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ARTICLE I.

THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, CONTEMPLATED IN SOME OF ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

When we speak of second causes, it must never be forgotten that the concurrence of at least two of them is necessary to the production of an effect. Hence we speak of the *causes*, not the *cause* of the Reformation, because we are here concerned with secondary causation only. The first cause we of course acknowledge to be God. The Reformation was a great work of his holy spirit, a mighty revival of the work which he had been doing ever since the utterance of the first promise in the garden of Eden. It was a re-form-ation, a restoration of the Church to the word of God, which constitutes its form, as the Holy Ghost constitutes its life. But the work of God amongst men is performed under the conditions of time and place. And there are very many circumstances attending and concurring, in regard to some or all of which we might confidently affirm that they were causes *sine qua non*, conditions without which the great event would not have taken place, or if it had taken place, would not have been the same event, or been followed by the same results.

Our Saviour, in his parables, frequently likens the processes of the kingdom of heaven to the processes of vegetable and
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animal life. And it is not without authority, therefore, and that the highest, that scientific historians and writers on the philosophy of history have contemplated history under the notion of an organic development, in which the life, the form, and the external conditions, constitute the main subjects of consideration. We refer to this mode of contemplating history here only for the purpose of calling attention to that striking circumstance in the formation of organisms of which physiologists tell us, the circumstance of all its parts or organs being developed, each from its appropriate centre, and all growing *pari passu* to meet each other in the integrity of the organism as a whole. God builds the vegetable or animal in a way totally different from that in which the most skilful human artisan builds any of his works, because God alone has the prerogative of imparting life. Hence we are all familiar with such forms of expression as "events coming to the birth," "being *ripe* for execution," "the fulness of time," etc.

In "the fulness of time" God sent forth his Son. Christ came when the world was ripe for his advent, and the stupendous birth could be no longer delayed. The history of the world had been growing for ages towards this event from three distinct centres. Three distinct lines had been converging upon this great moment in the life of the human race—lines unconsciously recognised by the Roman Governor when he wrote the superscription over the cross in the three languages which represented them.

So also in the case of the Reformation. The world was long in gestation before that great birth took place. There were several lines of providence which converged to produce that great revolution. Sudden as its outbreak appeared to the Court of Rome, and even to some good men, almost despairing of the Church, it was not sudden, as we now clearly see.

Before we glance at some of the causes of the Reformation, let us hint at some of the limitations under which these causes must be considered. Each one of these causes is itself an effect, as the Reformation itself becomes in its turn a most fruitful cause. The view of the mind in all such enquiries is necessarily

artificial and arbitrary. Looking to the future, its point of departure seems a fixed base from which all that follows proceeds. Looking to the past, its present position seems but the result of what has gone before. Its present position is the juncture of two eternities, the child of the one, and the father of the other. In the ascending scale each cause becomes an effect; in the descending scale each effect becomes a cause. This view is the only one which can make history a rational study, a study adapted to the reason. The inquiry after causes (which includes the inquiry after results) is that which distinguishes reason in man from reason in brutes; and human reason can never be satisfied until it reaches a cause, which is not also an effect. This procedure of the reason is beautifully illustrated by Villars:*

“A man entirely unacquainted with the course of a river, arriving upon its banks, and seeing it here flowing in an extensive plain, there confined in a narrow channel, in another place foaming at the leap of a cataract, such a man would regard the first turn of the stream where it might lie concealed by a gorge from his eye as the origin of the river; the cataract would produce a similar illusion. Having reached the source at last, he would consider the mountain from which it issued as the primary cause of the river. He would soon, however, reflect that the bowels of the mountain must soon be exhausted by so constant a stream. He will observe the accumulation of clouds, the rains, without which the drained mountain would furnish no source. Thus, then, the clouds become the primary cause; but it is the winds which, by sweeping the vast seas, produce the clouds, and it is the sun which draws them from the sea. But whence comes this power in the sun? Thus he is soon drawn into the inquiries of speculative physics, by his search after a cause, after an absolute principle from which he may deduce, in the last resort, the explication of so many phenomena.”

The like limitation must be laid down in reference to the *results* of this great revolution. The human reason, as it is never satisfied in the research of causes until it reaches a cause which is not in its turn also an effect; so in the research of results, it is never satisfied until it reaches an effect which is not also a cause.

*Essai sur L'Esprit et l'Influence de La Reformation, p. 1, §. 1.

It seeks an *end* as it seeks a *beginning*. But we must end very far short of the end, as we begun very far short of the beginning. "Art is long and time is fleeting."

Using the term cause in the wide sense as before defined, we notice as the first cause—

I. The universal corruption which had existed in the Church and in society for ages. This corruption was so enormous as to work its own cure.* The issue was reformation or death. The Church, which was designed to be a wholesome leaven in the centre of the depraved mass of humanity, and, by its powerful though silent working, to transform the mass into the likeness of itself, became an evil leaven, and transformed the mass into the likeness of its own corruption. The opinion which some genteel and fashionable people, both in England and in this country, are so industriously propagating, and so many simpletons are believing, that the religion of the Middle Age was a simple, fervent, devout religion, worthy of the imitation of all ages, is a sheer

*Bossuet, in his *Histoire des Variations, L. I.*, quotes Cardinal Julian as saying to Pope Eugene IV. that the disorders of the German clergy were so great as to stir up the hatred of the people against the whole ecclesiastical order; and that if these disorders were not corrected there was reason to fear that the laity would attack the clergy after the fashion of the Hussites, as they were already boldly threatening to do; that if the German clergy were not promptly reformed, that *another heresy would soon arise far more dangerous than that of Bohemia*; that men would begin to believe that they would be offering a sacrifice acceptable to God in abusing and plundering the ecclesiastics as a race odious to God and men, and sunk in the depths of wickedness; that this hatred of the people for the sacred order would extend itself to the Court of Rome, which would be regarded as the cause of all these evils, *because it neglected to apply the needful remedy*. "God," adds the Cardinal, "prevents us from seeing our perils, as he is accustomed to do to those whom he intends to punish. The fire is kindled before our eyes, and we run into it." This was Julian's idea of the manner in which the evil would work its own cure. The world was calling for a reformation of the Church "in *Head* and members;" but the blind guides would not reform the *Head*. Hence that "other heresy more dangerous than Hussiism" *did* arise, which proceeded upon the supposition that the See of Rome was the fountain of corruption, and must be either reformed or destroyed.

and mischievous delusion. The religion of that age is not to be estimated by a noble hymn here and there like the "Dies Iræ," or by an occasional excerpt from an Anselm, or a Bernard, or a Richard of St. Victor, breathing a true spirit of love and devotion to Christ. Nobody doubts that God had his chosen ones all through these ages of gross superstition, will-worship, and idolatry, who were sufficiently enlightened to weep in the solitude of their cells over the darkness and corruption of the times, and sufficiently bold to testify against it. But the tears and testimony of these good men are themselves proofs that the mighty current which they were endeavoring to stem was too strong for them; not to say that they were themselves so much infected with the prevailing errors as to render their testimony, in a great measure, nugatory and vain. Let us notice some of these testimonies in regard to the condition of the Court of Rome, the very head and centre of the Church.

These testimonies are so numerous that one scarcely knows where to begin or to end. We cite, however, two or three as they are given in the "Pope and Council," a work emanating from a Romanist source, and written in the interest of the "Liberal Catholic" party on the continent of Europe, the party represented by such names as those of Döllinger and Hyacinthe. We have not the means of verifying these testimonies, but we apprehend that no one who will compare the characters of the men whose names have just been mentioned with the characters of those who have set themselves for the defence of the late Council at Rome, will be at all troubled by any denial on the part of these last of the genuineness of the testimonies.

Among the bishops of the time of Innocent IV. (Pope), there was not one more highly honored than Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln, nor one for a long time more devoted to the Pope; indeed, so devoted that he acknowledged, in accordance with the Gratian and the Gregorian system, that he held his episcopal jurisdiction by delegation from the papal. This man, disgusted with the corruptions which, like a poisonous miasma, penetrated from the Roman Court into every portion of the Church, and especially with the hypocrisy exhibited in declaring the taking of interest

for money a mortal sin, while the papal usurers and brokers were exhausting the churches and corporations in all countries with usurious imposts, wrote a letter to the Pope shortly before his death, reproaching him with his tyranny and sharply warning him to repent.*

Jacob of Vitry, (afterwards made a Cardinal,) after making some stay at the Court of Rome, wrote to a friend (1216) that "it had lost every vestige of real Church spirit," and that "its members were so busy with secular and temporal things, with kings and kingdoms, law-suits and quarrels, that they scarcely allowed a syllable to be spoken about spiritual things." Later, when Pope Nicholas III. wanted to make John of Parma, General of the Minorites, a Cardinal, he declined, saying, "The Roman Church hardly concerns itself with anything but wars and juggleries; *for the salvation of souls it takes no care.*"

St. Hildegard, that famous prophetess on the Rhine, highly honored by popes and emperors, prophesied of the popes as early as 1170—"They seize upon us like ravening beasts, with their power of binding and loosing, and through them the whole Church is withered. The pride of the popes, who no longer observe any religion, will be brought low." So St. Bridget, the northern prophetess, who lived in Rome some two centuries later, calls the Pope worse than Lucifer, "a murderer of the souls entrusted to him, who condemns the innocent and sells the elect for filthy lucre." Durandus (bishop) says "the Roman Court interprets 'omnia traham ad me ipsum,' (John xii. 32, in the Vulg.,) as authorising its appropriating the rights of all others exclusively to itself, and that the Roman Church is reviled in every country; that every one is ashamed of her, and charges her with corrupting the whole clergy, whose immorality has exposed them to universal hatred." Yet this Durandus maintained the "Donation of Constantine," and the rights which flowed from that stupendous fraud.

But we need make no more citations from Romanists to show

*See, besides, the curious story of an old monastic chronicler touching a visit of Grostete to the Pope after his (G.'s) death, in "Pope and Council," and in Milman's History of Latin Christianity, VI., 293.

that even in their judgment the "head-centre" of the Church was wholly rotten in their day. The love of money was the master-lust of those who boasted of being the successors of Peter and Paul, the two apostles who have left the most solemn warnings on record against this very lust. But the infatuated people continued to believe that the popes were the successors of Peter and Paul, while their lives were the lives of Ananias and Sapphira, of Simon Magus, and Demas. Protestants have been unjustly charged with originating that interpretation of the Babylon of the Apocalypse which makes it the symbol of the Roman Church. Every reader of church history knows that this interpretation was very common among the Franciscans of the Middle Age. Even St. Bonaventura, whom the popes had loaded with honors, and who was bound by the closest ties to Rome as a cardinal and general of his order, did not hesitate, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, to declare Rome to be the harlot who makes kings and nations drunk with the wine of her whoredoms. For in Rome, he said, the dignities of the Church were bought and sold; there did the princes and rulers of the Church assemble, dishonoring God by their incontinence, adherents of Satan, and plunderers of the flock of Christ. He adds that the prelates, corrupted by Rome, infect the clergy with their vices; and the clergy, by their evil example of avarice and profligacy, poison and lead to perdition the whole Christian people. It was not, therefore, from a blind Ghibelline party spirit that Dante too applied to the popes the Apocalyptic prophecy. He had read Bonaventura, and puts directly into his mouth in paradise the denunciation on the covetous policy of the Court of Rome.* And to the same effect Petrarch is quoted, calling Rome "the impious Babylon, nest of treasons, in which all the poison of the world is cherished, in bondage to surfeit and drunkenness, an execrable harlot full of luxury and riot, an asylum of all heresies, a prison in which every good thing is extinguished, and every evil and abominable thing is nourished, a rebel against Christ and his apostles, in order to make divinities of Venus and

*See "Pope and Council," pp. 227, 228.

Bacchus.”* In unison with these invectives of the poets of the Renaissance in the 14th century, hear also the wailings of the Italian monk :

Quisquis opes sacras nummo reperire profano
 Quærit, eat Roman, sacra sunt venalia Romæ,
 Templâ, sacerdotes, altaria, sacra, coronæ,
 Ignes, thura, preces, cælum est venale Deusque.

Compare Revelation xviii. 11–13. No wonder, when every thing was put up for sale in Rome, that men who had any fear of God or sense of decency should identify the Church in that city with the city described in this chapter of the Revelation.

We have dwelt upon this feature of the horrible wickedness of the Court of Rome, because the love of money, when it takes full possession of a man, or of a body of men, banishes every thing which is holy, just, and good. It is a demon whose name is legion. “They that will be rich,” says Paul, “fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Hence there was no evil passion which did not run riot in Rome. Conspicuous among these was the lust of uncleanness, a lust associated in the Bible constantly with avarice, and in the Greek tongue expressed even by the same word “Sacerdotes, episcopi *avari*, *veneri ventrique* dediti ignominiâ notati tribuque moti sunt,” says a Council of Cologne.† The Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, A. D. 836, says of the nunneries, that “in some places they seemed to be rather brothels than monasteries.”‡ The nunneries generally became brothels, we imagine, when they became rich; and they generally became rich, though organised under the vow of poverty as

*See Tur., vol. 4, p. 14.

†Cited by Brucker, Hist. Phil., 3, 602.

‡Harduin, Concilia, tom. 4, p. 1397, No. 7, 8, cited in Murdock's *Trans.* of Mosheim's Ch. Hist., Cant. IX.

well as under the vows of chastity.* The history of the papacy, from 881–956, is called by modern historians the period of the “Papal Pornocracy,” because the popes, during this period, were generally governed by their mistresses or harlots, and are called by some of their own people “apostatic” instead of “apostolic.”†

The apostle mentions “erring from the faith” as another evil flowing from the love of money. The numberless illustrations of this connexion between the greed for money and heresy, which the history of mediæval Rome affords, may all be passed over except one, and that one is *instar omnium*, since it was the occasion of the outbreak of the Reformation. We allude, of course, to the sale of indulgences. Licenses to sin had been formally issued for ages, certainly since the time of the infamous Pope John XXII., who among all the Johns who sat in the Roman See, was, perhaps, the worst, with the exception of John XXIII. condemned and deposed by the Council of Constance, for simony, extortion, poisoning, adultery, incest, etc. This sale of indulgences was a monstrous and all-comprehending iniquity. 1. It involved, on the part of the Pope, a blasphemous usurpation of the prerogatives of God both as Lawgiver and Saviour.

*For specimens of the Anacreontic songs of the holy monks, see Wright’s Early Mysteries, and other Latin Poems, cited by Milman in his Lat. Christianity. B. 14, c. 4.

†Baronius (Anno 900) acknowledges that the Holy Apostolic See suffered things “indigna, turpia, deformia, execranda, abominanda;” but ascribes them to the fact that the emperors elected the popes! The truth is, however, that the emperors in this very century, reformed the Popedom. See Prof. Bryce’s “Holy Roman Empire.” The history of the popes may well gravel the defenders of Papal Infallibility. One of the champions of Rome is said to have answered the objection to this dogma drawn from the notorious ignorance of theology which distinguished the clergy of the city of Rome, by alleging the case of God’s speaking through Balaam’s ass. But here is a case of abandoned wickedness, not of brutish ignorance, a far worse case. We suppose the answer may be found in the fact of God’s speaking through Balaam himself, in spite of his love of the wages of iniquity. What other view could Bossuet have had when he wrote the introduction to his *Histoire des Variations*? Surely, he must have forgotten that the first pope, St. Peter himself, said, that “*holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” 2 Pet. i. 21.

2. It abrogated the whole gospel of grace by making its privileges a matter of money. The affair with Tetzal in Germany, and with Samson in Switzerland, is sometimes represented as one of those small occasions upon which great revolutions begin (like Hampden's ship-money); but we cannot imagine a more appalling form in which the hatred of the Devil for both God and man could present itself in opposition to the gospel, than this pretended claim to remit all punishment of sin for money. It was nothing less than a dethroning of Him whom God had exalted a Prince and a Saviour, and an enthroning of him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. It was making a mock of sin, and a pouring of contempt upon the blood and agony of the Incarnate Son of God. The world could endure no more. Tetzal and Samson were the last drops of bitterness which made the cup run over. Men had for ages been gnawing their tongues for pain under the scorpion stings of papal and priestly tyranny; and they welcomed the testimony of Luther and Zwingle as the voice of messengers from the skies.*

II. Another cause is to be found in the testimony of those bodies of Christians in the Middle Age known as "Witnesses for the Truth." The testimony of the more enlightened men in the

*It is instructive to compare the effect of Luther's preaching in Wittenberg, with the effect of Savonarola's in Florence about twenty years before. They both preached against indulgences. The one was honored and applauded, the other burnt. They were so near together in time, that we can account for the difference in effect only by the difference in place and people. Luther preached to Germans living at a great distance from Rome. Savonarola to Italians. "Never," says Villars, "were there so many atheists as in the country and neighborhood of the sovereign pontiffs." "The nearer people are to Rome," says Machiavel, (quoted by Villars.) "the less religion they have. The scandalous example, and the crimes of the Court of Rome, have been the cause that Italy has lost entirely all the principles of piety and every sentiment of religion. We Italians, then, owe this obligation to the Church and to priests that we have become reprobates and villains." Discourse on the First Decade of Livy, B. 1, c. 12. Truly, "reprobates and villains" are terms not too harsh to be applied to men who could take part with such a man as Pope Alexander VI., against such a man as Savonarola!

Church of Rome, to which reference has already been made, had very little effect, because they not only continued in the communion of the Church, but upheld the supremacy and practical infallibility of the popes. As the papacy was the chief source and bulwark of corruption, there could be no chance for a reformation, while the reformers continued to revere and maintain their prerogatives. The Empire of Rome papal was mightier than the Empire of Rome pagan. The dominion of the latter was the dominion of the sword; the dominion of the former was the dominion of opinion. From the time that Charlemagne condescended to receive the name and crown of the Emperor of the West, until the time of Hildebrand, all Europe believed that the world had been subjected by God himself to the rule of pope and emperor as His vicars—the one in the spiritual, the other in the temporal sphere. From the time of Hildebrand to the reign of Boniface VIII. all Europe believed, with here and there a dissentient, that the two powers were not coördinate, but that the emperor was subordinate to the pope. Even the monarchs that resisted the execution of his decrees within their territories, with few exceptions acknowledged his supremacy. “They kissed the Pope’s feet”—to use Voltaire’s words—“while they tied up his hands.” One of the most impressive proofs of the power of this opinion is the extreme reluctance of Luther to break with the Pope. The Holy See laughed at all the testimonies while it continued to be adored by the witnesses. It was only the witnesses who denounced the papacy as anti-Christ that were dra-gooned and burnt.

But there were such witnesses. The Cathari, the Paulicians,* the Waldenses, the Henricians, the Albigenses, and other bodies, contended with more or less purity and zeal, that God was greater than the Pope. The policy adopted towards these witnesses was that of the liar-murderer; first to slander, then to kill them. We know little about any of them, except the Waldenses, which is not derived from the indictments of their enemies. But as malice is blind, these indictments are not so skilfully drawn as to

*On this body, see Faber’s “Waldenses and Albigenses,” and Elliott’s *Horæ Apocalypticeæ*.

hinder us from seeing that they had at least more truth than their enemies. The slanders are not only incredible, but monstrous.

The points in which their testimony was defective or erroneous, were chiefly those which concerned ordinances of worship which God had ordained and the papacy had grossly perverted and abused. As, for example, the papacy had made the whole of religion to consist in external rites, had substituted the tithing of mint, anise and cummin, for judgment, mercy and faith, had converted the Church, which Christ had designed to be his witness-bearer, and an institute for calling and training His elect into a vast sacramental machine for turning out Christians; they went sometimes to the other extreme of rejecting the sacraments altogether. As the baptism of infants was held to be their regeneration, some of them rejected infant baptism altogether. Countless thousands sealed their testimony with their lives, but their testimony was not lost. Whole bodies were exterminated, but others sprang up in their room. One of these bodies lived on in spite of fire and sword, and lives still; the inhabitants of those valleys in which the noble Claude of Turin, in the ninth century, had borne his faithful testimony against the idolatry of Rome. How does the providence of God encourage us to testify for the truth by this history of the Waldenses, and by the fact that these witnesses whom the relentless persecution of ages has not been able to destroy, are now, while we write, preaching the glad tidings under the very walls of the Vatican, from which issued so many cruel thunderbolts against them! Truly, as the apostle says, "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." These witnesses did not reform the Church only because "the fulness of times" had not come. But when Luther appeared, they were ready with a hearty welcome to him as a new witness, (and in an unexpected quarter,) for truths for which they and their fathers had suffered the loss of all things.

III. The next cause we shall notice is that great movement of the human mind, which has been called the "Renaissance," or the "Revival of Letters." It is to be observed, in estimating the true force of this movement, that there is no necessary con-

nexion between the illumination of the mind which is merely natural and secular, and the reformation of the heart and life. The Romanists in nominal Christendom still greatly outnumber the Protestants, though the human mind, under the impetus it has received from the Protestant movement, has been intensely active, and has achieved marvellous victories in every department of science. Revealed religion is not subject to the law of progress in the same sense that other departments of knowledge are subject to it, and for this reason that it is revealed. "It matters not at all," says Macaulay, "that the compass, printing, gunpowder, steam, gas, vaccination, and a thousand other discoveries and inventions, which were unknown to the fifth century, are familiar to the nineteenth. None of these discoveries and inventions have the smallest bearing on the question, whether a man is justified by faith alone; or whether the invocation of saints is an orthodox practice. We have no security for the future against the prevalence of any theological error that has ever prevailed in time past among Christian men. We are confident that the world will never go back to the solar system of Ptolemy; nor is our confidence in the least shaken by the circumstance, that even so great a man as Bacon rejected the theory of Galileo with scorn; for Bacon had not all the means of arriving at a sound conclusion which are within our reach, and which secure people who would not have been worthy to mend his pens from falling into his mistakes. But we are very differently affected, when we reflect that Sir Thomas More was ready to die for the doctrine of transubstantiation. He was a man of eminent talents. He had all the information on the subject that we have, or that, while the world lasts, any human being will have. The absurdity of the literal interpretation was as great, and as obvious in the sixteenth century as it is now. No progress that science has made, or will make, can add to what seems to us the overwhelming force of the argument against the real presence. We are, therefore, unable to understand why, what Sir Thomas More believed respecting transubstantiation, may not be believed to the end of time by men of equal abilities and honesty. But, Sir Thomas More is one of the choice spe-

cimens of human wisdom and virtue; and the doctrine of transubstantiation is a kind of proof charge. A faith which stands that test will stand any test."* At this very day, in sober Christian communities, and under the shadow of the halls of science, a band of strolling thieving gypsies will carry off no small amount of revenue derived from telling people's fortunes. People who can have their fortunes told are not proof against any superstition however absurd or pernicious. "A very common knowledge of history, a very little observation of life," says the brilliant essayist before cited, "will suffice to prove that no learning, no sagacity, affords a security against the greatest errors on subjects relating to the invisible world. Johnson, incredulous on all other points, was a ready believer in miracles and apparitions. He would not believe in Ossian; but he believed in second sight. He would not believe in the earthquake of Lisbon; but he believed in the Cock Lane ghost."

Another consideration of great importance not noticed by Macaulay is, that the heart has full as much to do with faith in God's truth as the head. The natural posture of man in regard to this kind of truth is one of hostility. The truth comes as a *conqueror*, and is therefore received as an *enemy*. Even Hobbes confessed that if it had been contrary to men's interest and lust of dominion, that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles; they would either have denied that truth, or burnt the books of mathematics.

When, therefore, we mention the Renaissance as one of the causes of the Reformation; we do not mean to assert any necessary connexion between the two, but only that, in the ordering of Divine Providence, the former was not merely a forerunner, but a powerful promoter of the latter. The Revival of Learning was in its own nature purely worldly and secular. The days and nights of the great majority of the scholars were given to the study of the pagan writers of Greece and Rome. Erasmus was, no doubt, to the end of his life, more of a pagan than a Protestant, in spite of his labors on the records of the Christian faith.

*Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes.

Ulrich von Hutten, in the merciless sarcasms of the "Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum," had little zeal for the Gospel, and Luther declined his aid. "Non tali auxilio." Indeed the very name by which they were known indicates this view of the spirit of the revivalists. They were "humanists;" men cultivating a merely human literature, and cultivating it in the interests of humanity as contradistinguished from the interests of the Church, which had for ages controlled all thinking and enslaved it. The movement was a rebellion of the human mind against a tyranny which refused to acknowledge that God had presided over the mind of Greek and Roman pagan, as well as over the mind of Greek and Roman Christian. The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures were studied in the same spirit, for they too were practically proscribed, and in many places proscribed by statute.*

Still the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures *were* studied. Whatever the *animus* of Erasmus, his Greek Testament was a powerful instrument in promoting the Reformation. As in the days

*"Even the faculty of theology at Paris declared at this time, that religion was undone if the study of Greek and Hebrew were permitted. A monk in Hochstraten's army of ignoramuses said, 'They have invented a new language which they call Greek; you must be on your guard against it: it is the mother of all heresy.' I observe in the hands of many persons a book written in that language, and which they call the *New Testament*. It is a book full of daggers and poison. As to the Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that all those who learn it become instantaneously Jews.'

"This is a sample," says the Prize Essayist of the French Academy, "of the papal spirit of that age."

For such a spirit as this the Renaissance had infinite contempt, as well as for the spirit of mediæval mysticism. Aristotle himself, though a Greek, was hurled from his throne, because his name was associated with the dismal quarrels of Scotists and Thomists. People were content to gratify their tastes and their senses, caring little for worship, and still less for doctrine. They did not revolt against the Church, but they had no enthusiasm for her; and they had enthusiasm for whatever was fresh and graceful and intelligible. See Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 312. The literary clique of Weimar, with Gæthe at the head, a circle of polished scholars with no religion above the "elegant mythology" of Greece, will give us a good idea of the religious character of the leaders of the Renaissance. Gæthe professed his readiness to worship a model of Myron's statue of a cow and her sucking calf!

of good King Josiah; so now the discovery of the "book of the law" made a stir among the dry bones.

IV. The last cause we shall mention, is the political condition of Europe at the beginning of the 16th century. It would require more space than can be accorded to this article, to go into any thing like a full discussion of the causes which produced the political condition in which the Reformation found the nations of Europe. We beg leave to refer the reader who may wish to investigate this subject to the very interesting work of Professor Bryce of Oxford, on the Holy Roman Empire. All we can now attempt is a very rapid sketch.

The prime necessity of western Europe, after the fall of the western division of the old Roman Empire, was *unity*. Society had been thrown back into chaos by the invasions of the northern tribes, and the only law which was recognised was the law of the strongest. Wave after wave of violence and blood swept over the land from the north, and a fiercer deluge threatened to overwhelm it from the south, in a Saracen invasion. In the 8th century arose the first of the great Carlovingian line of princes, Charles Martel. In the battle of Poitiers he gave an effectual check to the Moslem power. But it was reserved for the genius of his grandson Charles the Great (Charlemagne) to conceive the idea of restoring the western empire, and so of restoring civil order. His comprehensive mind perceived that the scheme could not in any way be so speedily accomplished, if accomplished it could be at all, as by enlisting the aid of the Church in the west, and especially the aid of its leading bishop at Rome, the centre of the old empire. The Church was the only organisation that could pretend to any thing like extensive power combined with unity. It was the only body that could confront the violence of the times with the power of opinion. And Charlemagne had the sagacity to understand that the Empire of Rome could be restored, even in shadow, only by the force of opinion. When that colossal structure tumbled into ruin, it had done what no great Empire had ever done before, it had unified the races subjected to its sway. It had made what was, in the republic and in the earlier empire, a proud distinc-

tion, the common possession of all the natives of the Roman world. The working of the equalised and equalising Roman law contributed to bring about the same result, the assimilation of the races, and the merging of Greek, Jew, Scythian in Roman. The Greek and the Jew made the only successful resistance to this mighty process of fusion. Now, this tendency was precisely that which the Gospel itself fostered. It was a Catholic dispensation of the true religion; and the Church which it produced, unlike the Jewish Church of one nation, was the Church of all nations. It was not wonderful, therefore, that, on the one side, the Roman should be considered Catholic; and that, on the other side, the Catholic should be considered Roman. In short, Roman and Catholic meant the same thing, in different aspects. Considered as Roman, a man was the subject of the emperor; considered as a Catholic, he was the subject of the Roman bishop.

But these two dominions were only different sides of the same dominion. Ever since the time of Constantine the idea of a theocracy had been growing in the Church. Its first form was pagan, the form of the old Roman Republic, derived originally from the Tuscan lawyer-priests, the old Italian *Ulema*. This was the only form in which Constantine himself knew it. But after the establishment of the Christian religion, it took on a Jewish form, and the relation sustained by the emperor to the Church was like that of David and his successors to the priesthood in the Jewish theocracy. The kingly and priestly offices which were united in the invisible head of the theocracy reigning in heaven were separated in his representatives on earth. The kingly was given to the emperor; the priestly to the bishop of Rome. The Greek differed from this view only in challenging the priestly office for the bishop of new Rome, Constantinople.

This was the *theory* in the west after Charlemagne's time, and, as Prof. Bryce has shown, theory was more potent in the Middle Age perhaps than in any other period of the world's history. Hence the emperor was considered as a sort of head of the Church *in temporalibus*, as the Roman bishop was head of it in *spiritualibus*. The Church convicted of heresy, and the emperor

made the crusade with fire and sword. If this theory had been fully carried out, and the two heads of the Church, or ecclesiastical kingdom, had continued to coöperate as they did in the days of the great Charles himself, the bondage of Europe would have been, as far as we can see, perpetual and hopeless. But, happily for Europe and the world, Hildebrand arose, a pope of unbounded ambition as well as of surpassing ability, who could not endure *two* heads of the Church; and from his time down to the Reformation the theory which has been above expounded, while it continued to captivate the imaginations of solitary dreamers in their cells, was seldom respected in practice, respected by popes of the emperor's creation, and not always by these.

The empire fell with the fall of the Hohenstaufen. Founded or revived by Charlemagne as a universal monarchy in A. D. 800; again erected in A. D. 962, on the narrower but firmer basis of the German kingdom, by Otto the Great, its pretensions were maintained for several centuries by a line of monarchs of unrivalled vigor and abilities, against the rebels in Italy and the ecclesiastical power. But each successive emperor entered the strife with resources scantier than his predecessors, each had been more decisively vanquished by the pope, the cities and the princes. That it did not expire utterly with the fall of the Hohenstaufen, but lived on for six hundred years more, till it became a piece of antiquarianism hardly more venerable than ridiculous—till, as Voltaire said, all that could be said about it was that it was neither “holy,” nor “Roman,” nor “empire”—was owing partly to the belief, still unshaken, that it was a necessary part of the world's order, yet chiefly to the connexion, which was by this time indissoluble, with the German kingdom. But even as German king the power of the emperor was broken. He had been compelled, by his struggles in Italy, to relax the vigor of his resistance against the turbulent ambition of the nobles in Germany, to grant them privileges which they abused. So that at the era of the Reformation we find one of his electors able to bring so great an emperor as Charles V. to terms on the field of battle. His hereditary jealousy of the popes, combined with the independence of his own princes, humanly speaking, prevented

the Reformation from being extinguished in its very beginning. Nay, it does not seem paradoxical to assert that the hostility of Charles to the new movement, under all the complications of his position, was more favorable to that movement than a merely nominal patronage of it might have been.

The view we have presented will derive additional confirmation from a comparison of Germany with France at this period. Under Charlemagne these two countries were under the same government, or rather (as unwilling as the French are to acknowledge it) France was a part of the German Empire, and the great Charles was a German. The Franks were Germans, and conquered the Gauls, who had been conquered before by the great Caius Julius. Towards the close of the ninth century the Carolingian Empire was extinguished, and France began to assume the position of an independent State, under the genius of the House of Burgundy. By the year 1272, when the first of the House of Hapsburg was placed upon the throne of the empire, France was stronger than Germany. "Rudolf," says Bryce, "was as conspicuously a weaker sovereign than Philip III. of France, as the Franconian Emperor Henry III. had been stronger than the Capetian Philip I. In every other state of Europe the tendency of events had been to centralise the administration and increase the power of the monarch, even in England, not to diminish it; in Germany alone had political union become weaker, and the independence of the princes more confirmed."

The internal political weakness of Germany was the strength of the Reformation. The internal strength of France was the weakness of the Reformation in that country. In Germany it grew and became firmly established after many a storm of fire and blood; and now we behold a new German Empire strong enough to humble France in the very dust, erecting itself in the midst of Europe as a Protestant power; while France, which put out the light of the Gospel with blood, is becoming Ultramontane and surrendering those "liberties" which her kings and bishops defended for centuries against the ambition of popes and cardinals!

And here for the present we make an end.