions in western Europe. In the fifth century Leo the Great declared that "the care of all the churches belonged to himself, as the successor of the Apostle Peter, to whom, as the reward of his faith, the Lord had assigned the primacy among the apostles, and upon whom he had founded His Church."\* This claim to pre-eminence, based on succession to Peter, was a happy after-thought. It was never recognized by the Eastern or Greek Church, and several centuries later, along with a few doctrinal differences, it led to a permanent separation.

The Pope of Rome had now succeeded in placing himself at the head of the Western Church. Only one more step remained. For several centuries the Pope remained subordinate to the civil power. Charlemagne, while seeking to advance the interests of the Church in every way, still regarded himself as sovereign over the occupant of the See of Rome. He exercised the right of investiture, placing in the hands of the bishops the insignia of their office—the staff and ring—and receiving from them an oath of fealty. A conflict for the absolute supremacy of the Papacy followed with varying fortunes. A theocracy, at the head of which stood the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, now became the Papal ideal. It was supported by the forged "Decretals of Isidore," prepared in the ninth century, and by the still bolder fiction that Constantine had donated to the See of St. Peter all the provinces which composed the occidental part of the Roman Empire.

The conflict was a long one; but through the

\* Guericke's "Church History," p. 276.

factions of the empire, the Papacy finally triumphed under the reign of Gregory VII. For three days Henry IV., in the garb of a penitent, stood barefoot in front of the Castle of Canossa, before the proud Gregory deigned to give him audience and to release him from the ban of excommunication. The Papacy was at length exalted above the empire in absolute supremacy. "The world," said Gregory VII., in explaining the relation of the Papacy to the secular authority, "is governed by two lights—by the sun which is greater, and by the moon which is less. The Apostolic power is the sun ; the royal power is the moon. For, as the latter has its light from the former, so do emperors, kings, and princes receive power through the Pope, who receives it from God. Thus the power of the Roman Chair is greater than the power of the throne, and the king is subordinate to the Pope, and is bound to obey him." This has since remained the attitude of the Papacy.

No great civil or ecclesiastical institution can be built up unless it meets some want of the age. Though ultimately resting, as we have seen, on exegetical and historical error, and supported in its development by acknowledged fiction and forgery, the Papacy performed an important office in the earlier part of the Middle Ages. During the period of the Teutonic migrations and the dissolution of the old empire, it supplied an element of stability in the midst of confusion. It became the connecting link between ancient and mediæval Europe. It became the agency through which Christianity and something of the culture of the ancient world were imparted to the Germanic peoples, which were afterward to be the standard-bearers of human progress. Without this monarchical organization of

the Papacy, which gave it unity and strength, the Church would have suffered far greater loss during the confusion of the Germanic migrations.

Even the external Judaic character imposed upon the Church by the Papacy was not without its benefits in an untutored age. The barbarians that overran Europe were incapable of appreciating or understanding a purely spiritual worship. It could not appeal to their childish stage of development. The most effective method of reaching their minds was through a splendid spectacular worship. Magnificent churches, ecclesiastics in brilliant robes and mitres, smoking incense from swinging censors, and solemn chants in an unknown tongue, the display and veneration of saintly relics—all this was of a character to impress and subdue their astonished senses. Besides, the easy terms of salvation through the official administration of the sacraments, through the founding and embellishing of churches, through pilgrimages to holy places, and through other outward exercises, facilitated the spread of Christianity among the uncultivated nations of Europe during the earlier Middle Ages.

The Papal system reached its summit of power at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, declared himself the source of all spiritual and temporal power. He reigned supreme as the head of an absolute theocracy. He held himself above all human laws, and claimed the right of dispensing with them in the case of others. The army of ecclesiastics throughout western Europe were under his unlimited control. He assumed to be the arbiter of nations, and set up and deposed kings at will. Thus he excommunicated John of England, and laid his kingdom under an interdict. He dethroned Otto IV., of

Germany, and brought forward Frederick II. in his stead. As a climax to this monstrous assumption of power, he declared that submission to himself was an indispensable condition of salvation. The famous bull *Unam sanctam*, issued by Boniface VIII. in 1302, concludes with this sentence, which has since remained an article of faith in the Roman Church: "Indeed, we declare, announce, and define that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." \*

The organization of the Papal Church, as it existed near the close of the Middle Ages, and as it has since substantially continued, was magnificent in its perfection. At the head was the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. Besides his diocese as Bishop of Rome, and in addition to his temporal sovereignty over the States of the Church, he pretended to absolute authority throughout Christendom. He was the source of doctrine, the administrator of the temporal concerns of the Church, and the practical sovereign over the nations. Under him, obedient to his orders, he had a multitude of officials, who were bound to him, not only by the ties of a superstitious reverence, but also by the bonds of comprehensive and solemn oaths. The will of the head of the Church was promptly conveyed to the remotest parts of the ecclesiastical organization.

The bishops, holding their authority from the Pope, administered the affairs of the Church in more or less extended dioceses. The bishop was a prince of the Church. His episcopal duties consisted in watching over the parish priests and monasteries within his jurisdiction, in seeing that all Papal regulations were duly observed, and in

\* Henderson's "Documents of the Middle Ages," p. 437.

furthering in every way the interests of the Church. In addition to his ecclesiastical functions, he usually had charge of extensive landed possessions, which imposed upon him the duties of civil administration, and brought him into close relations with the central secular government. "As far back as Charlemagne's time," says Emerton, "we have bishops actually invested with the functions of the court, and, as the feudal system developed, such cases became so frequent as to be, in many parts of Europe, almost the rule. The bishop became, by virtue of his office, a vassal of the seignior in whose territory his lands might lie, and he also became in his turn a seignior, often on a great scale, with vassals and sub-vassals, ruling over a very wide extent of country."\*

The local administration of the Church was in the hands of the parochial clergy, who were divided into two classes. The first was the *secular* clergy, who lived among the people in the discharge of their pastoral duties. The other was the *regular* clergy, who, in addition to their pastoral functions, were likewise under monastic vows. Both classes alike were under the law of celibacy. Their principal duty was the administration of the seven sacraments. In public worship the celebration of the mass occupied the central place, and the religious instruction of the people by means of preaching was generally neglected.

Between the parochial clergy and the bishops there were other officers, as the archpresbyter and archdeacon, as between the bishop and the Pope were the cardinals, whose duty it finally became to elect the successive occupants of the Papal Chair, and the archbishops, who had charge of an ecclesiastical province of several dioceses. The arch-

\* Emerton's "Mediæval Europe," p. 547.

bishops, as the highest representatives of the Papacy in the several countries, were men of influence and power; and not only during the mediæval era, but also at the period of the Reformation, the archbishops of Cologne, Canterbury, and Rheims played an important part in ecclesiastical history.

The power of the Papacy, the growth of which has been briefly traced, was strengthened in various ways. Like a towering building, it was supplied with numerous buttresses. The first to be mentioned was the Crusades—that remarkable movement of western Europe to recover the sepulchre of our Lord from Saracen desecration. The Popes placed themselves at the head of the movement, and assumed and exercised an unlimited authority. It was Urban II. who sent the enthusiast Peter the Hermit to rouse Italy and France. At the close of this Pope's memorable address at Clermont in 1095, the vast assembly, swept away by enthusiasm, echoed his words, "It is the will of God." Princes were exhorted and commanded to engage in the holy enterprise. Knighthood received the sanction of the Church. The forgiveness of sin was promised to all who went on the crusade, and to all who perished, everlasting life. In the absence of the Crusaders, the Pope undertook to watch over their interests at home. In the summons of Eugene III. to the crusade in 1145 he says: "We do decree that their wives and sons, their goods also and possessions, shall remain under the protection of ourselves and of the archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of the Church of God." \* The natural effect of all this was to confirm the Popes in their assumed headship of western Christendom.

\* Henderson's "Historical Documents of the Middle Ages," p. 333.

Monasticism, which developed along with the Papacy, became another source of aggressive and defensive power. It grew out of the ascetic spirit, which early manifested itself in the Church, and sought a higher degree of piety in retirement, meditation, and self-denial. The monastic tendency was encouraged by the dissolution of ancient society. In the midst of social chaos, brought about by the barbarian invasions, men found it congenial to retire from ceaseless turmoils and conflicts to live in the solitude of deserts or monasteries. Hermits or anchorites, of whom St. Anthony may be taken as the type, most abounded in the East; but in the West the monastic system, with its more practical aims, generally prevailed. Monasteries were founded in Italy, Spain, Germany, France, England, and Ireland; and, in their best days, they were centres of industry, piety, and learning. The monastery of St. Benedict, founded on the heights of the Apennines in the sixth century, became an incentive to monastic life in the Western Church, and furnished the model of organization and discipline.

In the latter part of the Middle Ages the monastic spirit manifested itself with renewed vigor. In the twelfth century Bernard, of Clairvaux, a man of deep piety and moving eloquence, founded the order of Cistercians, who were bound by a rigorous discipline. Of the many orders both for men and women founded during this period, there are two that deserve particular mention because of their wide influence. The order of Dominicans, which was established at the beginning of the thirteenth century, aimed at disseminating the doctrines and extending the authority of the Church. While bound by the monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they did

not live in ascetic seclusion, but moved among the people as teachers and preachers. They were the defenders of orthodoxy, and found their way into the universities. Thomas Aquinas was their ablest theologian. The order of Franciscans, founded about the same time, was a similar organization. It gave itself particularly to missionary work, preaching the Gospel even before the Sultan. Their principal theologian was Duns Scotus. Both organizations, known as the mendicant orders, rapidly extended throughout the Western Church, and lent a strong support to the Papacy. In less than half a century after their organization, the Franciscans had no fewer than 8000 monasteries and 200,000 members.

The Papacy was likewise strengthened by the adoption and enforcement of the law of celibacy. A celibate condition was held to be holier than a married state. In accordance with this view, which seemed not entirely without Scripture sanction, the Papacy required celibacy in its priesthood. It was rejected in the Eastern Church, and met with much resistance in the West. Councils, emperors, and Popes legislated in the matter; but it was left to Gregory VII., in the eleventh century, to enforce celibacy with extreme rigor. In 1074 he issued a decretal "that every layman who would receive the communion from the hands of a married priest should be excommunicated, and that every priest who married or lived in concubinage should be deposed." By this law of celibacy, the Papacy more closely attached to its interests the vast body of its clergy, and added an element of popularity and efficiency to their work.

Another source of immeasurable power lay in education, which the Papacy claimed as one of its

exclusive functions. For centuries ecclesiastics were the chief representatives of learning. They became the lawyers, ambassadors, and prime ministers of kings. In connection with the monasteries and cathedrals, schools were frequently established to train candidates for the priesthood. Latin, the language of the Church, was made the basis of instruction to the general neglect of the mother-tongue. The seven liberal arts—the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*—were pursued chiefly in the interests of the Church. The parochial schools, under the supervision of the local priesthood, were designed to acquaint the young, not with the elements of learning, but with the first principles of Christian doctrine, to prepare them for intelligent participation in public worship, and especially to introduce them into Church membership. In schools of every class the principle of authority prevailed, and, in place of independent thought and investigation, the learners were forced to accept the instruction of their teachers. Through its ecclesiastical schools, the Papacy in large measure controlled the opinions and beliefs of the people for centuries.

Another powerful agency of the Papacy was the Inquisition, which had as its object the discovery, repression, and punishment of heresy. After the complete development of the Papacy, the principle of authority reigned supreme in the Western Church. The individual was required to accept the teachings of the Church without question. Inasmuch as heresy, which is a departure from the accepted faith, was a virtual repudiation of Papal supremacy, it was regarded as a serious offense. For its more effective repression and punishment, the Inquisition was established by Gregory IX. in 1232, and its general management

committed to the Dominicans. "Let loose against the heretics as '*Domini canes*' (a designation which they coveted as an honor), the inquisitors possessed unlimited power. Any party suspected or denounced could be imprisoned and tried without being confronted either with accuser or witnesses, and torture was freely employed to extort confession. Those who recanted were generally condemned to imprisonment for life; those who proved obstinate were handed to the secular tribunal to be consumed at the stake."

The general administration of the Papacy is regulated by Canon or Church Law, composed of the opinions of the ancient Latin fathers, the decrees of councils, and the decretals or bulls of the Popes. First codified by Gratian near the middle of the twelfth century—a time of Papal ascendancy—the Canon Law seeks to establish the doctrine of the Roman primacy in both spiritual and temporal matters. Under this law ecclesiastical courts claimed a very wide jurisdiction. It took cognizance, first, of all cases in which the clergy was involved, and, secondly, of all questions in which a religious element could be found. Under this latter principle, there was scarcely any cause—marriage, testaments, charities, tithes—that could not be brought before the courts of the Church. With the ultramontane conception of the Papacy favored by the Canon Law, nearly every interest of life was brought under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

It is a fundamental principle of the Canon Law that the Church is a sovereign state. Consequently it is independent of secular authority, and has the right to inflict penalties, both spiritual and corporal, for the violation of its laws. As a general thing, the penalties inflicted were of the class called spiritual, which consisted in the limitation or de-

privation of religious privileges. The extreme penalty for individuals was excommunication and death, and for nations the interdict and crusade. In carrying out its extreme penalties, the Church frequently invoked the aid of the civil power, over which it claimed a directive authority. The State often supported the excommunication and ban of the Church by a sentence of outlawry or by execution at the stake. The interdict consisted in the suspension of public worship, the withholding of the sacraments, and the denial of ecclesiastical burial. In a superstitious age, the interdict was a powerful means of coercion. The crusade was a war of extermination, such as was waged against the Albigenses. The attitude of the Papacy is exhibited in a decree of the third Lateran Council in 1179: "Though the Church does not thirst after blood, yet it is often salutary for the souls of men when they fear physical punishment. Since the heretics no longer keep silent and hidden, but boldly proclaim their errors, and lead the weak and simple-minded astray, let the ban be pronounced against them and their protectors. Let no one any longer associate or have business relations with them, but, on the contrary, let an indulgence for two years be extended to those who make war upon them." \*

In the foregoing study of the origin, growth, and organization of the Papacy, we must recognize a masterpiece of human genius and sublime ambition. The hierarchy early supplanted the democracy of the Apostolic Church. An imposing splendor, in keeping with the State religion of the Roman Empire, was introduced. The Bishop of Rome, by virtue of his residence in the capital city of the ancient world, aspired to pre-eminence

\* Alzog's "Universal Kirchengeschichte," II., p. 211.

over all other ecclesiastics. He supported his claims by a pretended occupancy of the See of Peter, to whom, it was affirmed, the Lord had given a position of primacy in the Church. He laid claim to temporal sovereignty and pre-eminence, supporting his pretensions by forged decretals and imaginary imperial donations. At last—and human ambition could not possibly go further—he made himself the source of all authority and religious truth, and, as Vicar of Christ, assumed to be lord of all the earth.

In organization the Papacy showed the masterful practical sagacity of the ancient Roman Empire. Every part of Europe was covered by ecclesiastical princes and officials. No resource was left unemployed to increase its power. It placed itself at the head of the crusade movement. It surrounded itself with an army of monastics. It attached its priesthood to its interests more closely by the law of celibacy. It made education one of its exclusive functions, and thus kept the training of the young in its hands. It organized the Inquisition for the detection and punishment of those who refused to submit to its teachings or authority. It emancipated itself from secular control, and, as a sovereign state, developed its own system of laws, which defended its most extravagant claims and extended its jurisdiction to the uttermost. So colossal and dangerous a despotism never before existed in the history of the world.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DOCTRINAL SYSTEM OF THE PAPACY.

LIKE its outward organization, the doctrinal system of the Papacy has been a gradual growth. Starting with the great primary truths embodied in the ecumenical creeds, which are the common heritage of Christendom, it has developed a distinctive body of doctrines which, as will be shown later, are associated with insidious and far-reaching errors. It was largely these errors that led, not only to the scandalous moral condition of the Roman Church at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but also to the repudiation of the Papacy by the reformers. Luther regarded his principal work a reformation, not of abuses but of doctrines. The reformatory movement can be understood in all its significance only in the light of the gross errors, against which it was a mighty protest.

The official title of the Papal organization, as contained in its professions of faith, is "The Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church," a title that seems open to several objections. There is reason, as we shall see, to question its holiness. It is not Catholic, that is, universal, in either doctrine or dominion. The fundamental Papal doctrines are rejected alike by the Greek and the Protestant Churches, which numerically embrace more than half of Christendom. How far in organization it has departed from Apostolic institution has already been pointed out, and its further departure in

doctrine will soon come under examination. When the imposing title which the Papacy has assumed is subjected to scrutiny, all that is accurately descriptive is the "Roman Church," a title that is unknown in the ecumenical creeds.

Two opposing views of the Church—utterly inconsistent with the Papal claim of unity—long prevailed in Roman Catholicism, producing endless discord and strife. The Gallican or episcopal view, represented by many distinguished prelates and defended by the Councils of Constance and Basel, made the episcopacy the ultimate source of ecclesiastical authority. The episcopacy found utterance in general or ecumenical councils, which were regarded as superior to the Pope, and competent to pass laws binding upon him. The Gallican view restricted the Pope's jurisdiction to spiritual things, and forbade his interference with secular government. It thus harmonized Papal supremacy with national independence. It is called Gallican, because its exemplification and its leading advocates, as Gerson and Bossuet, were found in France.

The opposite of Gallicanism is Ultramontanism. The Ultramontane view of the Church, which after the time of Gregory VII. was held with great firmness and consistency by the Bishops of Rome, makes the Pope the Vicar of Christ on earth, and, as such, the source of all spiritual and temporal power. The Church is under his autocratic control. In his official utterance he is held incapable of error. Princes are bound to obey him; and when he deems it desirable for the interests of the Church, he may resist or depose them—a power which he frequently exercised. All episcopal authority is derived from him. It is his prerogative

to call councils, to watch over their proceedings, and to give validity to their decrees. He is the universal teacher of the Church, the authoritative interpreter of Scripture and tradition, and the source of all doctrinal truth. Ultramontanism, which is the logical outcome of the Papal system and which guided the policy of the leading Popes for centuries, was formally established as an irreversible part of the Roman creed by the decree of Papal infallibility in 1870.

The mediæval doctrine of Papal supremacy, which forms the basis of the Roman Church, finds clear and full expression in the Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870. After pronouncing an anathema upon those who "should deny that it is by the institution of Christ the Lord, or by divine right, that blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the Primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter in this primacy," the Decrees continue: "Wherefore, resting on plain testimonies of the Sacred Writings, and adhering to the plain and express decrees both of our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, and of the General Councils, we renew the definition of the Ecumenical Council of Florence,\* in virtue of which all the faithful of Christ must believe that the holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is the true Vicar of Christ, and head of the whole Church, and father and teacher of all Christians; and that full power was given to him in blessed Peter to rule, feed, and govern the universal Church by Jesus

\* This Council was held in 1438.

Christ our Lord ; as is also contained in the acts of the General Councils and in the sacred Canons." \*

This doctrine of the Papacy is inevitably attended with two evils, both of which are abundantly exemplified, as will be shown later, in its extended history. In the first place, the chair of St. Peter offers a tempting prize to human ambition—the most tempting, indeed, that can be attained or conceived on this globe. National thrones sink into insignificance in comparison with the Papal throne. It is no wonder, then, that it has often become the object of ambitious, unscrupulous men, who exhausted every possible means to achieve their unholy aims. Deception, bribery, and even murder are frequently met with in the history of Papal succession. But, furthermore, the occupant of the Papal Chair is tempted to abuse his power for selfish and unholy ends. By virtue of his position, he is lifted above all accountability. "All must be judged by the Pope," according to the dictum of Innocent III., "but he can be judged by no man." Men are apt to become intoxicated at such divine altitudes of power ; and it would be a marvelous thing if we did not find worldliness, nepotism, and tyranny in the history of the Papacy. Such an unlimited and irresponsible power as the Papacy is in theory and aim is itself a dangerous and intolerable evil.

The Papal conception of the Church is that of a visible organization or monarchy. The Church is defined as "the same congregation of all the faithful, who, being baptized, profess the same doctrine, partake of the same sacraments, and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible

\* Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council, chap. III., in Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom."

Head, the Pope." \* By the first clause, this definition excludes all heretics and unbelievers; by the second, all the unbaptized; and by the third, all who reject the authority of the priests and Pope. It is further taught that "everyone is obliged, under pain of eternal damnation, to become a member of the [Roman] Catholic Church, to believe her doctrine, to use her means of grace, and to submit to her authority." †

This conception of the Church as an absolute monarchy or despotism, into which all Christians are to be gathered, and which is to exercise universal dominion under the vicegerent of Christ, must be acknowledged to possess the merit of simplicity and grandeur. It is easily understood; and it perpetuates the tradition of the ancient Roman Empire as a sovereignty of the world. In so far as it was realized in the Middle Ages or is realized at the present day, it gives us the oldest and most widely extended, and, in many respects, the most powerful monarchy that has ever existed.

But the despotic character of the Papacy is to be especially noted. In matters of faith and conduct, the laity are bound to an absolute obedience to the local priests. These, in turn, are bound to the bishops, from whom they receive their ordination and pastoral appointment. And the bishops themselves, by the most solemn oaths, are subject to the Pope, the source of all episcopal authority and the infallible head of the system. Thus, in the sphere of religious faith and practice, under which nearly the whole life may be included, the laity are forbidden all freedom of thought and liberty of action. They are placed, under penalty of their souls' salvation, in the power of the hierar-

\* Deharbe's "Full Catechism," p. 129.

† Deharbe's "Full Catechism," p. 145.

chy. That this power might be more complete, the laity have always been kept, as far as possible, in a state of docile ignorance. "The best ordered and administered state," says a Papal writer in presenting the ideal of his Church, "is that in which the few are well educated and lead, and the many are trained to obedience, are willing to be directed, content to follow, and do not aspire to be leaders."\* The impositions and frauds, to which this system of sacerdotal tyranny over body and soul inevitably led, will be pointed out in the following chapter.

In the Roman Church the priesthood, following Jewish ideas, constitutes a sacerdotal class, divinely set over the laity. The office of the priesthood is to mediate between God and the people, to offer sacrifices in their behalf, and to communicate to them, through the means of grace, the blessings of salvation. The priesthood is the official agency for conveying the salvation of God to men. "If anyone saith," so runs a Canon of the Council of Trent, "that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood; or that there is not any power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord, and of forgiving and retaining sins, but only an office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel; or that those who do not preach are not priests at all: let him be anathema."† The treasure of eternal life is placed in the keeping of the priests. They can bind, and no man can loose; they can loose, and no man can bind. It is not possible to lay claim to higher authority and power; and where they are recognized, what an instrument of oppression they are capable of being made!

\* *Catholic World*, April, 1871.

† Canons and Decrees of the Councils of Trent, Canon 1, on the Sacrament of Order.

The sacramental system of the Roman Church is in keeping with its external and visible character. A sacrament is defined as "A visible sign, instituted by Jesus Christ, by which invisible grace and inward sanctification are communicated to our souls." \* It is maintained that the sacraments effect *ex opere operato*, that is, by the performance of the act itself, the grace or blessing for which they were instituted. The Roman Church enumerates seven sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Ordination, and Matrimony—which are designed to cover every period of life. From infancy to old age, by means of the different sacraments, the layman is kept in the power of the priesthood.

According to Papal teaching, baptism cleanses from all sin, and confers the blessing of regeneration and sanctification. Without baptism no one can be saved. In confirmation, through the imposition of the bishop's hands, unction, and prayer, the baptized are strengthened, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, for consistent living. In the holy Eucharist, the bread and wine are transubstantiated into the true body and blood of Christ, who, in the form of the elements, becomes an object of adoration. In the communion, at which only the wafer is given to the communicant, it is held that Christ gives Himself bodily for the nourishment of the soul.

The sacrifice of the mass is made a propitiation for sin. It avails both for the living and the dead, specially for those for whom the priest offers it, and for all those who are present with devotion of heart. In the "Profession of the Tridentine Faith," it is said that "in the mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice

\* Deharbe's "Full Catechism," p. 245.

for the living and the dead." The sacrifice of the mass may be applied to shorten or alleviate the sufferings of those in purgatory. As devout believers, at the approach of death, and affectionate friends of departed ones have been found willing to appropriate money for the celebration of masses, this doctrine has proved a veritable mine of wealth to the Church.

The sacrament of penance, which is distinguished from the virtue of penance or sorrow for sin, consists in the priestly forgiveness of sins upon satisfactory confession. The priest does not simply declare the remission of sins, but really and truly remits them "in virtue of the power given to him by Christ." "If anyone saith," so runs a Canon of the Council of Trent, "that the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act, but a bare ministry of pronouncing and declaring sins to be forgiven to him who confesses: let him be anathema." The confession required is private or auricular, and the penitent is required to confess all sins, particularly those of a grievous character. The number and circumstances of their commission must be enumerated to the priest in order to receive entire forgiveness. The sacrament of penance is regarded as necessary to salvation, and places within the hands of the priest the inmost secrets of the hearts and lives of his flock. It leads inevitably to cruel and monstrous abuses.

Of the sacraments of Ordination and Matrimony it is not necessary to speak. It is to be observed that around each of these sacraments there grew up an elaborate liturgical ceremonial. These forms were borrowed in part from Jewish and in part from heathen sources. In an age of ignorance and superstition, the imposing ceremonial of the Roman Church had its influence in attracting the heathen

of the Empire and in overawing the Teutonic barbarian. This purpose, along with the exaltation of ecclesiastics, may be regarded as the underlying motive of liturgical development. But, strange to say, the elaborate liturgy of the Roman Church is regarded as having divine authority, and is therefore held to be unchangeable. Hence we read in the "Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent," "If anyone saith that the received and approved rites of the [Roman] Catholic Church, wont to be used in the solemn administration of the sacraments, may be contemned, or without sin be omitted at pleasure by the ministers, or be changed, by every pastor of the churches, into other new ones : let him be anathema." \*

The doctrine of good works occupies a prominent place in the Papal system. It is made to fit into the external character impressed on Christianity. In Romanism faith is mere assent to the dogmas proposed by the Church. In virtue of this assent, the believer is willing to receive the rite of baptism, by which, as already shown, he is regenerated and sanctified. Through the grace thus conferred upon him, he is able to do works that merit a reward at the hands of God. These are known as "good works," and consist generally, not in deeds of righteousness and love, but in acts prescribed by or beneficial to the Church. Keeping holidays, observing fasts, making pilgrimages, worshiping saints, using rosaries, embracing monkery, bestowing benefactions, particularly upon the Church, are held to be good works, through which the individual merits grace and eternal life. This was the accepted teaching of the Papal Church in the thirteenth century; and the "Canons and Decrees of the Council of

\* Seventh Session, Canon XII.

Trent," which simply reaffirm the doctrine of the mediæval Church, declare: "If anyone saith that the good works of one that is justified are in such manner the gifts of God, that they are not also the good merits of him that is justified; or that the said justified, by the good works which he performs through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life, and also an increase of glory: let him be anathema."\*

Closely connected with the doctrine of good works is that of indulgences. An indulgence is defined in Roman Catholic theology as "a remission of that temporal punishment, which, even after the sin is forgiven, we have yet to undergo, either here or in purgatory." The basis of the doctrine is found in works of supererogation, that is, works in excess of the actual needs of individual redemption. According to Papal teaching, our Saviour and the saints accomplished much more than was needed for salvation. This excess constitutes a spiritual treasure, of which the Pope is trustee or guardian, and which he may draw on at will to meet the wants of individual believers. Or, to quote from Deharbe, "Indulgences derive their value and efficacy from the spiritual treasure of the Church, which consists of the superabundant merits and satisfactions of Christ and the saints. This treasure is to be considered as the common property of the faithful, committed to the administration of the Church; since, by virtue of the communion of saints by which we are united as members of one body, the abundance of some supplies the want of others." This doctrine, as will be readily perceived, naturally

\* Sixth Session, Canon XXXII.

leads to gross abuses. At the period of the Reformation, unscrupulous vendors, with episcopal authority and connivance, imposed upon the credulity of the ignorant masses, magnified the scope and power of indulgences, and sold pardons, at a fixed schedule of prices, not only for past, but also for future sins. The sale of indulgences was repeatedly used as a means of replenishing the Papal treasury at Rome.

Another distinctive feature of the Roman system, in contrast with that of Protestantism, is the invocation of saints and the veneration of relics. It is taught that the saints, who are present with Christ, offer up prayers for the faithful on earth, and that it is salutary to petition them for their intercession. Their relics are to be cherished and honored as sacred. The Council of Trent enjoined upon bishops, and others who fulfilled the charge of teaching, to instruct the faithful "that the saints, who reign together with Christ, offer up their own prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and help for obtaining benefits from God. . . . Also, that the holy bodies of holy martyrs, and of others now living with Christ, are to be venerated by the faithful; through which bodies many benefits are bestowed by God on men; so that they who affirm that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of saints; or that these, and other sacred monuments, are uselessly honored by the faithful; and that the places dedicated to the memories of the saints are in vain visited with the view of obtaining their aid, are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and now also condemns them." \* This doctrine, par-

\* Twenty-fifth Session.

ticularly among people of low culture, is sure to lead to superstition and fraud. Patron saints, who come between the soul and God, are multiplied. As objects of increasing adoration, they obscure, to a greater or less degree, the love and mercy of God. Relics are credited with miraculous powers, and are worn as amulets. As treasures of priceless value, they become objects of bargain and sale; and the frauds connected with them have always been a scandal to the Papal Church.

This entire doctrinal system, which is skillfully defended by Roman writers, will be recognized by the Protestant reader as without Scripture warrant. What, then, is the source of doctrine in Romanism? The Roman Catholic Church recognizes two sources of doctrinal truth, both having equal authority. The first of these is Holy Scripture, including the Apocrypha; the other is tradition, or the beliefs transmitted orally from the apostles. Both, however, are to be infallibly interpreted by the head of the Church, that is, the Pope. The right of private interpretation of the Scripture is wholly denied to clergy and laity; and the doctrine of tradition enables the Roman Pontiff to promulgate any doctrine whatever that may be deemed useful to the Church. With this double source of authority, and this exclusive right of interpretation, there is no doctrine that may not be imposed upon the passive credulity of the laity.

To the end that the laity may be wholly dependent on the hierarchy for its faith and morals, the circulation of the Scriptures, no less than the promotion of popular education, has been restrained and discouraged by the Papacy. This fact is often denied by Roman writers. In his

popular and plausible defense of the Papal system, Cardinal Gibbons waxes eloquent on this point. "God forbid," he exclaims, "that any of my readers should be tempted to conclude from what I have said that the [Roman] Catholic Church is opposed to the reading of the Scriptures, or that she is the enemy of the Bible. The [Roman] Catholic Church the enemy of the Bible! Good God! What monstrous ingratitude, what base calumny is contained in that assertion!" \* But declamation does not alter facts. The Council of Trent passed ten rules in relation to prohibited books, which rules were approved by Pius IV. in a bull issued in 1564. The fourth rule is as follows: "Inasmuch as it is manifest from experience, that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to everyone, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it, it is, on this point, referred to the judgment of the bishops or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the priest or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety, they apprehend, will be augmented, and not injured by it; and this permission they must have in writing. But if anyone shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary. Booksellers, however, who shall sell or otherwise dispose of Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any person not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books, to be applied by the bishop to some pious use, and be subjected by the bishop to such other penalties as the bishop shall judge proper,

\* Gibbons' "The Faith of Our Fathers," p. 112.

according to the quality of the offense." \* This is the official expression of the Papacy's attitude toward the circulation of the Scriptures.

From the foregoing considerations, it is made apparent that nearly every leading distinctive doctrine of the Papacy, when free to assert itself fully, naturally and inevitably runs out into gross and often dreadful abuses. The dogmatic system of the Papacy impresses on Christianity, which originally consisted in truth, love, and righteousness, a predominantly external character. It has imported Jewish and heathen elements. It makes the Church a visible despotism, over which the hierarchy, with the Pope at the head, reigns supreme. The sacraments, which are craftily multiplied, are made efficacious in and of themselves. The religious life of the laity consists primarily in obedience to the teachings of the Church. Good works *par excellence* are those duties imposed by the Church—pious acts of human invention. All freedom is taken from the laity; as far as possible their intellectual culture is dwarfed; and for their beliefs, as well as for their salvation, they are absolutely dependent on the hierarchy. Such was the Papacy at the close of the Middle Ages, and such in spirit is it to-day.

\* Smets' "Concillii Tridentini."

## CHAPTER III.

### STATE OF THE CHURCH.

OUR study up to this point will help us to understand better the condition of the Roman Church at the close of the Middle Ages. The moral and spiritual decadence of the hierarchy and monasteries was not an accident, as might be supposed, but a natural and inevitable result of the organization and errors of the doctrinal system of the Papacy. The same degeneracy will be found, to a greater or less degree, wherever Roman Catholicism is left free to work out its natural tendencies. In contact with Protestantism, the evil tendencies of Romanism are more or less restrained. It is forced to a higher moral and spiritual plane—a fact that sometimes deceives the unwary as to the real character of the Papal system.

The actual condition of the Roman Church in the fifteenth century has given rise to no little discussion. Papal writers endeavor to present the condition of the Church in the most favorable light, and without exception maintain that the evils of the time are grossly exaggerated. Cardinal Newman boldly charges Protestant writers with wholesale lying. Janssen has rewritten the history of the Reformation period in order to present it in a creditable light. But, in spite of Roman Catholic denials, an examination of the facts leaves no room for doubt in any unprejudiced

mind. While there were not a few spiritual-minded ecclesiastics and laymen, the state of the Church as a whole was deplorable. As we shall see, from the Pope down to the humblest servant of the Church, there were unbelief, superstition, worldliness, and wrong. Nearly every distinctive feature of the Roman system produced a corresponding abuse, scandal, or impiety.

According to the authoritative teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, as already pointed out, the Pope as Vicegerent of Christ on earth is the source of all spiritual and temporal power. While sitting in judgment on others, and while directing the energies of a mighty despotism, he is himself answerable to none. He occupies the giddy height of the primacy of the world. The Papal Chair thus becomes an incomparable prize for the machinations of unholy men. The case of Alexander VI. will serve for illustration. "The simoniacal character of his election," says Richard Garnett in a judicious sketch, "is indisputable. We need not believe that the opulent and high-spirited Cardinal Ascanio Sforza was tempted with four muleloads of silver, but his instant elevation to the vice-chancellorship speaks for itself. Cardinal Orsino was bought with Borgia's palace in Rome; Cardinal Colonna with the Abbey of Sabiaco; money gained the minor members of the Sacred College; five cardinals alone are recorded as incorruptible." \*

The Popes for half a century before the Reformation—Sixtus IV., Alexander VI., Julius II., Leo X.—were worldly-minded, self-seeking men. Nepotism was a common scandal. The only

\* *Encyclopædia Brit.*, art. Alexander VI. Alzog ("Kirchengeschichte," II., p. 185) admits his criminal character and bribery. See Ranke's "History of the Pope," I., p. 35; also D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," I., chap. III.

care of Alexander VI., as Ranke states, "was to seize on all means that might aid him to increase his power, and advance the wealth and dignity of his sons; on no other subject did he ever seriously bestow a thought." During his pontificate Rome was terrorized by his son, Cæsar Borgia, whom he had raised to the cardinalate at the age of eighteen. "His own brother," says the able historian last quoted, "stood in his way; Cæsar caused him to be murdered and thrown into the Tiber. His brother-in-law was assailed and stabbed, by his orders, on the steps of his palace. The wounded man was nursed by his wife and sister, the latter preparing his food with her own hands to secure him from poison."\* But Cæsar laughed at these precautions. "What cannot be done at noon-day," he said, "may be accomplished in the evening." A little later his brother-in-law was strangled.

The Popes frequently engaged in wars to further their ambitious projects. Julius II. was not so much an ecclesiastic as a warrior and statesman. Though a patron of art and science, he was almost incessantly engaged in wars and political intrigues. "That this Julius II.," says Mosheim, "possessed, besides other vices, very great ferocity, arrogance, vanity, and a mad passion for war, is proved by abundant testimony. In the first place, forming an alliance with the emperor and the King of France, he made war upon the Venetians. He next laid seige to Ferrara; and at last, drawing the Venetians, the Swiss, and the Spaniards to engage in the war with him, he made an attack upon Louis XII., the King of France. Nor so long as he lived did he cease from embroiling all Europe." †

\* Ranke's "History of the Popes," I., p. 37.

† Mosheim's "Ecc. History," III., p. 9.

Leo X., was no less worldly-minded. "Since God has given us the Papacy," he said, "let us enjoy it." He cared far more for ease, elegance, and luxury than for the flock of God, over which he claimed to be supreme bishop. "An ardent admirer of classic and human culture," says the Papal historian Alzog, "he possessed a refined taste, had a love of elegant literature, and was sincerely devoted to the arts and sciences. But, for all this, he was entirely destitute of the motives and spirit which should form the guiding principles in the life of an ecclesiastic, and was, moreover, lavishly extravagant." \*

In keeping with their exalted station as primates over the whole earth, the Popes surrounded themselves with great splendor. The Papal court was the most magnificent in Europe. To maintain this outward splendor, large revenues were needed. From four sources the Papal treasury was continually replenished: 1. The income from the States of the Church; 2. The Roman Law Courts, to which cases were appealed from all parts of Europe; 3. The annats or first year's income of every bishop, priest, and abbot, who was presented to a benefice; and, 4. The sale of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences. The latter, as we shall see, became a regular traffic, attended with outrageous abuses. All parts of western Europe were laid under heavy tribute to maintain the more than regal splendor of the Roman Court. The demands of Rome were insatiable. "Nearly all the disputes occurring at this period," says Ranke, "between the several states of Europe and the Roman Court arose out of these exactions, which the Curia sought by every possible means

\* Alzog's "Universal Church History," II., p. 918.

to increase, while the people of all countries as zealously strove to restrain them." \*

An irreverent, skeptical, immoral tone prevailed in Rome. When Luther in 1511 was dispatched thither as envoy of the Augustine brotherhood, he heard prelates boast that in the mass, instead of the sacramental words, they mockingly pronounced over the elements, "Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain; wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain." The Sixth Lateran Council, which met in 1513, deemed it advisable, in the presence of prevailing skepticism, to prepare a decree against those who denied the immortality of the soul. Popes and cardinals not infrequently led immoral lives, and desecrated the Vatican with dissolute entertainments.

Alzog, who shields the Papacy as far as possible, admits that "the frivolity and questionable tone of morals which prevailed at the Papal Court after Alexander had become Pope, and which, if he did not openly encourage, he was at no great pains to correct, gave opportunities to his many enemies to spread all sorts of scandalous stories, and to indulge in the most extravagant exaggeration. He did indeed greatly abuse his power to secure positions of profit and honor for his children. He created his oldest son, Juan, Duke of Gandia, and fixed upon him many estates in the kingdom of Naples; he also bestowed upon him the Duchy of Benevento, which he had detached from the States of the Church." † In like manner, Creighton, who accepts only what can be established by indisputable testimony, and who rejects many statements made by earlier historians, still says that "the Vatican was frequently the scene of indecent orgies, at

\* Ranke's "History of the Popes," I., p. 43.

† Alzog's "Universal Church History," II., p. 909.

which the Pope did not scruple to be present. Men shrugged their shoulders at these things, and few in Rome were seriously shocked. The age was corrupt, and the Pope's example sanctioned its corruption." \*

The worldliness, skepticism, and immorality reigning at the Papal Court could not fail to exert a demoralizing influence upon every grade of the hierarchy. The head gave moral tone to the members. Ecclesiastical offices were bought and sold. "The Pope nominated cardinals from no better motive than personal favor, the gratification of some potentate, or even, and this was no infrequent occurrence, for actual payment of money! Could there be any rational expectation that men so appointed would fulfill their spiritual duties? One of the most important offices of the Church, the *Penitenziaria*, was bestowed by Sixtus IV. on one of his nephews. This office held a large portion of the power of granting dispensations; its privileges were still further extended by the Pope, and in a bull issued for the express purpose of confirming them, he declares all who shall presume to doubt the rectitude of such measures to be 'a stiff-necked people and children of malice.' It followed as a matter of course that his nephew considered his office as a benefice, the proceeds of which he was entitled to increase to the utmost extent possible." †

Incompetent persons were frequently appointed to high ecclesiastical positions. The occupants of rich benefices often handed over their duties to subordinates, while they went to live amid the splendors of courts and cities. One of the praiseworthy features in the life of Chaucer's "poor

\* Creighton's "History of the Papacy," V., p. 57.

† Ranke's "History of the Popes," I., p. 42.

parson" was that, unlike the common practice of his day—

“ He sette not his benefice to hyre,  
 And leet his scheep encombred in the myre,  
 And ran to London, unto Seynte Poules,  
 To seeken him a chaunterie for soules,  
 Or with a brotherhood to ben withhold;e ;  
 But dwelte at home, and kepte well his folde,  
 So that the wolf ne made it not myscarye ;  
 He was a schepherde and no mercenarie.” \*

The complaint against bishops was widespread. They lived in the midst of splendor, and squandered in sensual pleasures the revenues of the Church. In seeking to extend their authority, they were frequently at war with cities and princes. Brantôme, who was not friendly to the evangelical movement, bears testimony to the debasement of the episcopacy. After affirming that the bishops frequently bought their sees for money, he continues : “ And when they have attained these high dignities, God knows what lives they led. Assuredly they were far more devoted to their dioceses than they have since been ; for they never left them. But it was to lead a most dissolute life with their dogs and birds, with their feasts, banquets, marriage entertainments, and courtesans, of whom they gathered seraglios.” †

Erasmus, commenting on Matthew xxiii. in his edition of the New Testament, which appeared in 1516, thus speaks of the bishops : “ You may find a bishop here and there who teaches the Gospel, though life and teaching have small agreement. But what shall we say of those who destroy the Gospel itself, make laws at their will, tyrannize over the laity, and measure right and wrong with

\* Chaucer's "Prologue," lines 507-514.

† Baird's "Rise of the Huguenots in France," p. 53.

rules constructed by themselves? Of those who entangle their flocks in the meshes of crafty canons, who sit not in the seat of the Gospel, but in the seat of Caiaphas and Simon Magus—prelates of evil, who bring disgrace and discredit on their worthier brethren?"\*

Ignorance was one of the most venial defects of the parochial clergy. As their duties consisted chiefly in the administration of the seven sacraments, they had but little stimulus to learning. Preaching the Gospel was generally neglected, since in place of evangelical piety was substituted a system of ecclesiastical or work righteousness. Inasmuch as all theological truth was authoritatively and infallibly determined by the Pope, there was no need of superior learning. "In almost every council," says Hallam, "the ignorance of the clergy forms a subject for reproach. Not one priest of a thousand in Spain, about the age of Charlemagne, could address a common letter of salutation to another. In England, Alfred declares that he could not recollect a single priest south of the Thames (the most civilized part of England), at the time of his accession, who understood the ordinary prayers, or could translate Latin into the mother tongue. Nor was it better in the time of Dunstan, when, it is said, none of the clergy knew how to write or translate a Latin letter." † Similar causes produced substantially the same results up to the time of the Reformation. Melancthon and Luther, who made a visitation of the churches in Thuringia and Saxony, lament the ignorance of the priesthood and the neglect of instruction among the people.

The immorality of the parochial clergy, grow-

\* Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 121.

† Hallam's "Middle Ages," p. 949.

ing out of the unscriptural and unnatural law of celibacy, was a great scandal. This law, based on the idea of a higher morality and of greater devotion to the Church, was enforced more strictly after the time of Gregory VII. Apart from other forms of vice, celibacy frequently led to concubinage, which was sometimes winked at both by the bishops and the people. The former, by charging a tax, made concubinage a source of income; the latter found in it a protection for their families. Nicolas de Clémanges, a doctor of the University of Paris, and Secretary to Benedict XIII., says in discussing the degenerate condition of the Church: "Bishops do not hesitate to sell to priests licenses to keep concubines. No care is taken to ordain proper persons to the priesthood. Men who are lazy and do not choose to work, but who wish to live in idleness, fly to the priesthood; as priests, they frequent brothels and taverns, and spend their time in drinking, reveling, and gambling, fight and brawl in their cups, and with their polluted lips blaspheme the name of God and the saints, and from the embraces of prostitutes hurry to the altar." \*

At the Nuremberg Diet in 1522, concubinage was one of the evils complained of. It came to light there that Bishop Hugo, of Landenberg, compelled the relatively few clergymen who were living in celibacy to pay the concubinage tax. It did not concern him, he declared, that they were living without concubines, and that he could not lose his income because they did not choose to avail themselves of the privilege. The income which the bishop received from this source is said to have amounted to six or seven thousand florins. In a letter to the Bishop of Costnitz, Zwingli refers to

\* Creighton's "History of the Papacy," p. 301.

two well-established facts, namely : that the bishops collected money from the concubines of clergymen and their children, and that the Swiss congregations, according to ancient custom, made it the duty of newly established pastors to keep concubines for the protection of their own families. "In every country," says Hallam, "the secular or parochial clergy kept women in their houses, upon more or less acknowledged terms of intercourse, by a connivance of their ecclesiastical superiors, which almost amounted to a positive toleration. The sons of priests were capable of inheriting by the law of France and also of Castile." \*

Under the operation of this same law of celibacy, the monasteries frequently fell into great moral depravity. Instead of maintaining the high spiritual standard, which was their ideal, they fell under the grossest reign of the flesh. At its best, the monastic life, as it is sometimes portrayed, appears very beautiful ; but in the latter part of the Middle Ages, as is shown by abundant testimony, they had generally become more or less idle, ignorant, and licentious. In reference to the monasteries, a contemporary author already quoted says : "Generally the monks elected the most jovial companion, him who was the most fond of women, dogs, and birds, the deepest drinker, in short the most dissipated ; and this in order that, when they had made him abbot or prior, they might be permitted to indulge in similar debauch and pleasure." † Francis I. used to say that the monks were good for nothing but to eat and drink, to frequent taverns and gamble, to twist cords for the cross-bow, set traps for ferrets and rabbits, and train linnets to whistle."

\* Hallam's "Middle Ages," p. 862.

† Baird's "Rise of the Huguenots," p. 55.

The great scholar, Erasmus, who in his youth was deluded into entering a monastery, frequently refers to the ignorance and depravity of the monks. "Monks are to obey their abbots. Oaths are exacted that want of submission may be punished as perjury. It may happen, it often does happen, that an abbot is a fool or a drunkard. He issues an order to the brotherhood in the name of holy obedience. And what will such an order be? An order to observe chastity? An order to be sober? An order to tell no lies? Not one of these things. It will be that a brother is not to learn Greek; he is not to seek to instruct himself. He may be a sot. He may go with prostitutes. He may be full of hatred and malice. He may never look inside the Scriptures. No matter. He has not broken any oath. He is an excellent member of the community. While if he disobeys such a command as this from an insolent superior, there is stake or dungeon for him instantly." \*

Unfavorable testimony in relation to both friaries and nunneries might be indefinitely multiplied. Their general decadence and corruption can be questioned only by denying the declarations of councils and the reports of investigating committees, as well as the numberless statements of individual writers. "In vain," says Hallam, "new rules of discipline were devised, or the old corrected by reforms. Many of their worst vices grew so naturally out of their mode of life, that a stricter discipline could have no tendency to extirpate them. Their extreme licentiousness was sometimes hardly concealed by the cowl of sanctity." † Even Alzog is forced to acknowledge that "the transactions of councils showed only too

\* Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 68.

† Hallam's "Middle Ages," p. 960.

clearly that the religious spirit impressed on the cloisters by their founders more and more declined. Increasing wealth, especially after the distracting effects of the schism, suppressed the studious pursuits formerly carried on with so much love, care, and tireless industry. Luxury and licentiousness took their place; even the nunneries shared this disgrace." \*

The avarice and worldliness of the Church were exhibited in its vast accumulations of property. While a part of this wealth was accumulated in legitimate ways—by the gift of princes and the improvement of lands attached to monasteries—much of it was obtained by oppression and fraud. The payment of tithes was rigidly exacted. Legacies for charitable purposes were misappropriated. Charters were forged by ecclesiastics who were almost exclusively in possession of the ability to read and write. "They failed not, above all," says Hallam, "to inculcate upon the wealthy sinner that no atonement could be so acceptable to Heaven as liberal presents to its earthly delegates. To die without allotting a portion of worldly wealth to pious uses was accounted almost like suicide, or a refusal of the last sacraments; and hence intestacy passed for a sort of fraud upon the Church, which she punished by taking the administration of the deceased's effects into her hands. . . . The canonical penances imposed upon repentant offenders, extravagantly severe in themselves, were commuted for money or for immovable possessions—a fertile though scandalous source of monastic wealth, which the Popes afterward diverted into their own coffers by the usage of dispensations and indulgences." † In these ways the Church at

\* Alzog's "Universal Kirchengeschichte," II., p. 230.

† Hallam's "Middle Ages," p. 837.

one period came into possession of nearly half the lands of England, and, probably, a still greater proportion in other parts of western Europe.

The doctrine of the mass as a sacrifice for the living and the dead led to shameful abuses. The most sacred rite of the Christian Church was prostituted for money. It was often celebrated by profligate men, who hurried through the solemn ceremony in heartless and indecent haste. There were large gifts and endowments to pay for the repetition of masses for souls in purgatory. "It is evident," the Lutheran reformers say in their confession presented to Charles V. at Augsburg in 1530, "that of long time this hath been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men, that masses are basely profaned, being used for gain. And it is not unknown how far this abuse hath spread itself in all churches; of what manner of men masses are used, only for a reward, or for wages; and how many do use them against the prohibition of the Canons."

The so-called sacrament of penance, with its minute auricular confession and its various penalties, was likewise associated with crying evils. The inmost secrets of individual and family life were often communicated to corrupt priests to be taken advantage of or to be laughed at. Through the secrets thus obtained under penalty of the soul's salvation, the laity frequently passed under the complete control of the priesthood. "Confessions," Erasmus declares, "are notoriously betrayed. The aim of the monks is not to benefit men's souls, but to gather harvests out of their purses, learn their secrets, rule in their houses; and everyone who knows the facts will understand why these confessors need to be controlled."\*

\* Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 351.

Elsewhere he declares that secret confession is employed to extort money, and is made an instrument of priestly villany.

A still more scandalous abuse grew out of the doctrine of indulgences. It was bad enough to compound for imposed penances with money. But through the unscrupulous character of the licensed vendors indulgences for sin and crime were freely sold. A scale of prices for various iniquities was fixed in advance. When Tetzel set up his indulgence market a few miles from Wittenberg, he declared "that his red cross with the Papal arms was as mighty as the cross of Christ; that he would not exchange places in Heaven with St. Peter, for he had redeemed more souls with his indulgences than St. Peter with his Gospel; that the grace of indulgences was precisely the grace by which man is reconciled with God; and that it was to be had without sorrow or penitence through the purchase of the Pope's letter of security; for as soon as the money rattled in the chest, the soul leaped from purgatory to Heaven."\* It is difficult for us to realize the shamelessness with which this traffic was carried on, or the superstition that made it possible. About the time Tetzel appeared in Germany, Sampson went to Switzerland. "I can forgive all sins," he exclaimed; "Heaven and hell stand under my dominion; and I sell the merits of Jesus Christ to each and every one who is willing to pay in ready money for an absolution." †

The invocation or adoration of saints was attended with two great evils. The first of these was pilgrimages. The graves of martyrs or canonized saints were regarded as holy places, and

\* Matthesius' "Leben Luthers," p. 18.

† Christoffel's "Zwingli, or Rise of the Reformation," p. 139.

pilgrimages there were accounted as meritorious works. Furthermore, such visits were supposed to incline the saint to intercession in behalf of the supplicant. Numerous miracles were supposed to be wrought through the agency of the saints. Nearly every country had its saintly shrine, as St. Peter at Rome, St. Martin at Tours, and St. Thomas at Canterbury. These pilgrimages, made in a spirit of superstition and credulity, were attended with hardships, withdrew people from their regular vocations, and, under ecclesiastical penalties, imposed heavy burdens on Christian hospitality. John Aurifaber, addressing the mayors and aldermen of the imperial cities of Strasburg, Augsburg, Nuremberg, and others, says of the invocation of saints: "By this doctrine people were seduced and carried away to heathenish idolatry, and took their refuge in dead saints to help and deliver them, and made them their gods, in whom they put more trust and confidence than in our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; and, especially, they placed the Virgin Mary, instead of her Son Christ, for a mediatrix on the throne of grace. Hence proceeded the pilgrimages to saints, where they sought for pardon and remission of sins."\*

In like manner the veneration of relics gave rise to innumerable superstitions and frauds. Relics, worn as charms, were often credited with miraculous powers. They were exhibited with pomp in the churches. They were carried about through the country for the veneration of the common people, being exhibited to their superstitious gaze for money. At Bamberg in Germany there was a piece of the crib of Christ; milk from the Virgin Mary; a piece of Aaron's rod, which, however, was exhibited at Milan entire. At Trier the sa-

\* Luther's "Table Talk," Preface.

cred coat of Christ is still kept. At Schaffhausen the breath of St. Joseph, contained in the glove of Nicodemus, was shown.\* At Wittenberg there was a piece of Noah's ark, some soot from the furnace of the three Hebrew children, some hair from the beard of St. Christopher, and nineteen thousand other relics. † In his comment on Matthew xxiii. 27, Erasmus says: "What would Jerome say, could he see the Virgin's milk exhibited for money, with as much honor paid to it as to the consecrated body of Christ; the miraculous oil; the portions of the true cross; enough, if they were collected, to freight a large ship? Here we have the hood of St. Francis, there Our Lady's petticoat, or St. Anne's comb, or St. Thomas of Canterbury's shoes; not presented as innocent aids to religion, but as the substance of religion itself—and all through the avarice of priests and the hypocrisy of monks playing on the credulity of the people. Even bishops play their parts in these fantastic shows, and approve and dwell on them in their rescripts." ‡

Such were the results to which the errors of the Roman Church naturally, and in an age of ignorance and superstition, inevitably led. Were the evidence not so abundant, we might be tempted to question the truth of this travesty of Christianity, and this prevalence of ignorance, fraud, and oppression. But the proof, except to the willfully and stubbornly blind, is overwhelming. The virus of iniquity at Rome extended throughout the realm of the Papacy. The Pope, though claiming to be the Vicegerent of Christ, was, through his unwarranted interference and his

\* Kolb's "Culturgeschichte der Menschheit."

† D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," I., p. 60.

‡ Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 122.

exacted tributes, the oppressor of the nations. Incompetent and worldly-minded men were elevated to high ecclesiastical station through favor and bribery. The sacred duties of their office were neglected for voluptuous living. The revenues of the Church, wrung from the poor by cruel exactions, were wasted in forbidden pleasures. The parochial clergy, in violation of their vows, often lived in adultery, which was condoned or licensed by their superiors. The monasteries, both for men and women, were centres of idleness, ignorance, and uncleanness. The sacraments were sold or used to wrest money from the pockets of the credulous. Evangelical piety, which consists in a life of loyal obedience to God, was replaced by pilgrimages, fastings, and other ecclesiastical prescriptions. The laity were kept in ignorance, and, in this condition, their superstition was played upon to increase the wealth and power of the Papacy. Surely, if truth and righteousness were not to perish from the earth forever, the time had come for the Papal tyranny to be broken.

## PART SECOND.

### INEFFECTUAL EFFORTS AT REFORM BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

---

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE MYSTICS.

IN Part First we have traced the development of the Papacy in its organization and doctrines, and noted their effects upon the general life of the Church. Among the different orders of the hierarchy we have found worldliness and corruption, and among the laity gross ignorance and superstition, and an external conformity to ecclesiastical requirements in place of a piety of love and obedience to God. But, as already indicated, it would be an error to suppose that the entire Christian life of western Europe had been perverted. Below the prevailing error and superstition connected with the Papal system there still glowed in many hearts the fervor of evangelical piety. As in ancient Israel, when the prophet felt solitary in his fidelity to God, there were thousands that had not bowed the knee to Baal. To some extent the existing errors, both in doctrine and practice, were recognized and deplored. Not only were there individual protests, but the voices of councils and entire communities were raised against the existing evils. Throughout the

fifteenth century, and even earlier, there were prophetic voices; but, because the fullness of time had not yet come, they were uttered in vain or even stifled in flame and blood.

The Papacy or Roman monarchy is not, as its adherents fondly believe, synonymous with the Christian Church. In its distinctive features, as has already been made clear, it is anti-Scriptural and anti-Christian. But, at the same time, the Roman Church embodies some of the fundamental doctrines of evangelical faith. It accepts the ecumenical creeds, which declare the primary facts concerning God and human redemption. In its liturgical formularies it makes use of no small amount of Scriptural truth. Thus the Roman system of doctrine is mingled truth and error. But there have always been souls in that communion who, in spite of the encumbering error, still laid hold of the essential truth, and, on this basis, exhibited a beautiful life of faith and consecration. Not a few of the recognized saints of the Roman Church were men and women of Christlike spirit, as were also not a few whom she burned at the stake.

In the morning twilight of the modern era, it could hardly be expected that the facts connected with the Roman Church in doctrine and life could be clearly and fully apprehended. It was a time of more or less groping. Hence we find that generally the reformatory efforts of the latter part of the Middle Ages were only partial and inadequate. In some cases, as we shall see, these efforts related only to doctrinal errors; in other cases, principally to practical reforms. For a time considerable liberty of speculation was tolerated; but any active efforts at reformation speedily issued in a conflict with the Papal power, which by fire and

crusade endeavored to silence its enemies. Thus the mystics and speculative theologians were spared, while Savonarola and Huss and the Waldenses were destroyed.

It has often been noticed that in the course of history one extreme tends to beget another. This is true of scholasticism, which made theology a matter of the intellect alone. Scholasticism made the effort, often with astonishing dialectic acuteness, to embrace all theological truth in definitions and logical statements. It developed or embodied the principles and doctrines peculiarly distinctive of the Roman Catholic Church. It reached its climax in Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), who laid a scientific foundation for the doctrine of works of supererogation, of transubstantiation, and of withholding the cup from the laity. His *Summa Theologia*, in which his views are most fully expressed, was the first attempt at a complete and consistent theological system.

But scholasticism, which seeks to embody all theological truth in scientific logical statements, can never be universally satisfying. There are persons in whose soul-life the feelings are predominant. Emotion becomes a greater need than thought. Hence it happened that alongside of scholasticism there ran parallel during the latter part of the Middle Ages a more or less extended mysticism. The mystic seeks an immediate communion with God; he strives for a direct vision of the infinite. His method is contemplation. He does not employ logical methods of argument and deduction, but retires within himself to brood and wait for light. He yearns for the highest sanctification that he may be prepared for the beatific vision, though he is in danger, as has often happened, of running into antinomianism. He

naturally seeks quiet and retirement as the most favorable conditions for meditation ; and the conscious presence of God in holy benediction is esteemed as the highest good. The mystics have sometimes afforded us beautiful types of spiritual culture ; and the "Imitation of Christ" by Thomas à Kempis has long been recognized, in spite of its ascetic one-sidedness, as a religious classic.

John Ruysbroek (1293-1381), who in the Netherlands and in Germany gave a new importance to the mystical tendency, exerted a wide influence upon contemporary life and thought. As a mystic, he escaped in a measure from meditative one-sidedness, and labored actively for the improvement of the condition of the Church. He recognized communion with God as the highest aim and destiny of man. This union with the divine, which God is ready to grant to everyone coming to Him, is to be attained chiefly in two ways—the active and the contemplative. The former consists in a life of holy obedience after the example of Christ. "Without an outwardly virtuous life," he says, "we cannot draw near to God."\* But in this life of obedience we are turned chiefly to our fellow-men. In contemplation, we are chiefly turned inward toward God ; and by neglecting what is material and temporal, we retire into the quietude of soul in which God speaks to us and in which we discern Him. The soul, in its beatific vision of the divine, rests in perfect love and trust in Him. The soul and God in a sense become one.

But this inward, contemplative life did not, as in the case of many other mystics, lead Ruys-

\* Ullmann's "Reformers before the Reformation" (II., p. 41.), which treats quite fully of the mystics.

broek into ascetic retirement. The practical side of his nature was not entirely submerged. His eye surveyed the condition of the Church, and he had the courage to denounce the existing evils and to labor for their eradication. He reproved the laity for their avarice, licentiousness, and love of pleasure. He condemned all dishonesty in trade—lying, false weights, bad money—which everywhere abounded. But he was no less severe toward the representatives of the Church. “Popes, princes, and prelates themselves,” he said, “bow the knee to wealth, and, in place of the improvement and correction of souls, have only their purse in their eye.” A main cause of this corruption, as seems to Ruysbroek, lies in the Church’s being itself accessible to wealth, and offering its gifts for money. “All spiritual things are at the command of the rich. For them chants are sung, mass read, every external service the Church can render performed. They obtain without difficulty indulgences for the pains of purgatory and all manner of sins, and, when they die, requiems are sung on every side, and the bells tolled. They are buried before the altar, and numbered with the blessed.”\* No order of the hierarchy—priests, bishops, Popes—escaped his condemnation for their avarice and profligacy.

It will be readily understood how mysticism came into conscious or unconscious conflict with the Roman system of doctrine and practice. While nearly all the mystics were faithful adherents of the Church, their fundamental beliefs were directly opposed to its teachings, and tended to undermine its authority. As we have already seen, the Papal system makes the Church an external despotism, and religion an outward conformity to its laws.

\* Ullmann’s “Reformers before the Reformation,” II., p. 51.

It is a vast system of externalism. But the mystic places supreme emphasis on the subjective life and experience. He goes back of priesthood and sacrament to the evangelical principles of faith, love, and obedience. He believes in the infinite depths of divine love, which is willing, without the mediation of priest or saint, to receive every yearning, penitent soul; and he recognizes union with God in sanctity and purpose as the essential element of piety. It is this fellowship with the divine, and not the performance of ecclesiastical penances and works, that assures eternal life.

Mere outward conformity to ecclesiastical rites and requirements could not satisfy the mystic spirit. It sought more than a righteousness of outward works. "If it happen," says Ruysbroek, "that a man occupies himself in, and addicts himself to, the several kinds of works, more than to their substance and motives, and that he continues exercising himself with sacraments, and signs, and performances of an outward sort, more than with the objects and the truth which are thereby signified and conveyed, it is very possible that he may to a certain extent undergo a change, become once more an *outward* man, and, with all his good works, still be in captivity to silliness and prejudice. But if so be that a man desires to draw near to God, to elevate himself, and render his life fruitful, he must penetrate from the work to the reason of it, and from the sign to the truth. He thereby becomes master of his works, a professor of the truth, and enters into the *inner life*."

During the fourteenth century the course of mysticism was divided into two branches, which may be distinguished as the meditative and the practical. Both agreed in seeking a more spiritual type of Christianity. One of the principal repre-

representatives of the meditative type of mysticism was John Tauler (1290-1361), one of the great preachers of his age. He had a good acquaintance with the Scriptures, as well as with the scholastic learning of his time. A visit to Ruysbroek confirmed him in his mystical tendencies, to which his meditative temper and previous studies and associations had inclined him. Less metaphysical than Eckhart, who was pantheistic, and less poetical than Suso, who was fantastic, he reached the popular heart through the depth of his devotional feeling. His ideal of religious life was complete conformity to the image of our Lord. He looked upon man as an emanation from God, and he found man's highest destiny in a return to Him. This great end is to be accomplished by resisting the drawings of the flesh and the world, and by seeking direct communion with God in the realm of spirit. In this exalted communion with God, the soul should find its highest treasures, and, from the altitude of this blessed experience, look down on all else as comparatively worthless.

This subjective and spiritual conception of Christianity, presented with great power in his sermons, brought him into conflict with the existing ecclesiastical system. His books were burned, and he himself was excommunicated. But he wrote: "None who hold the true Christian faith, and *only sin against the person of the Pope, are heretics*, but those are heretics who, in spite of remonstrance, obstinately act contrary to God's Word and refuse to amend." He rejected the claims of the Pope to universal sovereignty. "Magistracy," he maintained, "is an estate instituted by God, and, in temporal matters, all must obey it, even the clergy, be they who they may. The emperor is supreme magistrate, and therefore obedience is

due to him before all. If he govern wrong, he is responsible to God for his conduct, and not to poor men." \* Tauler's sermons were not without effect upon Luther. "If it will gratify you to become acquainted with a solid theology in the German tongue," wrote Luther to his friend Spalatin in 1516, "perfectly resembling that of the ancients, procure for yourself John Tauler's sermons, for neither in Latin nor in our own language have I seen a theology more sound, or more in accordance with the Gospel. Taste and see how gracious is the Lord, if you have previously tasted and seen how bitter is all that we are in ourselves."

All that was best in mediæval mysticism was at length summed up in a little work entitled "German Theology." It was for a time attributed to Tauler, but the author is unknown. It "sets forth a living God, near to all, present and active in every place, but most intimately present and active in the soul of man. It therefore brings man to this God, in a relation which not merely is not outward or mediated by the priesthood and Church, works, and exercises, but which is in the highest degree inward, free, and childlike, and vitally exercises the affections. In the same manner, it sets forth a living Christ—a Christ to whom, as the Son of God become man and Saviour, and as the prototype and pattern of divine life in man, it refers everything; and who in that respect must be embraced not merely in historical objectivity, as an article of faith, but much more as a principle of life; inasmuch as His highest and full significance lies in the fact that He perpetuates and reproduces Himself anew in humanity, and that

\* Ullmann's "Reformers before the Reformation," II., p. 212.

His spirit and theanthropic life are transfused into the individual and impart divinity to him." \*

At the suggestion of Stanpitz, himself a mystic, Luther edited the "German Theology." In his preface, written in 1516, the reformer says: "This excellent little work, poor and homely in language and human wisdom though it be, is in the same and even greater proportion rich and precious in the skill and divine wisdom with which it is written; and to boast like an old fool, as I am, next to the Bible and St. Augustine, from no book with which I have met have I learned more of what God, Christ, man, and all things are." Thus throughout Germany and the Netherlands, and doubtless also in other parts of Europe, the theology of the mystics was producing a rich spiritual fruitage, and by emphasizing the subjective character of the Christian life was gradually undermining the formalism of the Papal system.

But we turn now to consider the practical side of the mystic movement as exemplified in the Brethren of the Common Life. The founder of this brotherhood was Gerhard Groot (1340-1384), a man of great eloquence and spiritual power. After studying at the University of Paris, he entered a Carthusian monastery, where he gave himself to meditation and study for three years. But his practical nature was not satisfied with a life of inactivity; and having been ordained a deacon, he traveled through the diocese of Utrecht, teaching and preaching. He was moved with ardent zeal, and spoke with great power. As was once said of a still greater teacher and preacher, the common people heard him gladly, and many were led to give themselves up to righteousness.

\* Ullmann's "Reformers before the Reformation," II., p. 231.

His zealous labors presented a strong contrast with the prevailing idleness and inconsistency of the secular and regular clergy. His denunciations of their corrupt manners, particularly of their unchastity, were unsparing. As a result, he became the object of persecution, and his license to preach was withdrawn.

Groot now turned to the instruction of youth. A few years before, he had visited Ruysbroek at Grünthal, whose simple monastic life made a deep impression on him. A truly fraternal spirit reigned in the monastery, and placed all the inmates on the same level. At Deventer, Groot founded a brotherhood, the members of which held all things in common. While living under a fixed rule, they were not sequestered from society, as were regular monks. Nothing was done by constraint; the motive principle was the love of God. The main object of the brotherhood was the spread of practical Christianity. Its members sought, first of all, to maintain among themselves a warm and genial piety through religious conversation, devotional exercises, and the study of the Scripture. Outside of the brotherhood they sought to extend Christianity by multiplying and circulating the Scriptures. Making copies of the Bible and of other religious books was a prominent part of their work. The Psalms were translated into the common tongue. But, above all, they gave themselves to the instruction of youth; and in the history of education, their work occupies a place of importance. The monastic and cathedral schools of the time were defective; the town schools were accessible only to persons of considerable means. Under these circumstances the Brethren of the Common Life gave gratuitous instruction to every class, the religious element,

however, being given the first place in the course of study.

“In the schools of the brotherhood,” says Johannes Janssen, an able Roman Catholic writer, “Christian education was placed high above the mere acquisition of knowledge, and the practical religious culture of the youth, the nurture and confirmation of active piety, was considered the chief object. All the instruction was penetrated by a Christian spirit, and the pupil learned to regard religion as the most important human interest and the foundation of all true culture. At the same time a considerable amount of knowledge and a good method of study were imparted, and the pupil acquired an earnest love for literary and scientific activity. From all quarters studious youth poured into these schools.”\*

During the fifteenth century the houses or communities of the Brethren of the Common Life were greatly multiplied. They covered the Netherlands and northern Germany, and were highly esteemed, not only by wealthy laymen but by many ecclesiastical dignitaries. Several of the Popes—Martin V., Eugene IV., and Pius II.—showed them favor. After the beginning of the Reformation, Luther defended them; and in 1532, when it was proposed to abolish their houses, he wrote to the Mayor and Council of Herford in Westphalia: “Inasmuch as the brethren and sisters were the first to begin the Gospel among you, lead a creditable life, have a decent and well-behaved congregation, and at the same time faithfully to teach and hold the *pure* Word, may I affectionately entreat your worships not to permit any dispeace or molestation to befall them, on account of their still wearing the religious dress, and

\* Janssen's “Geschichte des deutschen Volkes.”

observing old and laudable usages not contrary to the Gospel. For such monasteries and brother-houses please me beyond measure. Would to God that all monastic institutions were like them !”

But the Brethren of the Common Life did not escape persecution. The sincerity of their spiritual life and their zeal in the propagation of an evangelical religion put the clergy and friars to shame. The education of the people passed largely into the hands of the Brethren. Accordingly, finding their influence and emoluments diminishing, the priesthood and friars were roused to opposition. In some cases they succeeded in having local houses of the brotherhood suppressed. At the Council of Constance they made an effort to have the organization suppressed altogether. The Brethren, so the bill of indictment ran, observe the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and yet they do not belong to any particular order or religion authorized by ecclesiastical law ; therefore they have no valid right to existence, and are guilty of mortal sin. The Brethren were defended by the celebrated John Gerson, and the venomous attack at Constance proved entirely futile.

The devotional and scientific tendencies of the brotherhood of the Common Life were exhibited in two members, who stand out prominently in the annals of the fifteenth century. One of these was Thomas à Kempis, the author of the “Imitation of Christ,” in which the mystical yearning for communion with Christ is so strongly and so beautifully expressed. He was a deep student of the Bible, the perusal of which he repeatedly commended to others. “Woe,” he exclaims, “to the clergyman without education or knowledge of the

Scriptures, for he often becomes the occasion of error, both to himself and others! A clergyman without the Holy Scriptures is a soldier without weapons, a horse without a bridle, a ship without a rudder, a writer without a pen, and a bird without wings. And, equally, a monastery which wants the Scriptures is a kitchen without pots, a table without dishes, a well without water, a river without fish, a garden without flowers, a purse without money, and a house without furniture." Though Thomas à Kempis remained a faithful son of the Roman Church, his teaching, unconsciously perhaps to himself, was hostile to the existing spirit of the Papacy. He made piety consist in a personal relation to God in self-surrendering love. He left no place for a mediating priesthood or mechanically efficacious sacraments.

Unlike Thomas à Kempis, who loved to live in devotional retirement with his books, John Wessel preserved, along with deep piety, an energetic and practical nature. "The true philosopher," he said, "would fain remodel all kingdoms and nations, and bring them into a better and more prosperous condition." He expostulated with his aged friend, Thomas à Kempis, who was a zealous adorer of Mary. "Father," he said, "why do you not rather lead me to Christ, who so graciously invites those who labor and are heavy laden to come to Him?" His bold, independent spirit at length questioned the leading principles of the Papal system. He became in theology a Protestant. He regarded the Scriptures, without tradition or the authoritative interpretation of the Pope, as the source of religious doctrine. He was not satisfied with an intellectual assent to the teachings of the Church, but insisted on a vital piety of the heart and life. He rejected the "good

works" taught by the Roman system, and assailed, like another Luther, the doctrine of indulgences. Believing in the Christian's immediate access to God through Christ, he rejected the doctrine of a mediating priesthood and of intercessory saints. As a matter of prudence, he published nothing, but in 1521 Luther printed his principal writings. "If I had read Wessel sooner," the great reformer said, "my adversaries would have presumed to say that I had borrowed my whole doctrine from him, our minds are so consonant with each other."\* In Germany Wessel may be regarded as the most prominent precursor of the Reformation.

John Wessel was called for a time to the University of Heidelberg, where his liberal views were not without influence. He was succeeded by one of his pupils, Agricola, who perpetuated his critical and independent attitude toward the Church and its errors. John Reuchlin, a still more famous pupil, likewise took up his abode for a time at Heidelberg. The University thus became a centre for scientific and theological investigation, and it is remarkable that so many of the reformers—Melanchthon, Martin Bucer, John Brenz, and others—received a part at least of their training there. The reforming tendencies of the fifteenth century were perpetuated into the sixteenth, when the conditions were far more favorable for organized and effective resistance to the errors of the Papacy.

\* Ullmann's "Reformers before the Reformation," II., p. 579.

## CHAPTER II.

### BIBLICAL REFORMERS.

IN the case of the mystics, dissatisfaction with the Roman system grew out of a subjective and spiritual apprehension of Christianity. The power and the preciousness of the Gospel in the soul were felt to be more or less discordant with the external character that had been impressed on the Church, and with the worldliness that prevailed in every rank of the clergy. Alongside of this mystical movement or reaction there was another reformatory tendency, which found its basis and power in the Scriptures. This tendency was wide-spread; it had its representatives, as we shall see, in England, Bohemia, Italy, and France. Because its adherents were active in their opposition to existing errors and evils they were subject to persecution from the hierarchy, and some of them suffered a martyr's death.

1. One of the earliest and greatest of these biblical reformers before the Reformation was John Wycliffe, of England, whose active life embraces the latter part of the fourteenth century. The conditions were not unfavorable for reformatory efforts. It was the period of the Babylonish captivity of the Papacy, when the Popes passed under the influence of France at Avignon. The subserviency of the Papacy at this time to the French monarchy naturally excited distrust and opposition in England. Accordingly, under Edward III., the

Statute of Provisors devolved upon the king the right to fill the Church offices, and the Statute of Præmunire forbade subjects to bring before a foreign tribunal a cause that fell under royal jurisdiction. A few years later Parliament refused to pay the tribute of a thousand marks demanded by the Pope in recognition of England's position as a Papal fief since the days of King John. Thus the sentiment of patriotism re-enforced the dissatisfaction with the Papacy awakened by the worldliness and profligacy of many of its representatives.

Wycliffe was a man of great intellectual force, and had mastered the learning of his age. He resided for many years at Oxford as master of Balliol College and teacher of divinity. His influence in the University was for a time very great. He had a firm grasp on evangelical truth; and with a brave and independent spirit he set about correcting the evils in the Church. Like Luther, he possessed a genuine martyr spirit. When the mendicant monks were clamorous for his death, he said: "I know from the evangelical faith that antichrist with his blows can only destroy the body; but Christ, for whose cause I fight, can destroy both soul and body in hell. And I know that He will suffer nothing to be wanting of that which is most needful for His servants, when He has freely surrendered Himself to a terrible death, and permitted all the disciples who were dearest to Him to endure severe torments for their own benefit." \*

The key of Wycliffe's teachings and reformatory work is found in the authority he assigns to the Scriptures. He recognized the Scriptures, without the aid of tradition or Papal interpretation, as the ultimate rule of faith and practice. For this rea-

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 145.

son he was called the *doctor evangelicus*. He gave the English people the first translation of the Bible in the vernacular. "The Holy Scripture," he said, "is the faith of the Church, and the more familiar the people become with it, in a right believing sense, the better." He finds fault with the clergy for withholding the Scriptures. "As all believers must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account of the talents committed to them, so all should rightly know these talents and their use, in order that they may know how to render account of them; for then no answer which might be given through a prelate or steward could be of any avail, but each must answer in his own person." He maintained that the New Testament is intelligible to the laity who make an honest effort to understand it, and that its truth is sufficient for the salvation of a Christian without the ordinances and ceremonies of ignorant and sinful men.

Wycliffe's reformatory activity was at first politico-ecclesiastical. He defended Edward III. in his resistance of Papal aggression. He denounced the Pope as "the most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers." The large amounts paid into the Papal treasury would be better expended, he said, if given for the support of the poor. "And certainly," he wrote, "though our realm had a huge hill of gold, and no man took therefrom but this proud, worldly priest's collector, in process of time the hill would be spent; for he is ever taking money out of our land, and sends nothing back but God's curse for his simony, and some accursed clerk of antichrist to rob the land still more for wrongful privileges."

Wycliffe maintained that no political and temporal rule had been committed to the Pope in

perpetuity ; that, contrary to the teaching of the mendicant orders, the righteous might properly hold and enjoy earthly possessions ; that when the Church fell into corruption the state had a right to deprive her of the temporal goods which she abused ; that every prelate, and even the Pope, when he is wrong, might be accused, judged, and imprisoned by laymen ; that only a just excommunication, in accordance with the law of Christ, was valid ; that an unconditional power to bind and loose had not been, and could not be, conferred on any man.

These doctrines, actively proclaimed, did not fail to provoke resistance. The mendicant orders collected from his works nineteen propositions, the substance of which has been given, and forwarded them to Rome. Gregory XI., in 1377, issued three bulls against Wycliffe—one addressed to the University of Oxford, another to the bishops of Canterbury and London, and the third to King Edward III.—in which he commanded that the reformer should be arrested and tried for heresy. Owing to Wycliffe's popularity, this order could not be carried out ; and when he was summoned before an ecclesiastical court in London, he was accompanied by the Duke of Lancaster and the grand marshal of England, Lord Henry Percy. Through the protection of the nobility, this trial, as well as subsequent ones, came to nothing.

After 1378, Wycliffe's reformatory teachings covered a wide field, and his reformatory measures were comprehensive and vigorous. Apart from his translation of the Bible, he organized an evangelistic itinerancy for the preaching of the Gospel. His itinerants were known as the "poor priests," and after the manner of the apostles traveled from place to place preaching the Word. They at-

tacked the prevalent worldliness and vice among the different orders of the clergy, and exhorted their hearers to repentance and piety. Wycliffe's conception of the clerical office was truly evangelical. "If thou art a priest," he says, "and by name a curate, live thou a holy life. Pass other men in holy prayer, holy desire, and holy speaking; in counseling, and teaching the truth. Ever keep the commandments of God, and let His Gospel and His praises be ever in thy mouth. Let thy open life be thus a true book, in which the soldier and the layman may learn how to serve God and keep His commandments. For the example of a good life, if it be open and continued, striketh rude men much more than open preaching with the Word alone."

This type of the Christian minister was unlike what he saw about him. And elsewhere he complains that "prelates and great religious possessors are so occupied in heart about worldly lordships and with plans of business that no habit of devotion, of praying, of thoughtfulness on heavenly things, on the sins of their own heart, or on those of other men, may be preserved; neither may they be found studying and preaching the Gospel, nor visiting and comforting poor men." Through his own preaching, which was of a vigorous, practical kind, through the labors of his itinerants, and through his numerous writings, the doctrines of Wycliffe became widely disseminated in England.

Accepting the Scriptures as the sole standard of authority, Wycliffe, like the reformers of the sixteenth century, rejected nearly every distinctive doctrine of the Papal Church. He was unwilling to receive any doctrine on mere ecclesiastical authority. "Even though there were a hundred

Popes," he declared, "and all the monks were transformed into cardinals, in matters of faith their opinions would be of no account, unless they were founded on Scripture." His conception of the Church was not that of an external organization with a supreme pontiff at its head, but that of a communion of saints—the unorganized body composed of all the believers. He rejected the doctrine of ecclesiastical good works. "Many think," he says, "if they give a penny to a pardoner, they shall be forgiven the breaking of all the commandments of God, and therefore they take no heed how they keep them. But I say to thee, for certain, though thou have priests and friars to sing for thee, and though thou each day hear many masses, and found chauntries and colleges, and go on pilgrimages all thy life, and give all thy goods to pardoners—all this shall not bring thy soul to heaven. While, if the commandments of God are revered to the end, though neither penny nor half-penny be possessed, there shall be everlasting pardon and the bliss of heaven." He rejected the doctrine of works of supererogation, and with it the doctrine of indulgences resting upon it. He opposed the worship of saints, first, because it is impossible to tell with certainty who are to be ranked as such; and, secondly, because it derogates from the work and honor of Christ. "For Christ," he says, "ever lives near the Father, and is the most ready to intercede for us, imparting Himself to the soul of every wayfaring pilgrim who loves Him. Therefore should no man seek first the mediation of other saints, for He is more ready to help than any one of them."

But no part of Wycliffe's theology was more wide-reaching in its immediate effects and excited more bitter hostility than his rejection of the doc-

trine of transubstantiation. His arguments against this Papal doctrine were based on Scripture and reason. He dwelt on the philosophical absurdity that the qualities of the elements—shape, odor, color—should continue after the annihilation of the object or substance—bread and wine—in which they inhere. “It cannot be proved by reason or Scripture,” he argued, “that such an illusion is necessary for men as an *accidens sine subjecto*, when bread and wine remaining would in a more suitable way represent the body of Christ.” The rejection of this doctrine took away from the Papal priesthood its highest function, abolished the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead, and freed the Church from all the abuses and superstitions connected with it. He disseminated his views among all classes of people; for the learned he wrote treatises in Latin, and for the commonalty he prepared pamphlets in English.

In spite of the malice and efforts of his enemies, Wycliffe died a natural death in 1384. But his body was not to be left in peace. In 1415 the Council of Constance declared him a heretic, anathematized his writings, and ordered his bones to be removed from consecrated ground. For a number of years the command went unheeded; but in 1438 his body was taken up and burnt, and the ashes scattered on the Swift, a tributary of the Avon. But the truths proclaimed by the fearless reformer were not thus to be extinguished. In the lines of Wordsworth:

“As thou these ashes, little brook, wilt bear  
 Into the Avon, Avon to the tide  
 Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,  
 Into the main ocean they, this deed accurst  
 An emblem yields to friends and enemies,  
 How the bold teacher’s doctrine, sanctified  
 By truth, shall spread throughout the world dispersed.”

Wycliffe had the greatest confidence that sooner or later the truth of the Scriptures would prevail. He was confident that the hierarchy would not always be able to stifle the Gospel. In his writings there is found a remarkable prophecy of Luther's reforming work. "I suppose," he says, "that some brothers, whom God may vouchsafe to teach, will be devoutly converted to the primitive religion of Christ, and abandoning their false interpretations of genuine Christianity, after having demanded or acquired for themselves permission from antichrist, will freely return to the original religion of Christ; and then they will build up the Church like Paul."

The followers of Wycliffe in England, of whom there were large numbers, were stigmatized as Lollards, a name of uncertain origin. The doctrines of the reformer were industriously propagated by enthusiastic itinerant preachers. They "were picturesque figures in long russet dress down to the heels, who, staff in hand, preached in the mother-tongue to the people in churches and graveyards, in squares, streets, and houses, in gardens and pleasure grounds, and then talked privately with those who had been impressed." But about the year 1400 the Church and State combined to suppress the reformatory movement. Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was very active in the persecution that ensued. In 1408 he secured the passage of an ecclesiastical law which forbade anyone to preach without a bishop's license, prohibited all preaching against the clergy before a congregation of laymen, and required all Lollard books and translations of the Bible to be delivered up and burned. Nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Church was anywhere to be taught, and the translation of any portion of

Scripture into English was forbidden. The Parliament, under clerical influence, passed an enactment "that whatsoever they were who should read the Scriptures in the mother-tongue, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods from their heirs forever; and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the Crown, and most ar-rant traitors to the land." But the truth was not without its martyrs, among whom was Sir John Oldcastle, the friend of Henry V., who was burned at the stake in 1417. The Lollard movement was checked, but not annihilated; and its traditions, including Wycliffe's translation of the Bible, lived on till the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

2. But the greatest influence of Wycliffe, after the suppression of Lollardy in England, was to be exerted in Bohemia. His doctrines were conveyed to the University of Prague, at the beginning of the fifteenth century one of the most influential in Europe, by Oxford students. His works became well known in the Bohemian capital, where they found warm adherents and defenders. The most influential of his disciples was John Huss, who, through the earnest preaching of Militz, Conrad, of Waldhausen, and especially Matthias, of Janow, had been turned toward an evangelical conception of Christianity. With less intellectual force but with no less earnest purpose, he embraced the fundamental teachings of Wycliffe. He made the Scriptures the ultimate rule of authority in religious belief and practice, though he did not apply it, in its whole extent, to the Papal system. Thus it happened that he adhered to the doctrine of transubstantiation and of the seven sacraments. "I am attracted by his writings," Huss says in speaking of the English reformer, "in which he expends every effort to conduct all men back to the

law of Christ, and especially the clergy, inviting them to let go the pomp and dominion of the world, and live with the apostles according to the life of Christ. I am attracted by the love which he had for the law of Christ, maintaining its truth and holding that not one jot or tittle of it could fail." \*

Huss was educated at the University of Prague, in which he became a lecturer in 1398. He grew in popularity, and four years later he was made rector. He was a diligent student of Wycliffe's writings. The year of his election as rector of the University, he became pastor of the Bethlehem Chapel, which a pious citizen of Prague had endowed for the maintenance of practical preaching. His earnestness, spiritual power, and fearless denunciation of sin among clergy and laity drew about him a large circle of adherents. His conception of preaching was evangelical. "This must ever be the great and especial concern of the ministers of the Church," he wrote, "to preach to the people the Gospel of Christ in its purity and with fruit, so that the people may know God's will, avoid the bad, and be led in the good way of a just and virtuous life. Woe, therefore, to the priests who neglect God's Word, who lead lives of indolent repose when they might be preaching it. And woe to those who hinder the preaching and the hearing of the divine Word. But blessed are they who hear it and treasure it up in their hearts, and by good works observe it."

For a time Huss stood in favor with the ecclesiastical authorities ; and in 1403 he was appointed by the Archbishop Zbynek on a commission to report on a reputed miracle at Wilsnack. According to popular belief, three sacramental wafers had

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 242.

turned red with the blood of our Lord. The church at Wilsnack became a place of pilgrimages from all parts of Europe. The report of Huss was unfavorable to the superstition, and pilgrimages from the Archbishop's diocese were prohibited. On this occasion Huss wrote a tract, in which, while he held to transubstantiation, he attacked the superstition and fraud connected with it. "The glorified body of Christ," he says, "exists dimensionally in Heaven alone, though truly and really in the sacrament of the altar. Nothing that belonged to this body could be separated from it and present by itself alone upon earth. All that is said, therefore, about relics of Christ's body, or of His blood, as being present in this place or that, must be false. He who pretends to believe anything of this sort dishonors the blood of Christ. But, also, the iniquity of greedy ecclesiastics has increased to such extent that messengers of anti-christ, following their master, the devil, have exhibited their own blood as the blood of Christ, at the Eucharist, and the same is adored by foolish and unbelieving Christians, who, unbelievably, seek after wonders."

But a conflict with the hierarchy was only a question of time. Huss's zealous appeals for reform, and especially the authoritative eminence he assigned to the Scriptures, were inconsistent with the existing immorality of the clergy and the ecclesiastical absolutism of the Pope. Four principal points may be noted in the reformatory movement he inaugurated—points that are practical rather than doctrinal: 1. To bring the people together in harmony under the law of Christ; 2. To abolish anti-Christian ordinances, by which the people were deluded; 3. To require the clergy, banishing pomp, cupidity, and luxury, to live

pure and honest, according to the Gospel ; and 4. To regard the militant Church as consisting of the orders instituted by our Lord ; namely, priests faithfully fulfilling the law, secular nobles governing the people in righteousness, and the lower classes serving both orders according to the law of Christ. His view of the Church, like that of Wycliffe, makes it consist essentially of the body of the elect. He does not look upon it as a visible organization with the Pope as head. He regards the Pope, whom he sometimes characterizes as antichrist, as a hindrance. "It is evident," he affirms, "that the greatest errors and the greatest divisions have arisen by occasion of this head of the Church, and that they have gone on multiplying to this day. For before such a head had been instituted by the emperor, the Church was constantly adding to her virtues ; but after the appointment of such a head, the evils have continually mounted higher ; and there will be no end to all this, until this head, with its body, be brought back to the rule of the apostles."

In 1408 Huss was forbidden to exercise any priestly function within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Prague. A bull of Alexander V., in 1409, ordered the abjuration of all Wycliffite heresies, and a general prohibition of preaching. Three years later, when Huss opposed a Papal crusade against the King of Naples, and denounced the indulgences promised to all who should participate in it, he was excommunicated and banished from the city. Though an interdict was laid on all places that should give him shelter, he continued, as he had opportunity, his open-air preaching, and employed his leisure in writing his principal work, *De Ecclesia*.

This ecclesiastical persecution brought to light

the character of Huss. He was a conscientious, heroic spirit. Life was less dear to him than the truth of Christ. He held himself ready at all times to yield to clear reason or Holy Scripture, but not to arbitrary authority. "I avow it to be my purpose," he said, "to defend the truth which God has enabled me to know, and especially the truth of the Holy Scriptures, even to death; since I know that the truth stands, and is forever mighty, and abides eternally; and with her there is no respect of persons. And, if the fear of death should terrify me, still I hope in my God, and in the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord Himself will give me firmness. And if I have found favor in His sight, He will crown me with martyrdom."

Huss stood, like Luther, for the principle of individual liberty, as over against ecclesiastical authority. This was, indeed, his great heresy. When a Papal legate demanded of him whether he would obey the apostolical mandates, he replied: "I am ready, with all my heart, to fulfill the *apostolical* mandates; but I call apostolical mandates the doctrines of the apostles of Christ; and so far as the Papal mandates agree with these, so far I will obey them most willingly. But, if I see anything in them at variance with these, I shall not obey, even though the stake were staring me in the face." He refused to give up preaching at the command of the Pope, because he recognized his call to the ministry of the Word as coming from God. He felt, as did the apostles under similar circumstances, that it is better to obey God than man.

The great Council of Constance assembled in 1414 for the purpose of healing the distractions of the Church. Huss was invited to appear be-

fore it ; and to protect him from the treachery of his enemies, he was granted a safe-conduct by the Emperor Sigismund. He was anxious for an opportunity to explain his doctrines and to defend them before the Council. But this privilege was long denied him. Shortly after his arrival in Constance he was seized, in violation of the emperor's safe-conduct, and thrown into a noisome prison. In June, 1415, he was brought before the Council, and professed his readiness to retract every statement of his writings that could be shown to be erroneous. But the Council demanded submission rather than argument ; and after several hearings, when his voice was frequently drowned by hostile outcries, he was condemned to be burnt at the stake. The principal articles in his condemnation were as follows : " 1. The Church consists of those who are predestined to eternal life ; 2. The head of the Church is Christ alone ; the militant Church does not need a visible head, nor can it be shown that Christ ordained one ; 3. The Papacy owed its origin to imperial favor and power ; 4. Ecclesiastical obedience is an invention of the priesthood and a contradiction of Holy Scripture ; 5. A priest, when he is not conscious of a fault, should not cease to preach, even though the Pope forbid him ; 6. The Holy Scriptures are the only source and rule of Christian life." \*

Huss bore his condemnation and martyrdom with a heroic, Christian spirit. When, in degrading him from the priesthood, the bishops said, " Now we give over thy soul to the devil," he, raising his eyes to Heaven, replied, " But I commend into Thy hands, Lord Jesus, my soul redeemed by Thee." Before being chained to the

\* Alzog's " Universal Kirchengeschichte," II., p. 205.

stake he knelt and prayed : " Lord Jesus Christ, stand by me, that by Thy help I may be enabled, with a strong and steadfast soul, to endure this cruel and shameful death, to which I have been condemned on account of the preaching of the holy Gospel and Thy Word." Before the faggots were lighted, Von Pappenheim, the marshal of the empire, rode up and called upon him once more to recant. " What error should I recant," he replied, " when I am conscious of no error? The chief aim of my preaching was to teach men repentance and the forgiveness of sins according to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the expositions of the holy fathers ; therefore am I prepared to die with a joyful soul." With the words, " Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me," upon his lips, his spirit took its flight. His ashes were scattered upon the Rhine.

A few months afterward there followed another martyrdom on the same spot. It was that of Jerome, of Prague, the friend and fellow-reformer of Huss. He had defended the doctrines of Wycliffe in Paris, Vienna, and other cities of Europe, and had thereby excited the distrust and enmity of the ecclesiastical authorities. He went to Constance incognito ; but, finding it dangerous to remain there, and being unable to secure a safe-conduct, he started to Bohemia. He was arrested on the way by his enemies, and cited to appear before the Council to defend his teachings. Like Huss, he held himself ready to recant so soon as he was convicted of error from Holy Scripture. While he spoke there was heard among the noisy shouts, " Jerome must be burnt." He was subjected to a cruel imprisonment for nearly a year. At his final trial he defended himself with so much eloquence that he excited the admiration

even of his enemies. But refusing to recant what he held as truth, he was condemned to the stake. When the fire flamed around him he exclaimed in a loud voice, "Into Thy hands, O God, I commit my spirit." In the words of an eye-witness, "He feared neither death nor the fire and its torture. No stoic ever suffered death with so firm a soul as that with which he seemed to demand it. Jerome endured the torments of the fire with more tranquillity than Socrates displayed in drinking his cup of hemlock." \*

But the truth was not to be destroyed by the burning of these two faithful preachers. The news of their martyrdom produced great excitement in Bohemia; and soon, at a diet in Prague, a protest, signed by four hundred and fifty-two magnates and barons, defended the character of Huss as a man and evangelical teacher. A few days later, the nobles who had signed the protest formed themselves into a league to defend the preaching of the Gospel in their estates, and to obey the bishops and Pope only so far as they might be in agreement with the Scriptures. War was the result. In 1418 the new Pope, Martin V., issued various bulls in which he placed all obstinate Hussites under the ban, and urged all the ecclesiastical and civil authorities to proceed against them. The emperor, Sigismund, invaded Bohemia, but his armies were successively defeated in three great battles. The failure of the crusade inclined the Papal party to peace. The demands of the more moderate part of the Hussites were embodied in the famous four articles of Prague: 1. Free preaching of the Word of God throughout Bohemia; 2. The administration of the communion under both kinds, according to the institution of Christ; 3. Deprivation

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 380.

of the clergy of secular lordship and of secular property ; and 4. Repression of all public scandals. Negotiations with the Council of Basel ended in 1433 with the signing of the "Compactata," in which the demands of the Hussites were more or less fully conceded. The Hussites maintained their existence into the sixteenth century, when some of them returned to the Roman Church, while others allied themselves with the Protestant movement, and have perpetuated their existence to the present day as Moravians or United Brethren.

3. While a refined paganism characterized the social and ecclesiastical life of Italy, a prophetic voice was heard at Florence. Savonarola spoke and labored in the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, whose writings were his study and delight. Though his career was not free from a fanatical element, the sincerity of his purpose can hardly be questioned, and the reform he effected for a time in the dissolute "City of Flowers" is truly remarkable. A political element is found in his work ; but in all that he undertook he was animated by a devout Christian spirit.

The reformation he tried to effect was one of morals rather than of doctrine. But the basis of his teaching was the Scriptures. "Amid the luxurious, æsthetic, semi-pagan life of Florence," to use the words of Hill in his Introduction to Savonarola's "Triumph of the Cross," "in the ears of the rich citizens, the licentious youth, the learned Platonists, he denounced the revival of paganism, the corruption of the Church, the ignorance and consequent slavery of the people, and declared that God would visit Italy with some terrible punishment, and that it would come soon. He spoke severe words about the priests, declared

to the people that the Scriptures were the only guides to salvation ; that salvation did not come from external works, as the Church taught, but from faith in Christ, from giving up the heart to Him; and if He forgave sin, there was no need for any other absolution."

In his youth Savonarola was of a studious, meditative temperament. He found social festivities vain and repulsive ; and, though brought up in fashionable surroundings, he felt a contempt for the pomp and splendor of court life. He abandoned the medical career, which his father wished him to pursue, to devote himself to a religious life. His daily prayer was, " Lord, teach me the way my soul should walk." In 1475 he entered the Dominican monastery at Bologna, where he passed the next six years. " The motive," he wrote to his father, " which determines me to enter into a religious life is this : The great misery of the world, the misery of man ; the rapes, the adulteries, the robberies, the pride, the idolatry, the monstrous blasphemies by which the world is polluted, for there is *none that doeth good, no, not one.*" His writings at this period, particularly his poems, show a strong sense of the worldliness and wickedness prevailing about him in Church and State.

In 1490, during the reign of Lorenzo the Magnificent, he was transferred to the Dominican monastery at Florence. He had won renown as an eloquent preacher ; and when the cloister garden became too small for the crowds that thronged to hear him, he spoke in the Cathedral of St. Mark. " Your sins," he declared to the people, " make me a prophet." He spoke as one inspired ; and several of his predictions having been fulfilled, he acquired great authority with the people. Lorenzo was anxious to conciliate his favor ; and at his

suggestion a commission of five distinguished men waited on Savonarola to beg him to be less personal in his denunciations of vice, and to deal more in generalities. "Go tell your master, Lorenzo," the dauntless preacher replied, "to repent of his sins, or God will punish him and his. Does he threaten me with banishment? Well, I am but a stranger, and he is the first citizen of Florence; but let him know that I shall remain, and he must soon depart." The fulfillment of this fearless prediction a short time afterward enhanced his reputation and influence with the populace.

After the overthrow of the Medici house, the city of Florence turned to Savonarola as its law-giver. Through his influence, a popular form of government was adopted, the principal features of which were as follows: 1. The fear of God and the purification of manners; 2. The promotion of the public welfare in preference to that of private persons; 3. A general amnesty to political offenders; and 4. A council on the Venetian model, but with no doge. "Pleasure-loving Florence," says Madame Villari, "was completely changed. Abjuring pomp and vanities, its citizens observed the ascetic regime of the cloister; half the year was devoted to abstinence, and few dared to eat meat on the fasts ordained by Savonarola. Hymns and lauds rang in the streets that had so recently echoed with Lorenzo's dissolute songs. Both sexes dressed with Puritan plainness; husbands and wives quitted their homes for convents; marriage became an awful and scarcely permitted rite; mothers suckled their own babes; and persons of all ranks—nobles, scholars, and artists—renounced the world to assume the Dominican robe." There was a reign of Puritan rigor. All the articles that

minister to pleasure and luxury—cards, dice, perfumes, pictures, musical instruments, and licentious books—were collected and burned on the public square.

This ascetic rigor, so strongly in contrast with the prevailing tone of society and the Church, naturally provoked opposition. It was distasteful to the worldly-minded of the city. Savonarola's avowed purpose to reform the Church at large upon the apostolic model was not acceptable to the infamous Pope Alexander VI. He rejected the doctrine of Papal infallibility. "I lay down this axiom," he said in one of his sermons, "there is no man that may not deceive himself. The Pope himself may err. You are mad if you say the Pope cannot err! How many wicked Popes have there been who have erred? You say that the Pope may err as a man, but not as Pope. But I say the Pope may err in his processes and in his sentences. How many constitutions have Popes issued, annulled by other Popes; how many opinions of Popes are contrary to those of other Popes! He may err by false persuasions; he may err by malice, and against his conscience." These words are entirely in the spirit of Luther.

Savonarola was summoned to Rome, but refused to go. His effort to have a general council convened by the sovereigns of Europe decided his fate. Alexander VI. threatened Florence with the interdict, if the fearless preacher was not silenced. The reformer appealed to his work. "There are briefs arrived from Rome, is it not so?" he asked. "They call me the son of perdition. He whom you so call has no concubines; he preaches the faith of Christ. His spiritual daughters and sons, those who listen to his doctrines, pass not their

time in perpetuating such wickedness ; they confess, commune, live godly lives. This friar would build up the Church which you destroy.”

At length Savonarola was brought to trial. By means of confessions wrung from him under repeated tortures—confessions that were afterward mutilated and perverted—he was condemned to death. While the sacerdotal robes were being stripped off in the ceremonial of degradation, the bishop uttered the solemn formula : “I separate thee from the Church militant and the Church triumphant.” “Not from the Church triumphant,” replied the martyr, in firm tones, “that is beyond thy power.” His body was then burned, along with two disciples, and the ashes thrown into the Arno.

4. Among the earliest of the biblical reformers before the Reformation were the Waldenses. Though efforts have been made to trace their origin to an earlier date, it is now generally conceded that they originated in the latter part of the twelfth century. Their founder was Peter Waldo, a wealthy citizen of Lyons, in southern France. The sudden death of a friend at a convivial assembly startled him into serious reflection upon religious truth ; and, finally abandoning his mercantile career, and distributing his wealth among the poor, he exhorted all who would hear him to lives of righteousness.

He made the Scriptures the basis of his teaching ; and to him belongs the honor of having first translated the New Testament into the dialect of southern France. He discovered the contradictions existing between the teachings of the Gospel and the doctrine and practice of the Roman Church. He attacked the reigning vices of the clergy, and denounced the arrogance of the Pope. He ex-

horted the people to an imitation of the life of Christ ; and, as he gained many adherents, he soon attracted the attention of the Papal hierarchy, who forbade his preaching. With apostolic spirit, he replied that it is better to obey God than men.

The followers of Waldo were filled with the zeal of the primitive Church, and their preachers spread their doctrines throughout southern France and northern Italy. Their doctrines, in sharp contrast with the Papal system of belief, are not unlike the leading principles of the Protestant reformers. "The Holy Scriptures alone," they said, "contain all things necessary to our salvation, and nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God hath revealed to us."\* This is a rejection of tradition and ecclesiastical authority. They conceived of the Church, not as a visible organization united under the Pope, but as the body "of the elect of God from the beginning to the end of the world, by the grace of God, through the merit of Christ, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, and foreordained to eternal life." Holding that Christ is the sole mediator between God and men, they rejected the worship of saints and the sacerdotal character of the priesthood. "They receive," says Vignaux, "two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They affirm that all masses are damnable, especially those which are repeated for the dead, and that, therefore, they ought to be abolished ; to which they add the rejection of numberless ceremonies. They deny the supremacy of the Pope, especially the power which he hath usurped over the civil government ; and they admit no other degrees, except those of bishops, priests, and deacons. They condemn the Popedom as the true Babylon, allow the mar-

\* Milner's "Church History," II., p. 54.

riage of the clergy, and define the true Church to be those who hear and understand the Word of God." \*

The Waldenses required of candidates for the ministry an extended and accurate acquaintance with the Scriptures. To this end, the candidates were expected to learn by heart the Gospels of Matthew and John, all the canonical epistles, and a considerable part of the writings of David, Solomon, and the prophets. Afterward, upon evidence of a consistent Christian life, they were ordained as pastors by the laying on of hands. The younger pastors submitted themselves to the older, and all were supported by the voluntary contributions of the people. They taught the fundamental truths of the Christian faith as embodied in the ecumenical creeds.

The evangelical teaching of the Waldenses produced a simple but beautiful type of piety. Their character has been outlined by an inquisitor in an interesting passage. "The heretics are known," he said, "by their manners and words; for they are orderly and modest in their manners and behavior. They avoid all appearance of pride in their dress; they neither wear rich clothes nor are they too mean and ragged in their attire. They avoid commerce, that they may be free from falsehood and deceit; they live by manual industry, as day-laborers or mechanics; and their preachers are weavers and tailors. They seek not to amass wealth, but are content with the necessities of life. They are chaste, temperate, and sober; they abstain from anger. Their women are modest, avoid slander, foolish jesting, and levity of words, especially falsehood and oaths."

Notwithstanding their earnest faith and simple

\* Milner's "Church History," II., p. 54.

piety, they were calumniated by their enemies. As in the early Church, they were stigmatized with opprobrious names, and accused of horrible wickedness. In Provence they were called cut-purses. Because they denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, they were characterized as Arians. They were charged with lewdness, with disregard of the sanctity of marriage, and with other abominable vices. Through these and similar calumnies, religious hatred was inflamed and the sword of persecution sharpened.

From the close of the twelfth to the beginning of the sixteenth century and later, the Waldenses were subject to almost ceaseless persecution. The Inquisition, instituted by Innocent III., was first employed against them. Hundreds of these simple-minded and inoffensive Christians were thrown into prison, and afterward tortured, hanged, and burned. They were frequently attacked by secular princes, urged on by the Papacy and the hope of plunder. Innocent VIII. himself sent an army of ten thousand men against them under his legate. Fire and slaughter desolated their peaceful and flourishing valleys. Horrible pictures of suffering are handed down to us. "The poor people," says Milner, "seeing their caves possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps, the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand those little children who were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others were starved to death; a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greater part of their mothers died soon after them."

But bitter and unrelenting persecution failed to destroy them. As happened at an earlier period,

the blood of the martyrs proved the seed of the Church. At the period of the Reformation they numbered, it has been estimated, nearly a million, scattered throughout the various countries of Europe. They survived the storm of the Reformation era, and have maintained their existence down to the present time. The Waldensian Church of Italy is active in its missionary work to-day.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE REFORMING COUNCILS.

ONE of the most remarkable events of the fifteenth century was the assembling of the Reforming Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basel. Though they failed in their immediate object, the general effect was to shake the power of Papal absolutism and to turn the thought of Europe to the crying evils existing in the Church. Though the times were not ripe for reform, many truths were emphasized during the agitations of this period that prepared the way for the Protestant movement of the following century.

The calling of the Reforming Councils was due, first, to the Papal schism, and, second, to the corrupt state of the Church. In 1378 the cardinals, offended by the tyranny of Urban VI., withdrew for the most part from Rome, and at Fondi chose Clement VII. as Pope. The latter took up his residence at Avignon. The Christian nations of Europe were divided in their allegiance, France, Scotland, and Spain adhering to Clement, and England, Germany, and Scandinavia to Urban. The result was disastrous. The maintenance of two Papal courts led to increased extortion; and the rival Popes, by their intrigues, anathemas, and excommunications, confused and scandalized the religious life of Europe. "You know," says Philargi, Archbishop of Milan, "how those two wretched men calumniate one another and disgrace themselves by invectives full of rant and

fury. Each calls the other antipope, obtruder, antichrist. Each of them, to gain patrons in the world, to make his own party stronger by this or that person, dares not give a repulse to anybody that asks for anything. The man whom one rightly condemns, the other pronounces not bound. And thus all order is turned into confusion." \*

At various times efforts were made to heal the unhappy schism. The cardinals, in advance of election to the Papal chair, pledged themselves to use every effort, even to the point of abdicating, to restore unity. Gregory XII., the Italian Pope, and Benedict XIII., the French Pope, agreed to meet in 1407, at Savona, to take steps to heal the division. But regal power is a tempting possession; and in spite of their promises and pretensions, the rival Popes were not in earnest, and the proposed meeting never took place. "If either one of the two," says Aretin, an eye-witness and member of Gregory's court, "was really willing to do what he has sworn to do, the other would be obliged to fulfill his part, whether willing or not willing. For what excuse or evasion could he have? But now, when both delay, one furnishes the other with means of evasion and excuse. . . More acrimony of hatred, more violent indignation could not exist."

The cardinals of both parties finally became dissatisfied with the insincerity and selfishness of the Popes, and put forth a proclamation calling for a General Council at the city of Pisa, in 1409. All other efforts to restore peace to the Church having failed, the eyes of western Europe were turned hopefully to this assembly. It was largely attended. Two great problems confronted the Council: first, the healing of the Papal schism,

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 82.

and, second, the reformation of the moral and administrative condition of the Church. In 1401 Nicolas de Clémanges, who has already been quoted, wrote a remarkable work, *De Ruina Ecclesiæ*, in which he portrays its corrupt and disorganized condition. Speaking of the priesthood, he says: "Brought up without learning, in idleness, they busy themselves only with looking out for their pleasures, feasting, and sporting. Hence in all places there are so many bad, wretched, ignorant priests, whose scandalous lives make them offensive and sources of corruption to the communities. Hence the expressions of contempt for priests on the lips of all the people. While it was formerly the case that with people of the world the priesthood stood in the highest honor, and nothing was considered more worthy of respect than this order, now nothing is considered more deserving of contempt."

The Council of Pisa was dominated by the liberal principles of the University of Paris. Chancellor Gerson, while recognizing the Papal hierarchy as necessary, still placed the Church above the Pope. "It is from Christ," he said, "the Head and Bridegroom of the Church, that the mystical body, which is the Church, has her origin; and directly from Him she has her power and authority, so that she may, for the purpose of preserving her unity, cause the assembling, in a regular manner, of a General Council which represents her. This is evident from the words of Christ: 'Where two or three are met together in My name, there am I in the midst of them;' where it is to be carefully observed that He does not say in the name of Peter or of Paul, but in *My* name, thus intimating that wherever the faithful do but assemble, if this be done in *His* name,

that is, in faith on Christ and for the weal of His Church, He himself stands by them as an infallible guide." \*

In accordance with these principles, the Council declared its supremacy over the Pope. The rival Popes were summoned before it; and when they failed to appear, they "were declared to be disobedient and mendacious, and, as incorrigible heretics and schismatics, were deposed and excommunicated." † The faithful throughout Christendom were absolved from all allegiance to them. The Council elected Peter Philargi, Archbishop of Milan, as Pope, who assumed the name of Alexander V. Before his coronation the Pope declared that he would occupy himself with the reformation of the Church. But the resolution passed at the final meeting of the Council, through his influence, shows how little he was in earnest: "Whereas the Pope had it in purpose, in connection with the Council, to reform the Church in its head and members; and whereas, by the grace of God, much has been set in order by him; and whereas many other things relating to the order of the prelates and other subordinate ecclesiastical persons still remained to be done, which, owing to the premature departure of the prelates and delegates, could not be brought about; therefore, the transactions respecting the reformation should be suspended until the meeting of the Second Council, and then and there be continued." The date of the Second Council was fixed three years later.

Thus the first Reformatory Council ended in failure. The sentence of deposition against Gregory and Benedict had been unavailing; and so

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 79.

† Alzog's "Universal Kirchengeschichte," II., p. 162.

far from restoring harmony, the schism had been aggravated by the addition of a third Pope. The Council had been rash and injudicious. "Those who attended the Council of Pisa," wrote Nicolas de Clémanges, "decreed and published that by a new election, which was hastily made in compliance with the wishes of a few ambitious men, they had removed schism from the Church and restored peace to her. And who in the Church is so blind as not to understand clearly, by experience, how much they themselves and the whole Church were deceived by that opinion? Nothing worse could have been done to the Church, nothing more dangerous to union, than before everything had been duly arranged, and placed on the basis of sincerity and concord, so as to be able to treat of peace at all, to proceed to a new election, the very thing which from the beginning had laid the foundation of schism, had prolonged it to such duration, and had in so incredible a manner brought the Church down to the ground. So long as the hankering after benefices causes this same thing to be done, so long shall we look in vain for a union of the Church." \*

Alexander V. did not long survive. He was succeeded by Balthazar Cossa, as John XXIII., one of the most abandoned men who ever occupied the Papal throne. "He shrank from no crime," says Neander, "practiced the most unblushing extortions and every species of impudent simony, and abandoned himself to every excess. In such a time of corruption, he was able, by his immense wealth, to obtain great influence, which enabled him to carry out his objects." He made an effort to gain over the University of Paris by the bestowment of numerous

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 88.

benefices. He made Gerson's friend, Peter d'Ailly, a cardinal. But his efforts were in vain; and Gerson, in a work, *De Modis Uniendi*, continued to urge reform and to undermine the Papal supremacy. "See, then, ye believers," he exclaims, "that if we obey those who are thus contending with each other and rending in pieces the Church, we grievously sin. Long ere this would they have quitted the grasp of their tyrannical rule, had you not indulged them with your obedience." \*

Though he would gladly have avoided doing so, John XXIII. united with the Emperor Sigismund in calling a General Council at Constance in 1414. It is notable as being the largest Council of the Middle Ages. The twofold task of the Council of Constance, as of that of Pisa, was to heal the divisions of the Church, and to reform it, as the expression went, "in its head and members." "Although I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet," wrote d'Ailly at this time, "yet I venture to say, without asserting anything rash, that if at the next Council means are not found to remove these scandals, by the entire healing of the schism and by the reformation of so corrupt a Church, then we must set it down as probable that still more and greater evils will ensue."

The Council of Constance, like that of Pisa, was dominated by the liberal views of the University of Paris. In a discourse delivered before the Council, Gerson took strong grounds against Papal supremacy. "If the Church or General Council," he said, "decrees anything relating to the guidance of the Church, the Pope is not so exalted, even above positive law, as to be authorized arbitrarily to annul such decrees, in the way and

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 95.

in the sense in which they are decreed. Although a General Council cannot annul the Pope's plenitude of power, conferred on him by Christ in a supernatural way, still it may modify the use of that power by determinate laws, and by confining it within a certain range for the edification of the Church, with reference to which the Papal power, as well as all other authority entrusted to man, was instituted. And this is the ultimate basis of all Church reformation. A Church assembly may be convoked in many cases without the express sanction and the express proposal of the Pope, though he may have been lawfully elected and still living."

In accordance with these principles, which destroyed the doctrine of Papal absolutism, the Council promulgated the following decree: "The Synod of Constance, regularly assembled in the Holy Ghost, forming a Universal Council, and representing the militant Church, has its authority immediately from God, and everyone, the Pope included, is bound to obey it in what pertains to the faith, and to the extirpation of schism, and the reformation of the Church in head and members."\* When John XXIII. showed himself refractory, he was solemnly deposed by the Council. He was charged, not only with promoting schism, but with perjury and a stubborn denial of the immortality of the soul. A little later Gregory XII. was induced to abdicate; and when Benedict XIII. remained obstinate, he was deserted by his adherents, who now recognized the supremacy of the Council. Thus, in the year 1417, the way was opened to heal the long-standing schism by the election of a universally acknowledged Pope.

\* Fisher's "History of the Christian Church," p. 257.

Two questions now remained before the Council: first, the election of a new Pope, and, second, the reformation of the Church. The self-seeking of the members did not give promise of the best results. "Nearly all go to the Council," says Nicolas de Clémanges, "to seek their own interests, and but very few to promote whatever makes for peace and for the cause of Christ. Believe me, such persons ought never to have been selected for this business, persons of whom it is to be expected that they will do more by their covetousness to perplex the cause, than they can do by any zeal for peace to promote it in any way; but we should have chosen men who were especially free from ambition and inspired with zeal for peace and Church unity from heartfelt love, who would not do fawning homage to Popes for the sake of gain, would not be slaves to party zeal, but seek to form alliances for the promotion of a wholesome concord, and not their own private ends." \*

The Council was divided on the question whether the election of a Pope should precede or follow the measures of reform. The German party, headed by the Emperor Sigismund, advocated the postponement of the election. But the Italians and Spaniards, who were more wedded to the old order of things, urged the immediate election of a Pope. The Germans were finally forced to give way, but not till they had made a vigorous protest. "It must be acknowledged as a painful fact," they said, "that for the last one hundred and fifty years, or thereabouts, several Popes with their courts had been devoted to the fleshly life, immersed in worldly pleasure, and thus they had sunk downward to what was still worse, had forgotten the

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 114.

things of Heaven ; had taken no concern whatever in the welfare of souls and things purely spiritual, but looked merely at what was subservient to gain ; had usurped to themselves, by resorting to any means, the rights of other churches. They had brought all tribunals under their own control ; decided on all matters, even secular ; dispensed unusual indulgences for money ; and finally they had amassed such an amount of wealth that many of them could enrich all their kinsmen, and some had even sought to make them princes. And hence covetousness, which is called idolatry, paying court for spiritual dignities, heresy, and simony, had spread far and wide." \*

The election took place in 1417, when Otto Colonna became Martin V. Though pledged to a reformation of the Church in advance of his election, he made no serious effort to set about the work. He rejected conciliar authority, as it had been previously set forth by the Council, and made some vague promises to abate the evils connected with indulgences. The Council broke up April 22d, 1418. The schism had been healed, but the evils of Papal administration and the ignorance and vice of the clergy were left untouched. The greatest Council of the Middle Ages had, in a large measure, been a failure.

After a futile attempt to hold a Council, first at Pavia and then at Sienna, Martin V. called the third and last of the Reforming Councils at Basel in 1431. The laity were becoming restive under existing conditions. Ominous mutterings were heard among the Teutonic people. Cardinal Julian, who had been appointed to preside at the Council, wrote to Pope Eugene IV. : "What impelled me

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., pp. 121-124, where a full summary of this remarkable protest is given.

to come here is the false position and the licentiousness of the German clergy, owing to which the laity are exasperated beyond measure against the ecclesiastics. Wherefore it is very much to be feared that if they do not reform, the laity will, after the manner of the Hussites, fall out with the whole body of the clergy, as is already openly threatened.”

Three principal questions came before the Council of Basel: 1. The Bohemian heresy; 2. The union of the Latin and Greek Churches; and, 3. Ecclesiastical reform. In reference to the first, the use of the cup was allowed to the Bohemians. Nothing was accomplished in reference to the second. The question of reform, particularly on its fiscal side, met with opposition from the Roman Curia, whose wealth and luxury were at stake. In December, 1431, Eugene IV., alarmed at the activity of the Council in relation to reform, attempted to dissolve it. In this attempt he was opposed by his legate, Cardinal Julian, who wrote him a letter of vigorous protest. “So many Councils have been held in our days,” says the cardinal, “and no reformation has resulted from one of them. The nations were expecting that from this Council some fruit would come. But if it shall be thus dissolved, it will be said that we have trifled with God and man. And as no remaining hope of one amendment will exist, the laity will, with good reason, set upon us as the Hussites have done; and, in truth, rumors to that effect are already afloat. The minds of men are full of mischief; they already begin to spew out the poison that is to bring death to us. They will think that they do God an acceptable service in assassinating or robbing ecclesiastics. Because these will seem to be sunk in the lowest depths of sin, they will be

hateful to God and men ; and the slight reverence which is paid them now will then vanish entirely. This Council was one means still by which the people of the world could be in some measure restrained ; but when they see every hope dashed to the ground, they will let loose the reins and persecute us openly. Alas ! What honor is it which is to accrue to the Roman court for dissolving a Council assembled for the reformation of the Church ? Assuredly will all the odium, all the guilt and shame fall back on them, inasmuch as they were the first occasion of so great an evil, and carried it to a higher pitch." \*

Giving no heed to the Pope's bull of dissolution, and reaffirming its supremacy as declared at Pisa and Constance, the Council of Basel continued its sessions. When the Pope opened a rival Council at Ferrara, he was deposed by the Council of Basel as contumacious, and Felix V. was elected to the Papal throne. But these violent measures of the Council did not meet with the approval of the Church. In the schism and conflict that ensued, Eugene gained the ascendancy, and at his death his successor, Nicholas V., was generally recognized. In 1449 the Council decreed its own dissolution, leaving the Papacy in absolute control, and failing in every measure of extensive reform. But the Council of Basel, as well as those of Constance and Pisa, had not been in vain. They in a measure undermined the power of the Papacy ; they aroused the laity of Europe to a deeper sense of existing evils ; and they indicated some of the lines upon which a reformation, in the fullness of time, was to proceed.

\* Neander's "History of the Church," V., p. 131.

## CHAPTER IV.

### LITERATURE AND THE PAPACY.

THE attitude of the rising national literatures toward the Papacy during the later Middle Ages is full of interest. This literature grew out of the opening intelligence of Europe. In every country there were men, apart from the clergy, who acquired the elements of learning, either through the knightly education of chivalry or through the oldest universities and the revival of learning. These men escaped from the enthralling tutelage of the priesthood, observed and thought for themselves, and in story, poem, and satire set forth the condition and abuses of the Church. The work thus accomplished by literature, along with that of the mystics, biblical reformers, and Reforming Councils, helped to prepare the way for the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

In the fourteenth century the English language assumed essentially its modern form. The Anglo-Saxon and the French elements, which had existed side by side since the conquest by William of Normandy, harmoniously coalesced. This new language, which gradually supplanted French and Latin, gained official recognition in 1362, when it became the language of the courts of law; and the following year it was employed in the speech made at the opening of Parliament. About the same time it was used, as we have seen, by Wycliffe in his sermons, tracts, and translation of the Bible;

and what is still more important for us here, it became the vehicle of a rising English literature in Langland, Gower, and particularly

“Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath,  
 Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
 With sounds that echo still.”\*

It was the opinion of Hallam that “the greater part of literature in the Middle Ages, at least from the twelfth century, may be regarded as artillery leveled against the clergy.” This statement may be a little too strong; but it is remarkable that the three principal English poets of the fourteenth century all set forth, to a greater or less degree, the avarice, inconsistency, and impurity of the Papacy and its representatives. No class of the hierarchy is spared.

John Gower was of noble family. He wrote three principal poems, only one of which, the “*Confessio Amantis*,” or *Lover’s Confession*, was in English. It was written, as he tells us in a prologue, at the request of Richard II., who met him while rowing on the Thames. It contains a large number of tales drawn from the Scriptures, and from classical and mediæval sources. In Book II., which treats of Envy, the poet tells the “story of Pope Boniface’s supplantation of Pope Celestine.” Through a guileful artifice Celestine V. was induced to resign the Papal throne, which Boniface VIII. succeeded in securing for himself. The treacherous artifice is told in full. It is followed by a description of the reign of Boniface, who is pronounced treacherous in all his work, and “misleader of the Papacie.”

\* Tennyson’s “*Dream of Fair Women*.”

“ Thine entry, like a fox, was sligh,  
 Thy reign also, with pride on high,  
 Was like the lion in his rage ;  
 But at the last of thy passage  
 Thy death was to the houndes like.”

In Book V., which treats of Avarice, Gower describes the idleness and luxury of the clergy. A brief extract, with the spelling somewhat conformed to present usage, will serve for illustration. After declaring that “ the faith deceaseth and all virtue ceaseth,” the poet continues :

“ Christ died Himself for the faith,  
 But now our fearful prelate saith,  
 ‘ The life is sweet,’ and that he keepeth  
 So that the faith unholpen sleepeth,  
 And they unto their ease attenden  
 And in their lust their lives dispenden,  
 And every man doth what him list.  
 Thus stands the world fulfilled of mist,  
 That no man seeth the right way.”

Langland’s “ Piers the Plowman ” is a poem of about twenty-five hundred lines, retaining the old Saxon alliteration. It sets forth in seven cantos a series of visions in which the condition of the State and the Church is clearly reflected. Langland wrote for the yeomanry, as Gower for the nobility ; and in his poem we find, no doubt, the common opinion about the monks and priests. It must have been very popular in its day, for no fewer than forty-five manuscripts are still extant.

“ Langland is antipapal,” says Dean Milman in an excellent summary, “ yet he can admire an ideal Pope, a general pacificator, reconciling the sovereigns of the world to universal amity. It is the actual Pope, the Pope of Avignon or of Rome, leying the wealth of the world to slay mankind, who is the subject of his bitter invective. The

cardinals he denounces with the same indignant scorn ; but chiefly the cardinal legate, whom he has seen in England riding in his pride and pomp, with lewdness, rapacity, merciless extortion, and insolence in his train. Above all, his hatred (it might seem that on this all honest English indignation was agreed) is against the mendicant orders.

. . . . The friars furnish every impersonated vice, are foes to every virtue ; his bitterest satire, his keenest irony (and these weapons he wields with wonderful poetic force) are against their dissoluteness, their idleness, their pride, their rapacity, their arts, their lies, their hypocrisy, their delicate attire, their dainty feasts, their magnificent buildings, even their proud learning ; above all, their hardness, their pitilessness to the poor, their utter want of charity, which with Langland is the virtue of virtues." \*

In the prologue the poet describes a vision of "a fair field full of folk" busily engaged in their usual vocations. Various classes of English life are represented, particularly in connection with the Church. There were some who "for love of our Lord liveth full strait," but they seemed to be few in number. Pilgrims and palmers visited St. James and saints in Rome—

"And hadden leave to lie all their life after."

There were many hermits—

"Great lubbers and long, that loth were to work,  
Clothed themselves in copes, to be known from others,  
And made themselves hermits, their ease to have."

The poet saw friars, "all the four orders," who

"Preached to the people for profit of themselves."

Bishops are accused of going to London instead of watching over their charges ; priests are charged with having concubines :

“ And bringen forth barnes against forbidden laws.”

And the Pope himself is charged with selling bulls. In *Passus* or *Canto V.*, there is a full portrait of a priest who, though he does not know his paternoster, can recite “rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolph, Earl of Chester.” He was never sorry for his sins, and when he told his beads, “What he said with his tongue was two miles from his heart.” He preferred harlotry to visiting the sick and “fettered folk in prison.” The priest is made to say :

“ I have been priest and parson passing thirty winters,  
Yet can I neither say nor sing, nor saintly lives read ;  
But I can find in a field or in a furrow a hare,  
Better than in *beatus vir* or in *beati omnes*  
Construe one clause well, and preach to my parishoners.  
I can hold love-days and hear a reves reckoning,  
But in canons or decretals I cannot read a line.”

The close of the poem is full of significance. Though the poet does not break with the existing Papal system, he does not wholly rely on it. A godly life appears to him far better than priestly forgiveness or Papal indulgence :

“ At the dreadful doom when the dead shall arise,  
And comen all before Christ, accounts to yield,  
How then laddest thy life here, and His laws keptest,  
And how thou didest day by day, the doom will  
rehearse ;  
A poke full of pardons there nor provincial letters,  
Though you be found in the fraternity of all the four  
orders,  
And have indulgences double-fold, unless Do-well you  
help,  
I set your patents and your pardons at a pea’s hull.”

The picture that Geoffrey Chaucer gives of the worldly and corrupt character of the representatives of the Papal Church is no more pleasing or favorable than the pictures presented by his contemporaries. The "Canterbury Tales" is his greatest work; and in the prologue he gives us, with great artistic and dramatic power, a description of the pilgrims who are on their way to the tomb of Thomas à Becket. It is a living picture of contemporary life, showing us the features, dress, manners, customs, and religious life of the English people in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Nothing escapes the microscopic scrutiny of the poet; and the general truth of his description is beyond all question.

In the group of twenty-nine pilgrims, who include the various classes of English society, not a few representatives of the Church—a prioress, a monk, a friar, a parson, a summoner, and a pardoner—are found. The prioress,

"That of her smiling was full simple and coy,"

is distinguished more for her social elegance than for her piety. The parson,

"Rich he was of holy thought and work,"

is presented as an ideal portrait of pastoral fidelity and excellence:

"For Christ's love, and His apostles twelve,  
He taught, but first he followed it himself."

But Chaucer's account of the other representatives of the existing ecclesiastical order is far less favorable. The monk was a prince of good-livers. His principal delight was in horses and hunting, and

"He gave not for that text a moulting hen  
That saith that hunters be not holy men."

The good cheer he continually enjoyed left its mark upon his ruddy and worldly face:

“ His head was bald that shone as any glass,  
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.  
He was a lord, full, fat, and in good point.”

The friar was a “ wanton and merry ” man—

“ Somewhat he lisped, for his wantonness,  
To make his English sweet upon his tongue ;  
And in his harping, when that he had sung,  
His eyen twinkled in his head aright,  
As do the starres in the frosty night.”

He was a most successful beggar for his order. He cultivated the acquaintance of women and men of means ; he knew the taverns in every town, and the barmaids ; but with poor people he had nothing to do ; for “ it was not advantageous to deal with such rabble.” Money moderated the severity of the penance he imposed:

“ Full sweetley heard he confessioun,  
And pleasaunt was his absolucioun ;  
He was an easy man to give penance,  
Where'er he knew he'd have a good pitaunce ;  
For unto a poor order for to give  
Is signe that a man is well i-shrive.  
For if he gave, he dorste make avaunt,  
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.”

The summoner was as repulsive in his character as in his features. He was fond of strong wine—

“ And when that he well drunken had the wine,  
Then would he speak no word except Latyn.”

His private life was not a model of purity ; and familiarity with ecclesiastical courts had made him somewhat skeptical. He was not unamiable in disposition:

“ And if he found somewhere a good fellowe,  
 He wolde teachen him to have no awe  
 In such case of the Arche-deacon’s curse,  
 Unless a mannes soul were in his purse ;  
 For in his purse he sholde y-punished be.  
 ‘ Purse is the Arche-deacon’s hell,’ quoth he.”

But the pardoner is the worst of the lot, and his transparent frauds Chaucer lays bare with exquisite satire. He figured as a great ecclesiastic, but his supreme object was money:

“ Well could he read a lesson or a story,  
 But best of all he sang an offertory ;  
 For well he knew, when that the song was sung,  
 He moste preach, and well affyle his tongue  
 To wynne silver, as he right well could ;  
 Therefore he sang full merrily and loud.”

As he rode along with the pilgrims—

“ His wallet lay before him in his lap,  
 Brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot.  
 \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

But of his craft, from Berwyk unto Ware,  
 Ne was there such another pardoner,  
 For in his bag he had a pilwe-beer,\*  
 Which that, he seide, was our lady’s veil ;  
 He seide he had a tatter of the sail  
 That Seynte Peter had, when that he went  
 Upon the sea, till Jesu Christ him hente; †  
 He had a cross of metal full of stones,  
 And in a glass he hadde pigges bones ;  
 But with these reliques, when that he fond  
 A poore parson dwelling in the lond,  
 Upon a day he got him more moneye  
 Than that the parson got in monthes tweye.  
 And thus with feyned flattery and japes ‡  
 He made the parson and the people his apes.”

Throughout the “*Canterbury Tales*,” the references to the representatives of the Church are in keeping with the portraits given in the prologue.

\* Pillow-case.

† Took.

‡ Tricks.

In France the corrupt condition of the Church evoked strong condemnation. Both in poetry and prose the monks and priests were targets for the shafts of satirists. The troubadours of the South directed many of their songs against the tyranny and wickedness of the Papacy. They generally took sides with the Albigenses, and thus aroused the enmity of the Popes. In 1229 the University of Toulouse was founded ; and Pope Innocent IV., denouncing the Provençal language as identified with heresy, forbade its use by the students.

Thibaut IV., who had taken part in the crusade against the Albigenses, repented of his part in the bloody work, and denounced it in burning words :

“ They are preachers who have left their sermons  
To wage war and to kill people ;  
Never in God did such men believe.  
Our head\* makes all the limbs to suffer.”

In two of the longest and most popular poems of the Middle Ages, the “ Roman de Renard ” and the “ Roman de la Rose,” the worldliness, fraud, and immorality of the monks and clergy are exposed. In the former we read that “ really the reverend folks should strive to conduct themselves better.” The prevalence of concubinage on both sides of the Alps is dwelt upon. Then the poem proceeds :

“ All powerful truly is money !  
Few are the princely lands in which the priests do not  
levy  
Tolls and rents, availing themselves of mill and of  
village.  
Such pervert the world, and the people learn what is  
evil ;  
For one sees, where the priest is such, there all become  
sinful,

\* That is, the Pope.

One blind man from the path that is good misleading the others.

Nay, now, who has seen any pious works of the priesthood,  
Or how they build up holy Church with worthy example.  
Who lives only thereafter? They all grow stronger in evil.

So is it, too, with the people ; then how shall the world  
become better ? ” \*

In the “Roman de la Rose,” a part of which was translated by Chaucer, we read, for example, of the unscrupulous methods adopted by the monks and priests to overthrow their enemies :

“ Another custom usen we ;  
Of them that will against us be,  
We hate them deadly every one,  
And we will war on them, as one.  
Him that one hateth, hate we all  
And project how to make him fall.  
And if we see him win honour,  
Riches or praise through his valour,  
Allowance, rent, or dignity,  
Full fast, in sooth, compassen we  
By what ladder he is clomben so ;  
And for to maken him doen go,  
With treason we will him defame,  
And make him lose his goode name.  
Thus from his ladder we him take,  
And thus his friends foes we make.” †

The “Heptameron,” written by Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, presents a graphic picture of the manners and morals of her time. It contains seventy-two stories, nearly all of which turn upon some intrigue or amour. Many of the stories exhibit the immoralities of the monks and priests. Sometimes it is an abuse of the confessional ; sometimes it is an unhallowed relation between prior and nun ; sometimes it is a curate who abuses the

\* This extract is taken from Goethe's “Reineke Fuchs,” Canto VIII.

† Chaucer's “Romaunt of the Rose,” l. 6924-38.

confidence of his parishioners ; sometimes it is a fraudulent marriage for the purpose of gaining money. The tales are all too gross to be narrated, but they agree in exhibiting a shameful state of morals among the minor representatives of the Papal Church.

Rabelais, who was one of the most learned men of his time, and had himself taken monastic vows, portrays the idleness, ignorance, and sensuality of the monks in strong language. He was pronounced by Coleridge one of "the deepest, as well as bold-est, thinkers of his age." In his "Life of Gargantua," he explains why monks were generally despised. "A monk," he says, "does not labor, as a peasant does ; he does not guard the country, as the soldier ; he does not heal the sick, as the physician ; he does not preach and teach, as the good evangelical doctor and school-master ; he does not import commodities necessary for the commonwealth, as the merchant. That is why they are hooted and abhorred by all men. 'Yea, but they pray to God for us,' said Grandgousier. 'Nothing less,' answered Gargantua. 'It is true that with the jingling of their bells they disturb all the neighborhood.' 'Right,' said the monk, 'a mass, a matin, a vesper well rung is half said.' 'They mumble a great number of legends and Psalms,' continued Gargantua, 'which they do not at all understand. They go over many paternosters, interlarded with long Ave Marias, without thinking of them or understanding them. And that I call mocking God, not praying to Him. But so help them God, if they pray for us, and not for fear of losing their fat loaves and soup.' " \*

The literature of mediæval Germany is still bolder in its denunciation of ecclesiastical abuses.

\* "Oeuvres de Rabelais," Chap. XL.

In France, as we have seen, the attacks were leveled chiefly at the lower orders of ecclesiastics. But in Germany the Papacy, in its conflicts with the empire, had made its preposterous claims and tyranny more strongly felt. German satirists are not content to hold the monks and friars up to contempt, but boldly assail the wickedness and oppressions of the Papacy itself. In various ways poetry broke away from ecclesiastical control, and became an independent moral force. "It was tolerant in its spirit," says Scherer, "and had declared through Wolfram that unbelief could be expiated by a mere change of views. In the *Nibelungenlied* it had inculcated the unchristian duty of revenge; in the *minnesingers* it assigned a position to women which the Church could never yield to them; in the chivalrous and popular epics it set up ideals of life utterly at variance with those represented in the lives of the Christian saints; in Walther's and Freidank's hands it assumed a directly hostile attitude toward the Church and the Papacy. It was not only in Provence that heresy went hand in hand with the secular poetry. In Germany, too, heretics acquired great influence; they gained the hearts of the people, and composed hymns and songs which were taught to children." \*

Freidank was a poet whose thought extended beyond the sphere of love. He was a patriotic German, who sided with the empire in its conflicts with the Papacy. He is somewhat indulgent to the clergy, but fiercely assails the Pope. St. Peter, he says, received from God the charge of feeding His sheep, not of shearing them; yet all treasures go to Rome never to return again. He satirizes the system of indulgences, and rec-

\* Scherer's "History of German Literature," II., p. 225.

omnends with bitter irony that the man who contemplates murder should purchase freedom in advance.

One of the most celebrated mediæval story-tellers was Stricker. Though a severe moralist and steadfast adherent of the Church, he presented in the poem, "The Priest Amis," a characteristic picture of his age. The hero of the tale is a clerical swindler, who cunningly imposes on the ignorance and credulity of his victims. He sells fraudulent relics and pretends to work miracles. Visiting a cloister under the garb of a peasant, he deceives the provost with his pious pretensions. When asked what he desires, he meekly replies: "I am a poor man and have no desire for property; for I wish to live without sin, and to lift my heart and hands to God in prayer until the day of my death." Received into the cloister, he creates the impression, by a cunning trick, that he is the subject of miraculous intervention. The cloister becomes a place of pious pilgrimage, and rich gifts pour into its treasury. The end of the story is best given in the poet's own words: "He had made all the brethren and servants drunk, so that they lay as if they were dead. Then the priest bade his confederates carry out quickly the silver and gold, and all that had been offered to him. Nothing was forgotten. Thus he took away full two hundred marks, hasting with so great speed that he escaped without harm." The whole story gives an interesting insight into the monastic life of the time.

The greatest of the minnesingers was Walther von der Vogelweide. Born in the Tyrol, of noble blood, he wandered from country to country with harp and song. "Many lands," he says, "have I seen." He dwelt at the court of princes, and

was tutor to the young son of Frederick II., afterward Henry VII. He was an ardent patriot; the German people were the best that he "found in the wide world."

"The German has a well-bred air,  
And women there are angel fair."

His wide experience and observation gave him a clear insight into the religious condition of the Germanic states. He was a broad-minded patriot, and became indignant at the Papal usurpation, which dared to set up and dethrone German emperors. The conflicts between the empire and the Papacy, as well as the moral degeneracy of his age, are reflected in his poems. He attacked the Pope in a number of brief, biting poems, the energy and brilliancy of which must have given them wide circulation and large influence. Speaking of "The Papal Chair," he says :

"Thereon men now invoke God's wrath,  
And ask, how long, O Lord, wilt sleep?  
Thy teachers follow error's path,  
Thy shepherd flays and kills the sheep.  
The layman's robbed of goods and land,  
And blood makes red thy Vicar's hand." \*

That is nearly the whole poem; but the lines, as he wrote them, sting and stick like barbed arrows.

Walther boldly accuses the Pope and prelates of their corrupt and demoralizing example. Here is his poem entitled "Bad Models :"

"Whose heart turns not to every evil now?  
The Pope as heretic belies his vow,  
With whom should dwell celestial love and grace.  
The words and deeds of prelates let us trace :  
In both they once deserved unstinted praise ;

\* Walther von der Vogelweide's "Sämmtliche Gedichte." So for the translations following.

In both they are consistent now-a-days,  
 For steadily they *teach* and *follow* wrong,  
 Who should the models be of all the throng.  
 Despair has filled the stupid layman long ;  
 E'en hermits bitter lamentations raise."

Walther touches upon Papal avarice and cunning in a little poem called "The Italian Money-Chest :"

" Pray see the Pope, how Christ-like are his smiles,  
 As he to cronies tells his deep-laid wiles !  
 'Twere well he ne'er such wiles had found :  
 ' Two Germans with one diadem I've crowned,  
 That they with war may work the Empire woe,  
 While with their gold my coffers overflow.  
 They cut each other's throats by rage possessed,  
 But meanwhile German coinage fills my chest.  
 Therefore, ye prelates, feast with merry breast,  
 And let the stupid Germans hungry go.'"

The literature of Italy during the fourteenth century was scarcely less severe in its treatment of the vices of the representatives of the Papacy. In this century lived three great writers—Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio—who, as forerunners of the modern era, have exerted an immense influence upon the literary development of Europe. It is remarkable that all three repeatedly attack the profligacy of the Roman court.

For many years Petrarch lived at Avignon during the "Babylonish captivity," and was on terms of intimacy with members of the Papal court. In his letters and sonnets he has described the luxury and vice prevailing in ecclesiastical circles. His own life was not free from the moral taint of the time ; for though a priest of the Church, he lived with a concubine, and wrote his passionate sonnets to Laura. His two children were afterward legitimized by a Papal bull.

In his letters Petrarch has given vent to his

indignation at the luxury of the Papal court. "The successors of a troop of fishermen," he says, "have forgotten their origin. They are not contented, like the first followers of Christ, who gained their livelihood by the Lake of Genesareth, with modest habitations, but they must build themselves splendid palaces, and go covered with gold and purple. They are fishers of men, who catch a credulous multitude and devour them for their prey." He calls Avignon "the western Babylon, the worst of all the habitations of men, and but little better than the infernal regions."

"From the contents of these letters," says a biographer, "we might set down Petrarch as the earliest preacher of the Reformation, if there were not, in the writings of Dante, some passages of the same stamp. If these epistles were really circulated at the time they were written, it is matter of astonishment that Petrarch never suffered from any other flames than those of love; for many honest reformers, who have been roasted alive, have uttered less antipapal vituperation than our poet; nor, although Petrarch would have been startled at a revolution in the hierarchy, can it be doubted that his writings contributed to the Reformation." \*

In one of his sonnets, Petrarch invokes maledictions upon the proud and voluptuous court:

"May fire from Heaven fall upon thy head,  
O wicked court! Thy former frugal fare  
Is now exchanged for luxury and pride,  
The spoils of others whom thou hast oppressed  
With evil deeds which are thy sole delight.  
O nest of treachery! in which is nursed  
Whatever wickedness o'erspreads the world."

\* Petrarch's "Sonnets and Other Poems," p. 15.

Dante is universally recognized as the greatest poet of Italy. He concentrated in himself the learning of the Middle Ages, and afterward embodied it in the "Divine Comedy." He was a participant in the political and religious struggles of his day, and spent the closing years of his life in banishment from his native city, Florence. Near the beginning of the fourteenth century, he wrote a prose treatise, entitled *De Monarchia*, in which he combats the Pope's claim to universal dominion. The emperor, he maintains, derives his authority, no less than the Pope, from God. He points out some of the fallacies by which the Papists were accustomed to defend the temporal pretensions of the Pope. The well-known text about binding and loosing he restricts to spiritual matters. The comparison of the Pope to the sun and the emperor to the moon he rejects as false. Though he does not question the fact of Constantine's gift of the empire to the Pope, he denies its legality; for the one had no right to give nor the other to receive such a gift. The empire cannot be dependent on the Papacy, for it existed and was recognized in the Scriptures before a Pope was heard of.

But it is in the "Divine Comedy" that the moral condition of the Papacy is pointed out. Dante does not hesitate to place in purgatory and hell some of the occupants of the chair of St. Peter as a penalty for their wickedness. Had he lived through the following century, who can doubt that he would have placed many more there? Wandering through the regions of the lost, the poet asks :

" O say, my guide,

What race is this? Were these, whose heads are shorn,  
On our left hand, all separate to the Church? "

He straight replied : ' In their first life these all

In mind were so distorted, that they made,  
 According to due measure, of their wealth  
 No use. This clearly from their words collect,  
 Which they howl forth, at each extremity  
 Arriving of the circle, where their crime  
 Contrary in kind disparts them. To the Church  
 Where separate those, that with no hairy cowls  
 Are crowned, both Popes and cardinals, o'er whom  
 Avarice dominion absolute maintains. ' ' \*

Visiting a lower and more horrible abyss, Dante and his companion sought shelter from "the fetid exhalation :"

" Behind the lid  
 Of a great monument we stood retired,  
 Whereon this scroll I read : ' I have in charge  
 Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus drew  
 From the right path. ' "

Among the other Popes whom Dante consigns to hell as a fit retribution for their wickedness were Nicholas III., who confesses his simony ; Boniface VIII., who did "not fear to seize the beautiful Lady"—the Church—"and then to do her outrage ;" and Clement V., "of uglier deed," who, like the Maccabean Jason, bought the high-priesthood.

Boccaccio's "Decameron" is one of the best-known works of mediæval literature. It has exerted a wide influence on European literature, being imitated by the Queen of Navarre in the "Heptameron," suggesting to Chaucer the imperishable "Canterbury Tales," and supplying material to numberless writers. It consists of one hundred brief stories, which seven ladies and three gentlemen—all young, handsome, and cultivated—relate as a merry pastime at a country villa, whither they had fled, in 1348, to escape the plague in Florence. Most of the stories are

\* Dante's "Hell," Canto VII., pp. 37-49.

taken from contemporary life, and present a frightful picture of the depravity, not only of the Italian cloisters, but also of the Papal court.

A single passage, taken from the second story, must suffice. A Jew, of Paris, on the point of becoming a Christian, determines to visit Rome in order to observe the manners of him whom he is urged to receive as the Vicar of Christ. "He mounted his horse," Boccaccio continues, "and as quickly as possible betook himself to the court of Rome, where he was honorably entertained by his brethren, and there abiding, without telling any the reason of his coming, he began diligently to inquire into the manners and fashions of the Pope and cardinals and other prelates and of all the members of his court, and what with that which he himself noted, being a mighty quick-witted man, and that which he gathered from others, he found all, from the highest to the lowest, most shamefully given to the sin of lust, without any restraint of remorse or shamefastness, insomuch that the interest of courtesans was of no small avail there in obtaining any considerable thing.

"Moreover, he manifestly perceived them to be universally gluttons, wine-bibbers, drunkards, and slaves to their stomachs, brute fashion, more than to aught else after lust. And, looking further, he saw them all covetous and greedy after money, insomuch that human, nay, Christian blood, no less than things sacred, whatsoever they might be, whether pertaining to the sacrifices of the altar or to the benefices of the Church, they sold and bought indifferently for a price, making a greater traffic and having more brokers thereof than folks at Paris of silks, and stuffs, or what not else." Such is Boccaccio's picture of the Papal court.

The foregoing survey, brief and partial as it is, clearly reveals the attitude of literature in the principal nations of Europe toward the close of the Middle Ages. Chaucer, Rabelais, Walther von der Vogelweide, Dante, Boccaccio—these are all distinguished names in literary history. Chaucer and Dante rank among the world's great classics. They all presented the religious condition of their age as they saw it; and against the inconsistencies, avarice, fraud, and licentiousness of a large part of the representatives of the Papal Church they hurled their indignant protests and scathing satire. Their works gained a permanent hold upon the minds of the people; and their influence in undermining the Papal system and in preparing the way for a purer type of Christianity cannot be estimated.

We have now traced the various reforming agencies and influences prior to the Reformation. The mystics, in opposition to the externalism of the Papacy, cultivated a deep spiritual piety; individual reformers, like Wycliffe and Huss, advocated a purer type of belief and practice; the Reforming Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basel protested against the autocracy of the Pope, and urged a reformation of the Church in head and members; the literature of the age rebuked and satirized the tyranny and wickedness of the Roman hierarchy and its representatives. But all proved in vain. Instead of improvement or reformation, the Papacy persisted in its course of oppression and evil; it showed an unwillingness to reform either its doctrinal system or its corrupt practice. It clung desperately to its system of error and oppression which placed western Europe helpless at its feet. There seemed no hope of breaking its deadly tyranny. But no evil institu-

tion is permanent. And even while the Papacy was rioting in luxury, extortion, and wickedness, and jesting about the profitableness of the Christian fable, God was preparing conditions which made its tyranny impossible for a large part of Europe. The time of retribution was coming, the day of reform was at hand.

# PART THIRD.

## THE CIRCUMSTANCES PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE REFORMATION, AND ITS BEGINNING.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### NATIONAL GROWTH.

A REMARKABLE phenomenon in the later Middle Ages was the growth of national life and national feeling. After the destruction of the Roman Empire by the incursions and conquests of the various Teutonic tribes, there was no national life. The western part of the empire was divided up among Saxons, Franks, Goths, and others. In place of Roman unity, law, and order, we find nothing but division, disorder, and anarchy. The great modern nations were not born. The only bond of unity, which was at first an indefinite and inefficient one, was the Papacy. But, as in the beginning of creation and under the same divine law, order came in the course of time to replace chaos. And by the sixteenth century, England, France, and Spain had emerged from the confusion in substantially their modern form, and in Germany, though there was a lack of a single strong government, a national feeling had in some measure developed.

In this wonderful development of national life, Italy lagged furthest behind. Its divisions and

animosities were largely due to that power which ought to have been beneficently active in securing unity and strength. But the Papacy, instead of being the friend, has been the enemy of Italy. Lacking the power to form a stable national government, and fearing too strong a secular authority, the Popes found it to their interest to perpetuate existing divisions. When any of their neighbors, as Naples, Venice, Florence, or Milan, became dangerously strong, they did not hesitate to call France or Spain or Germany to their aid in subduing these rival states.

The statements of the Florentine historian, Machiavelli, on this subject are as clear as bold. "Forasmuch as some are of opinion," he says, "that the felicity and welfare of Italy depend upon the Church of Rome, I shall set down some few reasons to the contrary, which I have framed to myself, two of which are, in my judgment, unanswerable. One is, that by the corrupt example of that court, that province has lost all its religion, and all its devotion, which has been followed by many inconveniencies and disorders; for as the religiousness of a people presupposes all well, so where they are wicked it betokens the contrary; so then, we Italians have this obligation to the Church and its ministers, that by their means we are become heathenish and irreligious; besides another (little less pernicious), and that is, that we are grown divided and factious, which must of necessity be our ruin, because never was any province happy or united, unless under the obedience of one commonwealth or one prince, as France and Spain at this time: and the reason is, because Italy is not upon the same terms, as having no one republic or commonwealth to govern it but the Church; and though the Pope has assumed a tem-

poral as well as spiritual jurisdiction, yet he was never so courageous, or powerful, as to possess himself of all, and make himself prince ; nor was he ever so weak, but, upon apprehension of losing his temporal dominion, he could not call in some foreign potentate to defend him against any man who was grown too formidable. The Church, therefore, being neither so strong as to conquer all Italy, nor so weak as to suffer it to be overrun by anybody else, has been the occasion that it never fell into the hands of one person, but has been cantonized into several principalities, by which means it has been so weak and disunited that it has been not only exposed as a prey to the powers of the barbarians, but to everyone that thought good to invade it, which is an unhappiness we Italians owe only to the Church." \*

Strange to say, Germany was almost as far from national unity as Italy itself. Its divisions were chiefly due to the great rival of the Papacy, namely, the Holy Roman Empire, whose sovereign was always a German prince. While a continuation of the empire founded by Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Empire (which was neither holy nor Roman), dates from Otto the Great in the tenth century. It rests on a widespread belief during the Middle Ages that there should be a universal temporal power corresponding to the universal spiritual power. The function of the former was to guard man's secular interests, as the function of the latter was to guard his spiritual interests. "The Pope, as vicar in matters spiritual," to use the words of Bryce, "is to lead men to eternal life ; the emperor, as vicar in matters temporal, must so control them in their dealings with one another that they may be able to pursue undisturbed the

\* Machiavelli's "Discourses," Book I., Chap. XII.

spiritual life, and thereby attain the same supreme and common end of everlasting happiness. In view of this object, his chief duty is to maintain peace in the world, while toward the Church his position is that of Advocate, a title borrowed from the practice of Churches and monasteries of choosing some powerful baron to protect their lands and lead their tenants to war. The functions of advocacy are twofold : at home to make the Christian people obedient to the priesthood, and to execute their decrees upon heretics and sinners ; abroad to propagate the faith among the heathen, not sparing to use carnal weapons." \*

At first the two powers were regarded as equal, deriving alike their authority immediately from God. But the result was what might easily have been foreseen. A conflict arose between the Papacy and the empire for supremacy. The conflict extended through several centuries with varying fortunes. If Henry III. deposed three rival Popes and appointed another in their place, his successor, Henry IV., though titular sovereign of all nations, was forced to become a humble suppliant of the Pope, at Canossa, in 1077. It was at this time that the bold Gregory VII. put forth the preposterous claims, which all succeeding Popes have steadily adhered to in theory, that all mankind are subject to the Pope as God's Vicar, and that all earthly authority emanates from him.

The Holy Roman Empire worked disastrously upon German unity in two ways. In the first place, it gave the emperor large interests outside of Germany. A large part of his energies were absorbed in the effort to maintain his supremacy in Italy, the south of France, parts of Poland, and elsewhere. Unlike the sovereigns of France

\* Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire," p. 102.

and England, he was not free to labor for the unity and solidification of Germany under a strong central authority. In the second place, in the emperor's conflicts with the Papacy, various German princes, in order to weaken the imperial power or to promote some selfish end, sometimes sided with the Pope.

Under the Golden Bull of 1356, a new emperor, when a vacancy occurred, was to be chosen by seven princely electors, as follows: the three archbishops of Mayence, Treves, and Cologne, the Court Palatine of the Rhine, the King of Bohemia, the Elector of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg. Though inducted into office with elaborate feudal ceremonies, the emperor had little power at the close of the Middle Ages. There were no imperial domains; and his authority consisted of little more than a sort of feudal headship.

But in spite of the division of Germany into a large number of petty principalities, there existed, in the fifteenth century and earlier, a racial, if not strictly national, feeling. The empire itself, with its German head, brought the people together in a common interest. Their language, which had become the vehicle of heroic poems and beautiful minnesongs, was a strong bond of union. Satirists had strongly appealed to the patriotism of the German race. Above all, perhaps, flourishing cities had sprung up under the commercial activity following the crusades, and become centres of intelligence and wealth. They formed leagues to protect themselves from the unjust tariffs or plundering expeditions of the nobles. The Hanseatic League, which, at the height of its power, included no fewer than eighty-five cities, was a mighty force in northern Germany.

The growth of the French monarchy, which was completed in the fifteenth century, extended through nearly five hundred years. It began with Hugh Capet, who was elected king in 987. At that time France was divided into a number of independent baronies or duchies, the principal of which were Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Guienne, Aquitaine, Toulouse, and Provence. Hugh Capet, on ascending the throne, ruled only a small district in northern France, the chief city of which was Paris.

The dynasty of the Capets, which extended from the tenth to the eighteenth century, succeeded in solving the double and difficult problem that confronted it in the beginning. It united the different fragments of territory in a single royal domain, and it substituted a central monarchical authority for feudal independence and division. This great result, which was slowly effected from reign to reign, was brought about in three ways: 1. The hereditary of the crown; 2. The principle of primogeniture; and, 3. The indivisibility of the royal domain. The principle of hereditary secured consistency of policy; the principle of primogeniture, when once established, prevented family divisions and civil conflicts; and the indivisibility of the royal domain guarded and perpetuated every gain.

The royal domain was extended in various ways. Sometimes a district was violently seized upon at the death of the reigning duke. Sometimes a duchy was added by marriage with the heiress. At other times favorable opportunities were taken to make additions by conquest. With the growing power and extent of the kingdom, this aggressive policy encountered fewer difficulties. The

resistance and combinations of the minor feudal lords proved unavailing.

The greatest difficulty that finally lay in the path of French national development was the territory held by the kings of England. At one time the English possessions included the entire western part of France—the duchies of Normandy, Brittany, and Aquitaine. Quarrels and conflicts between French and English sovereigns were almost incessant. Early in the thirteenth century Philip Augustus succeeded in depriving John of a considerable part of the English territory. Finally the hundred years' war came on, and was gloriously terminated by the heroic leadership of Joan of Arc. England lost forever her French possessions.

Along with the extension of his territory, the French king established a stable central administration. He assumed the right to levy and collect taxes ; he maintained a standing army ; he established a system of justice. Thus at the beginning of the sixteenth century, France had become a strong absolute monarchy. Out of the feudal baronies of the Middle Ages there had issued a strong nation, which, in its independence and sharply-marked self-consciousness, was averse to all foreign interference and domination whatever.

The national development of Spain was more rapid and more splendid than that of any other state in Europe. For centuries Spain had been under the dominion of feudal lords. The Moors had established themselves in southern Spain. Subsequently three minor kingdoms had developed—Aragon, Castile, and Navarre. As elsewhere in Europe, the cities had risen into prominence ; and in the conflicts between the kings and the feudal lords they generally sided with the former.

But in 1481, when Ferdinand of Aragon married Isabella of Castile, there came a sudden change. By the virtual union of these two kingdoms, the strongest in Spain, the national development received a new and irresistible impulse. Ferdinand and Isabella were agreed in their policy of bringing about national unity. One of the first steps in this direction was the conquest of Grenada. After a bloody conflict of ten years, the Moorish capital, with the famous castle of the Alhambra, was captured, and the king, Boabdil, driven into Africa. Later the kingdom of Navarre was added to the central monarchy, and thus Spain, in less than a generation, became one of the leading powers of Europe.

Two facts added greatly to the prestige of Spain. The first was the discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492. In addition to an increase of fame, it brought large colonial possessions, and filled her treasury with the gold and silver of Mexico and Peru. The other fact adding to the influence of Spain was the far-sighted policy of Ferdinand. He sought to form alliances by marriage with leading sovereigns in Europe. His daughter Isabella married the king of Portugal—an alliance that under Philip II. added that country to Spain. His daughter Joanna married Philip of Austria—a marriage that was intended to secure the union of Austria and Burgundy under the Spanish crown. His daughter Catherine married Henry VIII. of England—a union that was designed to secure the alliance of England against France, the principal rival of Ferdinand in Europe. Thus a national feeling came to predominate over all others.

England was the first nation of modern Europe to acquire a firm national organization. Even before the Norman conquest in 1066, its various

hostile divisions were brought together under Edgar, who first became "King of all England." For nine hundred years its line of sovereigns has been practically unbroken. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was wellnigh an absolute monarchy, under the vigorous rule of the Tudors.

An important change and notable advance in the development of England began with William of Normandy, who made good his claim to the throne at the battle of Hastings. He restored national unity by abolishing the four great earldoms, which had previously been a constant menace to the throne. He introduced the feudal system in a modified form; while parceling out England among his principal followers, he bound them all to loyalty to himself. Strong independent baronies, as they existed across the channel, were not allowed. As a means of strengthening the crown, he had a census and property-list made for the kingdom, which is still preserved in the Domesday Book. This enabled him to levy taxes and make military requisitions throughout his realm.

For two or three centuries, England was occupied by two classes—Norman rulers and Saxon serfs. The French and Saxon languages existed side by side. But in various ways, particularly through military service in France, these two hostile classes were brought closer together. Their languages amalgamated; and, in the works of Langland, Wycliffe, Gower, and Chaucer, they laid the foundation of the English used to-day. A strain of French or Norman vivacity was added to the Teutonic phlegm of the Saxon; and the result was a type of character that has never been surpassed in its force, enterprise, and progress.

For a century after the conquest, the barons

endeavored to secure a dominant power in the kingdom. Under the reign of Stephen they were, in a measure, successful, and "robber castles" were erected in all parts of England. But under his successor, Henry II., the royal power was again made pre-eminent, and in the Assize of Clarendon he established a system of justice for all England. The usurpations and tyranny of John provoked hostility among all classes of the people; and in 1215 he was forced to sign the *Magna Charta*, which henceforth placed a limit on royal aggressions.

In 1295 the first complete or model Parliament was summoned. At first the lords and commons sat together; but about 1343 the commons became a separate body, and gradually gained greater influence in the government. They voted supplies of money and proposed new laws. In 1376 they gained the right of impeaching such ministers of the crown as had shown themselves unfaithful to the interests of the people. At last, in 1407, they obtained the exclusive right of making all grants of money required by the crown. This gave them immense power.

The Wars of the Roses in the latter half of the fifteenth century were favorable to royal supremacy. Many of the nobility were slain; and, absorbed in local interests, not a few of the towns failed to elect members of Parliament. During the reign of the Tudors, beginning with Henry VII. in 1485, the Parliament had little influence. In order to raise money, Henry resorted to "benevolences" or enforced gifts, and to fines imposed by the Court of Star Chamber. Henry VIII., under whom the Reformation in England had its beginning, shared in these despotic tendencies.

Thus, for several centuries before the era of the

Reformation, the nations of Europe were assuming a strong self-consciousness and resolute independence. This spirit of national independence was supported by the revived study of Roman law, which brought to the defense of royal authority a code more venerable for its antiquity than the forged decretals to which the Papacy made appeal. The result was in all the states of Europe a growing antagonism to Papal aggression and supremacy. Except in spiritual matters, the tendency was to exalt the state above the Papacy. This gave rise to the prolonged conflict between the emperor and the Pope, between Guelf and Ghibelline, between France and Rome, and between England and the Pope. Even Spain resisted the claims of the Pope to absolute supremacy.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RENAISSANCE.

THE term Renaissance is applied to the remarkable intellectual awakening that came as a second birth to Europe in the closing centuries of the Middle Ages. Evidences of this awakening have already come before us in the growth of commerce, the rise of nations, and the beginnings of national literatures. But the most potent agency in this awakening was the revival of learning. After the dark night of the earlier Middle Ages, Europe quickly rose to the heights of ancient classical thought, which was henceforth to be the basis of grander human achievement.

The ecclesiastical schools of the Middle Ages, as has been shown, were not designed for popular instruction. For a long time the masses grew up in ignorance. Even the nobility were, in most cases, unable to read and write. But two influences sprang up later to increase educational facilities. The first was chivalry, which provided a knightly culture ; and the second was commerce, which led to the establishment of town or burgher schools for the purpose of practical education. Both classes of schools, which were reactions against the narrow and defective character of the ecclesiastical schools, led to a larger and more practical knowledge.

As early as the twelfth century, the presence of a scientific spirit is unmistakable. The University

of Bologna was founded for the study of law, and the University of Salerno for the study of medicine. About the same time the cathedral school of Paris was enlarged into a university, in which the study of theology was predominant. This became for a long time the most distinguished seat of learning in Europe, and was at one period attended by more than twenty thousand students. Its influence before and during the Reformation was very great. Oxford and Cambridge, though the dates of their foundation cannot be fixed, are scarcely less venerable.

This scientific spirit, the energies of which were devoted largely to scholasticism, was due to two principal causes. The first was the crusades, which brought to the people of western Europe the stimulus of a noble purpose, and which, by various expeditions to the Holy Land, acquainted multitudes with new customs and peoples. The second was Mohammedan learning. For a time the Arabians were the intellectual teachers of Europe. Their schools in Spain, and even in Bagdad, were attended by Christian youth from various parts of Europe, who carried Arabian science—mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, chemistry, medicine—back with them to their homes. The intellectual activity of Christian Europe was thus stimulated in a remarkable degree. Before the middle of the fifteenth century, no fewer than ten universities, attended by thousands of eager students, had been founded in Italy, France, Germany, and England.

The remarkable inventions and discoveries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries exerted a favorable influence upon the intellectual development of Europe. The invention of gunpowder, as soon as it led to the use of firearms, helped to

bring about a salutary change in the organization of society. It destroyed the military prestige of the knightly order, brought the lower classes into greater prominence, and contributed to the abolition of serfdom.

The mariner's compass greatly furthered navigation. Instead of creeping along the shores of the Mediterranean or Atlantic, seamen boldly ventured upon unknown waters. Discoveries followed in rapid succession. After the Canary Islands and the Azores, the coast of Upper Guinea was discovered, and, in 1486, Diaz reached the southern point of Africa, which was named Cape of Good Hope. In 1492 Columbus discovered the western continent, and, six years later, Vasco de Gama, rounding the Cape of Good Hope, sailed across the Indian Ocean to Calcutta. Early in the following century, Englishmen explored the coast of North America, Spain conquered Mexico and Peru, and Portugal took possession of the eastern part of South America. It is not easy to conceive the effect which these discoveries, as presented in highly wrought descriptions, must have had upon the people of Europe.

A very powerful factor in the intellectual development of Europe was the printing press. Invented about the middle of the fifteenth century, it was brought, in less than a decade, to such perfection that the whole Bible appeared in type in 1456. It became an invaluable auxiliary in the revival of learning. It at once supplanted the tedious and costly process of copying books by hand, and brought the repositories of learning within reach of the common people. Printing was rapidly introduced in all the nations of Europe; and, before the close of the century, there were no fewer than two hundred and thirty-

six printing establishments in various towns and cities.

The revival of learning had its beginning in Italy. The three great Italian writers of the fourteenth century—Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch—may be regarded as its pioneers. Dante was familiar with the Latin classics, and in the “Inferno” it is Virgil who serves him as guide. Boccaccio was distinguished for his scholarship. He was zealous in collecting books and manuscripts, and is said to have been the first Italian who imported a copy of the “Iliad” and “Odyssey” from Greece. His Latin work, “The Genealogy of the Gods,” was the most comprehensive mythological treatise that had yet appeared. Petrarch was a zealous student of Latin and Greek antiquity. He traveled through Italy, France, Spain, and Germany in search of manuscripts, some of which he copied with his own hand. Though an ecclesiastic, he did not follow mediæval models of style, but wrote with classical finish and grace.

In the fourteenth century Florence became the centre of culture for Italy. The city was under the government of the Medici, who made it the home of literature and art. Michael Angelo, destined to be the greatest sculptor and one of the greatest painters of Italy, lived in the Medicean palace. The first Greek, Manuel Chrysolorus, who introduced the literary treasures of his country into Italy, received an appointment as teacher from the city of Florence, in 1396. The Platonic Academy was founded, and all the writings of Plato were translated.

Though there had previously been, as we have just seen, a turning of thought to Roman and Greek antiquity, the movement received its first

mighty impulse in 1453, when the capture of Constantinople by the Turks drove many Greek scholars to Italy. The way had been prepared for them in the revived interest in Greek learning. They were accordingly welcomed by noble patronage, and under its fostering care became for a time the teachers of Christian Europe. The interest in antiquity deepened into enthusiasm. Libraries were founded and manuscripts were collected with great ardor. Several of the Popes, without scenting danger, became generous patrons of ancient learning; Nicholas V. founded the celebrated Vatican Library, and collected for it a large number of Greek and Latin manuscripts; and, under Leo X., Rome became a centre of classical scholarship.

The work of these Italian humanists has been well portrayed by Seebohm. "They were digging up again," he says, "and publishing, by means of the printing press, the works of the old Greek and Latin writers, and they found in them something to their taste much more true and pure than the literature of the Middle Ages. After reading the pure Latin of the classical writers they were disgusted with the bad Latin of the monks; after studying Plato they were disgusted with scholastic philosophy. Such was the rottenness of Rome that they found in the high aspirations of Plato after spiritual truth and immortality a religion which seemed to them purer than the grotesque form of Christianity which Rome held out to them. They could flatter the profligate Pope as all but divine in such words as 'Sing unto Sixtus a new song,' but in their hearts some of them scoffed, and doubted whether Christianity be true and whether there is life after death for mankind." \*

But this new movement was not to be confined to Italy. Eager scholars from England, France, and Germany sat at the feet of Italian masters in order afterward to bear beyond the Alps the precious seed of the new culture. During the reign of Lorenzo de Medici, several Oxford students, among whom were Linacre and Grocyn, visited Florence to complete their studies. Linacre received instruction along with Lorenzo's own children, one of whom afterward became Leo X. Returning to England, they gave a fresh impetus to the study of the Greek language and literature. German scholars, like Peter Luder and Samuel Karoch, introduced the new learning into the German universities. Various cities—Strasburg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, and others—became centres of culture, where literature and art were pursued with engrossing ardor.

The revival of learning did not everywhere follow the same lines of development and produce similar results. In Italy, classical learning became an end in itself; and hence, while enlarging and refining culture, it tended to paganize its adherents. Ardor for antiquity became intoxication. Infidelity prevailed in the highest ranks of the Church; Christianity was often despised as a superstition; and immorality abounded in shameful forms. The heathenism of Athens was reproduced in Christian Rome. There is reason to believe that Leo X. himself was a skeptic; and unbelief became so prevalent that the Tenth Lateran Council judged it advisable to reaffirm the doctrine of the immortality of the soul by a special decree.

The absence of moral integrity is singularly reflected in the works of Machiavelli, particularly in "The Prince," whom he advises to be unscrupulous.

pulous in the maintenance of power. Conscientious adherence to truth he stigmatizes as being "superstitiously exact." "The present manner of living," he says, "is so different from the way that ought to be taken, that he who neglects what is done, to follow what ought to be done, will sooner learn how to ruin than how to preserve himself; for a tender man, and one that desires to be honest in everything, must needs run a great hazard among so many of a contrary principle. Wherefore it is necessary for a prince that wishes to live, to harden himself, and learn to be good or otherwise, according to the exigence of his affairs." \* His writings, as he explains in his "Letter of Vindication," only reflect the political and ecclesiastical life of the time.

Such was the state of belief and morals prevailing in Rome at a time when ancient learning and the fine arts flourished. It was pagan antiquity revived in spirit and in life. Well might Raumer exclaim, as he contemplated the facts, "How strangely united in one and the same land, and at one and the same time, what is most splendid and what is most horrible! What an angelic child Raphael must have been, yet his childhood falls at the iniquitous time of Alexander VI. Yea, how often in one and the same hero of art were united the most beautiful and the most hateful elements, the noblest and the most debased impulses, pious devotion, and detestable sensuality! Into what sins he fell and sank, when his love for nature and antiquity degenerated into unrestrained and godless lust, and his art as his life became pagan." †

Among the Teutonic nations, particularly in

\* Machiavelli's "The Prince," Chap. XIII.

† Raumer's "Geschichte der Pädagogik."

Germany, Holland, and England, the revival of learning produced far more salutary results than in Italy. The deep moral earnestness of the Teutonic race preserved it from moral and religious debasement. After a time, the new learning was cultivated with as much zeal north as south of the Alps ; but its results were utilized in the interests of a purer Christianity. The Greek and Hebrew Scriptures were studied as well as the Latin and Greek classics. Critical editions of the Old and New Testaments were published by able scholars, and thus the means were supplied for discovering and correcting ecclesiastical abuses.

Agricola has been called the father of German humanism. Born in 1443, near Gröningen, he received his degree of Master of Arts at Louvain ; and after spending some time in Paris, he went to Ferrara, Italy, in 1476, where he attended the lectures of Theodore Beza, on the Greek language. His learning and eloquence gave him a wide reputation ; and, upon his return to his native country, several cities and courts vied with one another in the effort to secure his services. At length, upon the solicitation of his friend Dalberg, Bishop of Worms, he accepted a professorship at Heidelberg, where for three years he delivered lectures on the literature of Greece and Rome. It was through his labors, in large measure, that the new learning was transplanted from Italy into Germany. "At a time," says Raumer, "when the worst Latin prevailed in Germany, and such a degree of ignorance that good Latin was not in the least appreciated, and bad taste was admired, it was Agricola alone who began to feel those mistakes, and to have a desire for a better form of speech." At the age of forty-one he began the

study of Hebrew, in order to be able to read the Old Testament in the original.

He was an intelligent educator, and exerted no small influence in improving the schools of his day. He declined to take charge of a school at Antwerp, but he wrote the authorities a letter full of sage advice. He condemned the schools of the time, characterizing them as "a prison, in which there are blows, tears, and groans, without end." "It is necessary," he continued, "to exercise the greatest care in choosing a director for your school. Take neither a theologian nor a so-called rhetorician, who thinks he is able to speak of everything without understanding anything of eloquence. Such people make in school the same figure, according to the Greek proverb, that a dog does in a bath. It is necessary to seek a man resembling the phœnix of Achilles; that is, who knows how to teach, to speak, and to act at the same time. If you know such a man, get him at any price; for the matter involves the future of your children, whose tender youth receives with the same susceptibility the impress of good and of bad examples."

One of the greatest representatives of the new learning was Reuchlin, who was born at Pforzheim, Germany, in 1455. At the age of eighteen he went to Paris, where he studied under a native Greek. He made the acquaintance of Wessel, whose evangelical views were not without influence upon his religious opinions. After leaving Paris, he taught Latin and Greek at Basel, and subsequently he became a professor at Tübingen. He resided for a time at Heidelberg, and became a centre for the propagation of Greek scholarship. He issued several elementary Greek books, which were used in Germany many years.

But his studies were not confined to the Latin and Greek classics. He took a profound interest in the Hebrew language, and is justly regarded as the father of Hebrew studies in Germany. In 1498 he was sent on an embassy to Rome, where he employed all his leisure in studying Hebrew, under a learned Jew, and in collecting Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. The motive that urged him to prosecute his studies in Hebrew is explained in a letter to Cardinal Hadrian: "I devoted myself to the Hebrew language because I perceived the great value which it would have for religion and true theology. To this end I have always directed my labors, and continue to direct them more than ever. As a true worshiper of our Lord, I have done all for the restoration and glorification of the true Christian Church." On the publication of his Hebrew grammar and lexicon, in 1506, the first work of the kind prepared in Germany, he could well exclaim, in the language of Horace, "I have erected a monument more durable than brass." Melanchthon was his nephew and adopted son; and Luther wrote him, in appreciation of his labors, "The Lord has been at work in you, that the light of Holy Scripture might begin to shine in that Germany where for so many years, alas! it was not only stifled but extinct."

Erasmus, born in Rotterdam, in 1467, was perhaps the acutest scholar of his day. In his youth he gave promise of the eminence he was afterward to attain. Agricola, who saw him at the age of twelve, was so impressed by the young scholar's appearance and precocity that he said to him, "You will one day become a great man." And his teacher at Deventer once enthusiastically embraced him, with these words: "You will

one day attain the highest summits of knowledge.”

In his youth Erasmus was persuaded to become an Augustinian monk, and was afterward ordained as a priest by the Bishop of Utrecht. He soon found conventual life entirely unfitted to his tastes and character. At length he was sent to the University of Paris by the Bishop of Cambray. To eke out his meagre allowance, he took pupils in Greek, the elements of which he had acquired by private study. He indicates his ambition at this time in a letter to a friend: “All I ask for is leisure to live wholly to God, to repent of the sins of my foolish youth, to study Holy Scripture, and to read or write something of real value.” His ardor for the new learning is evident in the declaration, “I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning, and as soon as I get any money I shall buy Greek books, and then I shall buy some clothes.”

At various times he visited England, France, Germany, and Italy, and everywhere his wit, learning, and fame secured him a cordial reception. In 1497 he went to England, where he met Thomas More, then a young man of twenty, heard Colet lecture at Oxford, and admired the learning of Linacre and Grocyn—all, like himself, enthusiastic humanists. “I have found in Oxford,” he wrote, “so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet, it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn’s knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgment of Linacre? When did nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than

the temper of Thomas More?" Later he became a lecturer on Greek at the University of Cambridge.

As he traveled from country to country, he visited libraries, collected manuscripts, and toiled industriously at his Greek. He read the Greek philosophers and poets, studied the Greek Christian fathers, translated Greek plays, Plutarch, and Lucian. "Beyond all," to use the words of Froude, "mixing as he did in every kind of society, living as he did among learned professors, learned theologians, Parisian poets and actors, fashionable ladies, bishops, men and women of all ranks and characters, he was studying the great book of mankind, without acquaintance with which all other knowledge is dry and unprofitable." \* In Italy he made the acquaintance of Pope Julius II., and numbered some of the cardinals among his intimate friends, among them Cardinal de' Medici, who afterward became Leo X. Henry VIII., of England, was his friend and patron.

The life of Erasmus cannot be followed further. He was acquainted with the foremost men of his day, and exerted a great personal influence through his recognized ability and scholarship. Two or three of his works exhibited the spirit of the humanistic learning, and embodied the elements of a new age. One of these works was the *Encomium Moriae*, or Praise of Folly, suggested by Sir Thomas More. It is a satire upon various classes of society. The ignorance, folly, and vice of the representatives of the Church are by no means spared. Erasmus calls the scholastic theologians "a proud, susceptible race. They will smother me under six hundred dogmas.

\* Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 58.

They will call me heretic, and bring thunderbolts out of their arsenals, where they keep whole magazines of them for their enemies. Still they are Folly's servants, though they disown their mistress. They live in the third heaven, adoring their own persons and disdaining the poor crawlers upon earth. They are surrounded by a body-guard of definitions, conclusions, corollaries, propositions explicit and propositions implicit. Vulcan's chains will not bind them. They cut the links with a distinction as with the stroke of an axe."

On the priests and monks he is, if possible, still more severe: "They call it a sign of holiness," he says, "to be unable to read. They bray out the Psalms in the churches like so many asses. They do not understand a word of them, but they fancy the sound is soothing to the ears of the saints. The mendicant friars howl for alms along the street. They pretend to resemble the apostles, and they are filthy, ignorant, impudent vagabonds. They have their rules, forsooth. Yes, rules—how many knots, for instance, there may be in a shoe-string, how their coats should be cut or colored, how much cloth should be used in their hoods, and how many hours they may sleep. But for all else, for conduct and character, they quarrel with each other and curse each other. They pretend to poverty, but they steal into honest men's houses and pollute them, and, wasps as they are, no one dares refuse them admittance for fear of their stings. They hold the secrets of every family through the confessional, and when they are drunk, or wish to amuse their company, they let them out to the world." \*

Of still more importance was Erasmus's edition

\* Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 132.

of the Greek New Testament, accompanied with a Latin translation and notes. "It is my desire," he said in the preface, "to lead back that cold dispute about words called theology to its real fountain. Would to God that this work may bear as much fruit to Christianity as it has cost me toil and application." This work, which appeared in 1516, made Europe acquainted with the Gospel as it was preached by Christ and His apostles. It enabled the people to compare the original institution of the Church with the imperial organization of the Papacy, and, especially through the editor's comments, to understand how far Christianity, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, had departed from its pristine simplicity and purity.

Commenting, for example, on "the husband of one wife," in Tim. iii. 2, Erasmus says: "Because in an age when priests were few and widely scattered, St. Paul directed that no one should be made a bishop who had been married a second time; bishops, priests, and deacons are now forbidden to marry at all. Other qualifications are laid down by St. Paul as required for a bishop's office, a long list of them. But not one at present is held essential, except this one of abstinence from marriage. Homicide, incest, piracy, sodomy, sacrilege—these can be got over, but marriage is fatal. There are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are chaste. The great proportion fall into lust, and incest, and open profligacy."

In the presence of forms and creeds, Erasmus advocated a Christianity of the heart and life. He demanded, not theological subtleties about the procession of the Spirit, but the fruits of the Spirit. Without any formal statement that the Scriptures

are the only rule of faith and practice in Christianity, he set them up as the standard by which to test the Church life of the time. The errors and views of ecclesiastics were strongly and bravely pointed out in connection with the Scripture passages that condemned them. No other method could have been more convincing and effective.

In the presence of the awakened intellect of Europe, the New Testament was everywhere eagerly received and devoured. A hundred thousand copies were soon sold in France alone. "The fire spread," says Froude, "as it spread behind Samson's foxes in the Philistines' corn. The clergy's skins were tender from long impunity. They shrieked from pulpit and platform, and made Europe ring with their clamor. The louder they cried, the more clearly Europe perceived the justice of their chastisement. The words of the Bible have been so long familiar to us that we can hardly realize what the effect must have been when the Gospel was brought out fresh and visible before the astonished eyes of mankind."\*

Such was the Renaissance in its beginnings, with some of its principal leaders. It was a movement of so great power that, overcoming all obstacles, it made progress in every country in Europe. The younger generation of scholars, many of the nobility, and not a few of the clergy, were devoted to the new learning. Suddenly the intellectual horizon was immensely extended. "For the first time," as Taine puts it, "men opened their eyes and saw." They began to examine and think for themselves; and with this freshly awakened critical spirit the beliefs and practices of the Papacy were subject to scrutiny. Errors of doctrine, vices of practice, frauds in worship, and tyranny in

\* Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 127.

ecclesiastical government became more and more apparent. The fullness of time had at last come ; only the prophet was still lacking.

## CHAPTER III.

### PRELIMINARY CONFLICTS.

THE conditions we have been considering make it evident that a new era of progress was preparing for Europe. Prophetic voices, announcing a new ecclesiastical order of things, were not wanting. The growing power and intelligence of the people made mediæval conditions less and less tolerable. Over all Europe there were preliminary skirmishes between the various conflicting forces—prophecies of that greater conflict which was soon to lay the foundation of civil and religious freedom for the modern world.

In the presence of the growing national feeling, the despotic claims of the Papacy to supreme temporal judgment and authority were more and more disregarded. The new critical spirit pronounced the "Donation of Constantine,"\* which had for centuries served as a bulwark for the temporal claims of the Papacy, an unmistakable fabrication. The authority of the Isidorian decretals was likewise undermined. The old Roman law was revived against the claims of the Papacy, and many of the leading scholars of Europe held to the equality of the secular with the spiritual power. Both alike, it was maintained, were ordained of God.

The attitude of the nations of Europe toward the Papacy is illustrated by the conflict of Philip

\*Henderson's "Historical Documents of the Middle Ages," p. 319.

IV. of France and Boniface VIII. When the king had the bishop of Pamiers arrested, the Pope issued against him the bull *Ausculta, fili*, in which the Papal independence and supremacy were boldly affirmed "Know then, my son," says the bull, "that it is not true that you have no superior and that you are not subject to the supreme Pontiff." The king, supported by the University of Paris, burned the bull and convoked the states general. The king was present at the meeting in 1302; and after a discussion of the bull, the assembly proclaimed the complete independence of the crown. The following year another assembly charged Boniface with heresy, simony, and ecclesiastical tyranny, and appealed to a general council and a legitimate Pontiff.

Another exhibition of the same spirit of independence is found in the action of the Frankfort Diet of 1338. Pope Benedict XII., continuing the long conflict between Louis the Bavarian and the Papacy, demanded the emperor's resignation of his royal and imperial dignities. It was an exercise of absolute Papal supremacy. In the law *Licet juris*, the Diet asserted the independence of the empire: "We declare that the imperial dignity and power come directly from God alone; and that, by the old and approved right and custom of the empire, after anyone is chosen as emperor or king by the electors of the empire concordantly, or by the greater part of them, he is, in consequence of the election alone, to be considered and called true king and emperor of the Romans, and he ought to be obeyed by all the subjects of the empire. And he shall have full power of administering the laws of the empire and of doing the other things that pertain to a true em-

peror ; nor does he need the approbation, confirmation, authority, or consent of the Apostolic See or anyone else."\*

The same spirit of resistance early manifested itself in England. The "Constitutions of Clarendon" of 1164 declared the civil courts to be supreme, and required all final appeals to be made, not to the Pope, but to the king. The aim of these "Constitutions" was to correct the abuses of the ecclesiastical courts. In the conflict between John and Innocent III., the king was at first disposed to laugh at the pretensions of the Pope. The "Statute of Mortmain," † of 1279, put a check upon the excessive accumulation of land in the hands of the Church. The "Statute of Provisors" checked Papal interference with the disposal of English benefices. The "Statute of Præmunire" prohibited the unauthorized introduction of Papal bulls into the kingdom. The English barons, in a letter to Boniface VIII., absolutely rejected the Papal claim of supremacy over the crown. "This letter," as Hallam remarks, "is nearly coincident in point of time with that of the French nobility ; and the two combined may be considered as a joint protestation of both kingdoms, and a testimony to the general sentiment among the superior ranks of the laity." ‡ Thus over all Europe the growing national feeling led to active resistance against the despotic claims of the Papacy.

Another preliminary conflict was the repeated insurrection of the peasants, particularly in Germany. The spreading intelligence opened their eyes to the hardships of their lot, and led them

\* Henderson's "Historical Documents," p. 438.

† Henderson's "Historical Documents," p. 148.

‡ Hallam's "Middle Ages," p. 908.

to determined though unfortunate efforts to improve it. The peasants were subject to a double bondage—one to the priesthood, and the other to feudal lords. Both were galling ; but of the two, the ecclesiastical bondage was, perhaps, the more exacting and cruel. The common people were required to pay tithes of all the products of their labor—"corn, meadows, pasture, grass, wood, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese, and chickens." And their share of the profits the clergy looked after with scrupulous care. In addition to this, all clerical services had to be paid for.

This feature of the social condition of Germany (and the picture is equally true for other parts of Europe) is forcibly presented by Juan de Valdez, brother of the Secretary of Charles V. "I see," he says, "that we can scarcely get anything from Christ's ministers but for money : at baptism, money ; at marriage, money ; for confession, money—no, not extreme unction without money ! They will ring no bells without money ; no burial in the church without money ; so that it seemeth that Paradise is shut up from them that have no money. The rich are buried in the church, the poor in the churchyard. The rich man may marry with his nearest kin, but the poor not so, albeit he be ready to die for love of her. The rich may eat flesh in Lent, but the poor may not, albeit fish, perhaps, be much dearer. The rich may readily get large indulgences, but the poor none, because he wanteth money to pay for them." \*

In Germany the peasant was a feudal tenant ; but after the Black Death, in the fourteenth century, had greatly reduced the number of laborers, the exactions of the feudal lords became more oppressive. The peasants were reduced practically

\* Seebohm's "Protestant Revolution," p. 60.

to a condition of slavery ; and inasmuch as there was no strong central government, to which they might appeal, they had no redress or protection. Their rights to the common pastures, to the wild game, and to the fish in the rivers were denied them. At all times they were subject to insolent and tyrannous orders from their lords, for whose wealth they had to toil and to whose luxuries they had to minister. And when a peasant died, the agent of the petty tyrant came to carry off, by feudal custom, the best chattel the widow possessed—perhaps the horse or cow upon which the family were dependent.

The first of the peasant uprisings was that of the four Forest Cantons of Switzerland. These cantons acknowledged the authority of the empire ; but when the Hapsburgs ascended the imperial throne, they attempted to subject them to Austria. The Austrian governors abused their position cruelly to wrong and oppress the freedom-loving Swiss. At length their tyranny became intolerable ; and the bold peasantry, under the leadership of Walter Fürst, Werner Stauffacher, and Arnold Melchthal, formed a league for the defense of their liberties. The spirit that animated them is well presented in Schiller's " Wilhelm Tell : "

" Yes, there is a limit to the despot's power !  
When the oppressed looks round in vain for justice,  
When his sore burden may no more be borne,  
With fearless heart he makes appeal to heaven,  
And thence brings down his everlasting rights,  
Which there abide, inalienably his,  
And indestructible as are the stars.  
Nature's primeval state returns again,  
Where man stands hostile to his fellow-man ;  
And if all other means shall fail his need,  
One last resource remains—his own good sword."

After Tell, according to the legend, had slain Gessler, the most ruthless of the Austrian governors, the castles were attacked and destroyed, and the tyrants driven from the country. A little later, in 1315, the Austrian army, sent to subdue the brave Swiss, was signally defeated in the battle of Morgarten.

The peasant insurrections in Germany are too numerous to be followed in detail. In 1460 the peasantry rebelled against new burdens imposed by their feudal lord, the Abbot of Kempten. In 1476 thousands of the peasant class in the bishopric of Würzburg gathered in revolt around Hans Boheim, who preached that there was to be an end of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, and that all men were to live as brethren. Several widespread conspiracies, which successively chose the peasant's clog as their martial standard, are designated as the *Bundschuh*. The first originated in Alsace, in 1493, and aimed at emancipating the peasantry from clerical and Roman courts, and from excessive taxation. It was early betrayed, and its leaders executed. A few years later, in 1505, another conspiracy was formed in the region about Speyer. It sought to elevate the peasantry, to acknowledge only the emperor as sovereign, to do away with the domination of Rome, and to make the forests and rivers free to all. "Only what is just before God," was the motto upon their standard. This conspiracy was likewise discovered and suppressed. Again, in 1513, a league was formed under Joss Fritz, in Würtemberg, and the year following there were uprisings in Carinthia and Styria, all which were suppressed by the nobility with the greatest cruelty.

In the face of this general dissatisfaction among the peasant class of Germany, the nobles found it

necessary to form the Swabian League. The existing social condition is clearly portrayed in the proclamation issued by the League. "Since the land of Swabia," it says, "and all over the empire, among the vassals and poor people, disturbances and insurrections are taking place, with setting up of the standard of the *Bundschuh* and other ensigns against the authority of their natural lords and rulers, with a view to the destruction of the nobles and all honorable persons, the noble and knightly orders have, therefore, agreed, whatever shall happen, to support each other against every such attempt on the part of the common man."

The great peasant revolution of 1525, which has often been erroneously ascribed to the Reformation, was but another manifestation of the profound discontent among the lower classes of people. The twelve articles, in which the peasants present their demands and set forth their grievances, are substantially those of the old *Bundschuh*. It was deliverance from ecclesiastical and feudal tyranny that they sought. Among these demands were : 1. The right to choose their own pastors ; 2. The payment of tithes of grain, but of nothing else ; 3. Freedom from serf bondage ; 4. Liberty to hunt and fish ; 5. No additional service to be required without money remuneration ; 6. Rent to be proportioned to the value of the land ; 7. Punishment for crimes to be fixed ; 8. The abrogation of death gifts, or the law of heriot, which permitted the feudal lord to take away the best chattel of a deceased tenant ; and, 9. Any of these articles proved to be contrary to Scripture to be null and void.

These demands of the peasants were just and right ; but in the attempt to maintain them by

force of arms, the peasant armies, under the leadership of religious or communistic fanatics, were often guilty of gross excesses and wrongs. A reign of anarchy threatened Europe. Under these circumstances it will be readily understood why Luther and Melanchthon, though sympathizing with the oppressed condition of the peasantry, still urged, even in violent language, the civil rulers to suppress the insurrection with the sword. In the civil war that followed, it is estimated that one hundred thousand peasants lost their lives. The chains of tyranny were riveted on the peasant class for three more centuries.

In France, the social disaffection of the peasantry manifested itself in the insurrection of the *Jacquerie*, in 1358. No other peasantry in Europe was subject to greater wrongs than that of France. They were burdened by the taxes of their feudal lords; they were disdained by the trading class; they were pillaged by the soldiers; they were flayed by the hierarchy. After the battle of Poitiers, the noblemen who had been captured by the English cruelly exacted additional sums from their serfs in order to pay their ransom. At length the oppressed peasants grew desperate; and, rising in insurrection, they, for a few weeks, executed a terrible vengeance upon their oppressors. They sacked and burned the castles of their lords, and in their fury slew even women and children. But soon the nobles attacked them, and visited upon them a terrible retribution. The peasants, poorly armed with iron-shod sticks, knives, and clubs, were no match for the mailed knights. The insurrectionists were almost exterminated and several provinces were left almost deserts.

A few years later, in 1381, there was in England

a widespread peasant revolt, known in history as Wat Tyler's rebellion. The peasantry were restive under restrictive legislation, following the great plague of 1348. John Ball, "a mad priest of Kent," as Froissart called him, preached against the social inequalities of the time, and inflamed the people with a sense of their wrongs. "Why do they hold us in serfage?" he exclaimed. "If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we, oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labor, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state." The growing spirit of the age was expressed in the popular couplet:

"When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?"

The immediate occasion of the insurrection was the levying of a head tax, which proved very onerous. A brutal collector in Kent grossly insulted the daughter of Wat Tyler, who seized a hammer and struck the ruffian dead. A hundred thousand men gathered about Tyler, and after entering Canterbury and pillaging the archbishop's palace, they moved upon London. The revolt spread through all the southern counties of England. The peasants demanded of the king freedom from feudal service, a uniform rate of rent to be fixed by Parliament, free trade, and uncon-

ditional pardon for all who had taken part in the rebellion. The king promised them full redress of their grievances; but, when in a parley Wat Tyler was treacherously slain by the Mayor of London, the revolt collapsed, and, as usual, many of the insurgents were afterward ruthlessly put to death.

The revival of learning, as might be expected, did not go unchallenged. The conservative element in the Church, particularly the Dominican monks, scented danger in the new learning. In their opposition to the humanists, they often showed an ignorance as gross as their hatred was venomous. They protested that all heresies originated in Hebrew and Greek, especially in the latter. "The New Testament," said one of them, "is a book full of serpents and thorns. Greek is a new and recently invented language, and we must be on our guard against it. As for Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that all who learn it immediately become Jews." \*

Even the universities were generally hostile to the humanistic learning. Though the students were often disposed to greet the humanists as "messengers from heaven," the faculties of instruction, with their well-known conservatism, stigmatized them as "preachers of perversion" and "winnowers of the devil's chaff." The faculty of theology in the University of Paris did not scruple to declare to Parliament that "religion is ruined, if you permit the study of Greek and Hebrew." The University of Cologne distinguished itself above all others in its uncompromising hostility to Greek and Hebrew. "At this period," says Sir William Hamilton, "the lectures and disputations, the examinations and

\* D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," I., p. 67

honors, of the different faculties, required only an acquaintance with the barbarous Latinity of the Middle Ages. The new philology was thus not only a *hors d'œuvre* in the academical system, or, as the Leipsic masters expressed it, 'a fifth wheel in the chariot;' it was abominated as a novelty that threw the ancient learning into discredit, diverted the studious from the universities, and rendered contemptible the once honored distinction of a degree." \*

Reuchlin was among the first to feel the venom of Dominican persecution. Because of his Hebrew studies and his tolerance for Hebrew literature, which the theologians of Cologne desired to have burned, he was accused of a secret leaning to Judaism, and threatened with the dungeon of the Inquisition. The Dominicans organized a tribunal at Mayence, and, after formally condemning the writings of Reuchlin, consigned them to the flames. The friends of progress in Germany and other parts of Europe rallied to the support of the great humanist; and when the matter was referred to the Pope, Reuchlin was declared innocent, and the fanatical monks were condemned to pay the cost of investigation.

One of the able champions of Reuchlin and of the humanistic movement was Ulrich von Hutten. Like Erasmus, he had spent his early years in a monastery, from which he fled to become a student at Erfurt, Cologne, and Frankfort-on-the-Oder. His talent for satire, by which he gained the ear of Germany, soon manifested itself. He contended with a noble enthusiasm for the national unity of Germany and for emancipation from the tyranny of Rome. He was one of the authors of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* (1514),

\* Edinburgh Review, 53, p. 185.

which unmasked in a striking way the ignorance and immorality of the monks. These letters were written in the barbarous Latin then in use in the monasteries, and, though Leo X. forbade them to be read, they were widely circulated. Few satires have ever proved more effective in discrediting their victims.

But this was not all. Hutten assailed the abuses and corruptions of the Roman hierarchy in various treatises, both in prose and verse. He was one of the most effective polemic writers at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and on account of his philippics against Rome, he was called the German Demosthenes. His "Roman Trinity" is an attack of tremendous force: "Three things keep Rome in power: the authority of the Pope, the bones of saints, and the traffic in indulgences. Three things are banished from Rome: simplicity, temperance, and piety. Three things the Romans trade in: Christ, ecclesiastical benefices, and women. Three things are disliked in Rome: a general council, a reformation of the clergy, and the fact that the Germans are beginning to open their eyes. Three things pilgrims usually bring back from Rome: a soiled conscience, a sick stomach, and an empty purse. Three things have kept Germany from getting wisdom: the stupidity of the princes, the decay of learning, and the superstition of the people."\* Luther himself has nothing more forcible than this epigrammatic indictment by Hutten.

Erasmus boldly espoused the cause of Reuchlin. In a letter to Cardinal Raphael, he says: "In supporting Reuchlin you will earn the gratitude of every man of letters in Germany. It is to him really that Germany owes such knowledge as it has

\* Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," VI., p. 198.

of Greek and Hebrew. He is a learned, accomplished man, respected by the emperor, honored among his own people, and blameless in life and character. All Europe is crying shame that so excellent a person should be harassed by a detestable prosecution, and all for a matter as absurd as the ass's shadow of the proverb. Anyone who will give us Reuchlin back, safe and sound, will deserve all our blessings."

Erasmus himself was the subject of clerical attacks scarcely less virulent. His New Testament and *Encomium Moris* were telling blows, and nothing but the patronage of civil and ecclesiastical princes saved him from the dungeon or stake. "The clergy," says Froude, "at first were stunned. When they collected themselves, they began in the usual way to cry antichrist and heresy, and clamor for sword and fagot. . . Most fools and many women were on the clergy's side, and a party which has the fools at its back has usually a majority of numbers. Bishops fulminated. Universities, Cambridge and Oxford among them, forbade students to read Erasmus's writings, or booksellers to sell them. Erasmus himself was safe from prosecution while he was protected by the Pope and the civil governments, and hard as he had struck, he had said nothing for which the church courts could openly punish him."

There was a loud clamor against Erasmus at the English universities. At Oxford there were two parties styling themselves Greeks and Trojans. The latter, who were in an enormous majority, represented the conservative or established order of things, and but for royal interference would have carried the day. Henry VIII. was not only a humanist himself, but a personal friend of Erasmus. Accordingly, when he learned the state of

things at Oxford, he had a letter addressed by Sir Thomas More to the governing body of the university. Its tenor may be gathered from a single paragraph. "I heard lately," says the monarch, "that either in some fool's frolic or from your dislike to the study of Greek, a clique had been formed among you calling themselves Trojans; that one of you, who had more years than wisdom, had styled himself Priam, another Hector, another Paris, and so forth; and that the object was to throw ridicule on the Greek language and literature. Grecians are to be mocked and jeered at by Trojans, whose laughter betrays their ignorance. This action of yours is foolish in itself, and gives an unpleasing impression of your general intelligence."\* It was in this ungentle way that the enemies of Erasmus at the English universities were put to silence and shame.

Thus, in various ways, the new and the old were coming into inevitable conflict in all parts of Europe. The leading nations were rejecting Papal dictation, and insisting on working out their own destiny without foreign interference. The common people were sighing for deliverance from feudal and ecclesiastical tyranny. Humanism was invading the strongholds of ignorance and superstition. In all this we see the unrest and anguish that always attend the birth of a new era in the world's history. But the decisive battle, in which all the hostile forces were united and opposed to each other, was yet to be fought.

† Froude's "Life and Letters of Erasmus," p. 139.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

IN the midst of the turmoils at the beginning of the sixteenth century, God was preparing, all unknown to the anxious and burdened multitude, a leader for His people. It was Martin Luther, a lowly miner's son, who was born at Eisleben, November 10th, 1483. In this case, as so often in the long course of sacred history, God chose a humble agent to accomplish His mighty purposes. The great leaders of the Jewish people in Old Testament times—Moses and David—were shepherds. The most of that noble circle to whom Jesus committed the great task of spreading the Gospel were fishermen. Through the hard discipline of poverty and toil, the prophets of God in every age have usually received the strength and courage to fulfill their divine mission.

The early career of the great reformer admirably fitted him for the work he was to perform. The struggles of his early life imparted strength and solidity to his character. He was brought up in an atmosphere of deeply earnest but austere piety. His father and mother, though strict and harsh in their family discipline, were godly people. His early school days at Mansfield were darkened by harsh discipline and crude methods of instruction. On slight provocation the rod was mercilessly used; and Luther himself records that he was beaten

fifteen times in one forenoon for not being able to recite what had not been taught him.

Destined by his thoughtful father to a learned career, he was sent, at the age of fourteen, to the school at Magdeburg, conducted by the Brethren of the Common Life. This organization, it will be remembered, devoted itself to the work of preaching and teaching. Though suffusing their instruction with a genuine spirit of piety, the Brethren were at this period friendly to the revival of learning. They promoted the study of Latin and Greek ; and thus, in every way, their schools were among the best of that age. Their influence on the ambitious boy, hitherto accustomed to inconsiderate severity, must have been encouraging.

A year later Luther passed to Eisenach, where his secondary training was completed. For a time he supplemented the meagre support provided by his father by begging, according to the custom of the time, "a little bread for the love of God." Here he was received into the home of Ursula Cotta, a kind and intelligent woman who had been attracted by his singing, and for the first time he had an opportunity to observe and acquire the refined manners of a patrician household. The school at Eisenach was presided over by John Trebonius, a learned humanist, whose spirit is exhibited in his habit of removing his cap in the presence of his pupils, recognizing in them the future magistrates, chancellors, and learned doctors of Germany. His methods of instruction were so excellent that Luther, many years afterward, commended them to Melancthon. It was a fortunate circumstance that, in his early training, the reformer breathed the atmosphere of the new learning.

In 1501 Luther entered the University of Er-

furt, which, founded a hundred years before, was at this time one of the most celebrated in Germany. Unlike many other universities of the day, it had welcomed the study of the Latin and Greek classics. The first book that was published in Greek type in Germany was printed at Erfurt. John Crotus Rubeanus, who became rector of the university in 1520, was a leading humanist, and collaborated with Hutten in preparing the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*. Though Luther did not neglect the study of the Latin classics, particularly Cicero, Virgil, Plautus, and Livy, he devoted himself chiefly to philosophy. He was thus introduced to the subtleties of scholasticism, and developed unusual powers as a debater. In 1502 he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and three years later that of Master of Arts. The conferring of the latter degree was attended with a great deal of ceremony. "What a glorious and exciting time we used to have of it," he once said, "when they conferred the degree of Master and honored the recipients with a torch-light procession; I hold that no temporal worldly happiness was equal to that." The talents of Luther were the admiration of the university. Once very sick and in fear of death, he was comforted by an aged priest. "My dear bachelor, do not despair; you will not die of this illness; our God will yet make a great man of you, and you shall comfort many people."

Luther was the most German of Germans. In him were embodied the noblest qualities of his race. He possessed a deeply religious nature, which was developed, first, in the atmosphere of austere piety, which pervaded his father's home, and, secondly, in his early education, which included instruction in the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. In the

library of the University of Erfurt he first saw a complete copy of the Bible, to which he was subsequently to devote so much earnest study. The sudden death of a friend brought him to serious reflection; and when shortly afterward he was terrified in a violent thunderstorm, he fell to the ground and exclaimed: "Help me, dear Saint Anna, I will become a monk." This was a turning point in his life—a necessary step in that marvellous course of training which was to make him the prophet of his people.

In 1505 he entered the Augustinian convent of mendicant friars at Erfurt. He submitted, without a murmur, to the most menial duties. With a bag upon his back, the brilliant young scholar, who had lately been the pride of the university, went begging from door to door. He was exemplary and zealous in the religious exercises of the convent. No one surpassed him in prayers, vigils, fasting, and self-mortification. "If ever a monk," he said afterward, "got to Heaven by monkery, I would have gotten there." But all his monastic zeal brought him no peace of mind; he was burdened with a sense of sin and a consciousness of his alienation from God.

In his condition of spiritual depression and agony, John Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Augustinian order, whom we have already learned to know as one of the German mystics, became his loving counselor. Caring little for the forms and doctrines of the Papacy, Staupitz made the love of God the centre of his belief and life. He taught Luther to think of God, not as an exacting law-giver and judge, but as a loving Father. He encouraged him to seek peace, not in tormenting penances, but in a loving trust in Christ, whom God sent into the world to be a propitiation for sin.

At the same time he encouraged the young monk in a diligent study of the Scriptures. Gradually the light dawned upon Luther's anxious spirit, and before he left the monastery at the end of three years, "his internal struggles ended," to use the words of Köstlin, "in a cordial acceptance of Jesus Christ as his only Saviour, and his confidence in his good works, as a meritorious ground of salvation, was abandoned." \* But it was reserved for subsequent years to reveal to him the truth of justification by faith in all its fullness and manifold relations.

In 1507 Luther was ordained to the priesthood. At the celebration of his first mass, he was so overwhelmed by emotion in offering the tremendous sacrifice, that he came near fainting at the altar. His religious nature was deep and strong. But the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt was not to be the scene of his great reformatory labors. A year after his ordination to the priesthood, and when the light of evangelical truth was dawning upon him, he was called to the newly-founded University of Wittenberg, where Staupitz was dean of the theological faculty. He lived in the Augustinian convent there, and his duties soon became manifold and onerous.

Luther at first lectured in the university on Aristotle; but, as might be inferred from his profound religious experience, this duty was not suited to his taste. He greatly preferred theology to philosophy. "Theology," he said, "is the branch which examines the kernel of the nut, the flour of the wheat, and the marrow of the bones." Early in 1509 he became a Bachelor of Theology, and began lecturing on the Scriptures. He discarded the scholastic method, and sought in the

\* Köstlin's "Life of Martin Luther," p. 71.

writings of prophets and apostles the truth of God. The Scriptures became to him the living book. "This monk," it was said by a distinguished member of the university, "will confound all our doctors, establish new doctrines, and reform the whole Roman Church; for he bases himself on the writings of the prophets and apostles, and is firmly planted on the words of Jesus Christ. This no one can successfully oppose or eventually subvert, be it with philosophy, sophistry, Albertistry, Thomistry, or the whole array of authorities." \*

In 1511, at the suggestion of Staupitz, Luther was sent to Rome on some mission connected with the Augustinian order. The experiences of this journey proved of great value; and, years afterward, when the work of the Reformation had begun, he was accustomed to say: "I would not have missed seeing Rome for a hundred thousand florins; for I might have felt some apprehension that I had done injustice to the Pope. But as we see, so we speak." At this time nature had but little interest for Luther, and his eyes seem to have been closed to the sublimity of the Alps and the beauty of Italian plains. But when he first caught sight of the eternal city, he prostrated himself in blind devotion, and, raising his hands, exclaimed: "Hail to thee, holy Rome! Thrice holy for the blood of martyrs shed there."

He had not yet been emancipated from the bondage of credulity and superstition. "Whilst at Rome," to use his own words, "I was such a foolish saint as to run to every church, nook, and corner, believing all their ridiculous stories and detestable falsehoods. I likewise said mass at Rome, being very sorry, at the time, that my

\* Meurer's "Life of Luther," p. 28.

parents were not dead, as I would have liked, by means of my masses and other precious works and prayers, to have delivered them from purgatory." As a meritorious work, for which the Pope had promised an indulgence, he ascended Pilate's staircase on his knees ; but before he had reached the top, the words of Paul, "The just shall live by faith," thundered in his ears, and he rose to his feet, fully confirmed in this Gospel truth of the great apostle.

He saw much in the Papal capital, as he records, that shocked and outraged his religious feelings. He discovered, in the celebration of mass there, an unbecoming haste and blasphemous irreverence. Skepticism and immorality were widespread. "Among other vulgarities," he says, "I there heard, as we were seated at the table, the courtiers laughing and telling how some would say mass, and speak these words over the bread and wine : ' Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain ; wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain.' " He discovered that, among ecclesiastics of the highest rank, wealth and luxury had supplanted apostolic poverty and self-denial. He saw the worldly splendor of the court of the warlike Julius II., who had just returned from the siege of a city, and whom he afterward denounced as a bloody tyrant.

In 1512, after his return to Wittenberg, Luther was made a Doctor of Theology. Dreading the responsibility it imposed, he was reluctant to accept the degree. "Upon a doctor," he said, "it is incumbent, according to his oath of office, to explain the Scriptures to all the world, and to teach everyone." His studious disposition shrank from publicity. But Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Augustinian brotherhood, was urgent and

imperative, and at length Luther yielded to the call of authority and duty. "Things have the appearance," said the judicious vicar, "as if God would soon have much to do in Heaven and on earth; He will, therefore, need many young and industrious doctors, through whom to transact his business." Years afterward, in the midst of his conflicts with the Papacy, Luther comforted himself with the pressing and imperative character of his call. "I received a regular call," he wrote, "and was forced to become a doctor, without any thanks for it, it being required as a matter of pure obedience. I was compelled to receive the doctorate and to take oath and vow to my dearest holy Scriptures, to preach them faithfully and without adulteration. Whilst engaged in such teaching, the Papacy crossed my path and attempted to withstand me."

Luther's apprehension of evangelical truth gradually became clearer and stronger. After lecturing on the Psalms, in which he adhered more or less closely to the mediæval fourfold sense, he took up the Epistle to the Romans, and a little later the Epistle to the Galatians. His lectures on Romans have been lost, but those on Galatians, as elaborated several years afterward, form a commentary noted for its lucid and powerful presentation of the doctrine of justification by faith. In his lectures he sharply distinguished between the law and the Gospel, and refuted the prevailing error that men can become just before God by external works. His presentation of Scripture truth was felt to be something new. "After a long and dark night," says Melancthon, "the light of the new doctrine seemed to dawn. He showed the distinction between the law and the Gospel, and refuted the then prevalent error that, by their own

works, men merit the forgiveness of sins, and, by their observance and discipline, are righteous before God. Recalling the minds of men to the Son of God, and, like the Baptist, pointing to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, he declared that sins are remitted freely, on account of the Son of God, and that this benefit is to be received by faith. Other portions of the Church's doctrines were made clear. These beginnings of still better things gave him great influence, especially since his life corresponded with his speech, and his words seemed to spring, not from his lips, but from his heart." \*

But Luther's duties were not simply those of a theological professor. Besides acting as sub-prior of his convent, he had given himself, through the persuasion and authority of Staupitz, to the office of preaching. He at first preached in the little chapel of the monastery ; but his power and unction coming to be recognized, he was invited to fill the pulpit of the city church. His energy and zeal were unbounded. He sometimes preached every day for a week ; and during Lent, in 1517, he preached twice every day. His sermons, like his lectures, were pervaded by evangelical truth, and the earnestness of his piety imparted to his discourses an unusual and impressive power.

It was during this period that Luther made the acquaintance of the German mystics, by whom his religious life and opinions were deeply impressed. In many respects, as we have seen in a previous chapter, their conception of Christianity presented striking contrasts to the prevailing Papal system. It substituted a living piety for formalism ; it exhibited an ardent longing for spiritual fellowship with God ; it presented the great truth of the com-

\* Jacobs's "Life of Luther," p. 44.

mon priesthood of believers. In 1516 Luther commended to his friend Spalatin the sermons of Tauler as a veritable treasure of evangelical truth. The same year he published the "German Theology," which he ranked next to the Bible and Augustine. But while profoundly influenced by mysticism, Luther was not entirely given over to it. In it feeling predominates over action; and, in the language of Schaff, "Luther was a born fighter, and waxed stronger and stronger in battle. His theology is biblical, with such mystical elements as the Bible itself contains." \*

Luther's evangelical apprehension of the Gospel made him dissatisfied with the scholastic theology and Aristotelian philosophy. He taught a living theology rather than the hair-splitting distinctions of the schools. He emphasized, in the lecture-room and in the Church, the great doctrines of repentance, forgiveness of sin, faith in Christ, and a life of obedience to God. He substituted a religion of power for a religion of form. He revived the theological teachings of Augustine, of whose works he had been a profound student. By his forceful presentation of evangelical truth, so long neglected in the scholastic theology, he in large measure changed the intellectual and moral life of the university. The halls of scholastic theology were deserted. Luther continually grew in power and influence; and among his intimate friends were Spalatin, Carlstadt, Lange, Link, and others, all of whom were men of splendid ability. In May, 1517, he wrote to Lange: "Our theology and St. Augustine flourish, and with God's help rule in our university. Aristotle is gradually descending from his throne, and will soon be overthrown, perhaps forever.

\* Schaff's "History of the Church," VI., p. 143.

The lectures on the Sententiarians are much despised, and no one can count on an audience if he does not lecture on this theology, that is, on the Bible or St. Augustine, or some other genuine Father of the Church."

According to the testimony of his private secretary, Spalatin, the Elector Frederick of Saxony, on the night of October 30th, 1517, had a remarkable dream, which, in the light of subsequent events, may be regarded as foreshadowing the Reformation. In his vision the Elector saw a monk writing in colossal characters upon the door of the castle church at Wittenberg. The old quill with which he wrote stretched over the Alps to Rome, where it pierced the ear of a lion, and nearly toppled the Papal crown to the earth. Whether a coincidence or a prophetic revelation, the vision clearly symbolizes the results of the Ninety-five Theses which Luther, October 31st, 1517, nailed to the door of the castle church.

In 1516, in order to complete the magnificent cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome and to maintain the luxury of his splendid court, Leo X. resorted to a sale of indulgences in Germany. He appointed three commissioners, chief of whom was Albrecht, Archbishop of Magdeburg and Mayence. As an electoral prince and imperial chancellor, he was one of the most important personages in Germany. To pay for his episcopal pallium, he had borrowed thirty thousand gulden from the famous banking house of the Fuggers in Augsburg. Like Leo X. himself, the archbishop was in sore financial straits, and therefore entered vigorously into the indulgence scheme, of which one-half the proceeds passed into his treasury.

To drive the business for him, he employed the Dominican John Tetzel, an experienced vender,

who as Inquisitor General was an ecclesiastic of high station and authority. Perhaps no more efficient and unscrupulous agent could have been found in Europe. He was gifted with a popular eloquence, and thoroughly understood the art of imposing upon the credulous multitude by solemn pomp and display. As he approached a town or city, he was welcomed, amid the ringing of bells, by a procession of priests, monks, magistrates, and the populace in general. Entering the principal church or cathedral to the full tones of the organ, he set up before the altar a red cross, over which was hung a silken banner bearing the Papal arms. Before the cross was placed a large iron money-chest; and then, mounting the pulpit, Tetzl magnified his office, lauded the power of indulgences, and in moving appeals urged the people to buy. "Your parents and relatives," he said to the people, "cry out to you: 'We are suffering cruel tortures; you might redeem us with a little gift, and you will not; we have begotten, supported you; we have bequeathed to you our earthly possessions, and you are so cruel and unfeeling as to leave us here in the flames, when you might so easily rescue us!'"

The blasphemy of Tetzl appears to have been shameless. Among the infamous things he proclaimed to the credulous multitude were the following statements, which, though seemingly incredible, are verified by adequate testimony and reflected in Luthër's theses:

"That he had grace and power from the Pope that, though one had violated the holy virgin, he could forgive it, provided the person placed the requisite amount of money in the box."

"That the red indulgence-cross erected in the churches, with the Pope's armorial bearing on it, was just as efficacious as the cross of Christ."

“That if St. Peter were here now, he would not have greater power than he had.”

“That he would not in Heaven exchange with St. Peter, for he had saved more souls with his indulgences than the apostle had by his preaching.”

“That if anyone cast money into the box for a soul in purgatory, the soul would fly up to Heaven as soon as the coin tingled at the bottom.”

“That it was not necessary to feel sorrow and grief on account of sin, or to repent, if one purchased the indulgences.” \*

In the latter part of 1517 Tetzel began his infamous traffic at Jüterbock, a few miles from Wittenberg, where some of Luther's parishioners bought letters of indulgence. As a faithful pastor he warned his people against the delusion of purchasing salvation for money. The previous year his attention had been directed to the gross abuses of the indulgence trade, and in a sermon he then declared that there is no authority for the doctrine that souls are delivered from purgatory by the purchase of indulgences. In subsequent sermons, as the light dawned upon him, he became more confident and more comprehensive in his denunciations. He perceived that indulgences interfered with inner penitence, without which there can be no forgiveness of sin, and lamented their demoralizing effect in teaching the people to dread the punishment of sin rather than sin itself. “Oh, the dangers of our times!” he exclaimed. “O, ye slumbering priests! Oh darkness denser than that of Egypt! How secure we are in these extreme evils!”

Under these circumstances, impelled by deep religious conviction and by fearless loyalty to the truth, Luther prepared his Ninety-five Theses, and nailed them to the door of the castle church.

\* Meurer's "Life of Luther," p. 44; Matthesius's "Leben Luthers," p. 18; D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," I., p. 241.

Without naming him, the theses were evidently directed against Tetzl, and the indulgence traffic he represented. Though not completely emancipated from Papal error, as Luther subsequently recognized, they contain sufficient evangelical truth to correct the gross abuses of the traffic and to shear it of its popularity and profit. The doctrine of indulgences, unconsciously to Luther, who was still a loyal son of the Papacy, was undermined. Note the following propositions :

“ 1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, Repent ye, He meant that the whole earthly life of His believers should be a continual repentance.”

“ 5. The Pope neither wishes to remit nor can remit any other punishments but those which he, either according to his own pleasure or in accordance with the canons of the Church, has imposed.”

“ 13. The dying pay all penalties by death, and are already dead to the canon laws, and are by right relieved from them.”

“ 21. Therefore the preachers of indulgences err when they say that through the indulgences of the Pope a man is freed from all punishment and will be saved.”

“ 27. Those preach the vain fancies of men who pretend that as soon as the coin tingles in the box, so soon the soul is delivered from purgatory.”

“ 33. We must especially beware of those who say that these pardons from the Pope are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to God.”

“ 36. Every Christian who feels true compunction has of right plenary remission of pain and guilt, even without letters of pardon.”

“ 52. To trust to letters of indulgence for salvation is trusting to vanity and falsehood, even though the Commissary or the Pope himself should give his soul in pledge for it.”

“ 62. The true treasure of the Church is the holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.”

“ 75. To think that Papal pardons have such power that they could absolve a man even if, by any possibility, he had violated the mother of God, is madness.”

“ 76. We affirm, on the contrary, that Papal pardons

cannot take away even the least venial sins, as regards the guilt."

"79. To say that the cross erected with the Pope's armorial bearing splendidly adorning it can accomplish as much as the cross of Christ is blasphemy against God."

In all this Luther was earnestly seeking for the truth. He had been denounced as a heretic, but he concludes his theses with an earnest solicitation to be shown, if he be in error, a better way. "On my part," he says, "as I have often done before, so now, too, I implore all men, by the faith of Christ, either to point out to me a better way, if such a way has been divinely revealed to any, or at least to submit their opinion to the judgment of God and of the Church. For I am neither so rash as to wish that my sole opinion should be preferred to that of all other men, nor so senseless as to be willing that the Word of God should be made to give place to fables devised by human reason."

Little did Luther anticipate the tremendous results that flowed from his theses. Originally prepared in Latin, they were intended alone for a narrow and scholarly circle. But they proved to be the match that lighted a great conflagration. They were speedily translated into German, and in a fortnight were eagerly perused and discussed throughout all Germany. Not a few devout and anxious spirits felt that at last a deliverer had come. Luther had voiced the feelings of many earnest Christians, who longed for deliverance from existing evils, and prayed for a return to a pure and spiritual religion. "Ho, ho!" joyfully exclaimed Dr. Fleck, who had assisted at the dedication of the University of Wittenberg, "this is the man that will accomplish it; he for whom we have long been waiting is coming." Reuchlin

was likewise delighted. "The monks have now found a man," he said, "who will give them such full employment that they will be glad to let me spend my old age in peace." Others, recalling the failure of previous reformatory movements, were less hopeful. Dr. Kranz, of Hamburg, while lying at the point of death, said, "You tell the truth, good brother, but you will accomplish nothing; go to your cell, and say, God have mercy upon me."

At the same time the theses worked a storm of protests and denunciations from scholastic adherents of the Papacy. The Dominicans were especially virulent in their attacks upon Luther. Aided by Conrad Wimpina, a professor of theology in the University of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, Tetzl soon brought forward a series of opposing theses, which he defended in the presence of a large assembly of monks. With great controversial shrewdness, he made the authority and power of the Pope the salient point of his discussion. He boldly maintained the infallibility of the Pope, which had not at that time been formally made an article of Roman Catholic belief. "Christians must be taught," he said, "that the judgment of the Pope in matters pertaining to the faith and what is necessary to the salvation of men is without question infallible, and that all observances referring to matters of faith, which the Papal chair has sanctioned, are part and parcel of Catholic truth, even if they are not found in the Holy Scriptures."

Another Dominican assailant, of far greater ability than Tetzl, was Sylvester de Prierio, or, as he is generally called, Prierias. He also maintained the infallibility of the Pope. "The Church universal," he declared, "is virtually the Church

of Rome and the Pope. The Roman Church is representatively the college of cardinals ; but virtually it is the Pope, who is head of the Church. Whoever does not rest upon the doctrine of the Roman Church and the Roman Pope, as an infallible rule of faith, from which even the Holy Scriptures derive their authority, is a heretic." Jacob von Hoogstraten, of Cologne, the persistent enemy of Reuchlin, demanded Luther's punishment by fire, and John Eck, a professor in the University of Ingolstadt, and a man of recognized ability and learning, charged him with reviving the Hussite heresy.

Though sometimes alarmed at the dangerous position into which he was being forced, Luther did not lose his courage and loyalty to truth. The replies of his assailants, so far from convincing him of error, only confirmed him in his apprehension of the Gospel. He was astonished at their emptiness of proof, and their reliance upon scholastic authority. After a visit to Heidelberg, where his learning, courtesy, and sincerity won him friends, who, like Bucer, Brenz, and Schnepf, afterward became prominent in the Reformation, he prepared in 1518 a defense of his theses, called *Resolutiones*, which in a very humble letter he dedicated to Leo X. "If I have deserved death," he says, "I refuse not to die ; for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

In spite of his servile letter, Luther rejects the infallibility of the Pope—an issue that had been forced into the discussion—and practically plants himself on the supreme authority of the Scriptures. "I concern myself little about it," he says, "whether anything does or does not please the Pope ; he is a man like other men. There have been many Popes, who have taken pleasure

not only in errors and vices, but likewise in the most unaccountable things. I obey the Pope as Pope, that is, if he speaks what the canons dictate, and if he acts in accordance with their prescriptions, or in connection with a council pronounces a decision ; but not, if he speaks only what seems good to himself merely. For else I would, with some that understand nothing of Christ, likewise be compelled to say that Julius II., notwithstanding his atrocious murders and shedding of Christian blood, still acted as a good shepherd and faithfully tended the flock of Christ." He further declared that the Church was in need of a reformation, but that the time of its accomplishment was known only to God.

The controversy speedily assumed a deeper significance. Pope Leo X., who was at first disposed to make light of the matter, became thoroughly aroused. "Brother Martin," he had said at the beginning, "is a man of fine genius, and this outbreak is a mere squabble of envious monks." But in August, 1518, he deemed it necessary to interpose his pontifical authority. Accordingly, he cited Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days to answer the charge of heresy, and ordered the Elector Frederick to deliver up this "child of the devil" to the Papal legate. He threatened to place the terrible interdict upon "all princes, communities, universities, and powers, or any of them," that might aid or protect Luther and his adherents. But the Elector was unwilling to sacrifice the most prominent teacher of his young university ; and, knowing that Luther's appearance in Rome certainly meant his condemnation, and probably his death, he secured, after diplomatic negotiations, the important concession that the reformer should be tried upon German soil.

In October, 1518, Luther went on foot to Augsburg to appear before the cardinal legate Cajetan. An imperial diet had just been held there, and Maximilian was still in the neighborhood. After receiving a safe-conduct from the Emperor, Luther appeared before the cardinal in three interviews. Nothing was accomplished. Cajetan demanded that Luther should : 1. Retract his errors ; 2. Desist from them in the future ; and 3. Refrain from everything else that might disturb the Church. Like the previous opponents of the reformer, he asserted that "the Pope had power and authority over all things." In reply, Luther expressed a willingness to be instructed, and desired to have his errors pointed out. He affirmed the scriptural character of his teaching, and refused to submit to the dictum of the Pope. "The decretals," he said, "often erred, and were opposed to the Holy Scriptures and Christian love. St. Peter, on occasion of his not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, had been reprov'd by St. Paul. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at if his successor should likewise err in any case. In matters of faith, not only a general council, but every believer was above the Pope, in case he had better authority and reason on his side." At length the legate, who had at first treated Luther courteously, became impatient and angry, and, rising from his seat, exclaimed : "Begone, and do not again come into my presence, except to recant." A week later, having reason to fear treachery, he left Augsburg secretly ; but before his departure, he left an appeal from Cajetan to the Pope, and "from the Pope ill-informed to the Pope better informed." And in November, he appealed from the Pope to a general council.

Before proceeding to extreme measures, the Pope

made another attempt to induce Luther to recant. For this purpose he dispatched his chamberlain, Miltitz, to Saxony, where the nuncio, a polished and plausible courtier, had a conference with Luther. For a moment the reformer, awe-struck at the proportions the controversy was assuming, wavered in his courageous line of action. A temporary compromise was effected. Luther consented to beg pardon of the Pope, and to warn the people against the sin of separating from the Papal Church. It was agreed that the matter in controversy should be settled by a German bishop, and that meanwhile both parties were to remain silent. Then, after a convivial supper, the negotiators parted with a kiss. A remark of the nuncio throws an interesting light upon the feeling of the German people. "O, dear Martin," said the effusive Miltitz, "I thought you were already an aged, worn-out theologian, sitting behind the stove, and thus disputing with yourself; but I perceive that you are yet an active, young, and strong man. And even if I had with me an army of twenty-five thousand men, I would not trust to bring you out of Germany. For on my journey I have made repeated inquiries as to how the people were disposed, and what they thought of you, when I found thus much: that where there is one on the Pope's side, there are at least three others on your side against the Pope."

The truce agreed upon was not of long duration. The controversy had already ceased to be a private matter. The Emperor and leading princes of Germany, the Pope and his cardinals, universities, and theologians, to say nothing of the common people, felt a deep interest in the issue that had been made. The conflagration could not be stayed. The Papal theologian, John Eck, was the first to

break the truce. Upon his initiative a disputation was arranged and held at Leipzig, in which he championed the Papacy against Carlstadt and Luther. His triumph over Carlstadt was not difficult; but in Luther he met an antagonist, who, in addition to great intellectual energy, possessed a wide acquaintance with ecclesiastical history and a matchless knowledge of Scripture, illumined by a profound religious experience. The debate lasted three weeks, and at its conclusion both sides claimed the victory.

An invaluable result for Luther was the increasing clearness with which he apprehended evangelical truth, his further rejection of Papal assumption, and his growing reliance upon Scripture as the ultimate rule of religious faith and practice. The principal point in the disputation, as in the previous discussions connected with the theses, was the nature and extent of Papal authority. In opposition to Eck's extravagant claims in behalf of the Roman Church and "the successor of St. Peter as the general vicar of Christ," Luther affirmed: "That the Roman Church is superior to all others is proved from the most silly decrees of the Roman Pontiffs who have been born within the last four hundred years; against which is the approved history of fifteen hundred years, the text of the Holy Scriptures, and the decree of the Council of Nice, the most holy of all councils." He was led to speak a favorable word for Huss, whose doctrines, he said a few months later, he had been teaching without knowing it. "No faithful Christian," he maintained, "can be compelled to anything beyond the Holy Scriptures, which constitute, properly speaking, the divine law."

Mosellanus, professor of eloquence at Leipzig,

who delivered an introductory address at the disputation, gives us an interesting pen-picture of Luther. "Martin," he says, "is of the middle size, of a spare frame, and so worn down by cares and study that, if you behold him near, you can number almost all the bones of his body. He is in the prime of manhood, and has a clear, penetrating voice. His learning and knowledge of the Scriptures are so admirable that he is at home in almost everything. Of the Greek and Hebrew he has learned so much as to be able to judge of the explanations. He is at no loss as to matter for discourse, for he has an extraordinary stock of facts and words at his command. In the common intercourse of life he is polite and friendly, having nothing gloomy or haughty about him, and knowing how to adapt himself to circumstances. In society he is agreeable, lively, and at all times of a good courage and a serene countenance, no matter what evil designs his enemies may have against him, all which constrains one to believe that he does not undertake such important things without the assistance of God." \*

The conflict deepened as new foes assailed and new friends defended the fearless reformer. The Franciscans denounced fourteen of Luther's theses as heretical. Emser, professor of canon law at Leipzig, made an insidious attack that aroused Luther's wrath. He was charged with holding Hussite doctrines; and in explanation of this fact, the slanderous report was circulated that he was descended of Bohemian parentage. After he had published a sermon favoring the administration of the sacrament under both kinds, Duke George of Saxony wrote to the Elector "that Luther's book was regarded as savoring considerably of Prague,

\* Meurer's "Life of Luther," p. 116.

and as, in fact, bearing with it much heresy and scandal." The Bishop of Meissen issued a proclamation against Luther's sermon on the sacrament, in which he lamented its evil effects and enjoined the clergy to preach the orthodoxy of Roman Catholic usage. The theological faculties of Cologne and Louvain pronounced his writings heretical, and condemned them to the flames. Thus monks, theologians, prelates, princes, and universities, zealously adhering to the Papacy, denounced Luther as a heretic and clamored for his destruction.

But friends were not lacking. Not only at Wittenberg, but through all Germany, the evangelical cause was constantly gaining strength. In Melanchthon the great reformer found an invaluable coadjutor and friend. Melanchthon's scholarship in Latin and Greek and his clear, intellectual penetration were of material aid to Luther. The gentleness of Melanchthon's character was a wholesome check upon Luther's impetuosity and violence. Throughout the critical and dangerous period under consideration, they were united in the bonds of a beautiful friendship. Luther accorded Melanchthon's attainments and talents a generous recognition; and when Eck attempted to ridicule the latter by calling him a grammarian, the reformer replied: "I, a doctor of philosophy and of theology, am not ashamed to yield when this grammarian's mind differs from me; I have done so often, and do it daily, on account of the gifts with which God has so beautifully filled this fragile vessel; I honor the work of God in him."

But Melanchthon did more. In this early period he used his pen in defense of Luther. "Judge yourselves," he said to the princes and people of Germany, "whether those really seek

the welfare and good name of your native country who bring accusations against the man that has delivered the country from Roman impositions, who, singly and alone, has ventured to root up errors that had maintained their ground for several centuries, who has again brought to light the doctrines of Christianity, which were almost entirely hidden amidst the ungodly statutes of the Popes and the silly sophisms of the schools. For this praise not only myself but the learned award him.”

The Elector Frederick likewise proved a most valuable friend. Upon the death of the Emperor Maximilian in January, 1519, he became regent of the empire—a position that gave him for a time a commanding influence. In reply to the urgent appeals of Papal representatives, he maintained a calm, judicial attitude, insisting that the errors of Luther should be pointed out and refuted as a necessary preliminary to his condemnation and punishment. His attitude toward Luther and his judgment of the popular feeling he gives in a letter to Dr. Teutleben. “Luther’s doctrines,” he says, “have already struck too deep root in the hearts of many in Germany for it to pass off so lightly (as is supposed), if, instead of refuting them with just and sound arguments and reasons, and manifest and clear testimony from the Scriptures, the terrors of ecclesiastical power alone be resorted to and put into requisition against him, to crush him; it would rather occasion great and excessive scandal in Germany, and excite fearful, dreadful, injurious, and ruinous insurrections, which might not prove of any advantage or benefit, either to the most holy father, the Pope, or to anyone else.”

Francis von Sickingen offered Luther a retreat

in his castle at Naustall, if he should find it necessary to leave Wittenberg. Ulrich von Hutten wrote a letter of encouragement, warning him to be on his guard. "For without you," he says to the reformer, "what misfortune, distress, and injury would it not bring upon all Christendom if you should now fall away. Yet as far as you are concerned, I am certain that you are resolved much rather to die than to pass over to them and be united with them." Schauenburg wrote in a similar strain: "I pray and exhort you in God the Lord, that, although the elector, princes, and other superiors should forsake you, and unjustly permit arbitrary, ecclesiastical power to be put in force against you, you would not let such swerving and falling off disturb you, much less betake yourself to the Bohemians, with whom several highly learned men have aforesaid sustained marked insults and injury, thus only making things worse. For I, and I think I may say a hundred others of the nobility, whom (if God permit) I will assemble, will faithfully support you and protect you against all the danger from your adversaries, till your doctrines have, in a general Christian council, regularly summoned, or by unbiased and intelligent judges, been vindicated and established, or you have been better informed."

All this sympathy and encouragement was, no doubt, grateful to Luther, and helped to sustain him in the midst of his trials and dangers. But his reliance was not in carnal weapons. "I would not," he wrote, "have the Gospel maintained by violence and bloodshed. By the Word the world has been overcome; by the Word the Church has been preserved; by the Word it will also be restored; and as antichrist has gained his

power without violence, so he will fall without violence.”

While powerful friends and defenders throughout Germany were gathering around him, Luther himself exhibited a prodigious activity and courage. Along with his work as a professor in the University of Wittenberg and preacher in the city church, he wrote in 1520 no fewer than fifteen treatises, most of which were replies to his assailants and attacks upon Papal errors. Through great conflicts within and without, his vision of evangelical truth had been rendered clear and profound; and among the various works of this laborious year there were three of such importance that they have been designated as his “Primary Works.” They bring before us, in definite form, the errors of the Roman Church which the reformers combated and the points of reformation which they ardently sought.

The first of these three great works was the address to the “Christian Nobility of the German Nation.” Luther understood its tremendous significance. The thought of the treatise came to him as he was driving along with a friend. “I have charged a rifle,” he said to his companion, “which, if I succeed in discharging it well, will certainly force its way through.” His achievement answered to his desire; and perhaps no more comprehensive and irresistible attack was ever directed against the Papal system.

The address consists of three parts. The first part is devoted to an overthrow of “the three walls of the Romanists.” “The Romanists have with great adroitness,” he says, “drawn three walls round themselves, with which they have hitherto protected themselves, so that no one

could reform them, whereby all Christendom has fallen terribly. First, if pressed by the temporal power, they have affirmed and maintained that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them, but, on the contrary, that the spiritual power is above the temporal. Secondly, if it were proposed to admonish them with the Scriptures, they objected that no one may interpret the Scriptures but the Pope. Thirdly, if they are threatened with a council, they pretend that no one may call a council but the Pope."

In attacking and destroying the first wall, Luther maintains that the distinction between the spiritual estate and the temporal estate is a hypocritical device. "Between laymen and priests," he says, "princes and bishops, or, as they call it, between temporal and spiritual persons, the only real difference is one of office and function, and not of estate; for they are all of the same spiritual estate, true priests, bishops, and popes, though their functions are not the same."

In regard to the second wall, Luther holds that the Pope's claim to be the sole interpreter of Scripture is an impudent usurpation, unsupported by reason, fact, or revelation. "It is a wickedly devised fable," he declares, "and they cannot quote a single letter to confirm it, that it is for the Pope alone to interpret the Scriptures or to confirm the interpretation of them; they have assumed the authority of their own selves. And though they say that this authority was given to St. Peter when the keys were given to him, it is plain enough that the keys were not given to St. Peter alone, but to the whole community. Besides, the keys were not ordained for doctrine or authority, but for sin, to bind or loose; and what they claim besides this is mere invention."

As to the third wall, it falls of itself with the destruction of the other two. "If the Pope act contrary to the Scriptures," Luther affirms, "we are bound to stand by the Scriptures, to punish and constrain him." If the Pope resist the calling of a council or the reformation of the Church, his authority is to be disregarded and his excommunications despised "as the ravings of a madman."

Luther concludes the first part of his address with these words: "And now I hope we have laid the false, lying spectre with which the Romanists have long terrified and stupefied our consciences. And we have shown that, like all the rest of us, they are subject to the temporal sword; that they have no authority to interpret the Scriptures by force without skill; and that they have no power to prevent a council or to pledge it in accordance with their pleasure, or to bind it beforehand, and deprive it of its freedom; and that if they do this, they are verily of the fellowship of antichrist and the devil, and have nothing of Christ but the name."\*

The second part of the address treats of "the matters to be considered in the council." It is a bold and terrific arraignment of the Papacy for its pride, tyranny, and wickedness. "It is a distressing and terrible thing," Luther exclaims, "to see that the head of Christendom, who boasts of being the Vicar of Christ and the successor of St. Peter, lives in a worldly pomp that no king or emperor can equal; so that in him, who calls himself most holy and most spiritual, there is more worldliness than in the world itself. He wears a

\* The foregoing, as well as the following quotations from Luther's three great treatises, are taken from Wace and Buchheim's "Luther's Primary Works." But they have been verified by reference to the German in the Leipzig edition of Luther's works.

triple crown, whereas the mightiest kings wear only one. If this resembles the poverty of Christ and St. Peter, it is a new sort of resemblance."

The reformer points out, in strong language, the usurpations and shameless subterfuges by which the Papacy increased its power and filled its coffers. Germany was impoverished to support an imposing and venal court. "There is such a swarm of vermin at Rome," he says, "all called Papal, that Babylon itself never saw the like. There are more than three thousand Papal secretaries alone; but who shall count the other office-bearers, since there are so many offices that we can scarcely count them, and all waiting for German benefices, as wolves wait for a flock of sheep? I think Germany now pays to the Pope more than it formerly paid the emperors; nay, some think more than three hundred thousand guilders are sent from Germany to Rome every year, for nothing whatever; and in return we are scoffed at and put to shame. Do we still wonder why princes, noblemen, cities, foundations, convents, and people are poor? We should rather wonder that we have anything left to eat."

Of the outrageous traffic in privileges and benefices carried on at Rome, Luther says: "Any sort of usury is made legitimate for money; property got by theft or robbery is here made legal. Here vows are annulled; here a monk obtains leave to quit his order; here priests can enter married life for money; here bastards can become legitimate, and dishonor and shame may arrive at high honors; all evil repute and disgrace is knighted and ennobled; here a marriage is suffered that is in a forbidden degree or has some other defect. Oh, what a trafficking and plundering is there! One would think that the canon laws were only so

many ropes of gold, from which he must free himself who would become a Christian man. Nay, here the devil becomes a saint and a god besides.”

The third part of the address is devoted to “twenty-seven articles respecting the reformation of the Christian estate.” Luther’s work was not simply critical and destructive ; in the latter part of this great polemic document he shows himself equally strong as a constructive reformer. His keen discernment recognizes not only the existing evils, but also the suitable remedies. To ameliorate the spiritual condition of Germany he proposes, among other things, that every form of Papal exaction, such as the annats, sale of benefices, and of confirmations by the Pope, be prohibited ; that temporal matters be settled by the princes without the interference of Rome ; that the number of Papal officers should be diminished ; that the terrible oaths binding the bishops to the Pope should be abolished ; that the emperor should be independent of the Pope ; that the Pope should surrender his claim to the temporal sovereignty of Naples and Sicily ; that the mendicant orders should be abolished, or, at least, restricted ; that priests should be allowed to marry ; that festivals, processions, and masses for the dead should be done away with, or at least diminished in number ; and that the universities, “where the blind heathen teacher, Aristotle, rules even further than Christ,” should undergo a thorough reformation.

In concluding this powerful treatise, Luther says with fearless and heroic spirit : “I dare say I have sung a lofty strain, that I have proposed many things that will be thought impossible, and attacked many points too sharply. But what was I to do? This I was bound to say ; if I had the power, this is what I would do. I had rather

incur the world's anger than God's ; they cannot take from me more than my life. I have hitherto made many offers of peace to my adversaries. But, as I see, God has forced me, through them, to open my mouth wider and wider."

This uncompromising polemical pamphlet, though it frightened some of Luther's friends, was welcomed by a large part of the German people. It gave voice to their feelings and definiteness to their aspirations. In a short time four thousand copies were distributed, and a new edition called for. It was fittingly characterized by Lange as "a war-trumpet." "The reformer," to use the words of Köstlin, "who at first desired only to open and teach the true way of salvation to souls, and to battle for this with the sword of His Word, has indeed taken, in a decided and impetuous manner, that other step, by which he demands the abolishment of the illegal and antichristian outward forms of the Romish Church, and even calls the temporal powers with their weapons, if need be, to assistance." \*

The second of Luther's great "primary works" was entitled "Concerning Christian Liberty." It begins with the paradox that "a Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none ; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone." He is free through faith, and a servant through love. Though far less polemical in tone than the "Address to the Nobility," it is not less fundamental and far-reaching in its statement of evangelical principles. It asserts the supreme authority of the Scriptures, teaches justification by faith alone, and argues the necessity of good works, not as a ground of pardon, but as a fruit of the new life. It is dedicated

\* Köstlin's "Life of Luther," p. 186.

to Pope Leo X., to whom, while professing a profound respect, Luther nevertheless reaffirms, in the strongest language, his charges of Papal depravity. "For many years now," he courageously says to the Pontiff, "nothing else has overflowed from Rome into the world—as you are not ignorant—than the laying waste of goods, of bodies, and of souls, and the worst examples of all the worst things. These things are clearer than the light to all men; and the Church of Rome, formerly the most holy of all churches, has become the most lawless den of thieves, the most shameless of all brothels, the very kingdom of sin, death, and hell; so that not even antichrist, if he were to come, could devise any addition to its wickedness."

The Christian is justified, Luther maintains, not by outward things of whatever character they may be, but by "the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ." The intervention of Popes and priests is not necessary. "Let us, therefore, hold it for certain and firmly established," he says, "that the soul can do without everything, except the Word of God, without which none at all of its wants are provided for. But having the Word, it is rich and wants for nothing, since that is the word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing."

Faith, by which alone the soul is justified, brings us into harmony with the divine will, leads us to the deepest veneration for Him in whom we believe, and, abolishing all false and artificial distinctions, makes all believers kings and priests unto God. It does away with the terrible ecclesiastical tyranny, under which "the knowledge of Christian

grace, of faith, and of liberty, and altogether of Christ, has utterly perished, and has been succeeded by an intolerable bondage to human works and laws ; and, according to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, we have become the slaves of the vilest men on earth, who abuse our misery to all the disgraceful and ignominious purposes of their own will.”

Faith leads to a willing service of our fellow-man, even as Christ gave Himself for us. It introduces a reign of love and helpfulness. “Thus from faith,” Luther says, in summing up his argument, “flow forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a cheerful, willing, free spirit, disposed to serve our neighbor voluntarily, without taking any account of gratitude or ingratitude, praise or blame, gain or loss. Its object is not to lay men under obligations, nor does it distinguish between friends and enemies, or look to gratitude or ingratitude, but most freely and willingly spends itself and its goods, whether it loses them through ingratitude or gains good-will. For this did its Father, distributing all things to all men abundantly and freely ; making His sun to rise upon the just and the unjust.”

The treatise is written with deep conviction and spiritual insight. It shows Luther's calm, firm hold on evangelical truth, and the lofty ethical plane to which he would elevate human life. It is infinitely above the externalities inculcated by the Roman Church. It is one of the reformer's noblest writings, and embodies in brief compass the evangelical system of faith and works, to which Luther would gladly have given his life, had he not been called to battle by the selfish enemies of the truth. In concluding his dedicatory letter to Leo X., he says : “By this you may perceive in what

pursuits I should prefer and be able to occupy myself to more profit, if I were allowed, or had hitherto been allowed, by your impious flatterers. It is a small matter, if you look to its exterior ; but, unless I mistake, it is a summary of the Christian life put together in small compass, if you apprehend its meaning.”

The third of Luther's “primary works” is the “Babylonish Captivity of the Church.” It is a polemical treatise, in which Luther recognizes the advances he has made. In place of all his previous writings on indulgences, which he has maintained were not to be wholly rejected, he wishes to substitute this unqualified declaration : “Indulgences are wicked devices of the flatterers of Rome.” He had hitherto recognized the human, though not the divine, right of the Papacy ; but, thanks to Eck, Emser, and others, he now utterly rejects its claims. “I now know and am sure,” he declares, “that the Papacy is the kingdom of Babylon and the power of Nimrod, the mighty hunter.”

The “Babylonish Captivity” is a thorough-going attack upon the sacramental system of the Roman Church. It is aimed at a vital point. With the number of the sacraments diminished, and with their administration rightly explained, the mediatorial office of the priesthood disappears. Here, as elsewhere, Luther substitutes faith for externality. Every sacrament, he explains, involves a word of divine promise, which the recipient must believe. “I must deny,” he says, “that there are seven sacraments, and must lay it down, for the time being, that there are only three—baptism, penance, and the bread—and that by the Court of Rome all these have been brought into miserable bondage, and the Church despoiled of all

her liberty." Accordingly, he rejects confirmation, matrimony, orders, extreme unction, and, later, also penance, as sacraments.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as Luther shows, had been perverted or brought into bondage in three ways : 1. It was administered to the laity in a mutilated form by withholding the cup ; 2. Its nature was misrepresented by the newly devised doctrine of transubstantiation ; and 3. Its true use was perverted by the sacrifice of the mass. He characterizes the withholding of the cup as "an act of impiety and tyranny;" the doctrine of transubstantiation he pronounces "a figment of human opinion ;" and the sacrifice of the mass, he declares, has "made this divine sacrament a mere subject of traffic, huckstering, and money-getting contracts." In the words of institution, the reformer says, "and absolutely in nothing else, lies the whole force, nature, and substance of the mass. All the rest are human notions, accessory to the words of Christ ; and the mass can perfectly well subsist and be kept up without them." The only thing required for the worthy reception of the Lord's Supper is a faith that rests with confidence upon the divine promise contained in the words, "given and shed for you."

In like manner faith is necessary in baptism. "It is not baptism," Luther says, "which justifies any man, or is of any advantage ; but faith in that word of promise to which baptism is added ; for this justifies and fulfills the meaning of baptism." This truth he emphasizes in a subsequent paragraph : "Let us then open our eyes, and learn to look more to the word than to the sign, more to faith than to the work or use of the sign ; and let us understand that wherever there is a divine promise, there faith is required ; and that both of

these are so necessary that neither can be of any effect without the other. We can neither believe unless we have a promise, nor is the promise effectual unless it is believed; while if these two act reciprocally, they produce a real and sure efficacy in the sacraments. Hence to seek efficacy in the sacrament independently of the promise and of faith is to strive in vain and to fall into condemnation." This doctrine, it will be perceived, is directly opposed to the Papal teaching of the efficacy of the sacraments *ex opere operato*.

Meanwhile, a Papal bull, bearing date June 15th, 1520, had been prepared against Luther. His heroic spirit, which no longer sought reconciliation with the antichrist of Rome, remained undaunted. In the concluding paragraph of the "Babylonish Captivity," he defiantly says: "I hear a report that fresh bulls and Papal curses are being prepared against me, by which I am to be urged to recant, or else to be declared a heretic. If this is true, I wish this little book to be a part of my future recantation, that they may not complain that their tyranny has puffed itself up in vain."

The Papal bull was brought to Germany in August, 1520, by Eck. It is an elaborate document. After invoking God and all the saints to defend the Church against the new heresy, it cites forty-one errors selected from the works of the reformer, among which are the following: "XVI. It would be well for the Church, in a general council, to resolve that the laity should commune under both forms. XVII. The treasures of the Church, from which the Pope gives indulgences, are not the merits of Christ and the saints. XIX. Indulgences do not avail, where truly received, to remit the punishment which divine justice de-

mands for actual sins. XX. They are deceived who believe that indulgences bring salvation and a spiritual benefit. XXXIII. To burn heretics is against the will of the Spirit. XXXVII. Purgatory cannot be proved from the canonical Scriptures." \*

After condemning the citations as contrary to the Roman doctrine, the Pope forbids them to be taught, and orders the works of Luther to be diligently collected and burned. The reformer and his adherents are given sixty days to recant, and after that time they are to be condemned as heretics, and handed over to the secular arm for punishment. The adherents of the Papacy are warned against association with the Lutheran heretics, and are charged to arrest and deliver them to Rome, "to receive in return for so good a work due remuneration and reward." Any city, land, or other place giving Luther and his followers shelter or protection is to be placed under an interdict, and everyone is warned against opposing the bull under penalty of the divine anger.

The bull was not favorably received in Germany. While it was posted in a few cities and Luther's works were publicly committed to the flames, it elsewhere excited opposition and contempt. At Leipzig Eck was mobbed by a crowd of students, and fled from the city under cover of night. At Erfurt the bull was torn to pieces by the students, and thrown into the river with the words: "It is a bulla (bubble), let it float." At Wittenberg the rector of the University refused to publish it under the pretext that it had not been delivered to him in due form.

Luther's fearless courage did not desert him.

\* Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," VI., p. 235, in Latin, and Jacobs's "Martin Luther," p. 413, in English.

In November he published a tract, entitled "Against the Bull of Antichrist." He justly complains that his doctrines are condemned without refutation. He examines the first twelve articles condemned in the bull, and, finding them consonant with evangelical truth, he concludes as follows: "Therefore I will herewith have everyone put on his guard and admonished, that he may beware of such devils, and will give a sign, namely, this: If the Pope does not revoke and condemn this bull, and rebuke Dr. Eck and his clique, as the executors of such bull, then no one is to doubt but that the Pope is the enemy of God, the persecutor of Christ, the destroyer of His Church, and the true antichrist. For thus far it has never yet been heard of that anyone has condemned the plain, manifest Christian truth, as this hellish, accursed bull does."

But shortly afterward Luther took a still bolder step. On December 20th, 1520, the university bulletin board contained the following announcement: "All friends of evangelical truth are invited to assemble about nine o'clock at the Church of the Holy Cross beyond the city wall. There, according to ancient, apostolic usage, the godless books of the Papal constitutions and the scholastic theology will be burned, inasmuch as the presumption of the enemies of the Gospel has advanced to such a degree that they have cast the godly, evangelical books of Luther into the fire. Let all earnest students, therefore, appear at the spectacle; for it is now the time when antichrist must be exposed."

Accordingly, a large throng of professors and students assembled at the designated place. A fire was lighted, and, as the flames brightly burned, Luther cast into them the hated canonical

law, and then the Papal bull, with the words, "Because thou dost trouble the Holy One of the Lord, may eternal fire consume thee." While the books were still burning, he returned to the city. In a letter to Staupitz he confesses "that he went forth that morning with trembling and prayer, but returned with greater joy than over any previous act of his life."

The burning of the canonical law, by which the Papal power was chiefly upheld, and the Papal bull, by which evangelical truth was condemned, was with Luther a solemn and religious act. It proclaimed his uncompromising and final rejection of the whole Papal system. The next day, after finishing his lecture on the Psalms, he solemnly warned his hearers against the errors and abominations of the Papacy. "If you do not," he said with great earnestness, "oppose with all your heart the wicked government of the Papacy, you cannot be saved, for the kingdom of the Pope is so utterly opposed to the kingdom of Christ and to Christian life, that it would be better and safer to live in a wilderness, without any human being near, than in and under the kingdom of anti-christ."

He fully recognized the danger of the step he was taking. While urging his auditors to bear testimony against Papal errors of doctrine and practice, he warns them that in so doing they jeopardize body and life. "For my own part," he continues with deep loyalty to the truth, "I shall rather incur all manner of perils in this world than charge my conscience with keeping silence, for which I would have to render an account to God. As I therefore have, for some time past, with my whole heart, resisted the raving monster at Rome, I consider the Babylonian plague and

pestilence an abomination, and shall, as long as I live, point this out to my brethren and warn them. If withal I cannot prevent the appalling ruin and destruction of innumerable souls, yet some among us can be rescued, so that they be not cast into the abyss of hell along with the rest.”

The reformation had dawned in Germany. Its further progress and its ultimate triumph there cannot be traced in detail. In 1521 Luther was summoned before the Diet of Worms, where, in the presence of the Emperor Charles V., he exhibited a heroic spirit. Rejecting the authority of Popes and councils, he refused to recant unless convinced by clear reasoning or by sacred Scripture. At the Wartburg, where he was confined for a time by the friendly intervention of the Elector Frederick, he began the translation of the Bible, which he subsequently completed with the help of Melanchthon and other scholars. The Diet of Spires passed an edict in 1529 forbidding the spread of the Reformation in states that had not already accepted it. A formal protest on the part of the evangelical princes fixed upon the reformatory movement the name of Protestant. At the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, at which the emperor was present in person, the Lutheran confession of faith, prepared by Melanchthon and approved by Luther, was presented. It has since been known as the Augsburg Confession. Leagues and counter-leagues were formed among the German princes, followed by the Schmalkald War in 1546. Though the emperor was hostile to the Protestant or reformatory movement, and willing to suppress it by force, his hands were tied by the Turks, who were threatening Germany, and by the French, who wished to establish themselves in Italy. He never felt strong enough to dare to alienate the Protestant

princes. Evangelical state churches, beginning with that of Electoral Saxony, were formed throughout northern Germany. At last, after many vicissitudes and dangers, the Religious Peace of 1555 was concluded, which left every prince free to choose between the Papacy and the Augsburg Confession. The battle for evangelical truth and religious freedom had been fought and won.

## CHAPTER V.

### BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION IN OTHER PARTS OF EUROPE.

As we have seen, the conditions favorable to a reformation of the Church were substantially the same throughout western Europe. Every country alike felt the weight of Papal oppression, which, with the growing national consciousness and the increasing popular intelligence, became more onerous and intolerable. Thus it happened that, almost contemporaneously with the Reformation in Germany, a similar, and, in a measure, an independent movement was going forward in various other countries. It was said by the jubilant friends of the Gospel that, "as in spring the breath of life is felt from the shores of the sea to the mountain-top, so the Spirit of God was now melting throughout Christendom the ice of a lengthened winter, and covering it with fresh flowers and verdure, from its lowest plains to its most barren and steepest rocks." \*

1. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Switzerland comprised thirteen small republics or cantons, which may be roughly divided into the cantons of the mountains and the cantons of the plains. No hardier or braver people were to be found in Europe. By their own unaided might they had freed themselves from Austrian oppression, and within the vast citadel of their mountain

\* D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," II., p. 280.

home they were impregnable against every assault. The government remained in the hands of the people—a fact that gave the Reformation in Switzerland its peculiar features. But elements of discord were not lacking. The cantons of the plains, in which lay the cities of Geneva, Basel, and Zurich, were less conservative than the cantons of the mountains. The former were more intelligent and more accessible to new ideas. Furthermore, the Swiss were frequently lured abroad as mercenary soldiers in the service of the Pope, the Emperor, or the King of France. In this way the native purity of their manners was corrupted, and discordant elements were introduced into the country.

Zwingli was the pioneer reformer of Switzerland as Luther was of Germany. Both alike were aided by a large circle of friends and coadjutors. But the two men were different in character and training. Luther possessed a deeper religious nature, which was developed by his severe monastic training. He came to a knowledge of evangelical truth through profound spiritual conflicts. He painfully ascended step by step to that eminence from which he clearly discerned the errors and tyrannies of Rome. Zwingli came to a knowledge of the truth through the path of humanism. He was a follower of Erasmus. His study of the Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament in the Greek, led him, without deep spiritual conflicts, to a recognition of the unevangelical character of the claims and practice of the Papacy. With him reason counted for more than the heart.

Ulrich Zwingli was born of honorable family on New Year's day, 1484, seven weeks after the birth of Luther. His boyhood gave promise of future eminence. He was educated at Basel and Vienna, where he mastered not only the Latin and Greek

classics, but also scholastic theology. At Basel he studied under the celebrated scholar, Wytttenbach, who first revealed to him the treasures of evangelical truth. "This pious man taught openly and boldly," in the words of Grob, "that purgatory, the mass, priestly rule, and the invocation of saints were in direct conflict with the Word of God ; that the time was not far distant when scholastic theology would be abolished, and the ancient doctrine of the Church be restored on the foundation of the Bible ; that absolution was a priestly fraud, and the death of Christ the only satisfaction for sins." \* Here he met Leo Juda, a fellow-student, with whom a few years later he produced the famous Zurich version of the Scriptures.

In 1506 Zwingli was ordained to the priesthood by the Bishop of Constance, and entered upon his pastoral work in the parish of Glarus. He studied the Scriptures with extraordinary zeal. He transcribed the Epistles of Paul in the original, and learned them by heart. He conformed his preaching to the doctrines of the New Testament, and thus, without knowing it, became a reformer. "Let us believe and obey," he said, "what is revealed to us in the Word of God. Whatsoever is not found in it must be regarded as superfluous ; and whatsoever is against it, as erroneous and untrue."

Zwingli's eyes were not at once opened to the selfish and ambitious character of the Papacy, and he was persuaded to accept for a time a pension of fifty florins. This pension was bestowed in order to secure his influence among the people of Glarus, where the Pope was anxious to raise a large number of mercenary soldiers. Zwingli accompanied his people on two expeditions to Italy, and was present at the disastrous battle of Marignano. His

\* Jean Grob's "Life of Zwingli," p. 32.

experience revealed to him, not only the sordid policy of the Pope, but also the demoralizing effects of the foreign service of the Swiss troops. He was a patriot as well as a theologian ; and henceforth his voice was raised against the mercenary system that was bringing demoralization and ruin upon his native country.

After ten years of faithful and acceptable service at Glarus, Zwingli was transferred, in 1516, to Einsiedeln. This monastery possessed a famous image of the Virgin Mary, which annually drew thousands of pilgrims from other parts of Switzerland, from Alsace, and southern Germany. The credulous throngs prayed to the image, which was credited with miraculous powers, and bestowed upon it valuable gifts. As a result the monastery grew richer and more famous. It was the duty of Zwingli to preach to the pilgrims. Though it was to the interest of himself and of the monastery to confirm the throngs in their superstition, he was loyal to the Gospel, and fearlessly exposed the errors of the Church. In 1517, when the abbey was filled to overflowing, he boldly declared that "remission of sins and everlasting life were not to be sought of the holy Virgin, but of Christ ; that absolution, pilgrimages, and vows, and the presents made to saints have no value ; that God's grace and help are everywhere within reach ; and that he hears prayer at other places as well as at Einsiedeln ; that the excessive veneration of the holy Virgin was prejudicial to God's glory ; that, as there is no purgatory, the masses for the soul are useless ; that the merit which some thought to gain by assuming monastic vows was pure imagination ; and that not Mary, but Christ, is our only salvation."

Zwingli was not frightened by the danger to

which his fearless preaching exposed him. Like Luther, he possessed the genuine martyr spirit. His sermons diminished the number of pilgrims, many of whom carried home with them the presents intended for the Virgin. When the prior of the monastery expressed his anxiety, Zwingli strengthened and comforted him with these words : “ Once for all, we must determine to cling inseparably to right, truth, and God, though with the loss of property and life. Once for all, we must venture and expose ourselves to the danger of death for the truth, and to confirm the mind against all the attacks of the flesh, the world, and the devil.”

While Zwingli was at Einsiedeln, a Franciscan friar, Samson, crossed the Alps to vend indulgences in Switzerland. He was scarcely less shameless than Tetzels in this infamous traffic. “ I can pardon all sins,” exclaimed the Italian monk ; “ Heaven and hell are subject to my power ; and I sell the merits of Christ to any who will purchase them by buying an indulgence for ready money.” He claimed the power to forgive, not only sins of the past, but also sins of the future. In the light of the Gospel, Zwingli denounced the indulgence error and imposture. “ No man,” he exclaimed, “ can remit sins ; Christ, who is very God and very man, alone has this power. Go and buy indulgences, but be assured that you are not absolved. Those who sell remission of sins for money are the companions of Simon the magician, the friends of Balaam, and the ambassadors of Satan.” Evangelical truth soon gained the ascendancy, and Samson was finally driven from the country.

The fame of Zwingli as a courageous evangelical preacher spread throughout Switzerland. He had the sympathy and support of many pious, scholarly men, who longed for deliverance from Papal

error and oppression. At the close of 1518 he was called to the Cathedral Church of Zurich. "You will make every exertion," the canons, who feared innovation, gravely said to him, "to collect the revenues of the Chapter, without overlooking the least. You will exhort the faithful, both from the pulpit and in the confessional, to pay all tithes and dues, and to show by their offerings their affection to the Church. You will be diligent in increasing the income arising from the sick, from masses, and in general from every ecclesiastical ordinance." \*

But Zwingli's conception of the Christian ministry was beyond mere money-getting. "The life of Christ," he replied, "has been too long hidden from the people. I shall preach upon the whole Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter after chapter, according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, without human commentaries, drawing solely from the fountain of Scripture, sounding its depths, comparing one passage with another, and seeking for understanding by constant and earnest prayer. It is to God's glory, to the praise of His only Son, to the real salvation of souls, and to their edification in the true faith, that I shall consecrate my ministry."

He was frequently led to speak of the evils existing in the Church. In a sermon preached in 1524, he discussed the condition of the cloisters. He defined worship, according to the teaching of the apostle, as visiting widows and orphans in their affliction, and keeping one's self unspotted from the world. "The world in this place," he said, "does not mean hill and valley, field and forest, water, lakes, towns, and villages, but the *lusts of the world*, as avarice, pride, uncleanness, intemperance. These vices, however, are more

\* D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," II., p. 324.

commonly to be met with within the walls of a cloister than in the world abroad. I speak not of envy and hatred, which have their habitation among this crew, and yet these are all greater sins than those they would fain escape by fleeing to a cloister. Consider, ye monks, your revels, and see how temperate you are ; rich food along with idleness avails not the body, but ministers only incentives to carnal lusts." \*

He pointed out the scandal arising from the antiscriptural law of celibacy. "I know not a greater scandal in the world," he declared, "than this, that priests are not allowed to marry, but are allowed, against a payment made, to keep concubines." In his "Christian Introduction," a brief theological manual, he thus speaks of the erroneous view of the mass as a sacrifice : "First, this false opinion has begotten and nourished every vice. For robbers, usurers, traitors, murderers, adulterers, have thought that, if mass was once read for their sins, it was all right with them. And resting on this, they have sinned shamelessly and enormously. This is well seen in the benefices, foundations, and mass-sales. The second iniquity consists in this, that through the mass so much of this earth's goods has been amassed and taken for the pretended sacrifice. And even had the mass been a sacrifice, yet it was horrible to take money, wages, this world's chattels, for it. But this was not enough ; the wealth thus amassed was used at will, was stolen from the poor in cases where it belonged to them, for under this pretext of saying mass the greatest part of alms has been rapaciously seized. Oppressions of all kinds have been practiced through it." †

\* Christoffel's "Zwingli ; or, the Reformation in Switzerland," p. 118.

† Christoffel's "Zwingli ; or, the Reformation in Switzerland," p. 139.

The result of all this is not difficult to divine. The faithful presentation of Scriptural truth tended to overthrow the Papal system of human doctrines and ordinances. While the friends of the Gospel increased, the adherents of the Papacy became alarmed. The bold and eloquent reformer was attacked, and at last, in 1522, the Bishop of Constance lodged a complaint against him before the Council of Zurich. This led, the following year, to a public disputation, which marks a turning point in the Reformation of Switzerland. On this occasion Zwingli submitted sixty-seven theses, which contained a summary of his doctrinal views. It is a remarkable fact that in substance they are identical with the teachings of the German reformers. They substitute the authority of the Scriptures for that of the Church ; they declare the Church to be the communion of saints, whose head is Christ ; they affirm that salvation is to be obtained only through faith in Him as priest and mediator ; and they reject the invocation of saints, justification by works, fasts, pilgrimages, monastic orders, indulgences, purgatory, and other inventions of the Papacy.

The issue was fully joined. Zwingli fairly triumphed in the disputation and silenced his Papal opponents. The city council, before whom the disputation was held, formally "resolved that Dr. Ulrich Zwingli shall continue to preach, according to the Spirit of God and the best of his ability, the holy Gospel and the divine Word. We also command all other common priests, pastors, and preachers in our city and province to teach and preach publicly nothing but what they find to agree with the holy Gospel and what can be proved by it."

From this time the work of reform made rapid

progress. It was based on the threefold principle of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, justification by faith, and the priesthood of believers. Through a study of the Gospel, Luther and Zwingli came, independently of each other, to a recognition and proclamation of those truths. When Zwingli was accused of being a Lutheran, he replied : " I preach as Paul wrote ; why do you not rather receive me as an adherent of Paul ? Yea, I preach the Word of Christ ; wherefore do you not receive me as a Christian ? " In Zurich there was a return to the simplicity and purity of the early Church. The Latin language was discontinued in worship ; the incomes of the chapters and monasteries was applied to education ; the celibacy of the clergy was abolished ; monks and nuns were freed from their vows, and image-worship was declared to be idolatrous. Similar changes followed the preaching of the Gospel in other parts of Switzerland ; and thus for another country the light of the Gospel had dawned.

2. There is a clearly marked difference between the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland and the Reformation in England. This difference grew out of the dissimilar political conditions prevailing in these countries. Germany was divided into a large number of small, independent governments, usually presided over by a petty prince. In Switzerland the separate cantons were independent republics, in which the power rested with the people. In Germany the progress of the Reformation was determined largely by the attitude of individual princes ; in Switzerland, by the attitude of the people ; but in England, which was almost an absolute monarchy, the Reformation was inaugurated and determined by the king.

A distinctive feature of the Reformation in Eng-

land during its initiatory stages was its insignificant departure from the doctrine and polity of the Roman Church. In its beginning it was a political rather than a religious movement. Papal supremacy was overthrown, but Papal beliefs and forms were retained. In the reformatory movements of Germany and Switzerland, the figures of Luther and Zwingli, great theologians and preachers, stand pre-eminent as popular leaders. In England there is no such reformer. It is the king who starts and leads the movement against Rome, not from motives of deep religious conviction, but from considerations of self-seeking ambition and of national security. It was only after the lapse of a considerable period that the strong undercurrent of Protestant feeling and belief gained the ascendancy.

The leader of the English Reformation was Henry VIII., a sovereign of strong will and despotic tendencies. For a time he was a zealous adherent of the Papacy. He magnified the authority of the Pope; and in reply to Luther's "Babylonish Captivity of the Church," he wrote a defense of the sacramental system of Rome, for which he received from Leo X. the title of "Defender of the Faith." And when he severed the relations between England and the See of Rome, he was not impelled, like the continental reformers, by evangelical truth, but by selfish policy. His work shows in a remarkable way how self-seeking and wicked men are sometimes used of God to further the interests of His kingdom.

The secret of Henry VIII.'s revolt against Rome was not, as Papal writers sometimes superficially affirm, "beastly lust," but political ambition. He was anxious to leave an heir of unquestionable legitimacy to the English throne.

When quite young he had married Catharine of Aragon, the widow of his brother Arthur. It was a marriage of policy, designed to strengthen the alliance of England with Spain. As marriage with a brother's wife is expressly forbidden both by the canon law and by Scripture,\* it had been necessary to secure a dispensation from the Pope setting both aside and authorizing the union. This was a questionable proceeding. The only surviving child of this marriage was the Princess Mary, whose legitimaey, owing to the irregularity of the marriage, was in danger of being disputed—a fact that at last gave the king deep concern.

In the earlier years of his reign, Henry VIII. had been in alliance with Spain and the Papacy. It was during this period that he was a zealous defender of the divine authority of the Pope. The legitimacy of his marriage depended upon it. But after the battle of Pavia, in 1524, there came a change that wrecked the hopes of the English king. The restoration of Francis I. frustrated his designs upon the throne of France. Instead of marrying the Princess Mary, as had been arranged, Charles V. espoused the Infanta of Portugal, to whom he had long been secretly engaged. The Pope formed an alliance with Francis. Henry VIII. was thus isolated in Europe; and since such powerful adversaries might at any time question the legitimacy of his daughter, the succession of the Princess Mary was seriously endangered. A new and unimpeachable heir was felt to be a necessity.

In this great emergency, as he believed it to be, Henry acted with characteristic Tudor energy. He resolved to divorce Catharine and disinherit Mary, and then marry Anne Boleyn, a charming maid

\* Leviticus xx. 21.

of honor, who had already won his favor. Cardinal Wolsey undertook to negotiate the affair at Rome. The Pope was placed in a most embarrassing position. To accede to the wishes and plans of the English monarch was to offend the powerful Charles V., the nephew of Catharine of Aragon. Under the circumstances, the Pope adopted the only policy open to him—a policy of subterfuges and delays. The imperious Tudor became wrathful. He deposed his pompous but unsuccessful minister Wolsey, and henceforth took, in large measure, the matter of divorce into his own hands.

Through the influence of money and of royal power, the universities of England and France, to whom the legality of the dispensation given by Julius II. for the marriage with Catharine had been submitted, gave opinions favorable to the plans of Henry VIII. Thomas Cromwell had become Secretary of State. It was his settled policy to render the dominion of his sovereign absolute. To this end he advised the king to disavow the Papal jurisdiction, declare himself head of the Church in his realm, and obtain a divorce from his own ecclesiastical courts. The temper of the English people at this time favored these radical changes. Dissatisfaction with the Papacy was general. The evangelical principles of the German reformation were widely disseminated. The writings of Luther were studied at Oxford and Cambridge. The avarice, extortion, and inconsistency of Papal representatives were apparent on every hand. The subserviency of the Pope to the will of Charles V., who was unfriendly to England, threw the weight of English patriotism on the side of Henry. The moment was thus

favorable for independent and high-handed measures.

At the opening of 1533 Henry VIII., without waiting for a divorce, was secretly married to Anne Boleyn. A few months later, Archbishop Cranmer, who had been appointed to the See of Canterbury, annulled the king's marriage with Catharine, and pronounced the marriage with Anne a lawful union. A week later he placed upon Anne's head the English crown. The Pope endeavored to arrest the course of events in England; but he was answered, first, by a prohibition of the payment of first fruits or annats into the Papal treasury, and then by the great Act of Supremacy, by which the English Church was severed forever from the dominion of the See of Rome. In 1534 Parliament enacted a statute declaring that the king "shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the imperial crown of his realm as well the title and state thereof as all the honors, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, repress, redress, reform, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction might or may lawfully be reformed."

The work of establishing the royal authority and of reforming ecclesiastical abuses went hand in hand. The former led to tyranny and bloodshed. Among other victims, Sir Thomas More was beheaded for refusing to acknowledge the king as supreme head of the Church in England. An uprising in the north was put down with ruthless

severity. Ireland was thoroughly subdued. But alongside of violence, we recognize not a few beneficent changes. The Ten Articles of 1536, though adhering in the main to the Roman system of theology, still rejected the supremacy of the Pope, recognized the authority of the Scriptures, and taught justification by faith. The excessive number of holy days was reduced; the worship of images and relics was discouraged, and pilgrimages were suppressed. In 1538 a translation of the Bible was put forth by Miles Coverdale under the avowed patronage of the king. With this fundamental beginning in doctrine, the future of the Reformation in England was assured.

The most thoroughgoing measure of reformation at this time related to the monasteries, which, as already shown, had generally become more or less dissolute. Two royal commissioners were sent on a general visitation of the religious houses; and in 1536 their report, in the form of a "Black Book," was laid before Parliament. About one-third of the monasteries, it was declared, were decently conducted; but the remaining two-thirds, in keeping with their general reputation, were charged with drunkenness, simony, and the most revolting crimes. As the report was read, a cry of "Down with them!" broke from the Commons. As a result of this investigation, about four hundred of the thousand monasteries existing in England were dissolved, and their revenues granted to the crown.

Such was the dawn of the Reformation in England. It is beyond the limits of this book to trace further the checkered and guilt-stained career of Henry VIII. He died in 1547, the year after the death of Luther, and was succeeded by his son, Edward VI. During the reign of Edward,

the evangelical movement, under the direction of Archbishop Cranmer, made rapid progress. It was followed by a Papal reaction under Mary, who endeavored to quench the Protestant spirit in blood. But finally, under Elizabeth, who came to the throne in 1558, Protestantism became the established faith of England. The Book of Common Prayer, first prepared under Edward VI., was revised in 1560, and two years later the Thirty-nine Articles were adopted. From this period dates the great power and prosperity of the English people.

3. The Lutheran Reformation, by a natural and easy process, extended itself over northern Europe. As has been seen, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the Papacy and its representatives. The writings of the German reformers were eagerly read and circulated, and Scandinavian students, returning from the University of Wittenberg, became enthusiastic missionaries of the evangelical faith. As a result, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway were not slow in joining the reformatory movement.

The first of the Scandinavian countries to become Protestant was Sweden. In 1521 a political revolution placed Gustavus Vasa on the throne. The hostility of the Roman clergy confirmed him in his adherence to the Lutheran faith. He appointed Olaus Petersen preacher at Stockholm, and his brother, Lawrence Petersen, professor of theology. Both had been students at the University of Wittenberg. At a public disputation, held in Upsala in 1524, Olaus Petersen triumphantly defended the faith of the reformers. The Scriptures, which elsewhere had proved so mighty an influence in the work of reform, were translated into the vernacular. Though the movement

of reform encountered opposition, the king prevailed, and in 1527 Protestantism became the religion of the country. The episcopal form of government was transferred, as in the Church of England, to the new Lutheran system.

At the beginning of Luther's reformatory work, Christian II. was king of Denmark. He regarded the reformer's work with favor. In 1520 he sent for a Saxon preacher to serve as his chaplain, and later invited Luther himself to his kingdom ; but subsequently, under the stress of political interests, he renounced the Protestant cause.

He was succeeded in 1523 by Frederick I., Duke of Schleswig and Holstein. Though bound at first, by the terms of his election, to uphold the Papal system, Frederick several years later avowed his adherence to the Reformation. John Taussen, who has been characterized as the Danish Luther, was called as preacher to Copenhagen. The foundation of a general reformation was laid in 1527 at the Diet of Odense, where it was ordained that Lutheranism should be tolerated, that episcopal ordination should proceed from the king, and that priests should be allowed to marry. From this time the Reformation spread rapidly among the people.

His son, Christian III., whose accession to the throne had been vigorously opposed by the clergy, completely established the Reformation. He had been present at the Diet of Worms, where Luther's heroic courage won his admiration. He resolved to put an end to the machinations of the Papal clergy ; and, accordingly, at the Diet of Copenhagen, he had the bishops formally deposed. Their property was turned into the royal treasury ; the monasteries were dissolved ; and, in their place, hospitals and schools were founded. Bugen-

hagen, the friend of Luther, was called to reorganize the Church. The Augsburg Confession became the standard of doctrine ; and bishops or superintendents, consecrated by Bugenhagen himself, were placed over the several dioceses. The University of Copenhagen was organized, and other schools of learning were established throughout the kingdom. A simultaneous reformation went forward in Norway, which, in 1536, had taken the oath of allegiance to the Danish king.

4. It is beyond the scope of the present volume to trace the Reformation in other countries. All Europe felt the shock of contending faiths and interests. With the exception of Scotland, it was the Teutonic nations that adopted the evangelical faith and threw off Papal tyranny. In France, the Reformation gained many adherents ; but after several cruel religious wars and the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew's eve, Protestantism was finally overthrown by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685. "The Genius of Fact and Veracity," says Carlyle in a remarkable chapter, "accordingly withdrew : was staved off, got kept away for two hundred years. But the writ of summons had been served ; Heaven's messenger could not stay away forever. No ; he returned duly ; with accounts run up, on compound interest, to the actual hour, in 1792 ; and then, at last, there had to be a 'Protestantism ;' and we know of what kind that was !" \*

In reference to Italy we cannot do better than quote the great Scotchman further. "Italy, too," he says, "had its Protestants ; but Italy killed them ; managed to extinguish Protestantism. Italy put up silently with Practical Lies of all kinds ; and, shrugging its shoulders, pre-

\* Carlyle's "Life of Frederick the Great," Book III., Chap. VIII.

ferred going into Dilettantism and the Fine Arts. The Italians, instead of the sacred service of Fact and Performance, did Music, Painting, and the like ; till even that has become impossible for them ; and no noble Nation, sunk from virtue to *virtu*, ever offered such a spectacle before. He that will prefer Dilettantism in this world for his outfit shall have it ; but all the gods will depart from him ; and manful veracity, earnestness of purpose, devout depth of soul, shall no more be his. He can, if he like, make himself a soprano, and sing for hire ; and probably that is the real goal for him."

In Spain the evangelical movement was crushed out by the horrors of the Inquisition. The intellectual and spiritual life of the people was cruelly repressed, and the way for national decadence effectually prepared. The effort to establish, by cruel, inquisitorial methods, Papal and monarchical supremacy closed the doors to all progress. Ignorance, servility, and moral decay followed ; and before many decades had passed the people that had dominated Europe and founded a mighty empire beyond the seas sunk to a subordinate place in the family of nations.

## CONCLUSION.

WE have traced the beginnings of the Reformation and the conditions that originated it. The Reformation in its origin was based on Scriptural truth ; and in its earlier stages it exhibited a triumphant energy and power. In the course of a few decades it wrested the northern part of Europe from thralldom to the Papacy. For a time the reformatory movement seemed destined to overthrow entirely the hierarchical despotism of Rome. How was it that its progress was stayed and that some of its conquests were lost? Why is it that no nation has embraced the Protestant faith in the last three hundred and fifty years? Why is it that Protestantism can do little more than hold its own to-day against aggressive Romanism? The answers to these inquiries are both interesting and instructive.

As we look at the condition and spirit of the contending forces in the second half of the sixteenth century, we discover an astonishing transformation. Protestantism and Romanism in a measure change character. The Reformation loses its primitive vigor, and the Papacy exhibits a renewed vitality. While the energies of the reformatory movement suffer a decline or dissipate themselves in fratricidal conflicts, the energies of the Papacy are united and hurled with persistent force upon the weakened lines of their opponents. The tide of Protestantism is rolled back from the Alps and Pyrenees toward the Baltic ; and the

ground then lost to the Reformation has not since been regained. It is important to trace this transformation and its results in some detail.

1. An unmistakable source of weakness in Protestantism was its diversities of creed. At first the fundamental principles of the Reformation were few and simple. On the basis of the Scriptures, all the reformers held alike to the supreme authority of the Word of God, to justification by faith, and to the universal priesthood of believers. They were united in their opposition to the errors and tyranny of the Papacy. But in the course of a few decades the leading reformers, advancing beyond the simplicity of these fundamental principles, developed more or less elaborate systems of doctrine. Though professing to be based on Scripture or to stand in accord with it, these various systems exhibited considerable diversity. Though agreeing in the three fundamental principles of the Reformation, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin did not, in some points, interpret the Scriptures alike; and thus arose the dogmatic systems associated with their names.

But this was not all. Within these larger systems there were many minor differences or tendencies, each of which was championed by zealous theologians. This was particularly true in Germany, where the Lutheran Church fell into violent controversies. The points of faith thus brought under discussion—the relation of the law to the Gospel, the nature of justification and sanctification, the place of the will in conversion, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and others—were no doubt of importance. But it seems unfortunate, while engaged in a mortal struggle with the Papacy, to have divided the forces of the Protestant Church over these points. These differences of

belief, in connection with the immoderate controversies often attending them, dissipated the energies of the reformers, confused in a measure public opinion, and placed in the hands of the Papacy a powerful weapon. Regarding external unity as an essential mark of the true Church, the Romanist has always delighted in pointing to Protestant divisions and differences as an unanswerable condemnation of the Reformation. The force of this argument can be broken only by a closer union of the different branches of Protestantism.

2. A second source of weakness to the Protestant cause was its spirit of intolerance. At bottom the Reformation rested on the principle of liberty of conscience. Luther mightily voiced this principle at the Diet of Worms, when, confronted by the combined authority of the Papacy and the empire, he declared : "Unless I can be convinced by Holy Scripture, or by clear and indisputable reasons from other sources (for I cannot defer simply to the Pope or to Councils, since it is clear that they have often erred), I neither can nor will retract anything. As it has been found impossible to refute the proofs I have quoted, my conscience is a prisoner to God's Word ; and no one can be compelled to act against his conscience." Without recognizing the liberty of conscience, which the Papal Church uniformly and persistently denies, it is impossible to vindicate the Reformation.

In the sixteenth century there was, perhaps, no part of the Protestant Church that did not practically ignore this fundamental principle. The Papal principle of intolerance and persecution was everywhere adopted and practiced. The various divisions of Protestantism laid claims to

Scriptural purity of doctrine ; and ignoring the right of freedom of conscience, they persecuted those of a different faith. · “ In the Palatinate,” to use the words of Macaulay, “ a Calvinistic prince persecuted the Lutherans. In Saxony, a Lutheran prince persecuted the Calvinists. Everybody who objected to any of the articles of the Confession of Augsburg was banished from Sweden. In Scotland, Melville was disputing with other Protestants on questions of ecclesiastical government. In England the jails were filled with men who, though zealous for the Reformation, did not exactly agree with the court on all points of discipline and doctrine.” \*

3. A third source of weakness to the Protestant movement was the fanaticism into which some of its ultra adherents fell. In a period of intellectual upheaval and change, it was but natural that unbalanced spirits should run to extremes. When the bonds of Papal despotism were once broken, it was natural for radical minds to abuse their newly found liberty. Though firmly resisted by the great body of reformers, these extreme and lawless tendencies were charged by Romanists to the principles of the Reformation ; and through the conflicts that attended them, these outbreaks wasted the energies of the Protestant movement, and among many thoughtful people excited grave apprehensions as to the results of the Reformation.

These fanatical tendencies took in general two directions. The first was an extreme type of mysticism, the principal representative of which was Caspar Schwenkfeld. The inner light of the Spirit—a principle that leads to every species of

\* Macaulay's “ Essay on Von Ranke,” which is a remarkable discussion of the subject in hand.

error and fanaticism—was exalted above the objective light of Scripture. Luther's adherence to the authority of the written Word was stigmatized as bondage to the letter. A subjective spiritual life was so exalted that all ecclesiastical rites and forms of worship were rejected. Infant baptism was discarded, and the doctrine of sinless perfection was inculcated. These principles were subversive both of Protestantism and Romanism; and though in general these misguided mystics and fanatics led morally irreproachable lives, they were everywhere subject to persecution.

The other extreme, which is known as Anabaptism, was much more fanatical and violent. Early in the Reformation, the Zwickau prophets, who made pretense to special revelations, appeared at Wittenberg, and for a time threw the reformers into consternation. From Allstädt, in Saxony, Thomas Münzer denounced the Reformation as vehemently as he denounced the Papacy. "Not the letter of the Holy Scriptures," he said, "but the Spirit should be made the principle of the Reformation; not only all ecclesiastical, but all civil institutions should be abolished and spiritualized. The doctrine of the evangelical liberty of Christians was grossly abused, the sacraments despised, infant baptism reviled, and all importance attached to the so-called baptism of the Spirit. Princes should be driven away, the foes of the Gospel be extirpated with the sword, and all possessions be held in common."\* At Münster a fanatical theocracy was established for a time; and the king, setting up a splendid court, claimed authority to inaugurate the millennium. These fanatical outbreaks everywhere followed the Reformation, and tended to bring it into discredit.

\* Kurtz's "Church History," II., p. 44.

4. Still another source of weakness to Protestantism was the general decline of zeal. In the beginning the Reformation was hailed with enthusiasm. In his attack upon Papal error and tyranny, Luther found ardent supporters throughout the Germanic nations. The newly restored Gospel was not without adherents in the Latin countries of Europe. But in the second half of the sixteenth century, this enthusiasm, to a great extent, died away. There was an absence of great leaders. No systematic or energetic effort was made to extend the work of the Reformation. In some measure this decline of interest and activity was, perhaps, the natural reaction that attends every extraordinary outburst of feeling and energy. But it seems to have been due still more to the lack of union and co-operation. Dissensions awakened doubts; fanatical excesses aroused apprehension; and bitter controversies over minor dogmas offended the practical sense of the laity. No united front, at once the source of confidence and power, was presented to the Papacy.

This lack of zeal was particularly noticeable among Protestant rulers. Among them, as Macaulay says, "there was little or no hearty Protestant feeling. Elizabeth herself was a Protestant rather from policy than from firm conviction. James the First, in order to effect his favorite object of marrying his son into one of the great continental houses, was ready to make immense concessions to Rome, and even to admit a modified primacy in the Pope. Henry the Fourth twice abjured the reformed doctrines from interested motives. The Elector of Saxony, the natural head of the Protestant party in Germany, submitted to become, at the most important crisis of the struggle, a tool in the hands of the Papists."

5. While divisions, conflicts, and fanaticism were weakening the forces of Protestantism, the Papacy was roused to new life. Realizing that its existence was at stake, it adopted comprehensive and vigorous measures of self-preservation. The first of these measures was a partial counter-reformation. As it has always done in the presence of a vital Protestantism, the Papacy, to some extent, corrected the abuses to which its system inevitably tends. The scandalous apathy and worldliness of the hierarchy were thrown off. Successive Popes reinforced their great administrative ability with lives of consistent piety. The various monastic orders exhibited something of their original self-denial and fervor. An astonishing missionary activity in the Orient and the new world fully made up for the losses sustained by the Church in Europe. The Council of Trent, while authoritatively anathematizing the fundamental teachings of the reformers, gave clear and definite statement to the dogmas of Rome. The results of this counter-reformation, partial and temporary as it was, may be easily imagined. In some measure it removed the grounds of dissatisfaction and hostility, conciliated the favor of the irresolute, and inspired new confidence in the adherents of the Roman Church.

6. The external unity of the Roman Church proved a source of great strength. The organization of the Papacy had been brought to a high degree of perfection by thirty generations of aggressive ecclesiastical princes. While Protestantism was divided not only into national churches, but also into minor and hostile sects, the tremendous agencies of Rome were all united under a masterful central power. This unity secured a comprehensive method of operations and a wise

disposition of forces. Under the circumstances we are compelled to wonder, not that the progress of Protestantism was stayed, but that it was not swept from the face of the earth. Had the Reformation not rested on truth, divine and indestructible, it must have perished in the unequal conflict.

7. The Order of Jesuits, founded by the Spanish enthusiast, Ignatius Loyola, proved a mighty agency in combating the Reformation and in restoring the power of the Papacy. The members of the Order, who were generally men of ability, were pledged to absolute obedience to their superiors. The society was ruled by a general in Rome, whose will was law. All that is ordinarily held dear by the human heart was sacrificed to the interests of the Order and the Church. The organization rapidly spread in Europe, and its missionaries, with heroic courage and self-sacrifice, extended the sway of the Papacy in India, China, and the continents of America. "The Order," to adopt the words of Kurtz, "made all conceivable means—science, learning, art, cultivation, politics, even commerce and trade—subservient to its purposes. It seized the management of the education of the youth of the higher classes of society, and thus trained devoted and powerful friends; by preaching and private counsel, it operated upon the people, and in the confessional secured control over princes, and penetrated into all the relationships of life, and obtained possession of all secrets. And all these thousands of means, these eminent powers and talents, were united under *one* will, served *one* purpose; positively, the furtherance of [Roman] Catholicism; negatively, the suppression of Protestantism." \*

\* Kurtz's "Church History," II., p. 165.

In their fierce determination to overthrow Protestantism, the Jesuits devised an abominable system of ethics. Among other principles they maintained : 1. That the end sanctifies the means ; 2. That an act is justifiable or excusable when there is a probability of its goodness ; 3. That mental reservations are allowable in making promises or taking oaths, and that the person so obligating himself is bound only by his intentions ; and, 4. That only such violations of a divine command are sin as are perpetrated with full consciousness of the wrong, and with a set purpose to break God's law. It is evident that with such principles there was no crime which the Jesuits might not commit in the name of religion. Among all the agencies employed by the Papacy, there was none, perhaps, that accomplished more in arresting the progress of the Reformation than the Order of Jesuits.

8. The zeal manifested throughout the different parts of the Roman Church added immensely to its strength. The Papacy has always had the power of inspiring a martyr-like devotion in its children. The sense of danger rallied all classes to its support. It skillfully utilized the agency of enthusiasts. The great end to be accomplished, which was nothing less than the subjugation of the world under the Vicar of Christ, strongly appealed to the imagination. Priests, missionaries, princes, all labored with zealous activity for the welfare of the Roman Church. Italy and Spain, fanatical in their opposition to the Reformation, ruthlessly employed the Inquisition for its extermination.

Papal zeal stood in striking contrast with Protestant apathy. "Among the [Roman] Catholic sovereigns," to quote again from Macaulay, "we

find a religious zeal often amounting to fanaticism. Philip the Second was a Papist in a very different sense from that in which Elizabeth was a Protestant. Maximilian of Bavaria, brought up under the teaching of the Jesuits, was a fervent missionary, wielding the powers of a prince. The Emperor Ferdinand the Second deliberately put his throne to hazard over and over again, rather than make the smallest concession to the spirit of religious innovation. Sigismund of Sweden lost a crown which he might have preserved if he would have renounced the [Roman] Catholic faith. In short, everywhere on the Protestant side we see languor; everywhere on the [Roman] Catholic side we see ardor and devotion.”

The foregoing facts make clear to us the unfortunate check of the Reformation. In no small degree the same conditions exist to-day, bringing weakness to Protestantism and strength to Romanism. On the one side there are divisions, discord, and apathy; on the other, unity, co-operation, and zeal. What of the future? There are thoughtful people who entertain grave fears of the Papal power, particularly in our own country. Its claim to universal sovereignty is asserted to-day, as it was in the Middle Ages, and its intolerance of all other beliefs has been declared in recent decrees. It is seeking, as it always has sought, to make the Church dominant in the state. It has set itself against the civil and religious freedom that distinguishes modern Protestant civilization. It has shown itself hostile to modern science and literature; and, claiming education as an ecclesiastical function, it is seeking to destroy or to get control of our public schools. It has entered politics for the advancement of ecclesiastical interests, and in various cities of our

country, and even in Congress, has gained important concessions and large gifts of money. It is active, organized, and aggressive as never before in the history of our country.

But in spite of the strength derived from its united and zealous effort, Rome is destined to defeat. The divine logic of events is against it. It is slowly losing ground among the nations ; and the wails that reach us at intervals from "the prisoner of the Vatican" reveal a consciousness of waning power. The demands which the Papacy makes upon the credulity and manhood of its adherents are too great for the growing intelligence of the world. Its attitude toward civil government is felt more and more to be impudent and intolerable. It stands for mediævalism in faith and ecclesiastical tyranny : and whenever mediævalism and Protestant progress are brought into conflict, it is the former that suffers defeat. There is a divine power, resistless and invincible, in the light and truth that underlie the advancement of our race ; and the Papacy, which is stubbornly attempting to check the tide of human progress, is destined, sooner or later, to be swept away.

THE END.













BW1800 .P14  
The reformation dawn.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00016 3412