

Italy's Contribution  
*to the Reformation*

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ITALY'S CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE REFORMATION

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TO THE

# Reformation

*By*

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TO MY PARENTS

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## PREFACE

THE present volume is an attempt to describe in brief compass the part that Italy played, at home and abroad, in bringing about the Reformation.

This book is based in part on original sources, but mainly on the careful reading of excellent books on political and religious movements in Italy, on a fair degree of familiarity gained from affectionate study of the literature and art of Italy, together with a thorough examination of the most important works related to my subject. It is impossible to write a book of this sort entirely on original sources, therefore, by its very nature, it must be a work of compilation.

This study dates back to my Seminary days in 1915-1918, when, inspired by my beloved Professor of Church History, Dr. David Schaff, I submitted my graduation thesis on the subject "What has Italy contributed to the triumph of the Reformation?" and with the loving kindness and appreciation which distinguished that great scholar, he encouraged me to continue my labors in this particular field. In December, 1920, I read a paper on the same subject before the Presbyterian Ministerial Alliance of Kansas City, Mo., and at their request it was published in the April issue (1921) of the Union Theological Seminary Review of Richmond, Va. Finally, it has been developed in its present form under the inspirational guidance of the Rev. Philip Wendell Crannell, D.D., President of the Kansas City Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>1</sup>

I wish to make grateful acknowledgment of the many valuable suggestions offered by Miss Edith Wilson, of the Kansas City National Training School for Deaconesses and Missionaries.

J. B. BISCEGLIA.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., June 26, 1928.

<sup>1</sup>Published with the consent of the Seminary.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE great moral and spiritual awakening of the sixteenth century, commonly known as the Reformation, is not, as many erroneously believe, the work of a man or a nation, but it is the outcome of periodical movements and reactions in different ages and under different skies. It is one of those movements conceived in the mind of God, executed by men at different times, different from one another in language and sphere of occupation, running sometimes on various paths, but always toward the same goal, namely, the Intellectual, Moral and Spiritual progress of man.

As all the movements of this sort which have private interest on one side and only public good on the other must undergo a long period of incubation, so many years had to elapse before the Reformation was brought to a successful end. It was a race started at the twilight of the Primitive Church, on through the dark ages, and the dawning of the Renaissance, to the glorious day of the Reformation. The runners received the torch from the simple followers of Christ, handed it down to the next runner, like the athletes of the Olympic games, over mountains and valleys, through the fires of the stock and the tortures of the Holy Inquisition, forward, always pressing forward till they reached the goal.

There has been a time when the Reformation was attributed to the superhuman effort of this or that reformer, totally ignoring those who have patiently prepared the path and assiduously hammered their way through all sorts of difficulties and tremendous obstacles, perishing in their effort, but acquitting themselves like men. A new era is just being ushered in,

when the contribution of the men in the rank and file will be properly evaluated, when they shall receive their reward as well as the leaders. For the task of history is no longer completed with the proper arrangement of facts for a certain period, but in tracing the origin and causes of every human progress in the forces at work everywhere and their connections and contributions to the general plan revealed. There is no other field where the attempt to do this meets with richer reward than the one we have selected.

The study of the Reformation in Italy is interesting from two principal aspects: First, for the apparent failure of all reformatory movements in Italy and the instinctive sympathy we feel for martyrs and saints; and secondly and more important, for the influence which the faith of the saints, the sufferings of the martyrs and the spirit of the men of the Renaissance had upon all the nations, but especially upon the Reformers and their successors.

If a new evaluation of Italy's part in the triumph of the Reformation is necessary, and the continuity of the Renaissance and the Reformation presented in its true light in Protestant countries, it is equally important that a new orientation be given such studies in Catholic countries, where the Reformation is presented even by able and seemingly unbiased men, as "an extinguisher of intellectuality and the source of all disorders,"<sup>1</sup> and as the crowning achievement to the spirit of rebellion of undisciplined, immoral, ambitious priests and friars.

Not in a spirit of antagonism or acerbity, therefore, but of Christian love and sympathy, let us review the causes for a Reformation; how Italy contributed to its triumph, and, finally, why it did not take deeper root in the land of Savonarola and the Vaudois.

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<sup>1</sup>Benedetto Croce-Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

ITALY'S CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE REFORMATION

## CONDITIONS BEFORE THE REFORMATION



WE look back in ecstasy to the golden age of Christianity when the foundations of the new church were laid in poverty, but equality and liberty were enjoyed by all; though its members were persecuted everywhere, "the blood was the seed of the church, when the chalices were of wood but the hearts of gold." When few scattered and frightened disciples, having met their risen Lord and received the Holy Spirit, rapidly multiplied into a mighty army that kings and emperors feared; the mighty Constantine, himself, in order to save his empire, was obliged not only to recognize, but to proclaim their religion, Christianity, the religion of the State.

Unfortunately the Church of Christ gradually lost sight of the covenant entered into with her crucified Master and began to romp freely with the princes and the mighty ones. "She adorned herself in the mysterious oriental royal fashion, casting aside the cross for the sceptre, reenacted the revels of old Greece and ancient Rome, bathed her bridal veil in innocent blood"<sup>1</sup> and started on her triumphal march; first toward power, glory and wealth; and then, toward vice and corruption. Her children were dragged in poverty and ignorance; her ministers everywhere became avaricious and immoral, the places of worship were turned into "dens of robbers."

The ambitious Bishop of Rome, having declared his supremacy over the other bishops, abandoned the path traced by the Divine Founder, and followed by the Apostles and Saints of the Primitive Church in order to achieve prosperity in worldly goods, honours, tri-

<sup>1</sup>Niccolini: Arnaldo da Brescia.

# I

## CONDITIONS BEFORE THE REFORMATION



WE look back in ecstasy to the golden age of Christianity when the foundations of the new church were laid in poverty, but equality and liberty were enjoyed by all; though its members were persecuted everywhere, "the blood was the seed of the church, when the chalices were of wood but the hearts of gold." When few scattered and frightened disciples, having met their risen Lord and received the Holy Spirit, rapidly multiplied into a mighty army that kings and emperors feared; the mighty Constantine, himself, in order to save his empire, was obliged not only to recognize, but to proclaim their religion, Christianity, the religion of the State.

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umphs and glory. It is true that the Vatican reached a period of undreamed of splendor and power, and Kings and Emperors had to go repeatedly to Canossa; but the tide of moral corruption and spiritual blindness in St. Peter's see reached a height that the moral and spiritual thermometer never registered above zero.

The Roman papal court was proud of a Sergius the II who sold the ecclesiastical offices; of a Sergius the III; of a John the XI; and of a John the XIII (904-956), who were celebrated in the ecclesiastic annals for their illicit loves, depucelations and incests; of a Benedict the IX, pope at 18 (1058), who, according to Desiderius Abbé of Montecassino was such a scoundrel and so depraved that his life cannot be told; of a Gregorius the VII (1073), legislator of the celibacy of the priests and lover of the Countess Matilde, whom St. Peter Damiano calls "not Holy father but Holy devil"; of a Niculus the III (1277), so demoniac that Dante places him in hell with his head downward; of a John the XXII (1316), inventor of the taxes for dispensations and the forgiveness of sins; of a Benedict the XI (1334), who violated Selvaggia, the beautiful, eighteen-year-old sister of Petrarch; of a Martin the V (1451), who ordered the assassination of Jerome of Prague, and John Huss; of an Adrian the IV, who, supported by Frederick Barbarossa, burned alive Arnaldo da Brescia on the bridge of Castel S. Angelo; and of an Alexander the VI (pope Borgia), who towers above all the others for vice and corruption; who made of the Vatican a house of prostitution and a den of assassins and who commanded the burning alive of Savonarola and his companions. Leo the X, the author of "The Fable of St. Peter," well stated the conception that his colleagues held of the papacy, when he wrote "God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it." Priests and monks by their uncleanness, avarice and

juggling between princes, set aflame the hearts of the saints; the schoolmen in bringing Aristotle's philosophy into religion, thus creating contradictions and absurdities, quickened the minds, the popes in taking over all powers for the spiritual and temporal welfare of man and by creating a synthetic religion and permitting immorality and corruption to invade churches and monasteries and the very precincts of the Vatican in the providence of God were to precipitate the silent and outspoken protests of many generations into a great protestant revolution.

As soon as the disease made its appearance, people began to search for a remedy. Men and women of good will, true lovers of truth, arose everywhere to accuse the Roman Papal Court. The giants of intellect and action in all walks of life and in every branch of learning; and all those who were born with a vision of their future martyrdom, raised their powerful voices in order to shake public conscience, break the chains which held the people in subjection, open their eyes, and finally, free Mind and Soul from the shackles of the dogma and the Inquisition. Only after bitter struggle and untold sufferings, the seed diligently sown everywhere and nourished with the choicest blood of Europe gave birth to the fairest flower of the centuries: The Reformation.

In the succeeding chapters we shall see how to this magnificent edifice of the redemption of mind and conscience and of the new birth of religion, the Italians first and not least concurred in the noble initiative. Their contribution through the centuries we shall trace as much as our present purpose and space will permit.

“The lot of precursors is hard: they know, but are not permitted to see; they arrive on the banks of the Jordan, but do not enjoy the promised land; they make plain the path for him who comes after them, but will pass beyond them. They prepare the throne and do not seat themselves on it. They are servants of the Master whom often they do not meet face to face. Perhaps the fierceness of John is justified by this consciousness of being an ambassador and nothing more. A consciousness which is never envious, but which leaves a tinge of sadness, even in his humility.”

GIOVANNI PAPINI'S, "*Life of Christ.*"

## II

### THE PRECURSORS OF THE REFORMATION



**T**HE precursors of the Reformation in Italy through their preaching, teaching and martyrdom, prepared the path upon which later, triumphantly marched the more fortunate reformers beyond the Alps.

Though profanity, corruption, and superstition had so saturated the Roman Court, the clergy, and the people, about which Machiavelli was compelled to say: "By the corrupt example of that court, Italy has lost its religion and become heathenish and irreligious," yet the spirit of God having once again mercifully spread His powerful wings upon the land of Christian martyrdom, called men and women from the Alps to Sicily to protest against the errors of the Church; to stigmatize the corruption of the clergy; and, to carry the torch of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Dark Ages. The design of this work will only permit a brief survey of the life and deeds of the most important pre-reformers in Italy, hoping that it will spur others to study the works of all those who laid down their lives rather than renounce Christ and Him crucified.

ARNALDO DA BRESCIA

1105-1155

Four centuries before the Lord summoned Luther in Germany and Calvin in France; three centuries before Huss appeared in Bohemia and Wycliff in England, Arnaldo da Brescia, the first martyr of the Reformation, denounced with irresistible eloquence and courage all the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. Arnaldo, born of wealthy parents in the year 1105, was educated first in Italy, and later, in France under

the famous Abelard. Having returned to his native city in a short time, as St. Bernard bears witness, he became the idol of Brescia for his piety, doctrine and eloquence. But an army of priests was watching all his movements and as soon as he attacked the temporal power with the words of Christ: "My kingdom is not of this world"; and the donations made by laymen on their deathbed saying, "the People must administer the ecclesiastic possession"; also, the immorality and wealth of the clergy, and began preaching and practicing apostolic purity and poverty; in order to save his life he had to escape first to France, later to Switzerland, and thence to Germany. In the year 1139, he was accused before the Lateran council "for having incited the people against the ecclesiastics," and St. Bernard wrote to Rome, that he was filled with horror by the doctrine of Arnold, who taught that "the princes had to be placed at the head of temporal affairs, and the ecclesiastics had to depend upon them for their needs." After having defended Abelard before the council of Sens in the year 1140 and having planted the seed in Zurich, which in the plan of God had to bear fruits in the person of Zwingli, about 1150, Arnold returned to Rome, welcomed by the people as the liberator of Italy; and he gained so much influence and power through his preaching and example, that the people forced Adrian the IV to flee from Rome. Unfortunately, in the year 1155 the pope crowned Emperor Frederick the I, sanctifying all his usurpations in Italy, and the latter, to pay him back, destroyed the autonomy of Rome and delivered Arnold to his ferocious and implacable enemies. On the 18th day of June the same year, in front of the Vatican, where today stands a Protestant church, Arnold was hanged and then burned, pierced by a boar spear, and his ashes scattered on the river Tiber. He remained un-

compromising to the last; he met death with dauntless courage; his sacrifice was not barren, because from his flaming pyre dawned upon Italy the glorious era of the Comuni.

### MARSIGLIO DI PADOVA

1280-1340

Marsiglio was in a certain way the mind of the Reformation in Italy. The Roman Catholic Historians as Dollinger, Pastor and Riezler, call Marsiglio, "Calvin before Calvin," and "the forerunner of Luther." They compare him for keenness of intellect with all the reformers, but deny him their religious experiences. Dr. Philip Schaff says, "his programme was a proclamation of complete changes, such as the XVI century witnessed."<sup>1</sup> He was the most radical of reformers, and his protest may be briefly stated as follows:

1. Religious tolerance.
2. The Church is made up of all believers.
3. The Church must not own temporal goods.
4. It is the right of the people to elect or depose the pope.
5. The pope has no more authority or jurisdiction than other Bishops and Priests, because they are all equal by the institution of Christ.
6. Neither the pope nor any other for him can exercise any act of coercion against any heretic, this power belonging only to the emperor.
7. The ruler must be elected by the people.
8. The pope is subject to the state.
9. The pope is not infallible.
10. St. Peter was never in Rome.
11. The function of binding and loosing is not judicial, but a declarative one.
12. A general council may err and laymen should sit in them.
13. The Scriptures are the ultimate seat of religious authority.

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*.

Dante and Petrarch denounced openly the vices of the Roman Catholic Church. Dante placed in Hell, popes and cardinals, and of the idolatrous condition of the church, he wrote:

Ye have made yourselves a God of gold and silver;  
And from the Idolater how differ ye,  
Save that he one, and ye a hundred worship?

Boccaccio ridiculed the corrupted life of the clergy in his humorous narratives (*The Decameron*).

The size of the present work does not permit me to speak at length of Laurentius Valla (1405-1457), whom Bellarmine calls the forerunner of Luther, and whose works Luther esteemed very highly. In his annotations to the New Testament, published by Erasmus in 1505, Valla corrected the Vulgate of St. Jerome, comparing it with the earlier Greek text. He attacked the Apostolic origin of the Apostles' Creed, exposed the Donation of Constantine as a fiction, attacked the whole temporal power of the papacy, began an examination of the Scriptural writings for the purpose of formulating the standards of textual criticism, and he became the founder of historical criticism. Dr. Philip Schaff writes that in boldness and in violence, Valla equaled the anti-papal writings of Luther.

In a work of this size it is impossible to write of all the pre-reformers, therefore we shall say nothing of Gerardo; of Jacopone Da Todi, Gerardo Segarrelli, Fra Dolcini, Cola di Rienzo, St. Brigida and St. Catarina da Siena and many others. But we must pass to Fra Gerolamo Savonarola.

#### FRA GEROLAMO SAVONAROLA

1498-1542

Among the reformers before the Reformation, shines with a bright light, the noble Friar of St. Marco, the

Italian prophet and patriot Gerolamo Savonarola. When Savonarola saw that marriage was not held in honor in Italy; that the writers were immoral; that in Rome alone there were 6,800 public prostitutes; that Innocent VIII had allowed the priest concubinage; that Leo the X pawned his tiara to maintain his extravagant table; that religious faith was declining; and that adultery and assassinations, rapine and magic arts were flourishing in the Vatican, he raised his voice in the cathedral of Florence against sin and vice, against the abuses of the Roman court, against the temporal power of the popes, and against the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. He withstood the infamous Alexander the VI, he appealed from the pope to a general council, and he exalted the Scripture from his pulpit. Savonarola was indeed the moral, political, and religious reformer of Italy.

In the year 1494 he prophesied the coming of a king across the Alps, and Charles VIII, then fulfilled the prophecy. He organized in Florence an independent government which had for its motto "Viva Cristo, il nostro Re, Christ is our King." But hated by the infamous Alexander the VI, who wrote "even if he be John the Baptist he must die," on May 23rd he was burned alive together with two of his companions. To the Bishop who, tearing his clothes, pronounced the sentence, "I separate thee from the militant and triumphant church," Savonarola replied: "Not from the triumphant." Of his martyrdom the Catholic historians have said, that this prophet who, like Elijah, preached righteousness, was unjustly condemned. His statue has since been placed in the Gallery of the 500 in Florence, and a place has been given him in the reformers' statue at Worms, but his name is engraved in the hearts of all those who love liberty and truth.

As we have seen, these Italian reformers have condemned, with indomitable courage, the same abuses and the same doctrines which later were condemned by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and the Protestant church at large. The success was not the same, because the Italian reformers preached and taught in Italy where they became easy prey of the pope and his bailiffs; and all the reformatory movements were suffocated in their infancy by the sword and the fire, because the conscience of the people had been precipitated into base subjection, and the mind to gross ignorance. On the other side of the Alps the ground was more propitious, the way had been long prepared; the distance protected the reformers from the clutches of the Vatican and the inquisition; the time was mature; God was working. In paying due honors to the more fortunate reformers beyond the Alps, we should not forget, however, the Italians who kept alive, like Vestals of old, the fire of freedom, of mind and conscience, throughout the centuries. Let us ever remember, that on their smoking pyres, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and many others kindled their torches in order to sweep away the darkness from the earth, to proclaim freedom to the people, and to preach to the world salvation by Grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### III

## REFORMATORY MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE CHURCH



AN early, mistaken, contemptible evaluation of the Reformation, expressed by Leo X in the well known phrase, "it is only a dispute among friars, of no great consequence," has led all subsequent Catholic sources, in Catholic countries, into an absurd, mischievous fallacy that the Reformation was brought about by disgruntled, dissatisfied, ambitious monks and priests. If such a position is excusable in superficial, unsympathetic observers of several centuries ago, in the light of modern historical criticism, it must be admitted that such a position is not only no longer tenable, but puerile and ludicrous, for, to discover the causes which brought about the Reformation, we must search farther in the history of the Church and deeper in the minds and hearts of men.

It was a titanic fight started within the Church by churchmen whose sole ambition and aim was to clean up the Church; men who would rather die than leave the Church, whose consuming fire was fed by their noble desire to purify the Church and hasten the coming of God's Kingdom, and whose sincerity cannot be questioned. It is a clash of ideals. On one side, we find the imperialistic ideal which passed from the Roman Empire to the Roman Church, where all the powers are gradually being absorbed by one man with centralized authority; on the other side, the principle of representative form of church government with freedom of mind and conscience and equal rights and privileges.

These two principles clashed within the Church, centuries before the Reformation. The first protests were

against the innovations brought in the Church and not of a schismatic nature at all; in fact, originally it was the aim of all reformatory movements to keep the Church in due bounds; later to transform the Church, evaluating the Christian principles and throwing overboard all that which was not in harmony with those ideals set by Christ and followed by the primitive Church; and only, when all attempts at reforms within the Church proved futile, by degrees, the separatist movements began.

Conditions became so appalling that cries for reforms were to be heard everywhere. The Vatican was torn with strife and dissension, and a schism divided the Church for seventy years. To examine the corruption of this period is like analyzing the contents of a sewer long without an outlet. Suffice it to say here that conditions were such that even the holy see, with its proverbial nonchalance for moral and spiritual conditions in its undisputed domains, called several Councils in order to bring about certain much needed reforms.

The first so-called Reformatory Council is known as the "Council of Pisa," (1409), and was convoked to put an end to the schism and oppose papal absolutism. There were 22 cardinals and 300 bishops present, the two popes, Benedict XIII, Spaniard, with his court in Avignon, and Gregorius XII, Italian, holding court in Rome, both refused to appear before the Council. They were deposed, and a third pope was elected, Alexander V. No reforms were discussed, and the Council, almost deserted, adjourned. Alexander V was weak and vacillating and died the year after his election. His successor was John XXIII, who attempted to call a Council in Rome, which was a complete failure; and in 1414, forced by Emperor Sigismund, the Council of Constance convened and its first movement was to

request the abdication of the three popes. One agreed, another was exiled in Spain and John was arrested and deposed with seventy charges preferred against him. With freedom of action the Council elected another Pope, Martin V, who was the choice of all Europe but was better qualified by the shouts of the urchins of Florence: "Martin is not worth a farthing." It was at this Council that John Huss was condemned.

Martin V was not very anxious for reforms, and during his pontificate nothing was done. After his death (1431) his successor, Eugene I, called a meeting of the Council which was held at Basel. The pope tried to transfer it to Italian soil; the Council protested and won, but word having been received that delegates from the Greek Church wished to discuss Church Union, the Council was in part at least, transferred first to Ferrara and later to Florence. The schism was renewed, and for a short time there were not only two popes but two councils, because those members of the Council left at Basel elected the Duke of Savoy pope, who took the name of Felix V.

The Council of Florence took a very important step toward the Union of the Eastern and Western branches of the Church, but was set back by the shouts coming from the Eastern population, "the Turk rather than the Pope," and so it came to pass, because in 1453 Constantinople fell under the yoke of the Mohammedans.

The Western schisms ended with the election of Nicholas V (1447-1455), who, having assured himself of the power, by the abdication of Felix V, turned all his energy to the Renaissance. He was more interested in the collection of rare books and what hired pens wrote of him and his pontificate than of reforms. When a conspiracy was discovered to give Rome the old freedom and the ancient glory, he had the

nobleman Stefano Porcari and eight of his companions hanged from the battlements of Castel Sant' Angelo. No reforms were attempted during the reign of Callixtus III, Pius II, Paul II, Sixtus IV, but after the death of Innocence VIII the cry went forth from every corner of the Church for a real Reformation. The conclave met, and after deliberating diligently and prayerfully, the announcement was made that the holy father had been elected (August 10, 1492) in the person of the infamous Roderigo dei Borgia, Alexander VI, who, among his many other crimes, put to death Savonarola.

Again the cries for reforms are heard at the Lateran Council (1512) and Leo X is the answer. He was so busy with his literary and artistic pursuits that he paid no attention to reforms and qualified the Reformation in Germany as a dispute among friars, but was very sorry later for having treated it so lightly. Adrian VI, who invited the prince to smother the first cry of the Lutheran protest, coming to Rome and seeing how deplorable conditions were, made an earnest, desperate effort for reforms, but, strange to say, he met his strongest opponents in his very court. He admits that popes can err, confesses publicly the guilt of popes and priests and condemns the temporal power.

No reforms were undertaken by Clement VII. Paul III together with Cantarini and Sadeleto had very good intentions and placed themselves against gross abuses and corruption and ready to lend an ear even to protests from beyond the Alps. Their memorandum, however, was set aside by the cardinals for its examination at a more convenient season, and later it was placed on the index. No reforms were considered by Julius II, but Marcellus II was inclined toward reforms and abolished nepotism. The temporal power received a severe blow from his theory that the

temporal affairs must be administered by organized government. But he was poisoned before his theories were carried out. Paul IV (Giovanni Pietro Caraffe) saw the failures of Reformers within the Church as a cardinal, and now he founded the order of Theatines to bring back piety and discipline in the clergy and destroy the Protestant Reformation.

Here is how popes and Councils, though feeling the need of reforms, treated all Reformatory movements within the Church. It is no wonder that all reforms adopted had no reference to the moral and spiritual welfare of Christianity, being all of an administrative nature, and not of far-reaching consequences because no one paid attention to them.

Here are some of the most important things decreed by the three so-called Reformatory Councils :

1. It is not contrary to the Holy Bible for ecclesiastics to hold worldly possessions.
2. Princes and Lords could not arbitrarily take church possessions, even if the possessor sinned at the time or habitually.
3. It is not against Christ's teachings to enrich the clergy.
4. Neither Silvester nor Constantine erred in bestowing wealth upon the Church.

Not even the monasteries with their severe discipline were immune from the disease of the age. Immorality had contaminated every church agency, and the cloisters were not spared, but became so saturated with corruption and sin that new orders with iron-clad discipline were created by men who saw the plight of the Church, and, were eaten up with zeal for His House, who took upon themselves to purge the life of the Church. Again we are confronted with a striking contrast. On one side, we meet men whose chief purpose was to enjoy life in its fullness, epicureans of the most advanced type; and on the other, men who revived the aesthetic spirit in all its rich, deep spiritual significance; in some, unbelief and a revival of pagan-

ism of the worst type; in others, shines Christianity in its apostolic simplicity and purity. A corrupted, decrepit sin ravaged church organism and a new, fresh, vigorous, youthful organization came from without to inject new life into the Church.

Between the tenth and fourteenth centuries we find a period very prolific in religious movements and organizations of all sorts. Elsewhere we are mentioning those movements which remained outside of the Church; here we want to mention only the most important movements started within the Church or which the Church eventually absorbed. As early as 910 the celebrated monastery of Cluny was founded by Beane on the severe principles of discipline of St. Benedict. In Arezzo the order of Camaldolis was founded with the introduction of lay brother for manual work. In 1073 the order of Grammont came into existence with the purpose of eliminating the accumulation of wealth. In 1084 the order of Certosins was started by St. Bruno with a rule of great austerity. Toward the end of the twelfth century the Carmelitan order was started in Calabria. These and other orders were started with the definite purpose of purging the monasteries and eventually the whole of the Church.

In the thirteenth century in that deep, dark spiritual night of the ages, appeared a most bright star in the firmament to lead men back to Evangelical purity and simplicity, kindling their hearts with true Christian love. The name of this Christian Knight was Giovanni Bernardone, better known and loved the world over as Francis of Assisi. He was born in Assisi in 1182. In his youth he lived a carefree life, indulging in all the pleasures of the young people of his social and economic conditions, and a leader in all their escapades.

During a prolonged sickness he had a religious experience which remoulded his whole life. He felt a vague call to preach, renounce the world and all the things thereof, flee temptation and follow Christ. But one day upon having heard the command "Go and preach: The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purse nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat,"<sup>1</sup> he exclaimed, "at last I have found the rule of my life!" Henceforth his ideal will be Christ; he will strive to translate into his life the principle of the Gospel and live a Christlike life. For himself and his followers he adopts as queen of all the virtues, Christian poverty, which he later celebrated in his songs. The members of the new order, known at first as poor penitents of Assisi and later as minor friars, were bound by "the rule of life of minor friars, which consisted in the observance of the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, which means that they must live in obedience, possessing nothing of their own and in purity of life."

St. Francis organized, also, an order for young women and Chiara Scifi, of Assisi, was the first Mother Superior. He also organized a third order of laymen who did not give up their families, who lived outside of the monasteries but under the discipline of the order.

Francis died October 4th, 1226, after having been adroitly deprived of his power by the pope, but the memory of such a religious genius who lived the Gospel with spontaneity and fervor, was already enshrined in the hearts of several thousand members who made his name legendary. Any one who is looking for a spiritual tonic should read the "Fioretti," one of those rare gems of religious literature of the Middle Ages,

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 10:7, 9, 10.

breathing, with unrivaled perfection, the atmosphere in which St. Francis lived and moved.

Discounting what the legend added and his own exaltation, we must confess that he was moved by the perfect Christian ideal of renunciation, and Innocent III, knowing the possibilities of the order within the Church and the menace if it broke away from the Church, finally recognized it. This saint of love, peace, sorrow and sacrifice stands alone, a bright star in that dark firmament, the only light to lead sin-wrecked souls safely to harbor.

Is it surprising then, that not very long after his death he was celebrated by Dante in the XI Canto of Paradise as he,

“Whose marvelous life deservedly were sung  
In heights empyreal . . .

. . . . .

and when

He had, through thirst of martyrdom, stood up  
In the proud Soldan's presence, and there preach'd  
Christ and His followers, but found the race  
Unripen'd for conversion; . . . ”

and later,

“Twixt Arno and the Tiber, he from Christ  
Took the last signet, which his limbs two years  
Did carry. Then, the season came that He,  
Who to such good had destined him, was pleased  
To advance him to the meed, which he had earned  
By his self-humbling; . . . ”

became the favored subject of Giotto's frescos and was raised to the altar by Gregorius IX?

The Franciscan movement was a silent protest against the wealth and impurity of the Church and the papacy which reached its height with Innocent III. The saint of Assisi lacks the polemical spirit for theological discussion, but not the warmth of true Christ-

like spirit of humility and love. He is without exception the noblest exponent of the deep yearning of all sincere souls for a return to the simple faith of the Gospel, to purity of living and for the organization of a spiritual democracy abounding in that most enduring of all Christian virtues: Love.

Dominic of Guzman was born in Caraloga, Castile, 1170. Between 1194 and 1199 he became first, Canon, and later, subprior, in the Cathedral chapter of Osma, which had been reformed under Augustine's rule. In 1203 traveling through south France and visiting the principal cities of Italy, he went to Rome. He followed the Count of Montfort in his crusade against the Waldensians and Albigenses, was so impressed with the progress made by the heretics that then and there, he resolved to found an order whose mission should be to convert the heretics. His followers were known as the Order of Preachers, and like the Franciscans, they had a branch for laymen, organized however, as a military order. Poverty for them was a means to an end, in order to combat more successfully the heretics who had charged the clergy of simony and immorality. Honorius III recognized the order, confirming the vow of poverty to the individual and not to the order, but the laws of the order became laxer after the death of its founder.

The crowning glory of the order was the creation of the Holy Inquisition, a tribunal for the examination and condemnation of heretics and the purging of heretical communities with sword and fire. The first victims were Waldensians and Patarens. The founder died in Bologna August 4, 1221.

Among other orders founded during this very prolific period are the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem to aid the crusaders, the Knight Templar, the Teutons and Redemptorists.

That the need was imperative for a reform or reforms cannot be questioned by any sincere, open-minded student of history; that this need was felt by church dignitaries and prominent laymen is an undeniable fact. We have shown how three councils were called but failed to bring about any definite important reforms; and finally, how new orders, silent or outspoken protests against conditions found within the Church when popes and cardinals were the high priests of licentiousness, debauchery and profanity, were cunningly attracted within the fold and robbed of their "raison d'être." It should prove conclusively that it was more than mere squabbling among friars, and that the real motive power was not ambition for power and glory, but a sincere, holy desire to bring the Church back to apostolic purity and simplicity; and only when these movements were strangled, the separatist movements acquired momentum and the cry was heard in Christendom for a complete separation from Babylon.

“No Reformation would have been possible without the Renaissance.”

—PHILIP SCHAFF.

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“So, in those classical times, when humanity was coming out of the terrors of the Middle Ages, and Dante, by setting reason and science against religious authority, was giving the signal of a great revolution, the dissolute life of the clergy and the sharp raillery of the merry story-teller, completed the work by making the way smooth for Martin Luther and his great Reformation.”

—G. LUZZI, *“The Struggle for Christian Truth in Italy.”*

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“The great movement of reform met with success precisely because men’s minds were prepared for it and were expecting it. Every accusation that Luther made and every reform that he suggested, had resounded through Christendom long before the opening of the sixteenth century.”

—E. M. HULME, *“Renaissance and Reformation.”*

## IV

### RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION



ITALY'S contribution to the Protestant Revolution could not be limited to the Pre-Reformers, who, through their preaching, teaching and martyrdom, prepared the path upon which, later triumphantly marched the more fortunate Reformers beyond the Alps, but in the plan of God it had to go on with the new birth of Arts, Sciences and Letters in order to furnish the means for the triumph of the Reformation.

After the decline of the Roman Empire and the rise of Christianity, the nations of the world fell into the uttermost ignorance. Ninety-five per cent of the people in Italy knew not how to read or write; priests and monks could hardly read the Breviary; "Homer and Virgil sang no longer; Demosthenes and Cicero were silent"; Christ addressed the masses in an unknown tongue; learning having thus humbly perished everywhere, conditions throughout the world became very lamentable. Charlemagne and Alcuin had made few monasteries the sole depositaries of learning, and in accordance with the Roman Catholic Theology that there is no salvation outside the Church, no education could be received outside of the monastery and the monastic garb. But through the mists of so much ignorance and superstition, God ushered in, like a thunderbolt, a period of splendor in art, literature and science that has never been surpassed.

The Renaissance was more than the revival of learning; it was the birth of a new spirit of free investigation, of a new force which remodeled our whole civilization from its foundations, leading mankind to purified Christianity and to all modern ideas and progress. Unfolding the world history we discover that its com-

posite factors, i. e., wars, politics, literature, economics, social development and civilization, the whole fabric, is closely interwoven with the lives of men and women. We shall, therefore, explain the relation of the Renaissance to the Reformation by describing the protagonists of this important movement, and then show how from Florence, the cradle of the Renaissance, the new learning, the spirit of freedom and the new idea of individuality and nationality, permeated not only Italy but the most remote corners of the earth.

### DANTE ALIGHIERI

1265-1321

Born in Florence from a noble family at a time when the republic was divided into two factions, armed against each other, Dante fought with great courage against the Ghibellins of Arezzo in 1289 and against those of Pisa in 1290. Under the influence of Brunetti Latini, Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia and Giotto, and having made a long and assiduous study of Virgil and other classic writers, the fathers of the Church, theology, arts and sciences, he soon gained prominence and held very important official positions. In the year 1300, when all the Western world streamed to the Holy City to visit the tomb of St. Peter, in order to receive indulgence and absolution, Dante conceived the plan of *The Divine Comedy*.

Dante, "the mystic and the seer," opened the golden period of the Renaissance by writing his immortal work, the "*Divina Commedia*," in Italian and not in Latin, the language of the Church; by setting reason and science against church authority, and by introducing the study of the classics which had been abandoned for centuries. He was not only the creator of the Italian language, but placed a new value on the

language of the common people, which had hitherto been considered much inferior to Latin, the language of the Church and aristocracy.

Dante's contribution is literary as well as political and religious. He belongs to that noble company of anti-papal pamphleteers who anticipated the views of the Reformers. Dante visited Rome during the pontificate of Boniface the VIII, who, according to the Roman poet Pasquino, "entered the Vatican like a fox, ruled like a lion, and died like a dog," and whom Dante bitterly chases in Hell, stigmatizing him as the chief of modern pharisees and usurpers.

Of the Church he writes:

" . . . that the church of Rome,  
Confounding in itself two governments,  
Falls in the mire, and soils itself and burden."

—PURGATORY XVI.

And on the idolatrous conditions of his time, here is the well-known apostrophe:

"Ye have made yourselves a God of silver and gold,  
And from the idolator how differ ye,  
Save that he one, and ye a hundred worship?"

—INFERNO XIX.

He now understood why "the vicar of Christ" took away Christ's word from the people; counterfeited its contents; made his word law, and enforced such a law by aid of the Holy Inquisition; monopolized salvation through grace and dispensed it to the highest bidder. Having perceived the helpless condition of the Christian church, a complete change took place in his life. This change in the life of the greatest poet of Christianity was the outcome of personal experiences.

While in Rome, Dante came in contact with priests whose lives were corrupted and whose mouths were

ready to pronounce curses and blasphemies; priests who were not different from those of Florence, of whom he wrote :

“Such fables Florence in her pulpit hears,  
 Banded about more frequent, than the names  
 Of Bindi and of Lapi in her streets.  
 The sheep, meanwhile, poor witless ones, return  
 From pastures, fed with the wind: and what avails  
 For their excuse, they do not see their harm?  
 Christ said not to His first conventicle,  
 “Go forth and preach impostures to the world,”  
 But gave them truth to build on; and the sound  
 Was mighty on their lips: nor needed they,  
 Beside the Gospel, other spear or shield,  
 To aid them in their welfare for the faith.  
 The preacher now provides himself with store  
 Of jests and gibes; and, so there be no lack  
 Of laughter, while he vents them, his big cowl  
 Distends, and he has won the need he sought:  
 Could but the vulgar catch a glimpse the while  
 Of that dark bird which nestles in his hood,  
 They scarce would wait to hear the blessing said,  
 Which now the dotards hold in such esteem,  
 That every counterfeit, who spreads abroad  
 The hands of holy promise, finds a throng  
 Of credulous fools beneath. Saint Anthony  
 Fattens with his swine, and others worse  
 Than swine, who diet at his lazy board,  
 Paying with unstamped metal for their fare.”

—PARADISE XXIX.

In the same manner in which the blasphemous priests of Rome three centuries later, in repeating “bread thou art and bread shalt thou remain; wine thou art and wine thou shalt remain,” kindled the wrath of Martin Luther, and in the Providence of God the true meaning of “the just shall live by faith” flashed upon him, so Dante, depressed and disgusted in Rome, caught a new vision of the relation of Church and State, of the purity of primitive Christianity, and this he preached throughout his whole life. He therefore wrote words of fire against despotism and the ambition of the Church,

compared her to the beast described in the book of Revelation, placed popes, prelates and prominent church supporters in Hell, and denounced sin and idolatry. Fortunately, he led the soul out of the mire to contemplate,

"His glory, by whose might all things are moved,  
Pierces the Universe, and in one part  
Sheds more splendence, elsewhere less . . . "

and "sang the joys, purity and holiness of a regenerated life."

His political protest, "De Monarchia," may be stated in his own words as follows: "A double direction is necessary to man according to his two ends, that is, the Pontifex maximus, who, according to the revelations, should direct the human race to spiritual happiness, and the Emperor, who, according to philosophical teachings, should direct men to temporal happiness. The imperial authority does not depend at all on the Church, coming not from the representative of God, but from God Himself, who is the Prince of the Universe, and the fountain of Universal authority."

We can clearly see, from what we have said, that Dante not only condemned the same vices and errors denounced by the Reformers and proclaimed the spirit of National Unity, but he went further, anticipating what Cavour whispered to his confessor on his death-bed: "Friar, a free church in a free state."

### FRANCESCO PETRARCA

1307-1374

"The first modern man"<sup>1</sup> was born in Arezzo from Petracco and Eletta, who had been exiled from Florence

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<sup>1</sup>P. Villari.

with Dante in 1302. Having lived with his parents at the papal court in Avignon, to please his father, he pursued the study of law at Montpellier and Bologna, but continually reading Virgil and Cicero; and after his father's death in 1325 he gave himself, heart and soul, to the study of the classic literature. Very early in life he acquired fame as a poet. Both Paris and Rome having offered him the laurel, he chose the latter and was crowned in Campidoglio on Easter Sunday in the year 1341 by the Roman Senate.

Petrarch was the very embodiment of the spirit of the Renaissance. He devoted his entire life to the collection and study of ancient classic manuscripts; preserving and copying the old; bringing to light those which had been lost for several centuries; sparing neither trouble nor money, he acquired in his many travels throughout Europe the most voluminous private library of his times and became by far the most learned humanist of his day.

Having written his principal works in classic Latin, which he acquired mainly from the long study of Seneca, St. Augustine, Virgil and Cicero, he sang in Italian, for Laura and the people in a very rich and elegant style the recesses of his heart and soul. The *Canzoniere* is a collection of immortal lyric poems in which love is exalted, in which the hope for a united Italy is entertained, in which religious experiences are described and in which immorality is condemned. In his poems we find the sharpest invectives against the immorality which flourished at the shadow of the papal throne in the midst of the highest dignitaries, where his beautiful young sister, Selvaggia, had been raped by Benedict XI.

We shall not attempt to quote from his "Sine titulo," a book in which he describes with vivid colors the vices of the papal court at Avignon; but we cannot close this

brief sketch of the life of the poet, who has been the model of the world for so many centuries, without bringing to our readers' attention at least several immortal lines of his poem, voicing eternal condemnation to the corrupted papal court of his day:

“Once Rome, now false and guilty Babylon!  
Hive of deceits! Terrible prison,  
Where the good dotte die the bad is fed and fattened!  
Hell of the living . . . .  
Sad world that dost endure it! Cast her out!”

We are filled with admiration for Petrarch, the creator of the sonnet and the canzone, the collector and discoverer of ancient manuscripts, inscriptions and coins, the singer in elegant classic Latin of the glorious ancient Rome, the father of the literary Renaissance, who quickened the soul of the world and threw so much light on the past and upon future centuries; but we feel very much indebted to him for his attacks on the vices of the Roman Catholic Church, and on the mediaeval tradition, starting the modern scientific spirit of criticism which made him rely upon observation, experiment and reason in his study of the world and man.

### GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

1313-1377

After the Boccaccio family, for commercial reasons, had moved to Paris, Giovanni was born. At first his father looked upon him as his future business partner, but when he saw that the boy took no interest in commerce, he sent him to Naples to study law, a very lucrative profession in those days. The beautiful Neapolitan blue sky and its magnificent sun-kissed bay was not conducive to the study of the Pandects. The attraction of the classic writer of Rome and Greece was much stronger than the dry, uninteresting law, and the

fire of love for Fiammetta finally burst into a rich flow of poetical compositions and merry-making tales.

The death of his father compelled him to go to Florence, where he met Petrarch, with whom soon he became very intimate. Like his friend and master, he spent much time, money and energy in collecting, copying and studying the ancient manuscripts. He founded the first chair of Greek in Europe in the studio of Florence, with Lorenzo Pilato as its teacher. From an Epicurean and obscene writer, after his conversion, he gave all himself to the writing of a biography of Dante and the exposition in public of the Divine Comedy, throwing much light upon the divine poet and his immortal work.

Boccaccio is great, not only because he is the father of the Italian prose and equaled Petrarch in zeal for the ancient classics, having copied many manuscripts with his own hands; and having made the first translation of Homer from the original; and for having given a new impulse to a liberal intellectual development; but above all, for having written his chief work, "The Decameron," in Italian, thus nursing the common people practically with the same anti-papal food that Dante and Petrarch had administered to the learned.

The book consists of one hundred stories narrated in ten days by a gay company of ten young people, who, in order to escape the black plague, took refuge on the high mountains and every day had to tell a story each. In a rich vein of classic Italian hitherto unknown, he reveals the low state of morals in mediaeval society, especially among priests, monks, nuns and the high dignitaries of the church; he exposes to the public hilarity the auricular confession, the worship of relics, idolatry, and everything pertaining to monks and priests. No wonder, then, that he was condemned by the Council of Trento.

Boccaccio never lost sight of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the power unto salvation, and in one of his narratives he describes how a Jew who insisted that he should go to Rome before accepting Christ, put great fear in the heart of the man who had been trying to lead him into the Church, because he thought that the corrupted conditions of the papal court would have extinguished the sparkle of hope that had just entered the Jew's heart. The conclusion of the story is, that in spite of the low moral conditions of the Vatican, the Jew returned from Rome converted, saying that if Christianity progressed in spite of such corruption, there must be something superhuman back of it.

With the revival of learning and the discovery of the Latin literature, the absence of classic Greek was keenly felt by all the Italian humanists. Though Petrarch had acquired a reading knowledge of Greek from Barlaamo, he pathetically confessed "Homer is dumb to me, while I am most certainly deaf to him." And Boccaccio, with the aid of his Greek teacher, was scarcely able to make a translation of Homer. But with the coming of Manuel Chrysolares (1350-1415), an envoy of the Eastern Empire who was induced to settle in Italy in 1396 and teach Greek, a new era began.

The undertaking of the Italian Humanists was not an easy one. There were neither grammars nor syntaxes. Dictionaries had to be compiled, manuscripts had to be collected and brought to light; it involved hard work and great effort on the part of a few. But the love for Greek classic literature was such that in spite of all hardships and the most insurmountable obstacles, the work of the Renaissance went on.

Through the teaching of Chrysolares a number of famous scholars sprang up in Italy, such as Verzerio,

Niccolo dei Niccoli, Bruni, Guarino da Verona and his son Filelfo, Poliziano, Marsiglio, Fucino, and many others, who copied hundreds of volumes, started libraries and schools, made excellent translations, wrote text-books and trained many who continued their work in Italy and beyond the Alps.

The Renaissance at this point assumed a new phase, schools were opened everywhere, manuscripts collected for the Vatican library, studies were undertaken for the marked purpose of a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the errors of the Church were exposed. As an example, the School of Vittorino da Feltro, the forerunner of Pestalozzi, Froebel and Montessori, brought marked innovations in the educational system. His aim was to develop through liberal teaching, the intellectual, moral and physical faculties of his pupils. The Medici family assumed the patronage of learning in Italy; Nicholas the V bought 5,000 volumes for the Vatican library and paid no less than 5,000 ducats for a copy of Matthew in Hebrew. Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) made an extensive study of Latin, Greek, Chaldean, Hebrew and Arabic in order to understand better the scriptures of the Old and New Testament and preach the Gospel as it was understood by the sacred writers. This and hundreds of similar contributions were of real and immediate value to the triumph of the Reformation.

## RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

*(Continued)*

THE influence of the Renaissance on the Reformation had to be of a still greater momentum than the simple new birth of Arts, Letters and Sciences in Italy. The sun of ancient learning set on Constantinople, turning the world into the darkness of the middle ages, but appeared again in Italy in glowing splendor and illuminated the uttermost parts of the earth. As Columbus brought the light of the Gospel to a remote and unknown continent, lost in the darkness of human ignorance, so the wandering professors and scholars of Italy, through the knowledge of classic Latin and the discovered commentaries of the church fathers, led the reformers to see a new light in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; through the knowledge of Greek, the compiled grammars, lexicons, syntax and the modern spirit of historical, scientific criticism, enabled them to make fresh translations of the New Testament, bringing forth the true meaning of the original; through the knowledge of Hebrew, Chaldean, Aramaic and Arabic, a new translation of the Old Testament was possible, and thus a research work in the scriptures and commentaries was inaugurated everywhere. These wandering scholars with the new light, gave the people a wider horizon and aroused the mind of the world to great possibilities in the field of religious freedom.

Of immeasurable influence and immediate value was the creation of new languages. Following the example of Italy, where the corrupted Latin had been transformed as by the magic touch of genii into a fresh, vigorous language, other countries set aside their old

languages as an old garment, and the outcome was a new group of languages in Europe. The importance of this change lies in the fact that the reformers, disregarding the official language of the Church, were enabled to recruit their followers from the learned and unlearned alike, because they were able to launch their appeals to them in their common tongue.

A close and continuous intercourse began at this time between Italy and the outside world. The scholars of Germany, France, Switzerland, Spain and England having tasted from the stream through the wandering professors, came now to the fountain, and Italy was soon invaded by a vast army of great admirers who were destined to become the leaders of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual movements in their respective countries. The descendants of those who were attracted to the "Caput Mundi" in different epochs, first by the glory of the Roman Empire, later by the splendor of the Holy City, and still later by the celebrated universities of Salerno and Bologna, in order to take the model for their own universities, flocked in these fruitful centuries in mystical pilgrimage to the Mecca of the new learning, not only that they might sit at the feet of the great masters of art and science, but that they might study Latin, Greek and Hebrew to better understand the Holy Scriptures.

The conditions which prevailed in Germany before the sixteenth century, as described by Erasmus, furnish us with a clear picture of the intellectual stagnation in other European countries. "The teaching of Latin was dull and meager, Greek was scarcely taught at all. The masters were content with a few old handbooks and weeded, outworn methods. Scholastic theologians and monks were equally hostile to the new humanism." But as soon as the scholars returned from Italy imbued with the revolutionized teaching

methods and with the sacred fire for the new learning burning in their hearts, there was such a radical change in the intellectual fecundity of the northern countries, that in a short time they gave birth to two important movements—Humanism and Reformation.

It is not our purpose to show in detail that which Einstein in his book "The Italian Renaissance in England" has compendiously stated thus: "Erasmus and Holbein, Lope de Vega and Montaigne, Camosus and Shakespeare, owed a debt of gratitude to Italy,"<sup>1</sup> neither to write biographies of the men, who, having come under the influence of the Renaissance, directly contributed to the revival of primitive Christianity throughout the world, but to show that "Humanism and heresy were alike the results of the Renaissance. Each was born of that momentous change in human affairs that we speak of as the rebirth of man and of which the essence was a revival of the individual,"<sup>2</sup> we shall briefly connect the links of this unbroken chain by mentioning only the most distinguished visitors to Italy from the Renaissance to the Reformation.

From Germany came Peter Luder (1415-1474), who, after having spent several years in Italy, became a lecturer at Heidelberg. There he incurred the enmity of the orthodox professors and went to Ulm, Erfurt, Leipsic and Basel. Rudolph Agricola (1443-1485), who is regarded as the chief restorer of Greek in Germany, studied in Italy for seven years, and later taught in Heidelberg, the center of Humanistic culture. Conrad Coltos (1459-1508) studied at Ferrara, Padua and Rome and returned home an ardent enthusiast of the New Thought. Herman von dem Busch (1468-1534), having spent five years in Italy, lectured in the univer-

<sup>1</sup>Lewis David Einstein: *The Italian Renaissance in England*, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>E. M. Hulme: *Renaissance and Reformation*.

sities and towns of central Germany, not only on the Latin classics, but also on the importance of an intelligent and systematic study of the Bible. Johann von Dalberg (1445-1504), after having studied in Italy, was made Chancellor of the University of Heidelberg and Bishop of Worms. C. Peutingger (1465-1547), having spent several years under Poliziano, became the chief of Augsburg humanists. Willibald Pirckheimer (1470-1530), of Nuremberg, the Florence of Germany, having spent several years with distinguished men of letters in Italy, became the patron of letters at home. Ulrich von Hutten, the strongest opposer of the papacy in Germany, received his inspiration in Rome. Reuchlin (1455-1522), the Master of Melanchthon and precursor of the Reformation in Germany, made several visits to Italy, spent much time with Pico della Mirandola, and, returning home, placed on a sound basis the study of Hebrew. Erasmus (1467-1536) spent three fruitful years in Italy at the University of Bologna, with the distinguished scholar, Scipio Fortiguerra, and the celebrated Hellenist, Paolo Bombasio, at the Aladine Academy in Venice, the center of Greek learning, and at Padua, and from there he went to Ferrara, Siena and Rome, visiting libraries and getting in touch with men like Egidio of Viterbo, general of the Augustin order, who was quietly working for a reformation within the Church. Returning to Germany, Erasmus published the Greek New Testament and became the enlightening power of the countries beyond the Alps. M. Pierre De Nolhac, critic of Petrarch and Erasmus, justly remarked about Erasmus that "Italy was the school where his intellectual formation was finished." The great Reformer, Martin Luther, is a child of the Renaissance. He had been a student at the University of Erfurt that could boast of such teachers as Luder (1415-1474), a student of the University of Padua;

John Wessel (1420-1489), and Jodokus Trutfette (1460-1519), who had studied in Italy, and Konrad Mutianus Rufus (1471-1526), who received his Doctor's degree at Bologna and came under the influence of Pico della Mirandola. Luther came also under the influence of Egidio of Viterbo, already mentioned here, and in his journey to Italy toward the end of the year 1510, he was influenced positively by reformatory movements and humanists, and negatively, by conditions in the Church and the life of the clergy. And, providentially, it was in Rome that he underwent a true religious experience, when the true meaning of "the just shall live by faith" was revealed to him.

As early as the twelfth century we find in England Italian scholars who had a very important part in moulding the religious and intellectual life of the British people. Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who introduced the Greek New Testament in England, wrote to Innocent IV in 1253, "I decline to obey filially and obediently. I oppose. I rebel." Terry, in his *History of England*, justly says: "Thus were sown in English mind the first seeds of that bitterness which was destined two centuries later to bear fruits so fatal to the pope's interests in England."<sup>1</sup> The number of Italians called in England to teach is legion, from Vicario who lectured on Roman Law, and Francesco D'Accurso who lectured on Civil Law at Oxford, to Francesco Pucci who lectured on Theology. Let us note here only some of the most important: E. Temellio (1510-1580) was called by Cramner to teach Hebrew; B. Ochino (1487-1565), who had been the best lenten season preacher of his day and was literally worshiped for his style, after being converted to the Protestant faith, was called by Cramner, together with Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500-1562), to defend the Book of Common

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Terry: *A History of England*, p. 278.

Prayer. Peter Martyr was by far the greatest theologian of the age given by Italy to England, and in recognition of his service he was made Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford and later was appointed to the first Canonry of Christ's Church.

But we must center our interest upon those who crossed the channel and went to Italy in order to gather the fruits of the Renaissance and spread the new learning in the Country.

The first visitors are John Free, John Gunthorpe and Robert Flemming. Later we find W. Selling and W. Handley, who studied at Padua and Bologna under Poliziano, and returning home introduced the study of Greek and made of the monastery of Canterbury a center of learning. W. Grocyn (1446-1519) studied in Florence under Poliziano, and returning home, introduced Biblical criticism and taught Greek at Oxford. Thomas Lineacre (1460-1525) spent several years in Italy. He went first to Bologna with Poliziano and later followed his master to Florence. In Rome he studied with Aldus, and at Padua he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Having completed his studies, he returned to England, where he introduced the study of medicine and founded the College of Physicians, taught Greek and lectured on Science at Oxford. John Colet (1460-1519), influenced by Neo-platonism and scriptural criticism during his three years in Italy, when he returned to Oxford, lectured on the Pauline Epistles, substituting the allegoric interpretation for a free exposition of the whole, quoting freely from Pico, Ficino, Valla and others, and later, founded the School of St. Paul in London. The first headmaster of St. Paul's School, W. Lilly, had also studied in Italy. Leland and Sir John Cheke went to Padua for the special purpose of learning Greek. Richard Croke, the first professor of Greek at Cambridge, had been sent

by Cramner to Italy to visit the chief centers of learning and collect opinions regarding the King's divorce. W. Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, went to Italy for inspiration, and there he developed interest in letters. W. Latimer studied at Florence; Thomas Starkey studied at Padua, and Dr. Caius, the founder of Cambridge Medical College, received his degree also from Padua. When these men returned home a new era dawned upon England. The new learning moulded the whole life of England, and gave us "The Utopia" of Moore and the Bible of Tyndale; created a spirit of determination for freedom expressed by Latimer as the flames were rising from his pyre at Oxford: "Play the man, Master Ridley. We shall this day light up such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

The men of letters and science in Italy who were attracted by the different centers of learning in France during the Renaissance, we cannot even enumerate here. Suffice to say that from Petrarch to Gerolamo Aleandro (1480-1542), who taught Latin, Greek and Hebrew and later became rector of the University, a continuous stream crossed the Alps, among whom Leonardo da Vinci, L. Alemanni, F. Andrelini, Andrea del Sarto, Cornelio Vitelli, Benvenuto Cellini, G. Tiferno (1456), and many others. The number of men that came from France to Italy in order to acquire the new learning is not less important than those who came from England and Germany. We are told by Prof. Gustave Lauson, in his "Histoire de la Litterature Francaise," that the Renaissance in France is a prolongation of the Renaissance in Italy. From Charles D'Orleans, who was almost Italian, Italy became the university of France. In the army of Charles VIII it is the French noblesse which pours in Italy; the same thing can be said of Louis XII and his army, and Fran-

cis I and his army. In about thirty years Italy was invaded five or six times. These men returned home saturated with the new learning, filled with a new spirit of freedom, and through them a general transformation took place in their country. The enthusiasm aroused in them for the study of the fundamental languages, of Science and Religion, was going to be very fruitful. Francis the I, under the influence of the Italian Princes, not only cultivated the new learning, but became the patron of letters. His sister, Margaret of Navarre, was for many years the protectress of men of letters and reformers. Marot, Desperiers, Farel, Sainte-Marthe, Lefevre, D'Étaples, Roussel and Calvin found protection on her estate from the persecutions of the Parliament and the Inquisition. Clement Marot (1495-1544), in whom Renaissance and Reformation are inseparably united, received his inspiration in Italy with Francis I and died in Turin. He translated the Psalms, Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed in French. Persecuted in France, he lived in Florence, Venice and Ferrara, Jacques Lefevre, D'Étaples (1455-1537) made a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Rebelais was three times in Italy, and for his freedom of thought, goes even further than Marot. Lazar de Baif (1496-1547), ambassador to Venice, was a great Greek scholar and contributed much to the intellectual life of his country. Joachim du Bellay (1522-1560), the Petrarch of France, lived for three years in Italy under the spell of the Italian Humanists. Jean Antonie de Baif (1532-1589), whose mother was an Italian, was born in Venice, studied Greek with Vergerio, and introduced important reforms to the French language. G. Farel (1489-1565), celebrated French Reformer and intimate friend of Calvin, was greatly influenced by the Italian Humanist and Reformers. Calvin, more than other reformers, is the product of the Renaissance. We

just wish to mention here in passing that he studied at the school of great humanists, chief among whom was Andrea Alciati, the most scientific legal teacher of the time; and having harbored in his heart the dream of every humanist to visit Italy, Calvin spent some time in Ferrara and other northern cities.

We have seen how these scholars, going to the Universities of Paris, Oxford and Leipsic, filled with the new spirit of freedom, of investigation and reasoning, and with the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, illuminated their pupils, took away bandages from the eyes of Reformers, and the outcome was not only the moral, but also the religious Reformation, because these men could finally prove with the original sacred writings that the Roman Catholic Church was in error, and that the growing Church of Christ, possessing the Truth, had the right to preach it unto all creatures, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Dr. E. M. Hulme, in his book "Renaissance and Reformation," has justly said that "the great movement of Reform met with success precisely because men's minds were prepared for it and were expecting it. Every accusation that Luther made and every reform that he suggested had resounded through Christendom long before the opening of the sixteenth century."

If the Renaissance was pagan at heart, having resurrected Plato and Roman life; had no use for mediaeval philosophy and developed a refined esthetic sense, and if it had a God, it was the God of beauty. If for the exalted, mystical conception of God was substituted the God of Art; for the ethical, the esthetical; for divine love sexual love; yet we must not lose sight, however, that it was also an age of contrast, and we find side by side with pagan expressions of life such sublime spirit-

ual experiences as fascinate and conquer our very souls, even after so many centuries.

We must also remember that to the Renaissance we are indebted for the reawakened interest in the sources of the moral and intellectual life of man, for a continuity and renewed appreciation of western civilization, a broadening of our horizon through the resurrection and popularization of classic and Christian antiquity, the birth of scientific spirit and modern science, and the fall of scholasticism, feudalism and papal imperial power in Europe.

The undertaking of the Italian humanists was not an easy one. There were neither grammar nor syntaxes; dictionaries had to be compiled and manuscripts brought to light. It involved hard work and great effort on the part of a few; but the thirst for knowledge and the love of truth were so great that in spite of all hardships and the most insurmountable obstacles, the work of the Renaissance went on and Homer touched again the golden chords of his harp: Demosthenes once more melted the hearts of the crowd; Plato taught eternal truths; Aristotle led the world with his fine threads of logic; the Church Fathers cast floods of light on the religious darkness of the age; and above all, because most important, the Holy Bible, in its primitive simplicity and purity, spoke to the people in their common tongue.

The Valdois, "the promise of Italy."—KING HUMBERT I.

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"No other section of our population can be compared with the Waldensian for public and private virtue."—FREDERICO SCLOPSIS, *celebrated jurist.*

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"They never numbered more than twenty thousand people, scattered in fifteen parishes; yet they had the history and the strength of a great people. They mustered armies with their own generals; they had their heroes and their martyrs. They discussed terms as equals, with nations a hundred times larger than they were; they endured the hardships of thirty religious wars (instigated by the Pope) against Piedmont, against France, and against the two combined; for almost a year they kept the powerful Louis XIV at bay. . . . Like the people of Israel, they were driven from their own land; like Spaniards, they reconquered their country. Scattered, butchered, almost wholly destroyed, like a race with the pestilence of which the earth should be purged, they reorganized again, more numerous than ever and more grimly persevering in their religious views."—DEAMICIS. "*Alle porte d'Italia.*"

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The Rev. J. B. Taylor, American Baptist pastor in Rome, wrote an article for the paper, "Italy and the Italians," in 1900, entitled "Evangelization in Italy." In it we read: "The Lord has providentially preserved a people in the valleys of the Alps, and this people is now providentially ready to put itself at the head of the great work of evangelization."

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Dr. Ignace Dollinger, aged Catholic, published in the second volume of his "Contributions to History of the Sects of the Middle Ages" some precious documents on the old Waldensian hospitals. To a friend who asked why he had not spoken of the Waldensians in the first volume, in which he treated of the agnostic and Manichean sects, he replied: "I did not wish to put them in such bad company."

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Paul Sabatier, writes in his life of St. Francis of Assisi: "The Waldensians made a real attempt at reform. . . . On their many journeys they spoke of the sad state of the Church and of the necessity for a reform; and these conversations were a much more efficacious means of apostleship than the books and papers of our day. . . . People have made ugly accusations against the Waldensians . . . but their real strength was in their virtues, which made so great a contrast to the vices of the clergy."

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"The Waldensian Church is the 'Burning Bush' of Christendom."—A. W. MITCHELL, M. D.

## VI

### THE WALDENSIAN CHURCH

THOUGH modern historical criticism has definitely set aside the claim made by Waldensian as well as foreign historians of a generation ago, of the continuity of the Waldensian church with the Apostolic church, yet it is still possible to hold that a pure, uncontaminated, spiritual stream ran quietly from the Apostolic time to the first protest uttered in the ninth century by Claudius Bishop of Turin, later by the Catari, still later by Peterbrusians, Arnaldists, Umiliati, Poor of Italy, Poor of Lombardy, Poor of Lyons, Paterines, and finally, like the pure streams coming down from the far distant mountain tops, all merged into the Waldensian movement.

Peter Valdo, whose name is permanently associated with the movement, was born about the year 1140; some believe in France, others in Switzerland, and still others in the Piedmontese Alps. Having settled in Lyons, he became a merchant of considerable wealth, but one day while conversing with some friends, one fell suddenly dead. Such was the impression that from that day he was wont of saying, "If I had died, what would have become of my soul?" He went to see a theologian about his spiritual needs at once, and after much questioning and persuasion, he was able to learn from him, "go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: come and follow Me."

After providing for his wife and daughters and making restitutions, he paid for a translation of the Gospel and gave the balance to the poor. For his own needs he begged henceforth. His ambition now was to preach the Gospel, and his consuming passion the sal-

vation of souls; but Alexander III prohibited him from preaching without permission from Bishops (1179), to which Valdo answered that he must obey God rather than man. As a result of his disobedience, he and his followers were excommunicated by Innocent III (1184). He attended then the III Lateran Council with the hope of receiving the privilege hitherto unjustly denied him and his followers, but there he met with the same negative results. Having had some difficulties with the Bishop of Lyon, he crossed the Alps, and in Italy was easily converted to more advanced heretical views.

Among such heterogenous groups, dissensions and disagreements were perfectly natural. The group split in two. Those who had really never broken away from the Church of Rome went back, while those whose minds were flooded with light and their hearts filled with love, broke away definitely from Rome, and finding the protest of Valdo too mild, they joined hands with more advanced Italian heretics.

The headquarters of the new movement was in Milan with a Theological School, and the central office for propaganda. Against the Waldensians the Roman Catholic Church placed the two orders: that of Assisi, whose founder had been influenced by the Waldensians, and the Dominicans, or preaching friars, created in imitation of the Waldensian preachers, not to preach the Truth, however, but to destroy the heretics.

The crushing persecutions of the Roman Catholic Church drove the peaceful and God-fearing inhabitants of the valleys to the inaccessible recesses of the mountains of Piedmont, where they found a natural bulwark to the attacks of the enemies of the faith. They lifted up their eyes unto the hills for help, and God gave them refuge on the Alps as early as 1184 and were greatly increased after the crusade of 1208, when over 60,000 had been butchered in France and in Italy. The

first edict of expulsion was issued by Ottone IV in 1210, instigated by the Bishop of Turin, and though no actual persecution took place, because of the trouble which arose between the Emperor and the Pope, yet it was the starting point, and henceforth the persecutions increased in their frequency as well as in their bitterness. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the persecutions were conducted by the Dominican Castellazzo, fra Giacomo da Busanzo and G. A. Acquapendente, culminating in 1484 in a hard-fought battle between the forces of Carl I, Duke of Savoy, and the Waldensians of Val Luserna. Between the thirteenth century and the sixteenth, partly due to missionary zeal and partly due to the terrible persecutions, the Waldensians scattered in Bohemia, where they spread the seed for the Reformation and later founded there the Moravian Church. In Austria and Germany their propaganda was so successful that persecutions became most ferocious. In Spain, France, Southern Italy and especially Calabria and Puglie, they made many converts, organized churches and founded towns. If the Reformers were not altogether influenced by these missionaries, it is probable that Luther, during his famous journey to Rome in 1510, came in contact with them and imbibed their doctrines.

As soon as the battle cry of the Reformation was heard, the Waldensians sent representatives beyond the Alps (1526), and on September 12, 1532, the Synod of Cianforan in the Valley of Angrogna was held, where representatives of the Reformers met with ministers and elders of the Waldensian Church in order to come to a more definite understanding regarding Predestination, Works, Confession to God, Sabbath rest and the two Sacraments. They did not receive their doctrines from the Reformers, as it is commonly believed, because as early as 1517, the same year Martin Luther

nailed his ninety-five theses on the doors of the church at Wittenberg, the Archbishop of Turin made these charges against the Waldenses:

- "They receive the Scriptures as the only rule of faith.
- "They reject doctrines introduced by popes and priests.
- "They deny that man needs the intercession of saints.
- "They reject the doctrine of purgatory and masses for the dead.
- "They deny that priests have power to forgive sins.
- "They oppose the confessional.
- "They protest against the worship of the Virgin and of saints.
- "They reject the use of Holy Water.
- "They condemn indulgences.
- "They ascribe the doctrine of purgatory to the covetousness of priests.
- "They abhor the sign of the cross and the worship of images.
- "They deny that wicked men can be representatives of Christ.
- "They disown the authority of the Pope.
- "They believe that private prayer is as acceptable to God as prayer offered in churches."

Their contact with the Reformers brought them, however, three armed expeditions (1535-1560-1561), which were repulsed by the Waldensians; and the Duke of Savoy, Emanuel Philibert, seeing the futility of the attacks, made the treaty of Cavour, by which liberty of worship was granted to those churches already in existence.

After one hundred years of tranquility and peace, the most terrible massacre took place in 1655, known as "Piedmontese Easter," and in 1663 the war of the Bandits. So appalling were these persecutions that Cromwell heard their groans and threatened to cross the channel and to send relief beyond the Alps, and Milton voiced the grief and prayer of his countrymen and fellow-believers in the following poem:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;  
 Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
 When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones.

Forget not: in thy book record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their groans

The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway

The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow  
A hundred old, who, having learnt thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

The most terrible trial, however, did not come until 1686, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when the combined hordes of France and Savoy broke the heroic resistance of the defenders of evangelic faith. It was aimed at their complete extermination, and many among the very best fell on the field of honor, while fully 12,000 were taken prisoners and accorded such inhuman treatment that nine thousand perished after a few months. The Duke of Savoy received the congratulations of Innocent XI for having "purged and cleaned the valleys," but while the lands of the martyrs were being sold, the terror was spread among the buyers as well as among the soldiers by a handful of Waldensians who had escaped the vigilance of the attackers, and the Duke was compelled to come to terms. They were finally permitted to go to Switzerland armed, together with those who had been taken prisoners and had survived the terrible treatment and most inhuman ordeals.

Love for their valleys was so strong that they made three attempts to return, and finally, in the most heroic and clever strategic movement, were successful in August, 1689, led by their greatest military leader, Henri Armand. The Duke of Savoy, in return for their help in his wars, issued an edict on June 4, 1690, permitting them to settle again in the valleys. During the French

Revolution, freedom of worship was granted. With the restoration, the Waldensians lost some of their privileges, but with the edict of Emancipation of February 17, 1848, they were admitted to all civil rights.

From what we have said it is clear that the Waldensians at first were only dissenters, later organizing themselves into a church within a church, and only when their apostolic courage and evangelical zeal were flamed by the strong wind of persecution, they stood ready to fight for their faith, and a complete separation took place from the church that had proved faithless to her Master and Lord.

They proclaimed the authority of the Holy Bible as the infallible rule of faith and practice, and became known as the people of one Book, the right and duty of appeal from ecclesiastical authority, the privilege to spread the Word of God through translations and preaching in the language of the people.

The form of worship was very simple, consisting chiefly in expository preaching and prayer. The rites consisting in the voluntary confession, leaving the absolution to God, baptism by aspersion administered to children, and Holy Communion using bread and wine. Their conduct was above reproach.

Their organization was very simple. It was not their aim to organize an order, which at that time was very common, but a community like the Apostolic, made up of believers and their children. The ministers received a theoretical as well as a practical training, becoming first deacons and later presbyters. The Synod met once a year and was presided over by a bishop known as *Maioralis* (elder). The itinerary ministers were sent two by two and established "Ospizi," or preaching stations, where they would stop during their journeys and have informal meetings. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they gained an entree into homes

and towns as merchants, gradually disclosing their real mission. A glimpse of their life is given in this poem:

## THE VAUDOIS MISSIONARY

## I

"O, lady, these silks of mine  
Are beautiful and rare—  
The richest web of the Indian loom,  
Which beauty's self might wear.  
And these pearls are pure and mild to behold,  
And with radiant light they vie;  
I have brought them with me a weary way:  
Will my gentle lady buy?"

## II

And the lady smiled on the worn old man  
Through the dark and clustering curls  
Which veiled her brow as she bent to view  
His silk and glittering pearls:  
And she placed their price in the old man's hand,  
And lightly turned away:  
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest call—  
"My gentle lady, stay!"

## III

"O, lady fair, I have yet a gem  
Which a purer lustre flings  
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown  
On the lofty brow of Kings;  
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,  
Whose virtue shall not decay;  
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee,  
And a blessing on thy way!"

## IV

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel,  
Where her youthful form was seen,  
Where her eyes shone clear and her dark locks waved  
Their clasping pearls between;  
Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth,  
Thou traveller gray and old;  
And name the price of thy precious gem,  
And my pages shall count thy gold."

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,  
As a small and meagre book  
Unchased with gold or diamond gem,  
From his folding robe he took:  
"Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price—  
May it prove as such to thee!  
Nay, keep thy gold—I ask it not—  
For the word of God is free."

## VI

The hoary traveller went his way—  
But the gift he left behind  
Hath had its pure and perfect work  
On that high-born maiden's mind;  
And she hath turned from her pride of sin  
To the lowliness of truth,  
And given her human heart to God  
In its beautiful hour of youth.

## VII

And she hath left the old gray walls  
Where an evil faith hath power,  
The courtly knights of her father's train,  
And the maidens of her bower;  
And she hath gone to the Vaudois vale,  
By lordly feet untrod,  
Where the poor and needy of earth are rich  
In the perfect love of God!

*(From The London Observer.)*

## VII

### PROVIDENTIAL DISCOVERIES AND INVENTIONS AND THE REFORMATION

THE pre-reformers prepared the path and the Renaissance furnished the means to the more fortunate reformers on the other side of the Alps; but the Reformation would have failed, or at least it would have been greatly retarded, had not providential discoveries been made of Heaven and Earth.

Christopher Columbus saw in the clear blue sky of his beloved Italy the vision of a new continent, and through difficulties well known to all, on October 12, 1492, he gave to the Old a New World. Later, Americus Vespucci, John and Sebastian Cabot, Verazzano and other Italian explorers, gave more exact data about this country and opened the way to the nations of the world. The discovery itself marked a great advancement in the history of human progress, but it becomes far more important when we consider how it profoundly affected the Reformation, and with it the destiny of the whole world.

The Roman Catholic Church held firm against the theory of the "Antipode," "The Damnable Heresy"; and Pope Zacharius declared it "perverse and iniquitous." Peter Albano was condemned by the Inquisition in 1316, and a few years later C. D'Ascoli was burned alive in Florence on account of their belief in the "Antipodes." When Columbus proved all that which the Church had so emphatically denied, i. e., the shape of the earth, and people living where theologians had asserted no one could live, the prestige of the pope's omniscience was severely shaken and the minds of men were quickened by dreams of vast possibilities. Through the same discovery, the papal infallibility

received a terrible shock when Alexander VI, in accordance with the Constantine's invented gift to Sylvester, recorded in the spurious Isodorian decretals, and by authority of the omnipotent God, conceded to him by St. Peter; and by reason of the vicarship of Jesus Christ, on May 3, 1493, issued the Bull of Demarcation awarding to Spain all the land and islands in the western ocean, drawing a line from north to south. The Roman Catholic Portugal was angered at such a deliberation of the Holy Father, and His Holiness, to preserve peace in the family, the next day issued another Bull dividing the western world between Portugal and Spain by a line one hundred leagues west of the Azores, running north and south. Later, however, both Portugal and Spain, and with them the rest of the world, discovered that the Pope was not very well informed by Providence as to the future of this continent.

America was not allowed to play a passive part, but had to play an active part for the triumph of the Reformation. It had to contribute to the freedom of mind and conscience, becoming "the city of refuge" to many poor Protestants who were fleeing away from Europe in order to escape persecutions.

The Pilgrim Fathers, from persecutions in England, came to worship God in spirit and truth in their "Timber fort both strong and comely, with flat roof and battlements" in Massachusetts; and the Highlanders who fought for Prince Charles Edward Stuart took refuge in North Carolina; the Quakers, to be free, sailed to New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Germans, driven from the Palatinate by Louis XIV, settled in Pennsylvania; the Huguenots, escaping from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, sailed for the Hudson and South Carolina, Oglethorpe led the Teutons to worship God according to the dictation of their conscience from Salzbury to Georgia; the Dutch

Protestants took refuge in New York, and the Swedish came to worship God in spirit and truth in Delaware.

This continent served as a secure refuge for the Evangelical Christians persecuted in their native countries; to the followers of the reformers who, in order to obey God rather than men, sacrificed what was most dear to them and exposed their lives to perils and uncertainty of climate, land and inhabitants. But had not Providence, through an Italian, revealed to the Old a New World, many of these fugitives would have been burned, executed or hanged in their countries; many Roman Catholic princes would not have yielded to their subjects; maybe the Reformation itself would have been suffocated, or at least greatly retarded.

The invention of movable types (1450-1455) aroused a zeal in Italy which has no equal in history. Though this important invention was not made by an Italian, yet it was perfected in Italy by Aldus of Venice, and Italy reaped the richest fruits in the rapid diffusion of the new learning. The printing presses of Florenre, Venice, Brescia and Rome were the most important in Europe, and Venice alone printed more books than all the rest of the world put together. The first Greek, Hebrew and Arabic types were cast in Italy, thus giving a great impetus to the spread of the fathers' commentaries and to the study of the Holy Scripture in the original. The beautiful Roman and Italic characters were soon preferred to the Gothic, and printing played a very important part in the propagation of the new ideas. Many students, who to learning united profound biblical scholarship and piety, gave freely of themselves and of their substance in order to print Greek and Hebrew texts, grammars and lexicons. The first Hebrew text was printed in 1475 in Italy, the first chair of Hebrew was established at the University of Bologna in 1448, and in 1514 at the University of Rome.

The first Hebrew psalter was printed in Italy in 1477, and the complete Bible in 1488. The Hebrew Old Testament used by Luther was a copy of the third edition of the text issued at Brescia. The complete Greek text of the New Testament was not issued until 1518, and it was published by Andrea Asolano.

We could not exhaust the list of Italians who providentially contributed to the triumph of the Reformation, but before closing, however, we must mention the name of Galileo Galilei (February 15, 1564-January 8, 1642), the founder of experimental science in Italy. The glory of Galileo does not rest entirely on the invention of the thermometer or on the discovery of celestial phenomena and new celestial bodies through his telescope; on the formulation of clear theories of mechanics, statics and dynamics; or on the discovery of the law of motion, which verified the Copernican System. Galileo's glory must be chiefly found in his declaration of war against prejudice and ignorance; in his moral courage to meet his adversaries in the open and sacrifice his happiness for the sake of truth; in his propagation of the spirit of free examination and free investigation, in demonstrating as false the doctrines of the Roman Catholic theologians concerning the celestial bodies and the earth, announcing to his contemporaries that "the Scriptures were not intended to teach science and philosophy"; that Nature and the Scriptures cannot speak a different language; that in order to harmonize revelation and science, the interpretation of the Church must be modified.

Having brought the dogma of the Church in direct collision with the deduction of science, Galileo had to pay the penalty. On the 25th of February, 1615, he was cited to appear before the Inquisition in Rome and to Cardinal Bellarmine he promised that he would not

teach "the obnoxious theory." In 1632 he gave out his famous dialogues, "System of the World," and in 1633 he was cited again before the Inquisitional tribunal in Rome. Infirm and worn out, overcome with age, "The starry Galileo with his woes," appeared before the Cardinal to recant his theories which were in contradiction with the teachings of the Church, but not with the Scriptures, and was condemned to live a prisoner in his villa in Arcetri, where he died in 1642. Galileo suffered not martyrdom because he wished to live and conquer his enemies. He was tortured and imprisoned by the Inquisition and was denied burial in consecrated ground by the Dominicans, but his influence was so great that his remains were laid by his countrymen in Santa Croce in Florence, the Westminster of Italy. He recanted, but as he exclaimed when descending from the Inquisitorial Palace, "it does move, nevertheless," referring to the motion of the earth around the sun. So through his example Truth had to march on to conquer the world and set man free.

## VIII

### WHY DID THE REFORMATION FAIL IN ITALY



IN the preceding chapters we have briefly demonstrated what was Italy's contribution to the Reformation, and we have easily shown how Italy remained in the van of all Reformatory movements in Europe. It now becomes our difficult task to examine and explain why the Reformation apparently failed in Italy. We must admit from the start that it is hard to understand how, in a country where the objections were the strongest against innovations brought into the Roman Church contrary to the Holy Scriptures, like the supremacy of the Pope and the celibacy of the priests bitterly fought by the bishops of Milan; where protests were heard as early as the ninth century through Claudius, Bishop of Turin, against the worship of saints and images; where the voice of Arnaldo da Brescia thundered against the abuses and corruption of the Roman Church and the Clergy in the twelfth century; of Fra Dolcino who, fired with prophetic zeal, announced the destruction of the corrupted Church of Rome and the coming of a new Church founded in poverty, true to Christ her Lord and Master; where men of letters, philosophers and scientists from Dante to Ariosto, from Petrarch to Guicciardini, from Boccaccio to Machiavelli, from Valla to Giordano Bruno, from Poliziano to Galileo, from Pico to hundreds of luminaries in all the branches of learning were in open protest against the immorality of the clergy and denounced the spiritual and moral corruption of the Church; where Marsiglio da Padova denounced and condemned all the abuses and false doctrines of the Church, condemned later by the Reformers; where suffered and died under the infamous Alexander VI,

Savonarola the prophet and moral reformer of Italy, who, upon being offered a cardinal's hat answered: "I want no other red hat than that which martyrdom will confer upon me"; where the Seraphic St. Francis lived with a true Christ-like spirit and missionary zeal; where hundreds of movements were started in cities and towns throughout Italy; where such organizations flourished like the Cathari, the Paterines, the poor of Italy, the poor of Lombardy, the Arnoldists, the glorious Waldensians who were willing to fight and to die for their faith. To the student of history, I say, it is puzzling that the Reformation should have failed in Italy. And when we stop to consider how the doctrines of Luther and Calvin made their way in Italy and encouraged the poor, struggling, hitherto helpless Italian Reformers, and that with a fresh translation of the Bible, edited by Antonio Brucioli in 1530, we will discover that every city from the extreme north to Naples became a center of evangelical Christianity.

With such wholehearted, enthusiastic, able and willing converts like Olimpia Morata, one of the most learned women of her time; Baldassare Altieri Ambassador of Venice, Girolamo Galateo, Giulio della Revere, Baldo Lupetino, Celso Massimiliano, Guglielmo Grotaroli, Girolamo Zanchi, Bishop V. Sorzano, Celio S. Curione, described by the historian McCree, as the Luther of Italy, Giovanni Maria, Fra Andrea di Ferrara, Nicola Sartorio, Paolo Sarpi, Francesco Gamba, Domenico Casabianca, Faventino Fanino of Faenza and the first martyr of the Reformation of the sixteenth century; Fra Benedetto da Foiano, Francesco Carduccio, Bernardo da Castiglione, Jacopo Gherardi, Bartolomeo Fonzo, Pietro Speziali, Francesco Spiera, Francesco Negri, Pier Paolo Vergerio, sent as papal nuncio, later in an attempt to refute Lutheran writings, was converted to the Protestant faith; Francesco della Sega,

Guilio Gherlandi, Antonio Rizzetto, Fedele Vigo, Goffredo Varaglia sent to convert the Waldensians but was converted by them and sealed his faith with his martyrdom, Giovanni Diodati, who gave us the best Italian version of the Holy Bible, still used to the present day; Francesco Turretini, Giuseppe Giusti della Scala, Bernardino Ochino and Pier Martire Vermigli of whom we have already made mention; Pietro Carnesecchi, secretary of Clement VII and apostolic protonotary, who, having accepted the evangelical faith, was first incarcerated by the cruel Pius V and later put to death in Rome; Aonio Paleario, professor at Milan, arrested also by order of the impious Pius V, who before his martyrdom wrote very tender parting letters of comfort to his wife and children, and countless others who likewise fought for their faith and sealed with their martyrdom, we must confess it becomes increasingly difficult to understand why the Reformation should have failed.

In searching for an answer or answers to the question why the Reformation failed in Italy, we shall state briefly four very plausible reasons:

1. The first reason that looms in our mind is the fact that the Italian soul had first been made arid by ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages; later, the Renaissance created a super-skeptical soul in many; and finally, the counter-reformation annihilated the spiritual life of the people. Many Italians were for the Reformation as long as it waged war against the Pope and the Clergy, but when it came to the spiritual side of it, they felt that they had outgrown the teachings of the Roman Church, and since, to them Christianity was synonymous with Roman Catholicism, they dismissed the whole question without further consideration.

2. The second reason must be found in the deep-rooted patriotism of the Italians. Their reasoning is somewhat like this: Since the papacy is a purely Italian institution and Italy, the seat of the papacy, has always found it a source of power and honor and financial gain, let us uphold it. Having lost political supremacy in the world with the fall of the Roman Empire, let us preserve the spiritual supremacy with Rome, the capital of Christendom.

3. With due respect to the glorious deeds and the innumerable martyrs, Italy, in my humble judgment, did not produce an outstanding man able to unite the various factions produced by the individualistic nature of the Italians, who were to muster all the scattered forces and present a united front to the common foe. If such a man appeared he was not revealed, perhaps because of the tremendous difficulties and vile persecutions he was overtaken by immature death. For had a man of the caliber and religious experience of Luther appeared in Italy, or of the learning and power of Calvin, the verdict of history would have been entirely different.

4. Persecution is the most accepted answer. Being so near the papal court, the seat of Inquisition, the power of the Cross and the Sword, all attempts were smothered as soon as they were hatched, the very soul of Protestant reformatory aspiration was suffocated. Even with prophetic vision they could not escape Scylla and avoid Charybdis. In support of this theory from many testimonies, here is what John Stuart Mill says:

"The Reformation broke out at least twenty times before Luther and was put down. Arnold of Brescia, was put down. Fra Dolcino was put down, Savonarola was put down. The Vaudois were put down. The Lollards were put down. The Hussites were put down. Even after the era of Luther, wherever persecution

was persisted in, it was successful. In Spain, Italy, Flanders, the Austrian Empire, Protestantism was rooted out; and most likely, would have been so in England, had Queen Mary lived, or Queen Elizabeth died. Persecution has always succeeded, save where the heretics were too strong a party to be effectually persecuted."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the answer is not contained in any one of these reasons, but in them all.

In claiming the priority of the Italians in the reformatory movement and tracing briefly the part they played, it was not with the intention of detracting anything from the more fortunate Reformers of Europe, but simply to evaluate Italy's part, which has long been neglected. Therefore, in paying due honor to the great Reformers of England, France, Germany and Switzerland, let us not forget Italy, and ever remember that six centuries ago with the discovery of the classic antiquity and with the birth of the new learning, the Italians furnished the means for the triumph of the Reformation. With the discovery of America the Italians revealed to men the earth, giving a safe refuge to all those who were persecuted in the Old World, with Galileo's inventions and discoveries the heavens were revealed to men and the freedom of mind and conscience was proclaimed; and with the movement of the Reformation begun in Italy, man's conscience affirmed itself in the world, freedom of mind was achieved, and the Gospel was preached in its purity and simplicity to the world.

<sup>1</sup>John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty."

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