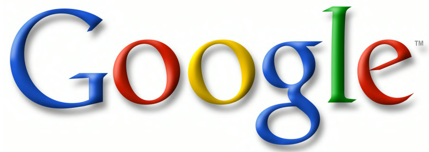

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The LUTHERAN MOVEMENT of the SIXTEENTH CENTURY

An Interpretation

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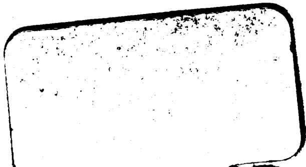

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The Lutheran Movement of the Sixteenth Century

AN INTERPRETATION

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DEDICATION

TO THE REVERED MEMORY OF
THREE GREAT TEACHERS
IN
THE MOST EXALTED SPHERES OF TRUTH
SAMUEL SPRECHER
SAMUEL BRECKENRIDGE
SAMUEL ORT
MEN HONORED AND BELOVED
FOR THEIR NOBLE GIFTS, FOR THEIR MANY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FOR THEIR LARGE USEFULNESS
AND, MOST OF ALL, FOR THE BEAUTY AND
STRENGTH OF THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY ONE OF THEIR OWN STUDENTS.
HAVING DIED IN PEACE AND IN CHRIST
THEY REST FROM THEIR LABORS AND
THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM

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PREFACE

The purpose of the writer in this book is not to present a connected and detailed narrative of the events of the great movement of the sixteenth century known as the Reformation, but rather to offer something of an interpretation. What he has sought to do is more in the nature of a valuation than an account. He is conscious of the manifold imperfections and shortcomings of his work on a great subject, which has occupied, with profit and pleasure, much of his attention in the more recent years of his life. The sixteenth century not only saw great changes, which transformed medieval into modern civilization, but also witnessed the birth of a new type of Christianity, which is known as Protestantism. Those changes, with their far-reaching results, came as the consequence of the reinstatement of vital principles in religion, and for this reason its moral, theological and ecclesiastical aspects have always claimed the special attention of the student of history. But that epoch-making movement produced, indirectly, political, national and international results of the greatest importance.

In any study of the great conflicts of history it is important not only to know when and where they were fought, and the leading participants, but also why they were fought and to what issues they led. The scenic and dramatic, the personal and individual, however fully and precisely and brilliantly brought out, are far from exhausting what an historian has to think about and set in order for the times to come. He must know something of those political and religious principles which give purpose to his narration of events, and which serve to interpret men, their motives, fidelity and courage. Church history, like the history of the great kingdoms and nations of the earth, requires a key, and that key is theology in the case of the Church, as in the other case it is political science. Ecclesiastical history is a history of principles and doctrines, as well as a narration of events. The great and permanently influential movements in that sphere had for the foundations upon which they were builded certain fundamental principles of enduring value.

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No biography of Luther, the chief of the reformers, however excellent it may be, is an adequate history of the movement associated principally with his name, nor any more a mere recital of the successive events following upon the act of the nailing up of the theses in 1517. The Reformation as a whole cannot be judged by the career of the great Reformer alone, remarkable as that career was in its personal aspects. Nor, again, is that great movement to be judged finally by the merely temporary structures of doctrine and polity which took on shape and statement largely because of the exigencies in which both the Church and the State found themselves after the Reformation became a reality.

In harmony with these views of the genius of history, the author of this book has attempted to confine himself largely to an interpretation of the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century under a fourfold aspect of the subject. Historical data and biographical events, accordingly, when used have been made to serve the purpose of illustrating and interpreting great principles. "No event ever happens in this world of ours," it has been said by one of the world's great preachers, "until the fulness of its time has come." This belief must go along with any true faith in the governing and guiding providence of God. It is in the light of this belief that the writer of these pages has sought to interpret the significance of one of the greatest movements in the history of mankind, without any attempt at giving an exhaustive account. No effort has been made to conceal personal bias. That the mere annalist may be able to do; but the historian cannot, unless he accepts a theory of determinism that is fatalistic and unethical. Bias and partisanship are not equivalent terms. The historian is a witness who must tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; but he is also something of a judge, who must do full and strict justice to every person and event which comes before his tribunal. Divesting himself of all partisan interest and prejudice, truth and fidelity are his chief duties. But this does not imply that he must lay aside his own mental energy, the results of his study, and even his religion itself. He is not to be supposed, after an induction into all available historical data, to love nothing and hate nothing. "A Church history," says Hase, "in which the author exhibited no distinct ecclesiastical character, and did not imprint this with clearness on his work, would be of little

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value to the Church." A man cannot be expected to ignore his own beliefs, his training or his prepossessions. "To pose," says Professor Bright, "as external to a subject on which we have interior convictions, to attempt, for instance, to sweep the belief in a divine Christ out of our minds, before we begin to read about the Nicene Council, would be like trying to take ourselves out of ourselves, to pretend to be not what we are. If our object is truth, we must not begin by being untrue, and affectation of unreality is untruth." The man who is so impartial that he has no preference for great leaders whom he regards as both good and right, or for religious principles that he regards as sound and Scriptural, and no reprobation for their antitheses, may be qualified to make himself agreeable to all classes, but not to be an accredited historian of the Church, or a qualified interpreter of its great men and events. The writer has made no effort to conceal his convictions, remembering always that these belong to the things that may be disputed or invalidated if untrue.

It is needless to add that this book is not intended primarily for professional students of either history or theology. It is rather for all people who want to know what the aims, the principles and the methods of the Reformation of the sixteenth century were—that movement which achieved their great spiritual emancipation and secured to them their inalienable heritage of religious and political truth.

It remains only for the author to express his best thanks to a good friend and former pastor of his family, the Rev. Charles F. Steck, D. D., Pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Epiphany, Washington, D. C. At the instance of the Lutheran Publication Society, he has reduced the manuscript of the volume to typewritten form, in order to facilitate the work of the printer. This work, which he declares has been a real labor of love, Dr. Steck has done with unusual care and accuracy, and the author desires in this place and way to express his heartfelt appreciation.

In the hope that among Christian believers this book may serve to quicken interest in the origin, principles and development of the movement which inaugurated the modern age, these pages have been written.

David H. Bauslin.

Springfield, Ohio.

Monday after the first Sunday in Lent, 1918.

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The Lutheran Movement of the Sixteenth Century

SECTION I

THE NEEDED REFORMATION

The Church has never, even at its worst, rested content in the face of moral or administrative evils. The quickening into newness of life has always been marked by the bringing out from its treasures of things new and old. Sometimes that quickening has put new life into old forms and decaying institutions. Sometimes it has developed new institutions, and found expression in new forms of Christian devotion. All these features we can discern in the years just preceding the coming in of the sixteenth century.

Even before that, "reformation in head and members," which had been urged by great Councils of the Church, but which never came through that agency; mysticism, a deeper relation between religion and learning, new discipline and life, and new forms of devotion to the Lord and Head of the Church, all bore witness to the effective reformatory forces that were lodged in the Church, and to her capacity to meet the new demands made upon her in the period of the most urgent need of the times. For long periods, it is true, there were no very serious, and certainly no successful, plans for cleansing what was very properly called the "Augean Stable of the Papacy"; but the forces capable of doing that much-needed work had been resident in the Church from the beginning.

I

By the Reformation we mean that great religious movement which had its origin in the grace of God, and which had been principally effected through the splendid mental and spiritual influence of His chosen instrument—that marvelous leader and

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reformer, Martin Luther. That movement restored to the Christian Church the true and pure doctrines of the Scriptures for the faith and practice of all believers.

We may speak loosely of this great Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century, as though it were a definite event. We ought, rather, to regard the overthrow of the papal supremacy and the restoration to the Church of the gospel, as set forth in the Pauline epistles, as the result of a number of causes, which had slowly, and through a long period of time, been gathering strength. "To divide history according to centuries is a difficult task. Great events do not cease with one and begin with the next; they dovetail into each other, and are lost gradually from sight when absorbed in the one paramount spirit of the age. We can see the leading characteristics of successive centuries without knowing their source or their results."

We are reminded of this reflection of Goethe when we are looking for a point or event from which we can definitely trace the history of the reformatory movement. When it was really precipitated was October, 1517; but at that point of beginning we stand, as it were, on one of the most significant of historical frontiers, with our glance backward over the centuries preceding the sixteenth, and forward from the theses, and yet discover no exact and easily determined boundary between the medieval period and the new and modern age.

Any great movement in history which has perpetuated itself in far-reaching consequences, permanent and widespread in their influence, has not been without antecedents. It can not be entirely traceable to the persons or the circumstances of the particular age which produced it. There must have beeen predisposing causes which were deeply rooted in the past. Any great movement which has permanently affected the life of the Church or the progress of civilization is never solitary. It is not to be studied or interpreted in itself alone, or dissociated from pre-existing causes or circumstances.

There were such antecedents in the case of this vitalizing movement. While it was distinctly a sixteenth century product, it is to be interpreted as the culmination of forces long at work, and the reassertion of isolated truths long neglected by the Church. For a right and adequate interpretation of that movement, it must be studied not only in the worked-out results of

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subsequent events, but also in the light of precedent conditions and causes. Not until this movement came was there a reassertion of vital truths and their proper co-ordination into a system that rendered a disruption of Western Christendom and a revision of Church doctrine inevitable. Whether we look at that movement with eyes that are prejudiced, or whether we occupy a sympathetic or hostile attitude—however much we may censure some of the purely incidental features of the movement, and with whatever condemnation we may see fit to disapprove any particular agent brought to the front in that great revolution, the movement itself, it cannot be successfully contradicted, was an historical fact of great magnitude, a religious and social agitation of fundamental importance.

Loud and urgent demands for the reformation of the Church had, in one form or another, been made from time to time. But these demands had, each in turn, been proven ineffectual in the succession in which they followed one upon another prior to that day when the brave monk of Wittenberg nailed his theses upon the church door—an event from which a new world of faith, ecclesiastical reorganization and Christian civilization has followed. The hierarchy had been practically unmoved, and by one after another of its chief representatives the cry for reform had been disregarded. But these, for the time, ineffectual protests and signs of revolt went on until at last the real reformation, proceeding upon the basis of great and fundamental Christian certainties, came forth in both the forms of revolution and reconstruction. That individualism which, in one way or another, had been unheeded in both the earlier and later forms of monasticism, now declared itself in the revolt and reaffirmations of Luther. He and his coadjutors asserted their independence, not by withdrawal from the world into the seclusion of the hermit and the monk, but by resisting the encroachments of the world on the Church, and by the restoration to the Church and the world of neglected truths which had originally been set forth by our Lord and in the epistles of the New Testament.

It was, indeed, an age of transition in which all this occurred, and a period in which no one could exactly forecast what was coming. The old order had crumbled away, or was tottering to its inevitable fall, and the age of change was at hand. Feudalism, which had held in strong grasp the whole of society, was gone,

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it having been rendered inoperative largely by the invention of gunpowder. The mariner's compass was pointing the way to new worlds awaiting discovery and presenting vast opportunities for adventure and enterprise. These, in turn, were certain to react upon the older civilizations of the medieval world, and upon the worked-out results of its mental activity. The invention of printing, too, which, hand in hand, had come along with the recovery of valuable manuscripts of well accredited ancient writings, was opening up the thought of the generations of literary culture and expression that were long past. The old ideas and conceptions on which the organization of Christian society had rested throughout the Middle Ages were no longer proving to be secure and practicable. The papacy had, in spite of its theories, its power, its antiquity and its elaborately articulated organization, lost caste by becoming of the earth earthy, and its old rallying cries were at last falling upon deaf ears.

A division in Western Christendom was inevitable—a division so considerable and far-reaching in its importance that all the schisms in the Church during the middle ages were, by comparison, insignificant. The process at work for a thousand years in the construction of the system of "Catholicism," as the papal system presumed to call itself, was at last to be antagonized in all its crucial points and replaced by a new edifice to be founded and erected upon a new apprehension of the Gospel. The traditional basis of the old ecclesiastical system that had been building for a thousand years was to be impugned in widely separated circles, entirely replaced in some others, and a new order of things in the spheres of authority, doctrine, organization and life was to take its place.

A movement, not to be classified with pre-Lutheran reformatory efforts, was to introduce an entirely new phase in the development of Christianity. The reactionary forces of the primitive, spiritual idea of the kingdom of God, which were rooted in the Gospel, began more and more to assert themselves. Even inside the stately and imposing edifice of the medieval ecclesiastical system some of these forces were struggling for freedom, and were more and more showing their capacity to break down the wall that confined them. Christianity as gospel was ready to assert itself against Christianity as law.

The Catholic Church and the medieval papacy were the greatest

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of the creations of the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era. The evolution of the papacy is the central fact of the first thirteen centuries after Christ. The time had now come when this great organization, which aimed to control the whole life of its subjects here, and to determine their eternal destiny hereafter, was forced to reckon with the incoming new forces that were to inaugurate the modern era. The great and transforming movement associated with the name of Luther, as with that of no other man or force, created the unmistakable line of division between the old and the new. An enlarging horizon, quickened intellectual life, new facilities for the acquisition and communication of knowledge, the growing consciousness of strength and personal rights, the bold declarations and lofty standards of great masters of both political and religious science, all proclaimed that the fulness of time had come for the Reformation.

The Church, it may be recalled, had entered the Gentile world at the beginning of its history as a forbidden cult, had been subjected to fierce persecution, and had been largely identified with the less influential social classes. In contradiction of the spirit of the gospel and the announced principles of the kingdom of our Lord, and by the mere momentum of the social and political conditions dominant at Rome, the primitive Church had been rapidly transformed into a great worldly system, with a mighty organization, made after the pattern of that maintaining in the empire, with an elaborate and spectacular ritualism, rigid dogma and marvelous accumulation of wealth. All these factors in the life of the Church had grown up side by side.

In the Church there had come about a striking resurrection of that paganism which it had believed itself commissioned to overthrow. The parallelism between the constitution of the Church and the old imperialism was striking. In its dogmas, its worship, the place it assigned the Virgin, the saints, angels and archangels, we may discover an indisputable series whose steps correspond to the heroes, demigods, gods and goddesses of the older pagan days.

The old empire had not been Christianized, if it had been even baptized. Christianity had moved into the heathen temples, not so much to transform them as to give them its name. Speaking of this period as it influenced the Church, in his book, "The Sociological Study of the Bible," Prof. Wallis says: "The Roman Church appealed to the barbarians as the heir of a great empire

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which had long held sway over the world. The new peoples of the West were not converted in the sense in which we now understand that word; and it is more exact to say that they were converted to the Church rather than to Christianity. The conquest of barbarian paganism by the religion of the Bible was at first the displacement of old state religions by a new state religion. The God of the Bible represented by the figure of Jesus (which had now acquired the religious value of God) was accepted by the new peoples of Europe almost on the basis of the paganism which they abandoned."

Speaking of the introduction of these pagan features into the life of the Church, Prof. Adeney, in his historical work on "The Greek and Eastern Churches," says that "Old heathen rites continued to be performed under the guise of Christian ceremonial, and saints' images, like idols, were carried around as a protection against fire, illness and death. It was a change of name, but not of substance. Siegfried's dragon became the dragon of St. George, while the virtues of the old goddesses were transferred to the Virgin Mary." "There was a growing approximation of pagan ritual in the ceremonials of the Church and the feelings of awe with which they were approached."

The emancipation of the Church from this paganizing alliance and thraldom was, accordingly, no inconsiderable task. The Church, as an organized body, had gone off into a wrong path, and to bring it back to the right ways of the Lord was the most urgent need of the times for the sake of both true religion and civilization.

The Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century, in view of all this, is not only the most important event of that deeply significant time, but one of the most important events in the history of the world. In its far-reaching importance this most vitalizing movement of modern times, which marks at once the close of the medieval age and the inauguration of the modern age, ranks with such historical events as the invasion of the Barbarians, the Crusades and the French revolution. It was not the work of one generation or of one school of thought, nor was it influential in but one phase of life. It was the outcome of ages in which various forces had been at work, the inevitable evolution of principles rooted in the history of the early Church, wide-stretching in its purposes and in its results, and soon became a potential in-

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fluence in most human things. It marked not only a decisive turning point in the spiritual and moral life of the Church, as then organized, but served, also, as a great landmark in the intellectual, political and social development of mankind. For some hundreds of years certain forces had been gathering strength, until at last they broke in the revolt of a considerable portion of northern and western Europe against the Medieval Church and subjection and allegiance to its unauthorized claims and assumptions. When the papacy broke up and the division came in western Christendom it buried the world of the Middle Ages in its ruins, but with the hopeful result that the new forces that were introduced became free and effective.

If the essence of Christianity, if the gospel of the grace of the Son of God, was once more to be allowed free scope, if it was to readjust its relations to the world, or to acquire or generate new life, the all-powerful conception of the Church then maintained must be shattered, or at any rate, deprived of its old-time strength. This was the primary requirement for an age of transition and reconstruction. Such a movement as that we propose to consider was necessarily complex. It was the work of friends and foes, of powers sometimes antagonistic and warring against each other, and sometimes, perhaps, unconsciously striving together for the same end. It was a movement which profoundly influenced European literature, affected social life, modified the political system of the civilized world, and altered the problems, the methods and the conditions of philosophical thought.

Thus the Lutheran movement, like all other impressive and influential movements in human history, sprang out of the concurrent operation of various forces of human thinking and activity. There were political, ecclesiastical, social, moral and religious influences combined in the antecedent conditions out of which it issued.

But after we have credited a due measure of importance to all these forces and influences, the real secret of that great and constructive event associated with the name and influence of Luther is to be found in the revival of the religious spirit. That had been forecast, and many preliminary forms of preparation had been enacted during an interval covering four hundred years. The long period of revolt in one form and another against the usurpations and abuses in the Church, the cultivation and ex-

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pression of genuine piety among the dissenting monks and mystics, together with the awakening of the public conscience, had produced a powerful revulsion against the government, worship and doctrines peculiar to the Church of that time. The spiritual aptitudes of the people had been awakened, and their wills had been stirred to action. The leaders who came to the front in the movement not only made the Reformation a fact, but were in turn also largely made by it.

This great movement, that was at once revolutionary and reconstructive, came contemporaneously with the full splendor of the medieval renaissance, in an age when intellectual curiosity was awakening, when philosophy, the sciences, and the ancient literary treasures were studied with an increasing interest and a real critical enthusiasm. The change that passed over Europe in the sixteenth century is traceable primarily, as we shall see more and more as we study its leaders, its principles and results, to the development of new conceptions, political, intellectual and religious. These asserted themselves in a period of bitter conflict between contending forces and antithetical principles, religious and ecclesiastical.

The philosophy of the period preceding the Reformation was but little more than mere school logic, derived at second or third hand from Aristotle. The science was a somewhat grotesque amalgam of empiricism and tradition. There was a superstitious and uncomprehending reverence for ancient Rome, at once the great imperial and ecclesiastical capital, but which had also become the center of spiritual apostasy. Here the papacy had become a great political institution. The spiritual significance of the Church, the body of Christ, had here been merged with worldly magnificence and imposing pageantry. The time had come when a man was needed whose feet should be shod with iron and brass, who could trample upon the impostures and heresies of the day; who should have the courage to defy popes and princes, bound together, frequently, in an unholy and unscriptural alliance. A man was needed; not a mere saint, who could by his holiness do no more than kindle spiritual aspirations among the masses of the people. For such a man the times were waiting and urgently calling.

The new century, too, in which this movement was inaugurated was pre-eminently aggressive in its constructive and destructive

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work. It showed but scant courtesy to that which was ancient if it had no other ground for its justification than antiquity. That "elegant pagan pope," as Leo X was called, dominated as he was by aesthetic rather than religious ideals, might attempt to restore the vanished glories of the age of Augustus, with such an elegant gentleman as himself to fill the place of Augustus. But the age was becoming too earnest to any longer spend its energies in worshiping painted virgins or sculptured Venuses, even though the one was the creation of the pencil of Raphael and the other of the chisel of Michelangelo. The real cry of the times was for those abiding spiritual realities that could alone satisfy soul and conscience.

The Church of this period had accumulated a multitude of relics and wonder-working images that had thrilled the hearts of the believing and quickened among the superstitious anticipations of miraculous deliverance from a long catalogue of ills. These had been made a source of unholy profit and unblushing imposture.

Indulgences, which had originally been invented to induce spiritual tranquillity for the troubled, to assuage the anguish of a despairing conscience, or to add to the joyous devotions of the pious, had been at last made a substitute for all real religion. The peoples, and their dependents at Rome, found this indulgence traffic a very profitable one, and, as was openly said, tried to make as much money as possible out of "the sins of the Germans."

Upon the papal see itself were discernible the strains of the most degrading vices, and the palatial abode of the pope, the medieval darkness was drawing to its close, while its most depressing aspects were innumerable signs of ecclesiatical disorganialleged vicar of the Lord from heaven, not infrequently exhibited the spectacle of a pagan court without the redeeming virtue of pagan sincerity in paganism's better days. The long night of zation, corruption and decay. Blind faith, countless bogus miracles and childish legends had all been so persistently pressed upon popular attention, and so exalted by the popular imagination, that in consequence there had been produced a condition of benighted ignorance and unreasoning credulity that is almost inconceivable in our time. Monasteries, once the scenes of the most marvelous and even revolting displays of ascetic self-abnegation and piety,

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became the seats of disgraceful revelry, scandalous sensuality and worldly avarice.

II

The darkness of the two centuries that followed the end of Charlemagne's reign was little short of the densest in history. It was at that time that the Holy See had sunk to the lowest depth of its degradation and impotence, when eight popes in as many years were elected and overthrown, and weak emperors struggled for the rent mantle of the great Charles, while over all a deluge of barbarism swept in recurring waves of Saracens, Huns and Normans. Dean Church has well pointed out that by the end of the tenth century Christian preaching had been almost hopelessly corrupted. The traditions of society at large were still the traditions of undiluted heathenism. In the conflict which ensued with the barbarians who had overrun the degraded Latin civilization, the Church had conquered, 'tis true, although at times it might seem as though the chief result had been to make barbarism more superstitious and cruelty more ingenious. From the times of Leo the Great and Gregory the Great on through the times of Gregory VII and Innocent III the internal government of the hierarchy had developed into an oppressive and arrogant absolutism. No priest, however good and wise and faithful, was to think and act for himself in the name of the one Lord Jesus Christ. For him, as well as for the laity, there was a great ecclesiastical lord over the conscience and the reason, while an enforced and arbitrary uniformity repressed individual initiative and freedom. Authority had degenerated into intolerance. The clergy for a long period had lived upon a level conspicuously below even that of the laity. There were many cases, reaching over a long period of time, of abnormal popular and pontifical depravity.

The vices of Pope John XII had been a common scandal. But it was only when he turned traitor to the Emperor that he was evicted from his pontifical office in favor of a more decent and reputable successor in the person of Leo VIII. Pope John the XXIII, notorious for numerous crimes and unholy profanity, acquired when he was a pirate on the high seas, was condemned for incestuous and adulterous practices. The Abbot-elect of St. Augustine at Canterbury was found, upon investigation, in the twelfth century to have been the father of seventeen illegi-

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timate children in a single village. Another Abbot in Spain, in 1130, was proved to have kept no less than seventy concubines, while another bishop was deposed in 1274 for having sixty-five illegitimate children.

Even as late as Luther's day, Albrecht, the Archbishop of Mainz, whom Erasmus had styled "the finest ornament of Germany in the present century," but whom Kaiser Karl said was neither a Catholic nor a Lutheran, but a pagan, bought his office for about $300,000 in our money. Of this fine example of ecclestiastical officialism, the Rector of the Catholic Institute at Paris said that he "employed the chief artists of his time and rewarded them in princely style. He collected the most celebrated musicians from all parts, gave splendid entertainments, and made a dazzling display of pomp. But the religious convictions of this archbishop had little depth; his moral conduct was not worthy of respect." He kept a harem for himself, the chief among his female accomplices in sin being a woman named Ursula Neidinger. This base fellow was even accused of robbing one of his mistresses, namel Elsa, of her jewels, and then of adding to his offense by casting her into prison. What he allowed himself he was generous enough to accord to others, and so his priests were permitted to keep concubines, the only condition being that they should help along the archbishop's revenues by purchasing a license from him.

A long line of Church Councils and a prominent group of ecclesiastical writers concur in depicting and deploring the scandalous conduct of popes and prelates. The writings of the Middle Ages are full of the accounts of nunneries that were brothels instead of nurseries of piety and centers of holy influence. Infanticides were numerous within these alleged sacred inclosures. Unnatural love is repeatedly spoken of as lingering within the walls of the monasteries. In the period immediately preceding the Reformation complaints were loud and frequent that the confessional was being perverted from its religious purposes and employed for those of debauchery. The Church was greatly in need of purification, not merely from the heresy that was continually asserting itself, but from notorious scandals which were even more aggravated and serious than the heresies. It seemed to be utterly incapable of reforming itself. There were men within it, for example, like Dr. Gascoigne, who looked with alarm

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upon the growing evils and debasing corruptions, but their censures and bewailings were generally very judicious and administered strictly within Church lines. Bishops and priests were neglectful of their sacred duties in the cure of souls. Living in luxury and pomp, many of them were scandalous sinners, so gross in their disregard of the moral law that they preached neither by word or example. There was a distressing absence of all true pastoral care and protection, while the flock of Christ looked up in vain and continued to go, for the most part, unshepherded and unfed. The sheep were attended by the under-shepherds to the extent that they might be the more profitably shorn in the interest of the big and pretentious hierarchy, to the scepter of which for a long period every crown in Europe was subject.

The immoral lives of the clergy, the ignorant fanaticism of the religious orders and the sophisticated subtleties of the scholastic theology had brought about conditions which had made the situation in the Church at the middle of the fifteenth century almost hopeless. In the debased Church the salt had well nigh lost its savor, and in the periods of its greatest corruptions preceding the Reformation, religious leaders repeatedly permitted, eulogized, and, as a rule, acted upon principles that were contradictory of the dictates of the most common standards of honesty, not to say anything of the transcendent sanctities of religion. They were known to applaud falsehood and to practice the most scandalous and wholesale forgery. They had habitually and grossly falsified history, and used imposture to such an extent that history had become an impious scandal and the most glaring of frauds. Judgment was openly sold, and plots and tricks were always among the resources of the opulent suitor to direct the course of justice and hasten the desired conclusion. According to papal annalists themselves, the innumerable regulations promulgated by every pontiff had no other object than to give free scope to venality and plunder. Among the reforms proposed at the Council of Constance was one to limit the vast number of reserved cases in which the Roman curia had assigned itself original jurisdiction, and by means of which the power of the local courts had been reduced almost to a nullity, and conferring on privileged classes and persons the right to carry their suits at once to Rome. But the project failed, along with all the other

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proposed reforms of that Council that committed John Huss, leading pre-Reformation reformer, to the stake. The skillful manipulations of those who were interested in the perpetuation of the profitable abuses in the Church were potent in taking off the chariot wheels of the conciliar reformers. The well-meaning representatives of universities and theological science, and prelates who saw the urgent need of reform, were not equal to the task of the period and effected no reforms of permanent value.

Official attempts at reform by Church Councils, as well as those made by heretical sects and by individual reformers, were demonstrated failures. Of the reforming councils, Pisa was not able to formulate an adequate remedy for the ills of the Church. The best it seemed to be capable of doing was to call on the chieftains of the double-headed hierarchy, the two popes, the one residing at Avignon in France and the other at Rome, to abdicate, and without even awaiting a response as to their willingness or unwillingness, proceeding to elect a third pope in the person of Alexander V. As neither the French nor the Italian pope found himself in the resigning mood, instead of unity in the head of the Church, the alleged successor of St. Peter, the papacy had attained to a pontifical trinity. Instead of two heads it had three, each clamoring for recognition as the one and only real head of the Church and the only rightly qualified occupant of the chair of St. Peter. The chief distinction of the Council of Constance may be summarized in the fact that in 1415, one hundred and two years before Luther's theses, it had triumphantly sealed, in treachery, blood and fire, the pact of Christian unity.

The truth is this, that the whole of the medieval history of the organization of the Church is a history of the growth of despotic authority and centralization of ecclesiastical power. The controlling section of the Church could see in it nothing more than a sphere of operations in the enjoyment of benefices and the perpetuation of abuses. The Church became filled with the covetous and unscrupulous, who brought in their train corruption of every kind and instituted forms of oppression which rivaled those of the feudal seigniory. In an atmosphere of sordid financial and political intrigue, the popes immediately preceding Luther's time thought but little of right conduct, and most of all of glorifying the capital of Christendom with architecture and art. Many of the popes had been transformed from vicars of Christ, the real and

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only Head of the Church, into mere adventurous politicians, even when their utterances assumed the cover of religious phrases.

The papal elections not infrequently were scenes of wild disorder. So tumultuous was the conduct of the people at the time of such an election late in the fourteenth century that a furious mob broke into the pontifical cellars, and the papal wine added to the disturbance of the occasion. The cardinals hesitated to face the crowd with the news that they had failed to elect a Roman pope, the man of their choice not even being a member of the sacred college. The chosen head of the Church not being present, they had no one to present for the purpose of quickening the reverence of the crowd and quieting their turbulence. Fearing, too, that, according to an old custom, the conclave chamber would be sacked, they took the precaution to send the plate and jewels they had with them to the castle of St. Angelo. Finding that these treasures were thus being carried away, the crowd became even still more suspicious and indignant. Placing no further restraints upon themselves, the mob rushed to the door, which had already been broken down to admit the prelates, when the cardinals became thoroughly terrified at the prospect of facing the turbulent and dangerous populace with the tidings that they had not yet been successful in the election of a Roman pope.

During the period of the "schism," which began a little more than one hundred years before the birth of Luther, extending from 1387 to 1409, zeal had grown cold in high places, and the breaches in the papal system were such that they have never to this day been entirely closed. The evils of the times were open and avowed. The Church was venal and corrupt in all its members. The ancient seat of the alleged primacy of St. Peter and his successors was for a long time even bereft of its papal head. The history of the times deals with accounts of a debased clergy, who were often married and given to taverns and brawling, trading and usury. As late as the Council of Basel, 1431-1443, it was deemed necessary to pass a resolution, not only to do away with papal reservations, but against the possession of concubines by the clergy, and that assembly of the Church would have done even more had it not been dispersed by order of Pope Eugenius IV.

Much can be said for the machinery and organization of the medieval papacy, for its enormous superiority, for the times, not

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merely as a religious center, but also as the center of law and government, for its many restraints over turbulent peoples, and its conservation of the forces that were real civilizing agencies in that time. For multitudes of people its decisions and imposed beliefs were the veritable oracle and tribunal of Almighty God. But after all that may be said in its behalf that can be truthfully affirmed, there will be left a deep impression of abuses unconcealed and long endured, and of the narrow selfishness and wholly political character of its aims and the dominance of worldly principles in all its extended borders. There were moral disorders and license, partly due to growing riches and changing tastes that marked the fifteenth century. There were ecclesiastical abuses, such as tardy and even corrupt courts at Rome and elsewhere, excessive fees and corruption, vows made but disregarded, and duties unperformed.

One of the most unworthy features of the system was its willingness to prosper and advance its unscriptural pretentions by the use of traditional jugglery of facts, mystification and forgery. By means of miraculous deception, associated with superstitious fears, and the use of administrative machinery and canonical law, the ecclesiastics of western Europe had become, in great part, its real rulers. By means of the ceremonial of consecration and coronation of civic rulers they had come to be, in large measure, the dictators of the kings of the earth. By means of the mighty adjuncts of excommunication and the interdict they had succeeded in dominating rulers and terrorizing whole communities. By virtue of their ecclesiastical distinction they became the counselors of kings and the judges in civil matters, while in some instances the function of legislation in matters purely of the state was actually usurped by the assembly of bishops. By means of confession, penance, purgatorial consignments, and other impositions, the Church had established its lordship over the conscience of the individual, and that individual soon became the subject of an organization that aspired not so much to control the conduct of men as to enlarge its power over mankind.

Against such low ideals in religion and their faithful realization in a sacredotal and political Church, a revolt was inevitable. Reason recoiled against such despicable ideals, and conscience protested against their realization in the organized life of the

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Church, and the result, by and by, was the Reformation. When it came, as we shall see, it was no mere reaction against an exhausted and tyrannical system, but a noble and successful endeavor to find a more excellent way by which Christian men could get nearer to the truth and the truth get nearer to man.

III

Secure in the possession of a temporal power which, contrary to the teachings of the Head and Founder of the Church, did not belong to it, the Church became less and less mindful of its own distinctively spiritual duties. Its immense authority was constantly and more and more devoted to the purposes and designs of the individual and personal ambition of its chief representatives and the exploitation and oppression of Christendom. The deplorable situation was indicated in the attitude of the Archbishop of Mainz, who formulated three needs of Germany, which, repeated in 1457, 1510 and 1522, may be summarized as mainly reforms in papal relations, ecclesiastical finance and patronage. The reform so pompously promised at Constance was easily evaded by the intrigue of those whose interests it would have compromised or jeopardized. Better things had been expected of the next Council, that held at Basel, but that had degenerated into an unhallowed squabble between the head and members of the Church, which brought both into contempt, and its efforts to diminish the abuses connected with the use of the powerful weapons of excommunication and interdict were of but little avail. The demands of the secular power for a thorough reform of the Church were so reiterated and so urgently pressed upon public attention that at last it became difficult to evade them. It was one of the results of these demands and this pressure that these so-called reformatory Councils were assembled. The last of them, which finally became a kind of a "Rump" Council, held at Basel, after a useless struggle with the pope, came to an inglorious end in the year 1443, forty years before the birth of Luther. The power of the Councils was destroyed and the work of reformation undertaken by the bishops had failed.

The hoary belief in the supernatural attributes of sacerdotalism had received nothing more than a severe shock. But it had at least come to pass that men, at last, felt at liberty in the rising

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revolt to criticize the scandalous lives of popes, cardinals and lesser prelates, while the medieval species of veneration was fast disappearing. Churchmen showed but little sense of responsibility for the solemn and awful functions entrusted to them, and the laity, yielding to the deplorable infection of the time, came soon to look upon the sacerdotal leaders of the people as their equals and not as demigods, unapproached and unapproachable in their sacrosanct isolation.

The moral state of the Roman ecclesiastics of every grade and rank was scandalous and it was only a question whether their vices themselves, or the shamelessness with which they indulged themselves in their debasing practices, was the worse feature.

The Church having proven false to its great and distinctive mission and having employed its almost illimitable power, not in softening the manners of mankind and inclining the minds of the people to the truths of the gospel, it is not surprising that the laity had become fierce and lawless. In consolidating its authority and increasing its already vast worldly possessions, the Church had in a large degree abrogated its divine commission. Of the situation, bewailed by all good men, the biographer of one of the popes, Leo IX, of the eleventh century, says: "The world lay in wickedness; holiness had perished; truth had been buried; Simon Magus lorded it over the Church whose bishops and priests were given to luxury and fornication." We have presented to us, as has been said, "A papal court which seemed, by some inebriation of the intellect, to have dreamed itself out of Christianity into paganism, to have ignored, by a sort of common consent, the Gospel revelation, and instituted again the Groves of Academis."

Even in Rome, the Capital of Christendom, the churches were neglected and in ruins, sheep and cattle went in and out of the broken down doors and the monks and clergy were steeped in immorality. According to John Pico, of Mirandola, one of the leading Italian Humanists, scepticism was enthroned frequently in the chair of St. Peter. He accuses one pope of disbelieving in the existence of God and another with questioning the doctrine of immortality.

Plurality of benefices, the appropriation of parish churches and the purchase of desirable positions in the Church constituted at the last the principal cause of a revolt of the downtrodden and impoverished people against the miserable cupidity and injustice

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that prevailed in the high places of the Church. The law of the Church had even become an instrument of wrong and tyrannical jurisdiction in the hands of wordly men, who had in many instances usurped the offices of ecclesiastical distinction. The hierarchy, that carefully articulated and co-ordinated machine for the government of the Church, whose head was in Rome, making the unscriptural and unhistorical claim to be the one and only official successor of St. Peter, seemed to be so consigned to evil as to defy all possibility of reform in either head or members. High positions in the Church were secured by means of political devices unsurpassed in the most degenerate periods of civic maladministration. Even scholarship was not indispensable in many promotions to positions where scholarship had always been regarded as a necessary adjunct. Degrees were often sold at the universities, and it is no cause of surprise that astounding ignorance and evil living went hand in hand. The average monastic life, where it was not impure, was at least not strenuous. The mendicant orders—Franciscans and Dominicans—had, if not corrupt, at least grown cold in the decline from their earlier enthusiasm.

For long periods there was nothing in the political history of the papacy which would in any degree have suggested that the spirit and method of the Head of the Church had contributed anything perceptible as a guiding principle in its councils. Its methods, in contrast with those of its Lord, were cruel, fraudulent and unscrupulous, even to a greater degree than those of most of the purely and confessedly secular powers. If the Founder of Christianity had appeared in Europe during what is known as "the age of faith," it is not at all unlikely that He would have been misunderstood and He Himself been burned at the stake or crucified as a common malefactor or pestilential heretic. What the Latin Church had preserved was not the religion of Christ in its purity, and which had lived on perforce of its own inherent indestructibility, but parts of the Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies, distorted and petrified by scholasticism, a vast amount of Pagan superstition, and in its organization a massive reproduction of Roman Cæsarism.

The crying need for reform in the Church and the state is strongly indicated, for example, in the extreme depression of the tenth century, many of the bad features of which endured down to the time of Luther. That century constitutes the darkest of

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the "dark ages," it being a century of ignorance and superstition, anarchy and crime in Church and state alike. It has been truthfully said that "the lowest point which civilization has reached in Europe since the century and a half which followed the fracturing of the western empire by Odoacer, A. D. 476, was that which is found at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh of the Christian centuries." Never was the papacy more degraded than during the one hundred and twenty years extending from 880 A. D. to 1000 A. D. After the breaking up of the Carlovingian Empire Europe lapsed into a state of almost complete anarchy. The papacy lost almost all of its power and prestige and came to be a bone of contention among rival factions. Beginning in the state the demoralization reached the Church and culminated in the papacy. Of this degenerate period in the history of Christianity the able historian, Dr. Philip Schaff, has said that "no Church or sect in Christendom ever sank so low as the Latin Church in the tenth century. The papacy, like the old Roman god Janus, has two faces, one Christian, one anti-Christian, one friendly and beneficent, one fiendish and malignant. In this period it shows almost exclusively the anti-Christian face. It is an unpleasant task of the historian to expose these shocking corruptions; but it is necessary for the understanding of the Reformation that followed."

It was during this time that the political disorder of Europe had affected the Church and paralyzed its efforts for good to an extent unattained at any other time, and that the papacy itself had lost all independence and dignity and had fallen a prey to avarice, violence and intrigue, and had become a veritable synagogue of Satan. It was, during this time, dragged through the quagmire of the darkest crime, and would no doubt have perished from the earth in consequence of its own degeneracy had not Providence, which is the genius of all history, saved it for better times and the real service which it rendered to mankind even in the periods of its most turbulent history. Pope followed pope in rapid succession, most of them ending their careers in deposition, prison or murder. Prior to the violent taking of the papal chair by Sergius III, in A. D. 904, there had been nine popes in thirteen years. One had died so hated that his body had been disinterred, stripped, mutilated and thrown into the Tiber, while those who had been ordained by him were com-

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pelled to be re-ordained. His successor had been already twice deposed from clerical office for scandalous wickedness and died within two weeks after being made pope. Leo V, A. D. 903, in less than two months was thrown into prison by one of his own presbyters, who thereupon took his place, to be himself in turn, and within a year, ignominiously expelled. The rich and powerful Marquises of Tuscany and the Counts of Tusculum acquired control over the city of Rome and of the papacy for more than fifty years of its bad history.

From the assassination of John VIII, the moral character of the papacy went rapidly downward. The politics of Italy played a prominent part in papal elections. The political factions corrupted the clergy and used them as their tools. This, too, is the period of what is known as the "Pornocracy," or the "reign of the harlots," when the papacy fell under the baleful influence of three bold and energetic women of the highest rank, but of the most debased character, Theodora the Elder, the wife or widow of a Roman senator, and her two daughters, Marozia and Theodora. Under Pope Sergius this famous trio of courtesans came to power. They combined with the fatal charms of personal beauty and wealth a rare capacity for intrigue and a burning lust for power and pleasure. For years they controlled the pontificate, placing in the chair of St. Peter their companions in guilt, bestowing the highest position in Christendom on their lovers or illegitimate sons. It is not possible fully to tell the story of the apostasy of this period. These Roman Amazons succeeded in turning the Church into a den of robbers and the pontifical residence into an Oriental harem. One of the favorites of the elder Theodora had been made successively Bishop of Bologna and Archbishop of Ravenna, and later, in 914, through her favoritism, was made pope under the name of John X. It was about the middle of this century that Marozia, the daughter, who had been called by an accredited historian "a drunken Venus," but who, notwithstanding this vile characterization, held the papacy in her hand, and in the bestowment of the headship of the hierarchy had placed one lover and three sons and grandsons in that coveted position, once occupied by Leo the Great, the man who had formulated for all time the papal conception that the successor of Peter had the care of all the churches of the world, and later by Gregory the Great, the man who had im-

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mensely strengthened the papacy to do vast service in anarchic Europe, and who, in an age of confusion, corruption and cowardice, was a mighty protagonist of high ideals. One of these favorites of Marozia, known in the long line of the papal successors as John XII, was the man who, according to the testimony of contemporary churchmen, turned the pontifical palace into a vast school of prostitution. Devout women were deterred from visiting the tomb of St. Peter, "lest," as declared by the historian Gibbon, "in the devout act they should be violated by his successor." No more severe arraignment of the apostasy of this pope could be adduced than the fact that a synod at Rome composed principally of German, Tuscan, French and Lombard prelates, and at which bishops and priests of the neighborhood were also in attendance, received testimony against him from high ecclesiastics as well as from laymen, accusing him of simony, cruelty, promiscuous licentiousness, of homicide, perjury, sacrilege, incest, of drinking wine to the honor of the devil, and of invoking the aid of pagan gods and goddesses to give a favorable turn to the dice in his gaming contests.

IV

In the period immediately preceding the Reformation the degeneracy of the monastic institutions had reached a debased level. In a brief issued by Pope Innocent VIII, in 1490, it is stated that for some time past great laxity in discipline had prevailed in monasteries of the Cluniac, Cistertian and Premonstratensian Orders, and that dissolute lives were being led in some of their houses even within the bounds of the archbishop's city, diocese and province. In a letter addressed to the Abbot of St. Albans, head of the largest and oldest establishment of the Benedictine Order in England, this monastic official was charged, according to common report, with being guilty of simony, usury and waste of the goods of his own monastery, while many of the monks were found to be leading dissolute lives and even of defiling the churches with their unholy alliances with nuns. Such institutions, it was openly alleged, had degenerated into public brothels, and in one nunnery, at least, good and religious women had been deposed that wicked ones might be promoted to official position. These exponents of monastic piety were charged further with

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the neglect of divine worship and with all kinds of evil practices, both within and without the holy precincts of their institutions; with selling the chalices and jewels of the Church to satisfy the abbot's own greed for honors and promotions, and, what was worse, with stealing for the same base purpose jewels from the shrine of the monastery.

These monastic orders were no doubt less demoralized than the secular clergy. It is not a reasonable presumption that they were all bad and incapable of further usefulness. They had not as yet entirely outlived the great reforms instituted by Norbert and Bernard. They were still capable of producing some good men. Nevertheless, there is truth in the testimony of an authority on the subject, that "Monarchism had become an oppression and a scandal, a hissing and a reproach to all men" as early as the close of the twelfth century. It is claimed that what strikes one most forcibly in an examination of the old monastic books of this period and later, written evidently by pious men, is this, that there is almost no mention of "personal religion" in them; that the whole gist of the thinking set down in them, and their speculation, seems to be the "privileges of our order," "strict exaction of our dues," "God's honor," meaning by that the honor of our saint, and more on the same well-worn lines. Carlyle's generalization in "Abbot Samson" is no doubt too sweeping; but he lays his finger on the great weakness and sin of the monastic system of the time. It was not so much in what the monk did as in what he left undone. His system of external renunciation had been displaced by the anxiety of Carlyle's abbot that "above all things there be no shabbiness in the matter of meat and drink." The monk not only dwelt at ease in Zion, selfishly unconscious of the souls around him, but what was worse, lived with many of his kind in the degradation of scandalous offences against God and men. Monasticism had fallen upon bad days. Its spirit and life were lost and its ideals obscured, although at last it had enough of salt and life to make its contribution of Luther, the greatest product of the medieval monastic system in its better aspects. The picture of the Church in France before Boniface disciplined it into some decency, drawn by Principal Workman in one of the chapters of "The Church of the West in the Middle Ages," is not overdone. The majority of the priests were runaway slaves or criminals who had assumed the tonsure without

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any ordination. Its bishoprics were regarded as private estates, and were openly sold to the highest bidder. * * * The Archbishop of Rouen could not read; his brother of Treves had never been ordained * * * Drunkenness and adultery were among the lesser vices of a clergy that had become rotten to the core."

This view of the Christian life, which was based upon the idea of the abasement of man before God, in which individualism, intelligence and emotion were all alike killed, did not prove itself to be, even to a considerable degree, ethical. In consequence of the gross ignorance that maintained in the Church, the period for centuries before the Reformation was one of widespread superstitution. Especially was this true as far back as the time of Gregory the Great, in the opening years of the seventh century, who was generally recognized as the most able man in the Church. He was a man capable enough in administrative gifts to have merged the office of Roman Emperor and Christian Bishop into essentially one, and thus to have become the real founder of the medieval papacy. But big as he was, Gregory was a true son of an age of credulity and superstition. He believed in all the tales current in his day about ghosts, ecclesiastical miracles and supernatural manifestations. He pronounced genuine, for example, the linen of St. Paul and the chain that had held him in bondage in a Roman prison, and which was said to be possessed of miracle-working power. To a converted Visi-Gothic king of Spain he sent a key made from the chain of St. Peter, a bit of the true cross and some hairs from the head of John the Baptist.

This head of the papacy at the termination of the sixth century and opening of the seventh was proficient in all the arts and sciences cultivated in his time. But notwithstanding his gifts and powers, he looked upon the slightest act, and sometimes no act at all, as surrendering the soul to the powers of an irresistible indwelling evil. In his day relics had attained a kind of self-defensive power, so that profane hands that touched them were withered and men who endeavored to move them were stricken to death. It was an awful thing even to approach to worship them. Men who had merely touched the bones of St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Lawrence, even with the pious desire of changing their position or of placing the scattered bones together, had fallen dead—in one case to the number of ten. The greatest

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gift that the Church could bestow would be a cloth which had been permitted to come in contact with the holy but dismembered remnants of once living saints. Gregory himself writes that if the chains of St. Paul would yield any of their precious iron to the file, which it is said they not infrequently refused to do, he would generously transmit this to the empress, consoling her for the smallness of the gift by the miraculous power which it inherently possessed. This great pope doled out gifts of this order with pious parsimony, and, we must believe, in entire sincerity. The smallest bit of filing from the chain of St. Peter became an inestimable present to a patrician, an ex-consul or some barbarian chieftain. In one of his letters Gregory refers to the fragments of the gridiron on which St. Lawrence was roasted. One of the most precious relics from the chain of St. Peter once tempted some profane Arian, Lombard or heathen, who, in his effort to secure it by the use of his knife, found this simple bit of his property suddenly transformed into an instrument of destruction, springing back, as it did, to cut his sacrilegious throat!

Closely connected with saint worship was the universal use of a vast catalogue of relics and a belief in their miraculous power. This expression of medieval piety was based by Thomas Aquinas upon that peculiar kind of regard which human nature prompts us to pay to the bodies of our departed friends and the things held as the most prized and sacred by them while they lived. The bodies of the saints were to be reverenced because they were in a special manner the temples of the Holy Ghost. The dominant interest of popular piety circles around the saints and their relics. These sacred mementoes in the Church were the greatest treasures of the community, while the relic chest became the choicest ornament of the private room of a lady, the armory of the knight, the stately halls of the king and the palace of the bishop. So wild, indeed, at one time, in the Church of the West, had this craving for the wonder-working relic become that imperial law had to prohibit the corpses of the martyrs being cut into pieces and offered for sale. Ambrose had refused to consecrate a church which had no relics, while at the time the Pantheon was dedicated by Pope Boniface IV twenty-eight cartloads of the bones of the martyrs were transferred to that building from various cemeteries. The seventh Ecumenical Council, held in 787 A. D., forbade bishops to dedicate a church which had no sacred

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relics under penalty of excommunication, while the traffic in such goods became a regular business and a source of temptation to the cupidity of enterprising dealers. They increased until western Europe was full of them and every community had miracle-working wonders, which were the products of excessive piety, fraud and credulity.

It was looked upon as a special mark of impiety to doubt the reliability and efficacy of the most scandalous impostures of this order. And this species of medieval piety did not decrease with the passage of the centuries after the time of Gregory the Great.

The devolpment of saint worship and relics which we find at the beginning of the sixteenth century amply illustrates this truth. The medieval saints, with their many alleged attributes and qualifications, reproduced, as Melanchthon said, the leading ideals of pagan mythology. St. George became the patron of Norsemen and the Virgin Mary the goddess of the sea, like Castor and Pollux in the case of the former, and Venus in the case of the latter. The saints, too, were endowed with the gifts of healing. One worked the cure of toothache and another of headache and yet another of diseases of the eyes. St. Louis healed the ills of horses, and St. Anthony cured the swine of fever. The image of the Virgin was carried round the fields to make the flax and corn grow; the maimed and crippled found relief in St. Cornelius, his rival being St. Koryn, who cured bad legs. St. Remus was credited with the cure of lunatics, St. Vincent healed those afflicted with bad mouths and St. Lievan those who suffered with boils and blains. At Einsiedeln, in Switzerland, one of the most celebrated of the holy places, the monastery had been built in the tenth century in honor of the Virgin Mary, and according to the popular legend, had been consecrated at midnight by Christ Himself. The pope expressly forbade the devout and simple-minded children of the Church to intimate even a doubt of the truth of this legend.

In the period of the Crusades, beginning in the closing years of the eleventh century, with open-mouthed credulity the people of the West received the holy objects, sometimes transported from the East and more times not, which were imposed upon them. These outbursts of fanatical zeal were responsible for a queer and ludicrous aggregation of impostures. There were the bones of Elisha, excepting the head, which it was alleged had been

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stolen by the Austin friars. The Holy Grail, of which Lowell writes so charmingly, was found at Cæsarea in 1101. The bones of the three kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, reputed to have been the magi who came to present their gifts at the manger at Bethlehem, were removed from Milan to Cologne, where they are still reposing. In the holy collection transmitted from the East were Noah's beard, the horns of Moses, the stone on which Jacob slept at Bethel, the branch of the tree on which Absalom hung, the table on which the last supper was eaten, the stone rolled away from the sepulchre of our Lord, the basin in which the feet of the disciples had been washed, the crosses of the two thieves crucified with our Lord, the stone on which Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, Paul's thorn in the flesh, a tooth of St. Lawrence and other equal reliquian absurdities. Connected with the body of Our Lord there was named a group of these sacred mementoes too sacrilegious and revolting to be even mentioned. The true cross on which He had been crucified for the sins of the world was found more than once, and fragments of it were so numerous that the fiction had to be invented that the true cross had the singular property of multiplying itself indefinitely. These fragments were declared to have been so numerous and large as to have been sufficient to build a man-of-war. The spearhead which had pierced Christ's side was shown at Rome, at Paris and near Bordeaux. The sword and buckler of the Archangel Michael were exhibited in France. Fourteen different places claimed the possession of different portions of the head of John the Baptist. The body of Matthias was to be seen at three places and the body of Sebastian at four. At the Episcopal City of Rodez, in France, was exhibited and adored the slipper of the Virgin Mary, which was especially worshiped on Saturdays. A dish containing the paschal lamb of the Last Supper was to be found at Rome, at Genoa and at Arles. The cup containing the eucharist wine was found at two different places. The Princess of Fretelsheim claimed to be in possession of two relics of the ass which carried Christ into Jerusalem.

Some idea of the popular estimate of the value of such relics may be gathered from the story of a certain monk called Bernard, who was in the habit of carrying about with him a box containing relics of St. Paul and St. Peter. Happening one day to give way to unpermitted thoughts, Bernard felt the two saints giving him

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a thump in the side. On recovering himself and coming back to a proper mental state, the thumping stopped, but was renewed upon the return of the unseemly thoughts. At last, it is said, the stupid fellow took the hint and being expurgated of the illicit thinking the troublesome thumping ceased. We have said enough, and much more might be said, to show that relics of the Church in Luther's day were both of the ludicrous and impossible order, such as straw from the manger in Bethlehem and plumage from the archangel's wings.

The Reformers commented sarcastically upon the absurdities to which this accumulation of relics gave rise. In the collection at Wittenberg there were 5005 distinct and separate specimens of the holy wares, among them pieces of the rods of Moses and Aaron and some ashes from the burning bush. In the Church upon the door of which Luther nailed his theses were shown a fragment of Noah's Ark, some soot from the furnace into which the three young men of Daniel's time were cast, a piece of wood from the cradle of Our Lord and hundreds of other such pious absurdities. At Wurtemburg there was a seller of indulgences whose head was adorned with a feather said to have been plucked from the head of St. Michael, who is mentioned in the Epistle of Jude and described in Daniel. An inventory of the relics once shown at Canterbury, the present head and center of Anglican Christianity, intended to excite the faith and secure the money of the throngs of pilgrims who came thither, indicates the immense resourcefulness of the Church on that line. At that seat of religion there were to be seen a fragment of the robe of Christ; three splinters from the crown of thorns; a lock of Mary's hair; a tooth of John the Baptist; a shoulder blade of Simeon; blood of the Apostles John and Thomas; part of the crosses of Peter and Andrew; a tooth and finger of Stephen; some hair of Mary Magdalene; a lip of one of the innocents slain by Herod; the head of Thomas a' Becket; a leg of St. George; the bowels of St. Lawrence; a finger of St. Urban; bones of St. Clement, St. Vincent and St. Catherine; a leg of Mildred the Virgin, and another of a virgin saint called Recordia. At Halle there were 8933 of these relics, among them being some of the wine from the wedding feast at Cana and some of the earth out of which Adam was created. In ridicule of such impostures Luther advertised that he had recently obtained "a piece of the left horn of Moses, three

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flames from the burning bush and a lock from the beard of Beelzebub."

Thus we have example of the urgent need of reform in the Church. Thus superstition and credulity had been increased until the traffic in relics was something enormous. "The western world," it was said, "had been deluged by corporeal fragments of departed saints" and "every city had a warehouse of the dead." An organized traffic was carried on by unscrupulous venders of the sacred wares, who had imposed them upon the credulity of the pious. The Fourth Lateran Council sought to put a stop to these commercial abuses, forbidding the veneration of relics which did not have the papal sanction, which it was said was easily obtained. The attitude of Luther and the Lutheran movement was expressed by the Reformer in his larger catechism, when he said "est ist alles tot ding das niemand hertegen kann." "They are lifeless, dead things that can make no man holy."

This worship of the saints and adoration of images became so widespread and general that there was a veritable craze for the shrines of the saints, and pilgrimages in Europe were greatly multiplied, the last decades of the fifteenth century being especially given to such pious journeys. German princes and wealthy merchants made trips to the Holy Land, visited the sacred places there and came back with many prized relics which they stored away in favorite churches. Frederick the Wise, the Elector of Saxony, the friend and protector of Luther at a later period, made such a pilgrimage and upon his return placed the relics he had obtained in the Castle Church at Wittenberg, upon the doors of which Luther nailed his theses on October 31, 1517, thus inaugurating the revolt against these and other ecclesiastical abuses which had for centuries been engrafting themselves upon the Church of Rome.

When such an array of absurdities was recognized as valid it is not surprising that frequently at the most sacred seasons in the Church calendar the priest should act the buffoon and the clown. On Easter Sunday, which should always be observed with a note of quiet but triumphant joy, the religious teachers of the people studied how they might best raise a laugh among the church attendants. One preacher imitated the note of the cuckoo, another hissed like a goose, while another related indecent stories. True religion was abashed at such practices, and that morals

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declined is not surprising. "If on our days," says D'Aubigne, "we should bring together all the immoralities and all the disgraceful crimes committed in a single country the mass of corruption would doubtless shock us still. Nevertheless, the evil at this period wore a character and universality that it has not borne subsequently."

V

Still another of the signs that the Church was greatly in need of purification is found in the scandalous commercializing practices that had grown up in connection with ecclesiastical offices. The greed for place, and gain in the securing of place, is voiced in what was said of one promotion to a bishopric: "He was licensed at Rome to gather the moneys of Exeter, and not to gather the souls of that bishopric to God." In one of the accounts of the apostasy of the Church of the fifteenth century the details are given of a man who had spent 1400 marks to secure for himself a deanery, and who confessed, in addition to the charge that he was both worldly and carnal in morals, that he knew not even the principles of Latin grammar.

One of the best accredited of the historians of Rome itself in the fifteenth century, writes: "It is notorious that boys, young men, and men living in the courts of the worldly, for money are placed in churches and in great offices and prelacies, others being passed over who have long been occupied in study and preaching and in the government of the people without worldly gain." Another instance is given of a foolish youth of eighteen years of age, the son of a simple knight, who was declared to be "like an idiot, drunk almost every day," who was promoted to twelve prebends and a great archdeaconry of one hundred pounds' value, and to a leading rectory. This silly and incompetent youngster was reported to have been promoted by the bishops to please a great worldly lord, whose playmate he had been in his boyhood. In the enjoyment of these prebends and of the archdeaconry he had remained for nearly twenty years, although during all this time he was never judged capable of being an ordinary priest, nor did he ever reside in any of his dozen prebends, nor in the archdeaconry, nor in the rectory. For him, in consequence of his inability to do anything in meeting the requirements of his numerous profitable ecclesiastical holdings, all things were dispensed

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from the see of Rome, which at that time was the center of all errors and superstitions. It was of the order of things in the papal system that a man deeply conscious of the abuses of the Church should turn his eyes for redress and correction to Rome, because the supreme and governing power was there. But even at Rome, as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, justice had to fight its way through many tedious delays and obstacles of divers order. In numerous cases the abuse of authority was used to defeat law and justice. "I know a man," says the papal historian Gascoigne, "who, wishing to be elected dean of Salisbury, on the day of election, by the authority of the archbishop, pronounced certain men by name to be then excommunicated, and to have been, for several years before, pronounced contumacious; and this he did because he knew that those men would not elect him to the deanery, and so by excommunication they would not have a voice in the election." When high positions in the Church could be secured by such devices, when a desired majority was obtained by the process of eliminating the doubtful members of the electorate, it is not surprising that neither character, scholarship nor age were regarded as required conditions among those seeking promotion.

Excommunication had frequently been made available in reducing to submission the proudest monarchs of Christendom, as in the case of Henry IV, of Germany, in the memorable contest at Canossa in the eleventh century. It now came to be used as a method of assuring a favorable majority by means of exscinding a contumacious minority, a method that not only would secure the desired majority, but would also preclude all possibility of reform.

"Rome," says the papal authority above quoted, "as a special and principal wild beast has laid waste the vineyard of the Church, her court reserving to themselves the election of bishops, that none may confer an episcopal church on any one unless he first pays the *annates,* or first fruits and produce of the vacant church. Likewise she has destroyed the vineyard of the Church of God in several places by annulling the elections of all the bishops in England. Likewise, she destroys the Church by promoting evil men according as the king and the pope consent. Herein has she ravaged the Church like a wild beast, that she has annulled all the elections made in cathedral churches, ordaining that all elections of bishops belong to the Apostolic Chamber,

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that is, to the judgment of the pope and his cardinals. Also, that Rome does not call any one a bishop except one whom the pope and cardinals elect as bishop or as archbishop, having had previously paid to them at Rome fruits to the extent of thousands of marks, and also presents to Roman and papal courtesans."

This is no prejudiced and biased Protestant fulmination against papal abuses, but a bitter lamentation of a loyal son of the Church over the corruption and wrong-doing that prevailed even at the chief seat of authority. Even the pope, who avowed himself to be the vicar of Christ, the head of Christendom and the ruler of states, was in bondage to the abuses of the times. Such was the almost hopeless condition of the Church and of its government, in its head and members, at the middle of the fifteenth century, when affairs were rapidly verging toward the revolt under the leadership of Luther and the reaffirmation of the truth of the Gospel, the only basis of permanent reform.

Whether well or ill-deserved, the Roman curia had the reputation of doing anything and everything for money, and this reputation, while most profitable to the officials of the Church, was utterly subversive of order and morality throughout all the borders of Christendom. At the close of the twelfth century, shortly after Innocent III had come to the papal throne, and under whose pontificate the papal ideals had attained to their zenith, Conrad, the Abbot of Ursperg, thus describes the condition of the German Church in its relations with Rome: "There scarce remained a bishopric or a prelacy, or even a parish church, that was not involved in law, and therefore forced to apply to Rome, but not empty-handed. Rejoice, O Mother Rome! for the fountains of the riches of the world are opened that rivers and heaps of money may pour into thee! Make merry over the iniquity of the sons of men, for thou gettest thy price for all these evils. Be glad over thy ally, discord, which has broken loose from hell that thou mayest wax rich! Thou hast what thou hast always thirsted for; raise the song of joy, for thou hast conquered the world, not by thy holiness, but by the wickedness of man. Men are drawn to thee, not by their devotion or their conscience, but by the increase of their iniquity, and the sale for money of thy decision of their quarrels." Two hundred years later the complaints of the best of the land show us that such abuses were as

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rife as ever, and that even at Rome, where gold was all-powerful, the poor ecclestiastical suitor had no chance. The god of this world had ascended the high places of the Church's dominion, and gold could always direct the course of justice. Papal collecttors traversed Europe to exact the payments levied upon the churches by Rome. Armed with the unlimited power of excommunication and interdict, they carried consternation, ruin and desolation into entire provinces. There prevailed one vast system of pecuniary mulcts as a condition of absolution. The vicegerent of Christ himself openly used, as did Sixtus IV, his supreme control over the sacraments for the base purpose of extorting money from his subordinates, levying arbitrary and enormous subsidies upon the Roman clergy and enforceing their payment by a liberal use of the dreaded excommunication, his ursurped power of arbitrarily shutting men out of the kingdom of heaven.

We must always remember that it is inevitable in the chronicles of any age that vice will be singled out, especially vice that is prevalent under religious forms, and that virtue, especially commonplace virtue, should be somewhat overlooked. There was much that was good in the period preceding Luther's age, but it was good in the midst of abounding evils. The Church presented to the men of that day the good and the bad, the mentally alert along with the superstitious, that peculiar mixture of gross abuses with the most placid and easy self-complacency among the very men who were maintaining and who were responsible for the abuses that prevailed. The papal court allowed the lowest fraud and imposture in the working system of the Church, and it was rather imposing, too, much of a burden upon the intellectual honesty that was beginning to come to the front to expect men longer to embrace all the lies perpetrated in her name while she herself did not believe them, and was laughing on the sly at the credulity of the faithful.

Such was the almost hopeless condition of the Church and its supreme government in the fifteenth century. Secure in the possession of the temporal power, it had become less and less mindful of its spiritual prerogatives, while its boundless authority was constantly devoted more and more exclusively to the purposes of individual ambition and the oppression of Christendom. The manifold abuses and corruptions that had grown up in the Church had almost forfeited its spiritual character and abrogated its

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claim to be the body of Christ. Its clergy were debased, and it was enslaved in simony, until at last it was said that "one can only get at Simon Peter through Simon Magus." As we approach the beginning of the sixteenth century we come to a period of moral degradation in the papacy having no parallel save in the tenth century, when harlots disposed of the pontifical office. "The governments of Europe," says the historian Ranke, "were stripping the pope of a portion of his privileges, while, at the same time, the latter began to occupy himself exclusively with worldly concerns." The revelations of the degeneracy of the ecclesiastical establishment of the time are appalling. They, however, give this ground for belief in the continued vitality of the true Church of Christ, in that they show, by way of contrast, the deep pit and the miry clay from which the Lord and Head of the Church can call out his people when the times of restoration come.

Myconius was long a monk of the Church, and became a Protestant and one of Luther's fellow-laborers. He wrote a description of the religious life of the age in which he lived from which there may be gleaned such facts as these:

"Christ's sufferings and death upon the cross were regarded by priests and people as an idle tale. They had no influence whatever upon the hearts and lives of men. Christ was looked upon as a severe judge who condemned all who did not look to the intercession of the saints or to papal indulgence for salvation. To secure such intercessions it was necessary to perform works of penance which were invented by priests and monks, and which brought money into the treasury. Ave Marias must be repeated. Prayers must be offered night and day, to Saint Ursula and Saint Bridget. Pilgrimages must be made to shrines found in mountains, forests and valleys. But in place of such works of penance money could be paid. The people, therefore, brought to the convents and to the priests money and everything that had value—fowls, ducks, geese, eggs, wax, straw, butter and cheese. Then hymns resounded, bells rang, incense filled the sanctuary, sacrifices were offered up, the larders overflowed, the glasses went around, and masses terminated and concealed these orgies. The bishops no longer preached, but they consecrated priests, bells, monks, churches, chapels, images, books and cemeteries; and all this brought in large revenue. The bones, arms and feet of the

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saints of bygone times were preserved in gold and silver boxes; they were given out during mass for the faithful to kiss, and this, too, brought in much money."

The head of the Church and those who stood nearest his throne seem to have been completely unaware of momentous changes that were impending. During the fifty years preceding Luther's theses not one word uttered by the popes indicates any suspicion that the dayspring of a new age was dawning. They were incapable of discerning the signs of the times. They were heedless of the currents which were sapping the foundations of their spiritual dominion, which was rapidly slipping from their grasp. Not one of the famous dynasties of history has ever illustrated with more convincing truth than the papacy the terrible proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth have been set upon edge."

The Church held in full possession an absolute monopoly, and as with other monopolies this one was conducted primarily and principally for power and profit. Ecclesiastical offices had become the objects of wholly selfish ambition, the ambition of every cardinal to be the pope, of every archbishop to become a cardinal, of every bishop to be an archbishop, and of every parochial priest to be a bishop. To attain the object of this graduated ambition in every case, the means most likely to win was money, and but few were found who were unwilling to use the means. Simony, with all its associated evils, was almost universal, and the debasing practice was worked from both ends—by the one who desired the advancement and by the one who had it to bestow. The man who would get the coveted position must pay high for it. But if what this one would pay seemed, to the one who had the office to bestow, not to promise enough of the means to secure such commodities, then the position was given to the one who would most largely share with the superior the plunder of the office, which was often in the greedy transaction bestowed upon boys of fourteen, ten, or even as juvenile as seven years of age, or upon the most worthless of men. Thus it was that money and how to get it became the one chief activity of the clergy, from the highest to the lowest. Whenever the bishop made a visitation over his diocese, it became a new occasion for money; when a cardinal came hence, it meant still more money; when the papal nuncio came, it meant yet more money, and when the pope chanced to

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come, it meant the most money of all. For a sufficient price, it was even made easy to find that a marriage was within the forbidden degrees of relationship, and accordingly void.

Peter Cantor was a churchman of sufficient standing to have influence even with Pope Innocent III, the great defender of Church dogmas, a master organizer of the hierarchy, and an administrator with but one peer in the history of the papacy. It is Cantor who asserts that "the most holy sacrament of matrimony, owing to the remote consanguinity coming within the prohibited degrees, was made a subject of derision to the laity by the venality with which marriages were made and unmade to fill the pouches of the episcopal officials." This was but one phase of the infinite casuistry by which any truth or principle of righteousness could be avoided. The forbidden degree of consanguinity was never discovered until after the marriage, and not even then except for a monetary consideration of consequence.

The Romish Church offered no proper resistance to the corrupting order of things. On the contrary, papal agents were continually laboring to swell the list of mercenaries for the service of the pope. Referring to the practices of an energetic cardinal in his own country of Switzerland who had wrought to this end with indefatigable zeal, Zwingli said: "With right do the cardinals wear red hats and cloaks; for, shake these garments, and out fall ducats and crowns; wring them, however, and they drip with the blood of your sons, fathers and best of friends." Expressions of judgment of this order could be multiplied indefinitely, and all tending to confirm what we have contended for —that corruption and wrong-doing prevailed everywhere, having even ascended to the high places of authority.

But Protestant indictments of popular abuses are not necessary. Innumerable incidental notices in the writers of the times, even of Romanists themselves, exhibit a condition of depravity and degradation which has seldom been surpassed. The corruption had reached all classes, and had come to dominate institutions that should have been the most holy among men.

A most startling picture of the condition of the clergy comes from the pen of Desiderus, the Abbot of Monte Cassino, who later (in 1086) became Pope Victor III. "The Italian priesthood," says he, "and among them most conspicuously the Roman pontiffs, are in the habit of defying all law and all authority; thus utterly

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confounding together things sacred and profane. During all this time the Italian priesthood, and none more conspicuously than the Roman pontiffs, set at naught all ecclestiastical law and authority. The people sold their suffrages for money to the highest bidder; the clergy, moved and seduced by avarice and ambition, bought and sold the sacred rites of ordination, and carried on a gigantic traffic with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Few prelates remained untainted with the vile pollution of simony; few, very few, kept the commandments of God, or served him with upright heart; following their chiefs to do evil, the great sacerdotal herd rushed headlong down the precipice into a quagmire of licentiousness and profligacy; priests and deacons, whose duty it was to serve God with clean hands, and with chaste bodies to administer the sacraments of the Lord, took to themselves wives after the manner of the laity; they left families behind them, and bequeathed their ill-gotten wealth to their children; yea, even bishops, in contempt of all shame and decency, dwelt with their wives under the same roof—a nefarious and execrable custom, prevailing, alas! most commonly in that city where laws, thus shamefully set at naught, first issued from the sacred lips of the Prince of the Apostles and his holy successors."

The rapid multiplication of orders and their marvelous increase of wealth was followed by equally rapid degeneration and decay, so that the original purpose of the monastic organizations was lost after a few generations had passed. Those who dwelt under vows of poverty in monastic seclusion were changed into a worldly aristocracy under a religious name. The promise of chastity was forgotten, the abbeys became centers of corruption, and many of the nunneries were almost transformed into houses of prostitution. In many such institutions devoted to piety and meditation the inmates lived riotously and waged war upon their neighbors. Men like the Abbot Gilbert confessed with shame that monasticism had become an oppression and a scandal, a cause of hissing and reproach among men. In 1147 St. Bernard, in many respects the most commanding figure of the medieval Church, said of the region of the Count of Toulouse: "The churches are without people, the people are without priests, the priests without the reverence due them, and the Christians without Christ. The churches are regarded as synagogues; the sanctuary of the Lord is no longer holy; the sacraments are no longer

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held sacred; feast days are without solemnity; men die in their sins, and their souls are hurried to the dread tribunal, neither reconciled by penance nor fortified by the holy communion."

Cardinal Baronius is one of the well-authenticated annalists of the Papal Church. Of the papacy in the ninth century Baronius says: "Never had divisions, civil wars, the persecutions of the pagans, heretics and schismatics caused it to suffer so much as the monsters who installed themselves on the throne of Christ by simony and murders. The Roman Church was transformed into a shameless courtesan, covered with silks and precious stones, which publicly prostituted itself for good.

"The palace of the Lateran was become a disgraceful tavern, in which ecclesiastics of all nations disputed with harlots the price of infamy. Never did priests, and especially popes, commit so many adulteries, rapes, incests, robberies and murders; and never was the ignorance of the clergy so great, as during this deplorable period. * * *

"Thus the tempest of abomination fastened itself on the Church, and offered to the inspection of men the most horrid spectacle. The canons of councils, the creed of the apostles, the faith of Nice, the old traditions, the sacred rites, were buried in the abyss of oblivion; and the most unbridled dissoluteness, ferocious despotism, and insatiable ambition, usurped their place.

"Who could call legitimate pontiffs the intruders who seated themselves on the chair of the apostles? And what must have been the cardinals selected by such monsters?"

Of the papacy in the tenth century Baronius says:

"In this century the abomination of desolation was seen in the temple of the Lord; and in the See of St. Peter, reverenced by angels, were placed the most wicked of men; not pontiffs, but monsters.

"And how hideous was the face of the Roman Church when filthy harlots governed all at Rome, changed Sees at their pleasure, disposed of bishoprics, and intruded their gallants and their bullies into the See of St. Peter!"

Of the twelfth century the same writer avowed that "it appeared as if antichrist then governed Christendom." Baronius was writing as an historian, but Bernard, the distinguished monk of Cluny, the author of "Jerusalem the Golden," lived at the time and it is he who writes thus:

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"The golden ages are past. Pure souls exist no longer. We live in the last times. Fraud, impurity, rapine, schisms, quarrels, wars, treasons, incests and murders desolate the Church. Rome is the impure city of the hunter Nimrod. Piety and religion have deserted its walls. Alas! the pontiff, or rather king, of this odious Babylon tramples under foot the Gospels and Christ, and causes himself to be adored as a god."

In an address before Pope Innocent IV and his cardinals, in the thirteenth century, Robert Greathead, the Bishop of Lincoln, England, in a personal appeal for a check on the abuses of the time told the assembled prelates plainly that "the clergy were a source of pollution to the whole earth; they were antichrists and devils masquerading as angels of light, who made of the house of prayer a den of robbers; and the Roman curia was the source of all the vileness which rendered the priesthood a hissing and a reproach to Christendom."

In the fourteenth century, in speaking of the scheme of Pope John XXII to make capital out of the abominations of the times by means of a systematic tax on sins for "absolution," "free dispensation" and "assurance," the abbot of one of the monastic institutions exclaimed: "Rejoice now, Vatican! all treasures are open to thee. Thou canst draw in with full hands. Rejoice in the crimes of the children of men, since thy wealth depends on their abandonment and iniquity! * * *

"Now the human race are subject to thy laws! Now thou reignest—through depravity of morals and the inundation of ignoble thoughts. The children of men can now commit with impunity every crime, since they know that thou wilt absolve them for a little gold. Provided he brings thee gold, let him be soiled with blood and lust. Thou wilt open the kingdom of heaven to debauches, Sodomites, assassins, parricides—what do I say? Thou wilt sell God Himself for gold!"

In the time of the "schism," and during the double pontificate of Boniface IX and Clement VII, the one reigning at Rome and the other at Avignon, the doctors of the University of Paris addressed a letter to the King of France in which they said:

"Two popes elevate to prelacies only unworthy and corrupt ministers, who have no sentiments of equity or shame, and who think only of satiating their passions.

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"They rob the property of the widow and the orphan, at the same time that they are despoiling churches and monasteries.

"Sacred or profane, nothing comes amiss to them, provided they can extract money from it.

"Religion is for them a mine of gold, which they work to the last vein.

"They sell everything from baptism to burial.

"They traffic in pyxes, crosses, chalices, sacred vases, and the shrines of saints.

"One can obtain no grace, no favor, without paying for it.

"It is not the worthiest, but the richest, who obtain ecclesiastical dignities."

The earliest writer on English Canon Law, John Athon, writing of abuses found in the Church of England by a legatine inquest made in 1237, indulges in no protest against its severity, but adds some touches and reflections of his own: "Our prelates," says he, "are pilots asleep in the storm." "Churchmen strain the canons by casuistry so as to give countenance to England's greatest evil, robbers." "The rural deans have neither the courage nor the knowledge for their work." "They are fat with the plunder and the blood of the poor." "Ecclesiastical lawyers say to a scrupulous client, answer thus and you will lose your case; but they fail to add, if you do not answer thus you will lose your soul." This native churchman took even a gloomier view of the English Church of his time than the Roman legate who had conducted the inquest on the Apostate Church, in which, in order to aid in the detection of the rascals, Pope Innocent III had issued elaborate direction how to detect nine different sorts of sham papal bulls.

The deplorable fact was this, that for centuries before Luther the papacy, from being the teacher of religion, the organizer of civilization, the heart and soul of Christendom, was changing into a piece of tyranny, depressing incubus and a by-word. The spiritual empire of the Gregories and the Innocents had been rapidly verifying the famous epigram of the English unbeliever Hobbes, who had come to regard it as a translation into spiritual terms of the empire of the Cæsars, and who said, "If a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is no other than the ghost of

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the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."

VI

If we would understand aright the force of the feelings that had come to make the papacy hateful among the people, until that hatred broke out at last into open revolt under Luther's leadership, it is worth while to note what we have already cited and much more that can be adduced from the impassioned utterances of this time. Dietrich Vrie, a well-meaning monk, who had gone to the Council of Constance, in a Latin poem which is more remarkable for its vigor than for its grace of expression, puts this language into the mouth of the degenerate and disconsolate Church: "The pope, once the wonder of the world, has fallen, and with him fell the heavenly temples, my members. Now is the reign of Simon Magus, and the riches of this world prevent just judgment. The papal court nourishes every kind of scandal, and turns God's houses into a market. The sacraments are basely sold; the rich is honored, the poor is despised; he who gives most is best received. Golden was the first age of the papal court; then came the baser age of silver; next the iron age long set its yoke on the stubborn neck. Then came the age of clay. Could aught be worse? All things are degenerate; the papal court is rotten; the pope himself, head of all wickedness, plots every kind of disgraceful scheme, and while absolving others hurries himself to death." This author's "History of the Council of Constance" opens with a severe denunciation of the simony, the avarice, the ambition and the luxury of the pope, the bishops and the entire clergy. "What shall I say of their luxury when the facts themselves cry out most openly on the shameless life of prelates and priests! They spare neither condition nor sex; maidens and married men and those living in the world are all alike to them." "Benefices," he complains, "which ought to provide alms for the poor have become the patrimony of the rich."

If these utterances of this historian, himself a papist, may be thought of as too highly rhetorical, they are more than confirmed by the writings of soberer spirits, in which denunciations of the same order and lamentations over the abuses that everywhere prevailed plentifully abound. Even in the Council of

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Trent, which assembled in the year before that in which Luther died, much plain speaking was indulged in by zealous brethren in the presence of the assembled fathers of the Church. The monstrous declension of the ecclesiastical system, the secularization of the whole body of the clergy, the greed of the Curia, the ignorance, laziness and lewdness of many of the secular clergy, the corruption of the monks, in short, the degeneracy of the officials of the Church, were all laid at that great assembly of the papacy, and with much plainness of speech, at the Church's own door. Evidences were multiplying that at last Rome was becoming sobered and forced to put its house in order. Pope Paul III contemplated with anxiety the progress of the Reformation in the lands beyond the Alps when he became head of the Church in 1534. Knowing full well that the appalling corruption of the vatican, the clergy and the monks must cease, or that each in its turn must pass away, as late as the beginning of his pontificate Paul had appointed a commission of the more strict from the College of Cardinals to examine into Luther's indictment of the Church. The letters of the early Jesuits make it impossible for any fair-minded historian to longer question the appalling corruption of priests, monks and people in every part of Europe at the period of the inauguration of Luther's reformatory and reconstructive work. Even from Rome, the head and center of Christendom, one priest wrote to another that there were not three men of his class in the city who were not stained by concubinage and crime. Papal infamy had become the subject of most widespread discussion. No other subject in the spiritual struggles of the time attracted a wider interest. Symptoms were multiplying to show that a new order of things was at hand. Causes that paved the way for the Reformation were working effectively, if not always harmoniously.

One of the certain signs of the degeneracy of any period in Christian history may be found in the kind of men tolerated as the leaders and teachers of the Church and as the sacrosanct exponents and examples of the spirit of Christianity. Most of the popes, it must be said, were men of mediocre ability but respectable character. Some were but little removed from idle voluptuaries, while others were apostate and vicious. Roman Catholic writers do not hesitate to admit that there have been wicked popes. Dante is far from being alone in remanding

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some of them to the pains of perdition. Judas, say some of the papal apologists, betrayed his Master and Peter denied Him, and how can we reasonably expect that the successors of the apostles should be better than the apostles themselves? Prophets in the Old Testament were sometimes cowardly and unfaithful, and the Church of that period passed through times of darkness and corruption. Then why not the Church of the new covenant? But notwithstanding the apologies, from its very beginning it was notorious that badness, even in violent forms, had sometimes climbed up into the chief places of papal power and dominion and that enormities and atrocities were found even in the court of the pontificate and among the wearers of the papal tiara.

Leo the Great, who became pope in the year 440, was the man who first really elaborated the papal theory of the Church, laying the greatest possible emphasis on the fact that there is one God, one Church, one universal Bishop, one faith and one interpreter of that faith, and that the recognition of this primary fact alone could bring unity and efficiency to the Church on earth. That he was sincere there is no doubt. He disdained all diplomacy and argument. His tone was always authoritative, arrogant and dogmatic in the highest degree. His writings indicate that he spoke, not as the individual Leo I, lacking an increment of personal prestige, but, as he in all honesty regarded himself, as the official successor of St. Peter, and in obedience to a command which he unquestionably believed had been laid upon him. He died November 10th, 461—just 1022 years earlier than the birth of Luther—but while he lived he had formulated for all time, as he thought, the papal conception that the successor of St. Peter had the care and headship of all the churches of the world. He came upon the stage at a time when he had the chance to observe the growing prestige of the papacy, which in Rome, now no longer an imperial residence, was drawing to herself the authority and influence of the waning and discredited empire. His own conception of the greatness and possibilities of the chair of St. Peter must have been largely moulded by what he had thus actually seen—a conception to which he was to give most effective expression, when, by and by, he himself came to occupy that exalted position. This was his line of argument: It was Peter who had been singled out by

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the Lord for the commission to strengthen his brethren, and to feed the flock of Christ. Peter is, therefore, the Chief Shepherd, who is set over the undershepherds of that flock. He is at once the pattern and the source of all ecclesiastical authority. In other words, according to Leo's argument, Peter was directly appointed by Christ as the Prince of the Universal Church, the primate to whose authority all bishops must defer. As for Rome, she is holy and elect, a priestly and royal city, which the chair of St. Peter has raised to the position of the capital and first city of the world, conferring upon her wider sway than that which her earthly lordship had ever bestowed.

Of these claims Leo speaks with conviction, and as a man conscious of his undoubted right to speak as he does. He speaks always as a superior to an inferior, or as a commander to his subordinates. But even the startling character of these claims of the founder of the papacy, and the persistence and force with which Leo asserted the prerogatives of his position, did not save the great organization of which he was the official head from indications, early in its history, of official degeneracy and appalling corruption.

Even in the time of Gregory the Great, who became pope in 590, that influential prelate wrote to the ecclesiastical chieftains in widely separated countries: "I hear that no one can obtain orders in your province without paying for them." As early as 599 he had to issue a circular letter forbidding bishops to have women in their houses, and ordering priests, deacons and subdeacons to separate from their wives. In an age of confusion, corruption and cowardice, Gregory became a mighty force for the creation of greatly improved ideals which did not long retain their idealism. The popes were great temporal sovereigns, and as early as the eighth century the art of forging documents to bolster up their unscriptural and secularized pretensions and claims was cultivated. This method of fortifying papal supremacy reached its culmination in what are known as the "Pseudo-Isadorian Decretals," a collection of documents, both genuine and forged, which appeared in Europe about the middle of the ninth century. The aim of these forgeries, which appeared under the name of Isadore Mercator, was to furnish the Church something of a written constitution, and to give assurances of primitive sanction to Roman supremacy. Their

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genuineness was generally believed in almost without question until the time of the Reformation; but for the most part they made up one of the most stupendous of all forgeries. Worked out with admirable skill and consummate ingeniousness, they constituted the most audacious and pious fraud ever perpetrated in the history of the Church. But notwithstanding the belief that all things were allowable which were adduced to uphold the doctrines and prerogatives of the Church, and the bogus piety of the fraud, the cares of earthly dominion enfeebled the sense of spiritual duty and at times warped the character of otherwise good men. Pope Stephen III, for example, in an age of easy dissolution of the marriage relation had but little to say about divorce, but became violently denunciatory of an alliance with the Lombards, the disproportion of his indignation being one of the most conspicuous features of his pontificate.

Pope Nicholas I, who died in 867, largely through the influence of the false decretals raised the Church above the State, causing the former, during his time, to reach the acme of earthly dominion. He came to regard himself, in deep sincerity, as the veritable representative of God on earth, as such a real and elevated vicar of Christ that he occupied a throne so high that from its great elevation all men, kings and beggars, patriarchs and monks, were of the same size. He believed that his prerogatives were so great that he was officially responsible to God, as he frequently said, for every immoral and irreligious movement in "every part of the world." Historical truth compels us to say that, even for a pope, he assumed an immense responsibility. He looked upon himself as divinely appointed and "inspired," and, in consequence, soon came to believe that disobedience to him was disobedience to God. From him kings received their crowns, and to him they were to be abjectly subject, even as the common serfs were to them. To his orders great and powerful prelates were to render obedience, or be deposed from all ecclesiastical preferment and distinction. Without his sacrosanct approval no council of the Church could be held in Europe. Without his papal authorization no church could be built and no book of any importance be published. He lived at an assumed elevation never authorized of God for any man or official, ecclesiastical or secular. He adopted a lofty tone in dealing with princes, and fell little short of the dictatorial manner of the most

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powerful autocrats who ruled from the chair of St. Peter in the crowning era of the papal theocracy under Hildebrand and Innocent III.

Nicholas was the greatest personal constructive force in the making of the medieval papacy up to his time. He was a strict example of the prestige of the system. He rebuked with sternness the most autocratic and aristocratic sinners. He scolded princes and kings as if they had been the most subservient lackeys. Like Gregory the Great, he added dignity to his assumptions by the moral animus which, in general, distinguished his pontificate. But after all, it was the loftiness of the claims of his sacerdotal creed more even than the strength of his personality or manifest sincerity that served to exalt him so much above the disorders of the troublous times in which he lived. When we think of it as a time of murder, incest, rape, spoliation; a time of monastic and priestly corruption, of unquestioned and monstrous evils, which are amply reflected in the letters of this pontiff himself—whatever our view may be as to the unscriptural and unhistorical claims of this man—we cannot but feel that it was well for Europe at that time to have had such a masterful ecclesiastical official. The forged decretals, which were but little used by the popes before the middle of the eleventh century, were of immense service to the papacy in spreading a conviction, in a credulous and superstitious age, of the antiquity of these advanced but entirely untenable claims of the greatest of medieval organizations, if not the greatest of all times. It used methods, and proceeded at times on the basis of principles, at complete variance with the teachings of Christ, the Head of the Church—principles which no cause could sanctify, and which, being bequeathed to its later history, have caused the papacy to be distrusted, and which have continued to arouse hostility extending from the days of Nicholas I to Benedict XV.

But the seeds of degeneracy were deeply rooted in the papal system itself, which had been bolstered up by interpolations and forgeries. Bad days were at hand. The history of the Western Church, controlled by Rome during the latter part of the ninth and tenth centuries, deals with a period of unparalleled corruption and inefficiency. The papacy as a constructive spiritual force almost disappears from view. The influence of such lead-

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ers and organizers as Leo the Great, Gregory the Great and Nicholas I has almost entirely disappeared, and their ideals and ambitions for the Church have fallen upon days of depressing degeneracy. After the death of Nicholas in 867, there came for over two hundred years a line of weak popes for the greater part of the unholy succession. Many of them were not only weak, but wicked and worldly. The Church was reaping the direful reward of her own unscriptural mesalliances, unholy and secular in character.

Prior to the time of Nicholas there had been among the occupants of the chair of St. Peter but few men of commanding ability or dominating personality, but even fewer of ignoble character. But even as much cannot be said of most of his successors down to the time of Hildebrand. It was a pope, Stephen VI, the official vicar of Christ and alleged successor of Peter, who had exhumed from its grave the half putrid body of Formosus, a predecessor, and treated it, in a wretched outburst of his papal brutality, with appalling indignity and outrage. At a time when violent disorders broke out under John VIII, one of the stronger of the successors of Nicholas, speaking of the leading ecclesiastics, one of the most conservative and reticent of writers has said: "Their swinish lust was only second to their cruelty and avarice." Hadrian II had the widow of one of these base officials whipped naked through the streets of Rome, and had the eyes of another put out. In the tenth century came the reign of the "Pornocracy," when, in the lamentable development of the papcy in this period, the dominion of such dissolute women is all the more queer and inexplicable, because it is the record of the feminine ascendancy in a nominal theocracy. It was during this period that there were three popes at the same time, with but little of choice between each of the three pontifical scoundrels. Though very young on his accession to the papal throne in 1033, Benedict IX was noted for his corruption. His crimes were many and flagrant. He committed murders and adulteries openly, "robbed the pilgrims on the graves of martyrs, and turned Rome," as was said of him, "into a den of thieves." His atrocious conduct at last exhausted the patience of the Romans and they expelled him, electing Sylvester III in 1044, one year before Benedict's death. But the deposed vicar of Christ, by the help of the Tusculans, returned and

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reinstated himself in power. He then sold the papacy in 1045 to John Gratian, who became Pope Gregory VI, and who hoped, by means of reforming the institution, to justify the illegal proceeding of buying it. But Benedict again returned and claimed what he had sold, on the ground that the sale was illegal, inasmuch as he had no right to sell the successorship of St. Peter—an instance of a troubled conscience and an example of luminous piety in a dark time.

The history of the times demonstrates beyond any doubt, even in the minds of fair-minded papalists, that various representatives of the papacy had fallen below even an average standard of righteous conduct, and some of them of even common decency, and that at least a few in the lists of badness had given adequate ground to be rated as specimens of extraordinary depravity. Even as early as the fourth century some of the successors of the humble fisherman, St. Peter, seem to have yielded to the temptations of worldly display and luxury, to say nothing worse. Even a heathen historian refers to their costly turnouts, and declares that their feasts surpassed those of "kings' tables." This same writer informs us further that, even at such an early period, the episcopal chair was considered worth contending for even unto the shedding of blood, and that in one case the sacrifice of one hundred and thirty-seven lives in the storming of a church was only an incident of the struggle through which Pope Damasus, elevated to his office in A. D. 366, was made the Roman bishop. It is not affirmed, to be sure, how great was the responsibility of the successful candidate for pontifical honors in this disgraceful and unholy contest, but it would be something of a strain upon charity to suppose that the chief beneficiary was in no degree accountable for the bloody violence of his successful advocates.

Not less discreditable were the circumstances attending the elevation of Vigilius in the year 537. According to Hefele, the Catholic historian of the Church, this man came to his lofty position as the conscious instrument of an intriguing empress, and as the result of outrageous injustice against his predecessor, who was made the victim of lying accusations and driven from office in order to make room for a characterless successor, an irritating official of whom it was said that he promised everything and paid only with prevarications.

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Beginning with Sergius III in 904, the chief office of the whole papal system for more than half a century was the spoil of unprincipled Italian nobles and a bad trio of notorious females. At a later period, according to the admission of Pastor, another of the Catholic historians, the conduct of these depraved "Vicars of Christ" was, in general, conspicuous for its worldly tone, even at times going into the extreme of a demoralizing and disgraceful luxury. Some of them exhibited a temper somewhat at variance with that of the real Lord and Head of the Church, whose special representatives they claimed to be. One of these popes, Clement V, who, as one of the subjects of the French king, was elevated to the papacy in 1305, became much enraged at the encroachments of the Venetians upon Ferarra. He not only expended the full list of penalties against these Venetians, but in addition made their property liable to confiscation and their persons to enslavement wherever they might be seized.

Gregory XI, one of the popes of Avignon from 1370 to 1378, was not surpassed by Clement when he gave vent to his rage against the Florentines in violent and outrageous speech. Another of these vicars, Clement VI, who resided during the Babylonian captivity at Avignon, in his effort to crush the Emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, showed himself to be something of an expert in the use of violent invective. If that kind of speech were effective certainly Lewis must have been somewhat reduced, for speaking of him the pope indulged in this strain: "We humbly implore divine power to repress the insanity of the aforesaid Lewis, to bring down and crush his pride, to overthrow him by the might of its right hand, to inclose him in the hands of his enemies and pursuers and to deliver over to them his prostrate body. Let the oven be made ready for him in secret and let him fall into it. Let him be accursed coming in; let him be accursed going out. The Lord smite him with folly and blindness and frenzy of mind. Let the heaven send their lightnings upon him. Let the wrath of the omnipotent God and of the Saints Peter and Paul turn against him in this world and that to come. Let the whole earth fight against him; let the ground open and swallow him up alive. In one generation let his name be blotted out and his memory extinguished from the earth. Let all the elements be against him. Let his habitation become a desert; let all the merits of the saints above confound

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him, and make open display of vengeance upon him in this life; and let his sons be cast out of their habitations and with his own eyes let him see them destroyed in the hands of enemies." There is evidence that this outburst of rabid pontifical execration had the desired effect upon the spirit of the contumacious Lewis, for in September, 1343, he wrote to the pope that as a babe longs for its mother's breast, so his soul cried out for the grace of the pope and the Church.

In such representatives of corrupt papal administration all sense of spiritual responsibility was overshadowed by their thoroughly securalized ambitions. The historian Gregorovius says: "With Sixtus IV the priestly character of the people began to vanish and that of territorial lord became so prominent that the successors of Peter in that era appeared as representatives of Italian dynasties, only accidentally holding the place of popes, and wearing the tiara in the place of the ducal crown. The thoroughly worldly schemes to which the popes now devoted themselves required more than ever the use of worldly means such as financial speculations, traffic in offices and in matters of grace, unprincipled acts of statecraft, and the dominance of nepotism. Never before was nepotism driven with such recklessness, papal protégés (in most instances the actual bastards of the popes), Vatican princes, being brought upon the theater of Roman affairs with every new incumbent of the papal office, advanced suddenly to power, tyrannized over Rome and over the pope himself, contended for countships in a brief round of craft and intrigue against hereditary lords and against cities, kept in good fortune oftentimes only so long as the pope lived, and founded, even when their power went to pieces, new families of papal princes."

Adequately to describe the character of the medieval Church from the days of Wiclif to those of Luther would tax the powers of portrayal possessed by a Dante. The plain facts, however, stated as briefly and as simply as possible, carry their own sad and depressing impression, without the aid of a brilliant imagination. There is a medieval proverb, quoted somewhere by the historian Hase, that if a man would enjoy himself for a little while, let him kill a chicken; if for a year, let him marry a pretty wife; if for life, let him become a priest. In this high office it had come to pass that avarice and luxury, greed and

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ambition, simony and extortion, seemed to be linked up together, the papacy itself having set the bad example. Petrarch said that the court of the popes at Avignon was a place where the hope of heaven and the fear of hell were regarded as old fables, where virtue was regarded as a thing for peasants, and sin was looked upon as a sign of manly independence. Considering the manifold apostasies and unmeasured badness of many of these unworthy successors of Peter, it is not surprising that Dante, the great Florentine, a true and loyal son of the Church, should not only have had the courage to criticise the action of the papacy, but to have consigned some of its chief representatives, not simply to purgatory, but to the deepest hell. The knowledge of them that has been gathered since, with the passing of the centuries, has not induced any disposition to reverse the wisdom and justice of Dante's consignments.

VII

The papal system which had thus become so degenerate, was not so much evolved as created. It may be said that seven men were the creators of this vast piece of sacerdotal and hierarchical machinery, so much like the ancient Empire of Rome in its eleborate articulation and co-ordination of officials and parts. These seven men were Gelasius I, Leo I, Gregory I, Hadrian I, Nicholas I, Gregory VII, and Innocent III. From Innocent to Benedict XV the system, with varied applications to changing conditions, has largely been an inheritance. Each of these seven men amplified and deepened the foundations, and did much to enlarge the structure of this great religious principality which became the guiding and organizing power in the Church, until, when its power was turned into omnipotence, it became a factor in the Church's disorganization and final disruption at the time of the Reformation.

No man had ever ascended the papal throne with so pretentious an idea of its prestige and responsibility, and no pope ever confronted a more disordered state in Christendom, than Hildebrand, or Gregory VII. Most of the priests of every country at his accession were legally married, though in some places the law of celibacy was enforced, while many of them were living in illicit relations. He believed that his sacerdocracy was of the

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will of God, that it was divinely ordained and instituted, and that it was the only means of maintaining religion and morality in Europe. His coming to leadership in the Church, by popular demand, in 1073, did not so much usher in as bring to its highest point the wave of reformation already set in motion more than twenty-five years before. His fierce and unyielding campaign against simony not only filled the entire period of his famous pontificate, but also serves as a commentary on the state of the Church with which he had to deal. He was the great organizer of the papacy, and proclaimed its absolute right in the Church. The pope's word, thought he, is God's word, the pope's acts are God's acts. He proclaimed and made effective the idea that the apostolic chair, in a spiritual sense, is present everywhere, and that its occupant, judged by no man, is to be the judge of all. Severe and uncompromising as he was, Hildebrand's soul was stirred by the thought of the greatness of his mission. He overthrew one tyranny, but in its place he reared another and more intolerable one. Hildebrand has been variously intrepreted. Whether he was one of the good men of the earth it is not for us fully to determine, but he was unquestionably one of the great of the earth.

Innocent III was the last great maker of the papacy. He entered upon his pontificate in 1198, and reigned for eighteen years. From the beginning of his rule he recognized the necessity of moral reformation, and to his credit it must be said that, from the year of his election he endeavored to abolish pluralism, luxury, rapacity, pride, arrogance and the other evils that had debilitated and corrupted the Church. Under him the papal theory reached its culmination. The earthly empire he compared to the moon shining faintly from light borrowed from the spiritual power of which he was the embodiment and expression. He wielded an almost absolute authority, brought the papal power to its zenith, and made his voice heard as none other in the public affairs of the Europe of his day. He came to his exalted position with a belief in man's utter depravity, and in the pope's power to pardon all sin and to remit all penances. In his memorable administration, in which he exercised a dominion hitherto unattained, and never since maintained in the same degree even by the papacy, he reaped what Hildebrand had sown and filled in an outline traced by his master hand in the eleventh

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century. He enforced his lofty claims as the head of all things by compelling the prefect who represented the empire and the senator who represented the Romans to take oaths of allegiance to himself, thus casting off the last trace of an imperial yoke. After the grimmest medieval fashion, he sent his troops to lay waste the properties of rebellious nobles. He placed England under an interdict until the affrighted and superstitious people saw the doors of their churches closed upon them, while, deprived of the seven sacraments and Christian burial, they imagined the jaws of a medieval hell gaping wide for their souls. He drove priests and prelates out of his kingdom. In 1215 he rebuked the barons of England for their "infamous presumption" at Runnymede in taking up arms against John Lackland, a vassal of the Roman see, and denounced the Great Charter of Rights wrung from the unwilling hands of John as a devil-inspired document, and forbade his imperial vassals to accede to its unjust demands. He excommunicated the barons when they refused to lay down their arms, and suspended Stephen Langdon, his own archbishop of Canterbury, when that prelate refused, on the ground that it was dictated by false representations, to promulgate the sentence.

Innocent had, within the space of ten years, raised the power of the papacy in England to its supreme height, and then dealt it a blow from which it could never recover. He taxed the clergy, confiscated the funds of monks, and forbade nobles to wear costly furs or eat sumptuous dinners, or to indulge in sports at tournaments. He gave countenance to the monstrous crime of persecuting the Albigenses, in that historical butchery of a brave reforming people, whose bones, as said John Milton, "lie bleaching on the Alpine mountains cold." His ideal was papal power, but of the attribute of love he knew but little. In the interest of his papal ideals he sacrificed himself. He was one of the great makers of the papacy. Nearer than any other who went before him, this alleged successor of St. Peter came to realizing that ideal after which he was striving. He it was who put the finishing touches on that mighty Colossus which Luther by and by was to smite to its undoing. He advanced claims as extravagant as Hildebrand, and succeeded in making them more effective in their execution. He could say, "The Lord bequeathed to Peter not merely the government of the universal

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Church, but the whole secular estate." Gregory VII could have said no more.

Boniface VIII was the last great representative of the papal ideal in its earlier and more austere and autocratic medieval form. He attempted to give the last notable expression to the world power of the papacy, but not with the old-time success of Nicholas I, Gregory VII or Innocent III. Boniface was bold and keen, and had made himself acquainted with the political situation in Europe. He had adopted the Hildebrandian ideals with their immeasurable pretensions, and ventured to enforce his authority over princes. But the papacy was passing into a period of comparative impotence. Influences were at work which were not only to become fatal to the worldly grandeur of the pope and to his life, but to his fame to the latest ages. Unfortunately for the colossal piece of ecclesiastical machinery of which the pope was the head, the days of declining power came just at the time when the eyes of Europe were growing sharper. It was the period of the rising renaissance of classical culture, and, in Germany especially, of biblical exposition and religious earnestness. It was a period rich in civic development and prosperity, when keen-eyed laymen and scholars of distinction were coming to the front. Obedience to the pope as a condition of salvation was encountering manifold difficulties. There were signs of rising revolt against the abuses and usurpations of the ancient orders of things. The general of one of the orders impeached Pope John XXII for heresy. William of Occam, "the Doctor Invincibilis," one of the most astute of the later schoolmen, and others assailed the existing institutions with powerful assaults of invective. The pope, honored as the "vicar of Christ," was denounced as the "anti-Christ." "The dragon with the seven heads," and other designations big with bad meaning. Crushing indictments of the papal pretensions and vindication of the secular power, were launched in quick succession by such men as Arnold of Brescia and Marsilio of Padua. The basis upon which papal claims had been made to rest in forged decretals and conciliar declarations was at last being subjected to scrutiny.

The resourcefulness of the popes is a matter of some note. A jubilee, for example, had been announced for 1390, and from that the pope had reaped a rich harvest. But that did not deter

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his thrifty successor from also reaping another golden harvest from another jubilee in the year 1400, after the lapse of only a single decade.

Being fearful of the band of brigands, robbers and ravishers which infested the papal estates, many pilgrims from Germany and Scandinavia were deterred from coming to Rome. But the reigning Pope, Boniface, met this emergency in the interest of the piety of these frightened children of the Church and the increase of the resources of his own treasury by enacting that such pilgrims from lands of the north might obtain the same pardon granted their southern brethren by visiting certain shrines nearer home and paying the papal agents the cost of the coveted journey to Rome. Such simoniacal practices are established and admitted by papists as well as asserted by the reformers of the day. We have the official assurance of the Council of Constance that John XXIII "sold absolution from punishment and guilt," together with other and abundant indications of the continuance of this abuse. Even the gamblers and prostitutes had to pay the tithe from their infamous earnings, while complainants were mercilessly punished. One historian asserts that this man Baldessare Cossa, who later became Pope, when a cardinal deacon, had violated no less than two hundred maidens and matrons of Rome. He pressed the sale of indulgences so flagrantly and by such objectionable agents that the Bohemian reformers burned the bull announcing the terms of the sale, in the streets. He was described as "addicted to the flesh," "the dregs of vice," "a mirror of infamy," "guilty of poisoning, murder and persistent addition to the vices of the flesh."

And yet it is not to the moral indigation caused by this man's character that he owed his fall, but to the treachery of the Emperor Sigismund and the Council of Constance, both bent on restoring at least the outward unity of the Church. He was made a victim of the growing zeal for the unification of the distracted Church. It was all the while becoming more and more evident that reform must come from without the Church. Popes and cardinals could not effect it, and in the prevailing creed there was no canonical basis for the action of a council in defiance of them. But notwithstanding, one hundred and two years before Luther's theses, this pope, who had preached the opening sermon of the Council of Constance from the text, "Speak

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every man the truth," was deposed and disgraced by the same Council that ordered the burning of Huss, and declared to be "unworthy, useless and harmful." On the inside the papacy was slowly discerning the rising tide of revolt, while on the outside the new culture was sharpening the pens of the critics.

Three typical popes of Luther's own day, and each in his own way, indicate in their different careers the imposing and obstinate array of obstacles the reformer had to face in the great work he wrought in the name of the Head of the Church.

Alexander VI was the pope during whose pontificate the lowest depths of degradation of the papacy was reached. In the year in which Christopher Columbus discovered America, and when Luther was but nine years old, this man, hitherto known as Cardinal Roderigo Borgia, ascended the papal throne. He pursued the same policy as Pope Sixtus IV, who died when Luther was but one year old, and who had conducted himself in such a manner as to warrant the belief that he regarded himself not only as the official head of the Church, but as not even being indirectly related to Christianity as a moral and religious system. With more boldness and skill, and with greater good fortune, Alexander followed in the way of the wicked Sixtus. He was certainly the most notorious of the venal and secular popes of the period of the Renaissance, and probably the most immoral, though it is but fair to say that in the matter of wickedness he had some formidable pontifical rivals among his immediate predecessors, such as Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII. Under the influence of Alexander the papacy sank to the level of other Italian principalities and showed itself, like them, also, ready to sacrifice even the welfare of Italy for its own temporal advantage, and to further the designs of the Borgia family. The sole aim of this pope in securing the papacy seemed to be the formation of an independent kingdom for the benefit of his own family. Quite in harmony with the character of the man, he had obtained the coveted tiara by intrigue, and after one of the most corrupt elections known in history. He never shrank from any form of diplomatic intrigue, nor from war or assassination, in order to realize his purposes and carry out his designs in behalf of his own. He made himself stronger than his rival secular princes by using the spiritual weapons of excommunication and interdict, which they could not use and which had

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not yet been rendered entirely ineffective. In a country proverbial in the sixteenth century for the terrible laxity of its morals, he was one of the worst of his time. The Holy Father of Christendom had abandoned even the pretence of decency, and followed a course of life not merely openly secular, but impudently and scandalously immoral. He was one of the vilest, most sensual and cruel men of whom history affords us any knowledge. He may be fairly rated as the culminating figure in a considerable group of pontifical badness. Surrounded by troops of courtesans, as a kind of papal monstrosity he made the Vatican the scene of orgies that would have satisfied the depraved tastes of Caligula, Commodus, or Heliogabalus. He despoiled the Church of its rightful adornments as the bride of Christ, and exposed her to the European nations in all her hideous and unbecoming medieval deformities, so that she had become a byword and reproach, making inevitable the coming revolt on the part of the people who shared in a clearer apprehension of the gospel and of the nature and sanctity of the Church.

The papal and other documents relating to the children of Alexander, at least six in number, and which have been found in the Vatican archives and in other places, reveal an extraordinary moral degeneracy and laxity at Rome. The baseness of the pope's character, the sensuality of his court and the mysterious murders which filled Rome with terror, gave currency to stories which pictured him, as well as his children, Lucretia and Cæsar, as monsters of badness. In his absence from the Vatican he left Lucretia as his representative at the papal residence, while the world wondered at the abnormal spectacle of a pope's bastard, and a woman at that, sitting as the regent on the steps of the throne of St. Peter and exercising supreme authority even at the fountain head of papal dominion and authority. He lived in open illicit relations with one concubine named Rosa Vanozza, and without any regard for the disorderly proceeding or any apparent compunction used his high position to promote the interests of his son Cæsar Borgia whom he had in turn made his bishop and archbishop. The vices of this Cæsar were equal to those of his father. In a bad age he abandoned the priesthood that he might the more freely, without any kind of ecclesiastical restraint, run his career of crime. Among his other enormities

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it is alleged that he mixed the cup of poison which his father drank by mistake and from which he died at the end of his ill-spent life as an unworthy priest, an apostate in his high vocation and, as the supreme pontiff, a traitor to the spiritual interests of the Church of which he was the avowed spiritual and titular head.

Of this Cæsar, the degenerate son of a bad father, it has been said that he was at once the image, the ideal and the terror of his age.

Alexander's chief objects in life seem to have been his own personal security and the advancement of his own children. In view of the loftiness and sacredness of his high position he was a selfish voluptuary of the most ignoble type—a man who in the name and for the ends of religion employed fraud, treachery and crime. The condition in which the papacy soon found itself showed that his policy had not even the redeeming merit of effecting the security of the hierarchy over which he so ignominiously presided.

When Alexander died on August 8, 1503, but two years before Luther entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt, it is said that his departure called out unspeakable joy at Rome. He had proven himself to be most hostile to the interests of that religion whose chief exponent he was supposed to be. Even he had acknowledged, although it must be confessed somewhat tardily, the need for reform. But this impulse to better things soon passed away in the stress of politics and dynastic injustice. But even Alexander VI made his contribution to reform. His secularization of the Church, his scandalous life and the indignation it aroused contributed in no inconsiderable degree to prepare the way for that new religious movement, then near at hand, and which was destined to open up a new and brighter chapter in the history of Christianity. He Who hath all power and Who directeth all things by the word of His power could so order it that even this notoriously wicked pope should become, in spite of himself and by reason of his very enormities, a herald and forerunner of reform.

The state of the Church could be expected to be in nothing superior to its bad but tolerated head. Of one prince of the ecclesiastical establishment, who had been drawn from the obscurity of a Franciscan monastery, it was said that his chief mis-

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tress flaunted 8000 ducats' worth of pearls on her embroidered slippers. In one night of gambling one lay prince lost to one of the unregenerate cardinals 100,000 ducats. Another cardinal left at his death a fortune of 100,000 ducats, largely the result of his skill in the same unrighteous industry, while still another of these papal electors was the leading sportsman of his day in fashionable Roman society.

The state of Rome was in accord with that of the sacred college of cardinals. Prosperous criminals who were by some chance, or by some failure to recognize the fact of their opulence, arrested, bought their liberty at the Vatican. The incidental allusions of contemporaries to the condition of Rome make somber, and some of it grewsome, reading. A writer in the "American Catholic Quarterly Review," as late as 1900 observes "that Borgia secured his election through the rankest simony is a fact too well authenticated to admit a doubt." Frequently prurient comedies and still more prurient dances enlivened the sacred palace. In 1501 one historian dispassionately notes in his diary that the pope was unable to attend to his spiritual duties, but was not prevented from enjoying in the Vatican what was known as a "Chestnut Dance" and other performances of fifty nude courtesans whom Cæsar Borgia had brought in for the pleasure of his father. This even a fair-minded Romanist ought to be willing to see—that there has been no Borgia among the popes since the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

In the time of Alexander the Church was moving in an atmosphere of sordid financial and political intrigue. In the fast growing splendor and opulence of Rome the Church was nearing the edge of a formidable chasm of which even the vicar of Christ seemed to be unaware.

VIII

Another of these Renaissance popes, who in himself and his career indicated the urgent need of reformation, was the martial "Vicar of Christ" known in the history of the papacy as Julius II, who, after the brief pontificate of Pius III, that lasted less than a month, succeeded the infamous Alexander VI. If the one object of Alexander had been the advancement of his own children, that of Julius was to build up and strengthen the temporal sovereignty of the pope. He ascended the papal throne

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in 1503, while Luther was yet a student in the University of Erfurt. His ambition, if more respectable than that of his immediate predecessors, was yet altogether worldly. He was determined to make the papal state the strongest political power in Italy. He was the most warlike among all the successors of St. Peter. It was he who afforded the world of his day the spectacle of the supreme religious teacher of Christendom and the Christian King of France, Louis XII, the "First son of the Church," engaged in war with one another. At the opening of his campaign against Louis, Julius was smitten with a sickness that was supposed to be unto death. But to the amazement of his court, he left his bed, in January, 1511, and betook himself to the camp of his soldiers. Snow covered the ground but the pope set an example to his papal troops by enduring all the hardships of the camp. At his death he was known as the "pontefice terrible."

A satire known as "Julius Exclusus," which appeared after the pontiff's death, represented him as appearing at the gate of heaven with great din of warlike noises. Peter suggested that as he was a brave man and had a large army and much gold and was also a busy builder, he might build his own paradise. At the same time the apostle reminded him that he would have to build the foundations deep and strong so as to resist the assaults of the devil. Julius retorted, so the story runs, by peremptorily giving Peter three weeks to open heaven to him and that in case of refusal he would begin a siege with 60,000 men.

Whatever the gain may have been which the policy of Julius brought to the papacy, it certainly involved in the issue great hazard and loss. He was a man of fine mental endowments, capable of sympathizing with all things great in life and art, but he was a secular prince wearing the papal tiara. He was a soldier wholly devoted to war, in which he led in person. Much of the time he lived in the field, subdued his Italian neighbors, and, had his reign lasted long enough, would no doubt have conquered all Italy. He fought like a soldier and lived like a prince, but he was economical in financial matters, even though he was the patron of Bramante, Michelangelo and Raphael. Devoted to war, he yet valued the arts of peace. The foundations of St. Peter's had been traced by one of his predecessors, Nicholas V, but they were laid by Julius, who failed not to encourage the rare group of men

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of genius who adorned the period of his pontificate, so full of contradictions. Of him a contemporary says: "He was fortunate rather than prudent, courageous rather than strong, but ambitious and beyond measure desirous of every kind of greatness." Piety was not one of the notable traits of Julius' reign, but it afforded an agreeable relief from the coarse scandals of the reign of Alexander VI. He had, it is true, a family of three daughters, in strong contrast with the Hildebrandian ideals, but the festivities attending the marriage of one of them were not appointed for the Vatican, nor did any of them give offence by their ostentatious presence in the pontifical palace.

But Julius sacrificed all interest in the moral and religious concerns of Christendom, even though the firm establishment of the states of the Church for the next three centuries was his work. To the end he kept up his tortuous diplomacy. In spite of his own bull against simony, the curia remained as corrupt as ever, and money continued to be raised in all the evil ways which were the fruits of the evil resourcefulness of the papal system. From a worldly standpoint, he had exalted the papal throne to the eminence of the national thrones of Europe. In the terrific convulsion which Luther's Reformation produced, it has been said that "the institution of the papacy might have fallen in ruins had not Julius re-established it by force of arms."

But this pope who did so much in a worldly way, and whose patronage of art was so commendable, did not have the temper of a reformer, and his eyes, so beclouded by temporal ideals and concerns, could not discern the signs of the times. One of the best accredited historians of the Church, Dr. Schaff, writing of the period immediately preceding the Reformation, says: "In vain will the student look for signs that Julius II had any intimation of the new religious reforms which the times called for and which Luther began. What measures this pope, strong in will and bold in execution, might have employed if the movement in the north had begun in his day, no one can surmise. The monk of Erfurt walked the streets in Rome during this pontificate for the first and only time. While Luther was ascending the *scala sancta* on his knees, and running about to the churches, wishing his parents were in purgatory that he might pray them out, Julius was having perfected a magnificently jeweled tiara, costing 200,000 ducats, which he put on for the first time on the anniver-

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sary of his coronation, 1511. These two men, both of humble beginnings, would have been more a match for each other than Luther and Julius' successor, the Medici, the man of luxurious culture."

It is said that there was great joy among the people in Rome in the year 1513, when it was announced, in due medieval form, that Julius II was dead, that their spiritual father, whose blessing they so devoutly received, was no more, that his fierce and warlike spirit had fled forever. Men respected Julius, but they feared and hated him. Having succeeded in making the policy of the Church more respectable, he had not even made a pretence of raising it above its purely secular course. Accordingly, when the tolling of the great bell in the Capitol, which was sounded only on such solemn occasions, announced to Rome and to the Church that the Holy Father had been deposed by death, there was appreciation of him as the founder of the papal states, but little veneration for his memory, and still less affection for him as the chief shepherd of the flock of Christ, whose vicar on earth he had claimed to be.

The warlike Julius was succeeded on the pontifical throne by the chief voluptuary of his time, Giovanni di Medici, who took the official title of Leo X. Men smiled, it was said, upon his succession, felicitating themselves, as they believed, on the fact that he was more like a gentle lamb than a fierce lion. The papacy of Leo is great in the history of culture, but insignificant in the history of religion and the Church. If he shared but little in the martial tastes of his predecessor, he was equally secular in tone. In place of military tactics and strategy, he put the arts of diplomacy and devotion to heathen ideals of culture. Politics and literature filled up his horizon. He loved pleasure, and was an adept in duplicity. The story was widely believed that at the opening of his pontificate he had given expression to his epicurean conception of the supreme office in the Church in writing to his brother Julian: "Let us enjoy the papacy, since God has given it to us." He became pope four years before Luther's theses, but any spiritual conception of his exalted office came not with him to the papal chair. A liberal patron of learning, fond of sumptuous feasts and splendid outlays, intent only upon worldly advantage, he did nothing to appease the growing demand for reform, which, when at length it came to his own

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pontificate with irresistible energy and began to revolutionize Europe, he estimated to be nothing more than a squabble between jealous and bigoted monastic orders.

The festivities at the new pope's coronation showed at once to all men that a reign of unusual worldly magnificence had been inaugurated. The pomp and splendor of the great procession on that occasion was famous even in that day of gorgeous pageants. In his patronage of art and the pursuit of the political interests of the house of Medici, Leo seems to have been unmindful of the real interests of Christendom. In him paganism seemed to have installed itself in the seat of papal dominion. Among his favorite amusements the chase occupied a leading place, although such a form of pleasure was forbidden by canonical law to the earthly vicegerent of God, and other clergy. Portions of the year he passed, booted and spurred, in his devotion to such unsanctified pursuits. At one assembling of this order the pope found himself in the midst of eighteen cardinals, besides other prelates, musicians, actors and servants, the ecclesiastical sportsmen being aided by a pack of sixty or seventy dogs. Leo, too, was fond of the theater, being accustomed to attend plays in the palaces of the cardinals, those of rich bankers, in St. Angelo, and looking on as they were performed in the Vatican itself—some of them, it is said, being of the lascivious order. Festivities of all sorts absorbed much of the pope's attention, the horizon of his outlook seeming always to be his own pleasure. He encouraged the vanity of wretched poetasters, and rewarded them with wine mixed with water in proportion to the blunders made in their sometimes wretched versification and rhyming. The number of such blunders that called for this peculiar form of remuneration, it is said, was large. He had a vulgar kind of delight in practical forms of joking, totally unbecoming in an ordinary representative of the Christian religion, not to say anything of the alleged vicegerent of the Almighty. He was habitually frivolous, playing cards much of the time with the cardinals, and concluding the game by contributing money to the bystanders.

In spending so much of his leisure in sports and games, the pope was not only indulging in that which gave him pleasure but, as was affirmed of him by a contemporary, because he also had been led to think that indulgence in such recreation served the additional purpose of prolonging his pontifical life. Con-

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certs and comedies were features of many festive evenings passed within the sacred courts of the Vatican, when the guests frequently numbered as many as two thousand. His success at sports, it is also said, had something to do with the granting of pontifical favor, those seeking papal advancement finding the best time to present their petitions to be at the end of a day of successful hunting of the stag or fishing in the Lake of Bolsema.

During Leo's pontificate a new social order at Rome came into existence, an order founded upon luxury, art and wealth, the leading features of Italian papal civilization having become spacious palaces, splendid and lavish entertainments and a court of literary dependents and obsequious flunkeys. Princely luxuriousness absorbed the papal funds. Opulent bankers, such as Strozzi, gave great banquets at which the cardinals of the Church fraternized with courtesans, while the pope, personally temperate after the irregularities of his youth, was sometimes in attendance. Men of abnormal appetities, one conspicuous example being a Dominican friar, were brought to the table of the holy father to amuse him and his guests by an exhibition of their incredible gluttony. At carnival time the pope entered without restraint into the wild gaiety of Rome, and comedies of libidinous character were staged before the eyes of the man who claimed to sit in the chair of St. Peter, but who had, in fact, despoiled his high office of its sacredness and prostituted it into a vehicle of his own carnal propensities. This reigning head of Christendom had but few spiritual interests and but little personal religion. Of him it was wittily said that his learning and fine tastes would have made him a perfect pope, if he had but combined with these attainments some knowledge of religious matters and some inclination to piety. By some writers Leo has been commended for his fasts, but it should be remembered that his weekly self-abnegation of this order was intended rather to reduce the flesh than to subdue it. A wit, a scholar and an epicure, he set himself diligently to enjoy that which had been conferred upon him. When not engaged in the pursuit of grosser pleasures of the life that now is, he was dabbling in European politics.

Of this Leo X, so destitute of seriousness and knowledge of the situation confronting him when the Reformation came, it has been said by Bishop Creighton, one of the fairest historians of

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the papacy, "He studied his personal appearance, he was proud of his delicately formed hands, and called attention to them by wearing a profusion of splendid rings. He chose to live in public, and surrounded himself with amusing companions; he enjoyed a laugh, and his mirth was not always refined. He took pleasure in the vulgar witticism of buffoons, and found cynical delight in the sight of human nature reduced to the lowest level of animalism. He encouraged by his laughter portentous feats of gluttony, and though habitually temperate himself, he liked to see the eyes of his guests glisten with undisguised enjoyment at the dainty fare which his table set before them. Sometimes he played tricks upon their voracity and served unclean animals, such as monkeys and crows, dressed with rich sauces which beguiled the palates of his guests, whose confusion was great when they discovered the truth."

In behalf of Leo it has sometimes been said that his qualities were those of the epoch to which Italy long looked back as the period of its greatest glory. It may be so, but to him belongs the unenviable distinction of having turned the Vatican, the dwelling place of God's vicegerent on earth, which he claimed it to be, into the house of frivolity and reveling, and of so steeping himself in the pleasures of time and sense as to have rendered him oblivious of the impending catastrophe in the north. Lavish without reflection, the pope had not only exhausted all his spiritual arts but his treasury as well, the one rendering him bankrupt as a moral and religious influence and the other inducing him to resort to mercenary expedients, unscriptural in character and revolting to the most enlightened Christian judgment of the times.

Such were the popes of the Renaissance. Luther saw Julius II on his visit to Rome in 1511, and Leo was pope when Tetzel's disgraceful huckstering of indulgences roused the soul of the great Reformer and stirred his moral indignation. Leo had made some pretence at reform, but the sincerity of that was doubted and the results showed its ineffectiveness. Decrees were passed for the reformation of the Roman Court and the repression of concubinage, blasphemy and simony among the inferior clergy. In the year before the nailing up of Luther's theses, Leo had also issued a bull in which he renewed and reaffirmed the famous bull *Unam Sanctum,* issued by Boniface VIII, in November, 1302, against Philip the Fair of France.

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This bull contains this passage: "There are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. Our Lord said not of these two swords, 'It is too much' but 'It is enough.' Both are in the power of the Church, the one the spiritual, to be used by the Church, the other the material, for the Church; the former, that of the priests, the latter that of kings and soldiers, to be wielded at the command and at the sufferance of the priest. One sword must be under the other, the temporal under the spiritual. The spiritual instituted the temporal, and judges whether that power is well exercised. We, therefore, assert, define and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation to believe that every human being it subject to the Pontiff of Rome." Thus on the very eve of the Reformation we encounter the most extreme of all assertions of the supremacy of the papacy over the whole world reaffirmed, and by the most luxurious and worldly of all the popes, who was himself to be a witness of the rending asunder of western Christendom, the inauguration of the modern era in the history of mankind, and the overthrow of a power that had continued for more than a thousand years. For the first time in hundreds of years men were aroused in feeling and untrammeled in reasoning. The cup of indignation was more than full. If Europe was to remain Christian, the Reformation must come.

That the Reformation was urgently called for is evident in the deplorable and astonishing ignorance of the clergy even so late as the period of Luther's death. In England, for example, a royal visitation had been instituted, extending over a series of years beginning in 1547, the year of the accession of Edward VI. A report of a visitation under the direction of Bishop Hooper, in the diocese of Gloucester in 1551, has been published along with comments. One of the purposes contemplated in this visitation was to find out the qualifications or disqualifications, as it proved to be, for the important function of preaching. The illiteracy exhibited in this report was of this order: "Three hundred and eleven clergymen were examined, and of these one hundred and seventy-one were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, though, strangely enough, all but thirty-four could tell the chapter in which they were to be found; ten were unable to repeat the Lord's prayer; twenty-seven could not tell who was its author; and thirty could not tell where it was to be found.

"The report deserves study as a description of the condition of

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the clergy of the Church of England before the Reformation. These clergymen of the diocese of Gloucester were asked nine questions—three under separate heads: 1. How many commandments are there? Where are they to be found? Repeat them. 2. What are the articles of the Christian Faith? Repeat them. Prove them from Scripture. 3. Repeat the Lord's Prayer. How do you know it is the Lord's? Where is it found?"

That the equipment for the work of preaching was ludicrously meager is evident in this summary, given in Lindsay's Reformation in England:

"Only fifty of the three hundred and eleven answered all these simple questions, and of the fifty, nineteen are noted as having answered 'mediocriter.' Eight clergymen could not answer any single one of the questions; and while one knew that the number of the Commandments was ten, he knew nothing else. Two clergymen, when asked why the Lord's Prayer was so called, answered that it was because Christ had given it to His disciples when he told them to watch and pray; another said that he did not know why it was called the Lord's prayer, but that he was quite willing to believe that it was the Lord's because the king had said so; and another answered that all he knew about it was that such was the common report. Two clergymen said that while they could not prove the articles of the Creed from Scripture, they accepted them on the authority of the king; and one said that he could not tell what was the Scripture authority for the Creed, unless it was the first chapter of Genesis, but that it did not matter, since the king had guaranteed it to be correct."

"It seemed," says Dr. Schaff, in writing of the situation confronting Christendom, "as if Providence allowed the papal office at the close of the medieval age to be filled by pontiffs spiritually unworthy and morally degenerate, that it might be known for all time that it was not through the papacy the Church was to be reformed and brought out of its medieval formalism and scholasticism. What popes refused to attempt, another group of men with no distinction of office accomplished."

If, then, the evils of the Church were enormous—and this was admitted, in his time and place, by each of the Renaissance popes —it was something that they were admitted, and that their removal had even been suggested, and that higher ideals of life

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were being contemplated and held up to the expiring Middle Ages. Signs of danger and promise were strangely mingled, but the official leaders of the Church did not seem to be able to discern either. The period of the papacy immediately preceding Luther, the instrument of the Church's deliverance, came to an end in the tawdry luxuriance and unscrupulous measure of Leo X, a man to whom the objections and arguments of the refomer sounded like the accents of an unknown tongue. To such a man Luther's attack upon the indulgence traffic of Tetzel was of importance only in so far as it imperiled one of his sources of revenue. Of the spiritual significance of that attack he could have no understanding whatever.

Had the demoralization calling so urgently fo- -eform been but half as bad as it actually was, the sequel migut have been entirely different. Had there been no Luther there had been no reform, but Luther was demanded by the situation, and, in some sense, made by the conditions he confronted. Half-grown evils do not compel revolutions. They create, not men like Luther, but men like Erasmus, whose principle respecting the evils of his times was this: "Evils which men cannot remedy, they must look at through their fingers." To compel the growth of thoroughbred reformers, error must have time to come to a head. Evil must declare itself by acting out its real character and to the full before it dies. Tetzel was only the exponent of the full-grown abuses of the medieval penitential system. Froude called him a "spiritual hawker," whose business it was to "sell passports to the easiest places in purgatory." His methods were so insolent to the common sense, and so offensive to the indignant consciences of good men, that the Reformation, the restatement of the old faith of the gospel, came somewhat in the form of a stupendous reaction against those impulses and impostures which gave the world, and tolerated in the Church, men like Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X.

The literature of a period not only serves to indicate the type of the literary expression that maintained at a particular time, but is also a reflection of the spirit of that particular period. The literature of the later Middle Ages, which grew out of the opening intelligence of Europe at that time, is full of interest as one of the adjuncts that served to prepare the way for the Reformation of the sixteenth century. In the judgment of Hallam,

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"the greater part of the literature of the Middle Ages, at least from the twelfth century, may be regarded as artillery being leveled against the clergy." Much of it was taken up with satirical and other forms of literary bombardment of the avarice, inconsistencies and moral degeneracy of the papacy in its head and members. In April, 1520, there appeared Ulrich Von Hutten's scathing pamphlet entitled *Vadiscus*. It clearly shows the direction which German interest was taking. It says in a dialogue with epigrammatic triplets against the Roman court: "Three things keep Rome in power: The authority of the pope, the bones of the saints and the traffic in indulgences. Three things are banished from Rome: Simplicity, temperance and piety. Three things the Romans trade in: Christ, ecclesiastical benefices and women. Three things are disliked in Rome: A General Council, a reformation of the clergy and the fact that the Germans are beginning to open their eyes. Three things pilgrims usually bring back from Rome: Soiled conscience, a sick stomach and an empty purse."

In England, in "Piers the Plowman," Langland sets forth in a series of visions the condition of the State and the Church, in which mild reproof and humorous satire are exchanged for righteous wrath, and fierce invectives are hurled at a corrupt Church and its unworthy priesthood. The friars furnish every impersonated vice, and are depicted as the foes of every virtue. The cardinal legate is represented as having been seen in England riding in his pride and pomp, with lewdness, rapacity, merciless extortion and insolence in his train.

Geoffrey Chaucer did not have the temper of a reformer, but the picture of the worldly and corrupt representatives of the papal Church which Chaucer draws is no more pleasing and favorable than pictures presented by his contemporaries in England and Germany.

The vivid portrayals given us in the "Canterbury Tales" of the typical churchman of the day—the pleasure-loving, worldly monk, the easy-going friar, the lying, unscrupulous pardoner—all possess satirical bearing which it is impossible to ignore.

"In Rome," wrote Hutten, "you may live from robbery, commit murder and sacrilege, break the laws as you will; your talk may be shameful, your actions criminal; you may revel in lust, and deny God in Heaven; but if you do but bring money to Rome

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you are a most respectable person. Virtue and heavenly blessings are bought and sold at Rome. You may even buy the privilege of sinning in the future. At any rate, it is madness to be virtuous; sensible people will be wicked."

In Italy, Petrarch invoked fierce maledictions upon the proud and voluptuous papal court. Boccaccio draws a frightful picture of the depravity of Italian cloisters and of the papal court, while Dante, chief among the poets of his country, had the courage and fidelity to medieval teaching to consign to purgatory and hell such popes as Nicholas III, Boniface VIII and Clement V. Similar citations from the literary productions of the time might be adduced almost indefinitely, indicating the great popular unrest, and presenting the religious condition of their age as the writers saw it and portrayed it in their indignant protests and satire directed at the cupidity, inconsistency, fraud and licentiousness of the degenerate Church and its official classes.

IX

That which Europe needed at the end of the Middle Ages, and desired in its inmost heart, was not a Renaissance, a revival of intellectual activity, but a deep and fundamental reformation in the sphere of religion. The existing conditions called not so much for a regeneration of art and learning, as for the regeneration of the Church in its alleged head and all of its members. What was of the greatest urgency was not the proclamation of the tidings that the ancient world, with its treasures, had been rediscovered and made accessible to the appreciation and estimates of mankind, but the real Glad Tidings preached to the poor, and which, with its mighty transformations, could bring blessings to the world lying in wickedness and sin, and effect the real reformation of Church and Society. To the credit of the men who then lived, be it said, they were not unaware of the real source of the evils that afflicted the land. In the degeneracy of the Church and the evils that had fastened themselves upon its head and members, the men of that day recognized, with increasing certainty, the cause of the widespread corruption. The Church, they perceived, had become merged in the world. The salt had lost its savor, and the fair garments in which the Church had at first been arrayed, had been bedraggled in the mire by the very

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men who were supposed to be the conservators of their whiteness. The vessels of faith had been tarnished by their own accredited custodians, by the men who were expected to be the heralds of divine truth and examples to the flock of Christ.

The decay of the Church was the dominating evil of the times, and this was felt wherever the longing after a better and restored spiritual life was deepest and most widespread. The cry for reformation, not merely of the intellectual and æsthetic aspect of life, not simply for a renewal of an interest in art and learning, went up from the land. The hope for the coming time lay in the demand for what was of more fundamental importance—the renewal of the Church in head and members. The splendid plans of conciliar reformation of the morals and administrations of the Church instituted at Pisa, Constance and Basel had all miscarried, and the hurt of the people went unhealed. It was all a hopeless expenditure in plans, money and labor, and dealt only with the outworks of the apostate Church. The Renaissance very soon became, in part at least, an adjunct of the movement for reform, but the revival of interest in art and learning, both of which had long been in exile, very soon proved its inadequacy as a regenerative force.

The Italian society of the second half of the fifteenth century was brilliant in its culture, full of æsthetic interests, and rich in natural talents, but in its real life it was immoral, corrupt and full of animalism. What the Church in Italy needed was not art or quickened intellectual life, or new methods of administration, so much as new men.

In the forefront of the movement for reform stood Germany, whose people had a depth and sincerity surpassing those of the peoples in the south of Europe. There spiritual interests had been kept more to the front. Those great desires which can only find satisfaction in the gospel had a basis deep in the heart of that people. There, more than elsewhere in Europe, people were longing after the certainty of salvation. As Hegel has set forth, while other maritime nations were going out to America and the Indies in quest of riches and the dominion of lands, Luther was opening up new realms of thought and life among a serious-minded people. Among this people were heroic men who made the revived classical learning the assistant of Christian revelation. In the Renaissance there were helps to the acquisition of the

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truth of the Scriptures, but that Word itself, in the hands of Luther, became the primary means of restoring the Church. That was back of the theses which inaugurated this most vitalizing movement in modern Christianity and civilization.

The fifteenth century had attempted a reformation of the Church by experiments with its constitution, by laying down new rules for the discipline of clergy and laity, but it was all in vain. When, however, in the sixteenth century, Luther attacked the doctrines of the Church, showed its departure from the faith once for all delivered unto the saints, he touched, without fully being aware of it, the single point from which the renovation must proceed, and from which the whole being and life of the Church could be restored and transformed. Then the long-wished for and fervently-desired Reformation was at hand, and the modern era in the history of mankind had begun.

The old Church on the eve of the Reformation had come upon days of such awful moral degradation that it was utterly unfit to contend against the forces of decay, on the one hand, and of reform on the other.

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SECTION II

THE CHIEF PERSONAL FACTOR IN THE MOVEMENT

The man who is right with himself and with his God, in his deepest and most secret life, is the man who possesses that peculiar creative moral power which is always at the basis of great revolutions and reconstructions in the spheres of religion and civilization. When new reforms are pressed on the public conviction by overpowering necessity and constraining justice, commending themselves to the deepest conscience and the most correct judgment, the vast majority of those who recognize the righteousness of those reforms are slow to espouse, champion and defend them. In a period in which such reforms are urgently needed most men promptly inquire what other men think, what the journals of the days are saying, and what personal advantages are likely to ensue. But surely self-assertion, within proper limitations and in the proper spirit, is needful, not only as an expression of all high character, but an essential in the forward movements of mankind. That righteous self-assertion, even under adverse conditions and in perilous times, has always been a distinctive mark of the great captains and leaders. Nothing more certainly reduces the grandeur of human life, and paralyzes the forces that make of men the great champions of faith and righteousness in the earth, than that inert kind of gregariousness which makes a man to be content in being and doing like every one else at the critical eras in human history. The stalwart leaders of their day and generation who have been instrumental in starting peoples along new paths of progress have never denied themselves and limited their influence by shrinking into the crowd and losing their identity. Next to the rejection of God and His truth, this is the way to the suicide of high character and to diminishing influence.

When Emerson looked upon a great city, it is said that in his estimate, it stood for something more than streets and warehouses, crowds and external splendors. To him it stood most of all for the few noteworthy men who dwelt in the big town, and when he had seen them he had exhausted his interest in the place.

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That which makes men distinguished and eminently useful in the world is their capacity and willingness to project themselves trustfully and courageously into the lives of other men—the willingness to stand alone with the truth in spite of the clamor of majorities and the threats of the officially and commercially great and powerful. Such men are not content to allow the secondary and the partial to swerve them from the supreme and the eternal verities; they will not let the mandates of princes or emperors or potentates in either Church or State outweigh God's solemn voice and subordinate the higher utilities of life. In consequence of such considerations there is an undying interest in striking and powerful historical characters, an interest which pervades the most widely differing schools of sentiment and doctrine. It is this peculiar interest that, in an unusual degree, attaches to the name of Luther, the dominating personal factor in the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century, and which is always inseparable from his name.

I

The name of this distinguished Teutonic chieftain and leader of his people in the revolt and work of religious reconstruction which mark the termination of the Middle Ages and the frontier of the new age, looms larger and larger as the years go by. More and more the place assigned him by the wisest, but most widely differing interpreters of the persons and factors that have entered into the making of human history, is that of leader and chieftain. More and more is he rightfully assigned the first place among the recognized leaders of the modern era, the right and proper place in harmony with the fitness of things. The memory of the assertion of great and fundamentally important principles and of great achievements is constantly linked with his name. The men who know best how to estimate the forces which have made great civilizations and given permanence to great religious movements constantly accord him the primacy. Far beyond the circle of scholars and theologians, far beyond the limits of all ecclesiastical organizations, this great leader and constructive force touches life at many points, and his name continues to avail in kindling great enthusiasms and mighty movements. In consequence of the simple transaction of nailing certain propositions upon the church door at Wittenberg in Ger-

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many, which, according to the academic methods of his time, he prosposed to discuss, coupled with that remarkable courage with which he followed that transaction up to its logical consequences, the civilization of modern times and their civil and religious freedom were rendered possible. Through that simple act as a beginning and what ensued, he was instrumental in God's hands in bringing untold blessings to men in all succeeding ages. Since the end of the great career of St. Paul the footprints of no man have left so deep an impression upon the sands of time. The chief among the reformers was not ambitious of distinction. He anticipated none of that greatness which men have been constantly prone to attach to his name, and were he here today, at the end of four hundred years, he would no doubt be surprised more than others at the posthumous renown that has come to be his and at the constant testimony which is borne to his greatness.

The more this man is studied the more do his vigor, earnestness, courage, decision of character, sincere and hearty piety challenge our admiration. Among those who have come to interpret him without prejudice he has always been loved and honored, while he has been hated by the enemies of light and feared by the trimmer and time-server. He was, so far as men can discern, always ready not only to contend for the truth but to lay down his life for the cause of his Lord and Master, in the interpretation of whose person and work he always discerned the ground of human redemption and the basis of true civilization. In him we are constantly encountering a life that is always battling its way and overcoming opposing forces, while at the same time we are led into the study of one who in his own rich and varied experience passed through the purifying fires of temptation and the struggles of a soul greater than those of any other man in the sphere of religion since St. Paul and Augustine. In him we are constantly confronting a character that reflects in an extraordinary degree the conflict, strength and victory of human nature under the influences of divine grace. In him we are continually coming in contact with the tragic and the humorous, the childlike in combination with the imposing massiveness of the great and mighty. Rough and turbulent at times, in a rough and turbulent age, there was also a charming gentleness in his character, and we can adopt Carlyle's well-known characterization of him: "Unsubduable granite, piercing far and wide into the

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heavens, yet in the clefts of its fountains, green, beautiful valleys with flowers."

Hallam attributes to Machiavelli the profound suggestion that states are formed or reformed by the influence of one man, a suggestion which finds illustrious verification in the case of Luther. Not only was he, as has been said, the father of the German language; he was the incarnation of German genius, the mighty intellectual and moral power that shaped the destiny of the German people. The world now rejects with scorn the proud and arrogant boast of the pompous Louis XIV, who affirmed that "he was the State," but in all places where the judgment is the most enlightened it grants that in the brain and heart and conscience of an humble Augustinian brother there was hidden, not only the splendid future of his own country, but also the future of much of that individual religious liberty, that independence of thought, and those restless struggles of conscience out of which have grown the most significant and splendid achievements in every land of Christendom. To him, in modern days, our thoughts go back, and from him forward, for unto him, as the pivotal point of personal influence, is attributed the turning place in the Church's history. What follows after has been set down, much of it, to his credit; and what went before is now compared and judged by the standard of that which he reaffirmed and led to a successful issue in the stormy times of the century in which he did his work and ended his earthly career. In consequence of his commanding personality, his Christian courage, his faith and magnetic words, a quickening breath went through the Europe of his day, in all parts of which there soon began to prevail a secret conviction that the world was about to witness, not the establishment of a new sect, but a new spiritual birth of the Church and a widespread reconstruction of society. Thousands of men, born of the new spirit, rallied round this chieftain, who was the man for the crisis, and the gladly-recognized leader, who was the instrument under God in this widespread revival.

It was the conjunction of the hour and the man which made the new era in which to one brave heart was assigned the mighty task of checking the ravages of sin and darkness and to start the multitude, kings and subjects and all peoples, along a nobler and upward path. Had not something come to purify the heart and enlighten the mind in Luther's day, the world would have re-

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lapsed into barbarism. Accordingly, the transformation of society and civilization associated always with his name and leadership was the first and most far-reaching in its effects of all those which have been conspicuous in the course of modern history.

At the particular junction of events in Germany at which he came, his capacity for anger and assault, coupled with positive reaffirmations of the truths of the Gospel, was something the world needed. The times demanded the internal honesty, and the utter fearlessness, and hot temper, of the reformer no longer content to mildly contemplate the abuses of the times. The mighty work to be done waited for a Hercules of Christian mold and convictions, a strong son of power whose words, in the language of the common people, should sound like martial music in times of conflict, to summon them to a new appraisement of the gospel of grace and a new estimate of their own place and power and prerogatives. The world was waiting for a witness of religious thinking, experience and freedom, some one big enough and comprehensive enough to actualize the best thought of his age on these lines in conjunction with a renewed sense of that joyous trust in God which overcomes the world. The necessities of the situation in Church and State called for a man who could rally the dissenting forces in a revolt against a Church which had forgotten the precepts of its Founder, against the tyranny of a traditional scholasticism and the arrogant assumptions of a priest caste, and lead the way for the restoration of a biblical theology as a strictly historical science. A crisis had come in the history of Christianity and civilization that called for an independent spirit who would tolerate no outside interference and who was not to be deterred or frustrated by the mandates from thrones, councils or popes. Happy was it for his own age and fortunate for subsequent ages that, in that day, Germany could grow one of these out of its fertile soil.

Of Luther, who came to his mighty task in the fulness of time, and who at once became the greatest personal force in the great movement of the sixteenth century inseparably associated with his name, his distinguished Scotch biographer, the late Professor Lindsay, has said that "history knows no other man of such kingly power." Of him also the distinguished Baptist scholar, Prof. W. C. Wilkinson, has said, "No other man perhaps ever lived, who, simply by what he was, stamped himself so indelibly

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as did Luther upon the universal imagination of the human race; no other man who, by his own single force, did so much to turn into a new channel the main current of human history."

Many causes had been at work preparing the way for the far-reaching Teutonic revolt. The hour was at hand, and in Luther the man came with the hour. The chief of the reformers had an advantage in the time of his appearing. The Christian world of his day was ripe for the change in which he was destined to lead. To the transformation he was to effect, the great earlier movements of the human mind and society had contributed. The failure of the reformatory councils held in the preceding century at Pisa, Constance and Basel had left a deep impression on all sincere souls of the inadequacy of the methods of reform contemplated by such great gatherings of the medieval Church. Preachers, the founders of religious orders, the councils, all in turn were bewailing the evils of the times and denouncing the abounding superstition and oppression that so urgently called for a change. Inventions like that of gunpowder and of the mariner's compass were serving to break up the old civilization and pointing to a new world beyond the Atlantic. The invention of printing was making knowledge available among all classes of men. The study of Greek literature was creating disgust with the barbarous anachronisms of the scholastic theology and displacing a method of culture that was peculiar to the Middle Ages. Commerce and discovery were liberalizing the minds of the commercial classes and making them restless under the priestly yoke imposed upon them. The growth of the national spirit was inciting men to revolt against the unscriptural, autocratic and much-abused papal claim of political supremacy. Literary and scientific movements of the day were enlarging the area and multiplying the subjects of thought and investigation. The fall of feudalism and of the aristocratic form of government made it necessary to reckon with the people, who were far from being satisfied with their position and prospects.

There had been during the age that was now closing repeated isolated assertions of the spirit of democracy, and in the conflicts between the crown and the people against the nobles, the latter were losing their prestige. They looked jealously upon the rising movement toward concentration of power in the hands of the princes, seeing themselves thrust aside without voice in the

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Diet, and gradually, but surely, declining from the importance which they had enjoyed under the old feudal system. The peasants, who were the subjects of grievous oppression, were quite as much dissatisfied as the nobles, and with much better reason.

In addition to the more secular movements which were tending to radical change must be reckoned those more profound and vital forces which rule the religious nature of man. To political restlessness there must be added the stimulus of that great religious agitation which had been started in Germany. There was a rising tide of resentment against Rome and the hierarchy, and a widespread preparation among receptive and inquiring minds for the teachings of the reformer. The old order was passing and the new was at hand. The latter half of the fifteenth century may be regarded as the eve before the day of modern Christianity, that new day of which the Reformation epoch is the dawn. The records of that fifty years have an important bearing both on the great ecclesiastical event which was then impending and on the condition of modern Christendom.

To his work the son of a poor miner came, to stamp his tremendous personality on an entire age, when the discovery of America was opening up new avenues of adventure, colonization and trade; when the printing press was giving knowledge wider currency, thought a vaster range, and opening up for the Church of modern times her pathway of power; when the revival of letters brought the stores of the ancient Greek and Roman literature before the schools of all Christendom; when the quickening impulse of the intellectual awakening of the Renaissance in Germany was forming its alliance with religion; when the papacy, under Innocent III, had reached the height of its grandeur and sway, and, under the disastrous reign of Boniface VIII, of whom it was said that "He came in like a fox, ruled like a lion and died like a dog," passed into the period of its decline; when Spain, under the control of Charles V, was, in arms and political power and wealth of resources, the leading nation on the earth, powerfully effecting the policy of the, at that time, distinct kingdoms of England and Scotland as a consequence of martial and other alliances; when there were heart longings in the homes of the German fatherland that neither art nor literature, nor the medieval Church with its grand cathedrals, its splendid ritual and its impressive celebration of the mass, could satisfy.

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The times demanded a man of deep spiritual experience and intense moral earnestness, who loved the truth and who sought liberty to believe and teach the truth. There was a call for someone who was large enough to gather up all the forces and interests which we observed to be awakening—national, democratic, humanistic, mystical, pious and reformatory—and bring them to bear among princes and scholars, citizens and peasants, in achieving the mighty work that was waiting to be done. There was needed a great religious leader who could capture men by the manifest reality there was in him; a man with overwhelming religious convictions, who was able and courageous enough to communicate them to others, and who had a whole cause to champion and more than half a world to challenge and defeat. The times called for one who was able to overcome odds against him that were enormous; a man who was qualified for a crisis in the general progress of society in its troubled passage from the Middle Ages to modern civilization.

For such times and conditions Luther was amply qualified by nature, grace and training. Rich in his endowments, many sided in his nature and attainments, frank and popular in the communication of his experiences, poet, musician, preacher of popular gifts, theologian and commentator of rare insight into the truth, the Reformation of the sixteenth century is identical, for the most part, with his history. He was the primate among reformers, the greatest single personal factor in the history of the modern era in which we are living.

He came into exciting times for the man who dared to throw down the gauntlet against imperial power and pontifical assumption. It is interesting to recall here the report of a dream of the Elector Frederick of Saxony, which he dreamed while sleeping in his palace, six miles from Wittenberg, only a night or two before the nailing up of the theses on the door of the Castle Church. This dream was told by Frederick the next morning. "I dreamed," so runs the report, "that the Almighty sent me a monk who was a true son of Paul the Apostle. He was accompanied by all the saints, in obedience to God's command, to bear him testimony, and to assure me that he did not come with any fraudulent design, but that all he should do was conformable to the will of God. They asked my gracious permission to let him write something upon the doors of the palace chapel at Wit-

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tenberg, which I conceded through my chancellor. Upon this the monk repaired thither and began to write. So large were the characters that I could read from my palace, six miles distant, what he was writing. The pen he used was so long that its extremity reached as far as Rome, where it pierced the ears of a lion which lay there, and shook the triple crown on the pope's head." Certain it is that this dream of Frederick was an accurate forecast of the events which came in rapid order after the nailing up of the theses. This son of a miner, with a stout heart and an open Bible, and a trust in God and His word, did shake the triple crown of the pope and the foundations of the old medieval hierarchy, foiled the craft and might of the empire, and smote the pontifical See with blows from which it has never, even to this day, recovered. That this is true is verified even by Catholic writers themselves. In one of the encyclopedias of the Church, and published with ecclesiastical sanction, it is said: "There is not, perhaps, in history, a guiltier name than that of Martin Luther, the patriarch of Protestantism. For fifteen centuries the Church of Christ has seen many heretics assail her, many rebellious children turn against her; but never a sect, never a heresy, never a persecution, presented traits so grave, and principles so dangerous, as the revolt of the sixteenth century raised and disguised under the delusive banner of Reform."

In the use of the figure of speech based upon the meaning of his name in the Bohemian language, from the dungeon in which he was imprisoned, and just before he was burned at the stake, on July 6, 1415, John Huss wrote these words: "They may kill a goose, but a hundred years from now a swan will arise which they will not be able to kill."

The dream of Frederick the Wise, the violent denunciation of the papal encyclopedist and the prophecy of the forerunner, John Huss, were all fulfilled when Luther's mighty and penetrating voice, responding to God's call to duty as it came to him, shook the foundations of the most powerful and carefully articulated ecclesiastico-political system that the world had ever seen.

II

It was doubtless a divine ordination that Luther was born poor. His origin furthered his work. "I find it altogether suitable to

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Luther's function in this earth, and doubtless wisely ordered to that end by the providence presiding over him and us and all things," says Carlyle, "that he was born poor and brought up poor, one of the poorest of men. Hardship, rigorous necessity, was the poor boy's companion; no man or thing would put on a false face to flatter Martin Luther. Among things, and not the show of things, had he to grow up. It was his task to get acquainted with realities and keep acquainted with them at whatever cost; his task was to bring the whole world back to reality, for it had dwelt too long with the semblance of things."

His grandparents, and the ancestors before them, dwelt in the little town of Moehra, in the Thuringian forest. They were sturdy, honest, hard-working peasants, marked by those characteristics of life that make for strength of character, power of will, firmness of purpose under the pressure of adverse conditions. Of his origin the Reformer was never ashamed, but spoke of it repeatedly with pride. "I am," said he, "a peasant's son; my father, grandfather and all my ancestors were farmers." Of this family line only his father was compelled to leave the ancestral estate and take up a trade. He removed to Mansfeld, where there were rich mines, and at that place, devoting himself to that industry, his forges brought him but scanty profits. Luther thus repeated much of the world's best history by being born, cradled and disciplined in poverty. "The wheels of youth rest or rust in riches," says Carlyle, in further estimate of the Reformer's power; "in poverty they all run. Wealth says, how shall I enjoy myself? Poverty says, what shall I perform? Out of the former come those who play; out of the latter those who work."

Poverty and piety seem to have been the only estate of Hans Luther and Margaret Lindemann, his parents. Some wind of fortune brought this humble pair from their earlier home at Moehra to Eisleben, where, on the 10th of November, 1483, at 11 o'clock at night, their first child was born, upon whom the next day, at his baptism, they bestowed the name of Martin. "Strange enough to reflect upon it," says Carlyle again. "In all the world of that day there was not a more entirely unimportant looking pair of people than this miner and his wife. And yet what are all emperors, popes and potentates in comparison? There was born here a mighty man, whose light was to flame as a beacon over

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long centuries and epochs of the world; the whole world and its history was waiting for this man."

The pictures of these people which have come down to us present rugged faces, into which toil, exposure and care have been traced in wrinkles and furrows and features, which were made hard by incessant application to hard tasks. The home training was stern even to the extent of cruelty. The family scepter was a birchen rod, which was mercilessly wielded, no matter how trivial the offence; and any intervals of exemption at home were made good by the village schoolmaster, who heartily believed in the same scepter applied in the field of pedagogy. This youth, who was destined to such future distinction and influence, was once roundly beaten with a stout stick until the blood came, when he had committed the heinous crime of stealing a handful of nuts! Luther did not look back with approval, but with sadness, upon this severity; but it did not abate his affection for his parents, for when he was the foremost man in Germany, he said of them: "They meant it all for my best good." "But they did not know how to distinguish the dispositions to which the punishment is to be adapted."

But associated with this mistaken parental severity was a readiness of father and mother to take upon themselves all kinds of hardships, and a willingness to make sacrifices for the benefit of the children; and posterity owes an immense debt of gratitude to the hard-handed peasant father, who cared enough for his talented boy to make the sacrifice necessary to spare him from his home and to give him the best educational advantages of his day. Luther was the son of a poor man, but a man of enough refinement and appreciation of the higher utilities of life to give his son an opportunity at a time when fortune had but few darlings and philanthropy fewer still.

Every man who has permanently influenced the Church has been characterized by three factors: Fine native gifts, the training of the schools, and profound personal religious convictions. Luther had them all. He was a man of fully disciplined powers, having been educated successively at Mansfeld, Magdeburg, Eisenach and Erfurt. In 1497, when he was fourteen, with another lad from Mansfeld he was sent to Magdeburg, in order that he might prepare for the university. After being here for a year he went to Eisenach, where he secured the means of support,

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according to the custom of the times, by singing at the doors of the houses of the principal citizens. Here it was that Frau Cotta, a woman of wealth and refinement, was so charmed by Martin's singing that she became his much-needed friend, offering him a place at her table and in her family. In 1501, being then in his eighteenth year, he was sent to the University of Erfurt, one of the centers of humanistic learning in northern Europe, and the most renowned university in Germany. Students from all parts of Europe were drawn thither, and it was a common saying that "whoever wants to study thoroughly must needs go to Erfurt." Here he came in contact with the advancing learning of his times and was captivated by it, while his talents from the first commanded the attention of all who came in contact with him, so that he soon became the admiration of the university. It was in the library one day that an event occurred of unusual importance to him and to the world. Here he found the first complete copy of the Scriptures he had ever seen. He read, and, as he read, his interest in the divinely inspired volume deepened. He had found the real source of religious truth, which for him had been hitherto unexplored. Deeply religious from his boyhood, religious problems had always had a special interest for young Luther—problems for which he had not been able to find any real solutions in the teaching of the Church. Neither mind nor heart had found rest. But this Book of Books satisfied him, and into its treasures he plunged with earnestness, enthusiasm and reverence, being fascinated by its simplicity and religious fervor. In his diligent application to his studies he went from science to science, mastering each with a thoroughness and rapidity that amazed his teachers and fellow-students. The department which he made his specialty was that of philosophy. In 1502 he received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy, and in 1505 took his doctor's degree, ranking second in a class of seventeen candidates. He was now, according to the plans of his father, to enter upon the study of law, and, in view of his fine gifts and his devotion to study, his friends were predicting for him a splendid career, leading on to both distinction and fortune.

But Providence here interposed. The Lord of the Church had other work for Luther. Suddenly, to the surprise of his friends, to the consternation of the university, much to the grief of his father, after taking his master's degree, he bade the world fare-

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well, and on July 17, 1505, entered the Augustinian cloister as a monk. Here he subjected himself to the severe discipline of the monastic life, denied himself all comforts, tortured his body and fasted and prayed to a degree that almost proved fatal to his life. Differing, however, in one respect from most of his monastic brethren, he held on to his much loved studies, and of him his fellows by and by came to say: "If this brother keeps on to his studies he will rule us"—a prophecy that was literally fulfilled. A fact worth mention in connection with Luther's entrance into the monastery shows in itself the need of reformation and a re-estimate of the relative importance of things. When he went to become one among the Augustinian brethren he took with him just two books, possibly the only ones that he possessed. They were not the gospels and epistles of the New Testament containing the life of our Lord whom he was seeking to serve, and the matchless writings of St. Paul, or the lofty strains of David and Isaiah and Job. This finely endowed, well-trained and deeply religious young man of the sixteenth century took with him two books of heathen authorship, and in another tongue than that of his people. They were the writings of Plautus and Virgil. Much of the secret of the Reformation is found in this fact, the ominous fact, that Luther had grown to manhood, and in the Church of his day, without ever having seen a Bible, the one infallible source of truth and salvation.

In 1507 he was ordained to the priesthood, and in the following year was made a professor in the university of Wittenberg, which had been founded by Frederick of Saxony in 1502, the school always destined to be memorably associated with the Reformer's work and influence. Here, at first, he lectured on dialectics and physics, but his heart was already in theology. In 1509 he became a Bachelor of Theology, and immediately began lecturing on the Holy Scriptures. He quickly gained a reputation as a lecturer, and at once deeply impressed his students. His teaching was practical and personal, and he was equally forcible in the pulpit and the lecture-room. While at Erfurt he had attained to some knowledge of the Bible, and had seen something of the difference between the simplicity of the gospel and the life and practice of the Church. In the university and in the pulpit of the parochial church Luther found a field, the first in his life, for the use of his remarkable powers. His lectures produced a powerful

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impression by the novelty of his views, the freshness of that which was scriptural, and the boldness of his advocacy of what he was coming step by step to believe. "This monk," by and by remarked the rector of the university, "will puzzle all our doctors, and bring in a new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman Church, for he takes his stand on the writings of the apostles and prophets, and on the word of Jesus Christ." On so much of truly Protestant ground he had already planted himself. Gradually he was led by his biblical studies to see the full light of the gospel of grace. The books which he read and studied most of all were the Psalms and the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. He had come through his study of these Scriptures to see that the righteousness of God is not merely an attribute of the great Judge of all the earth, but that God in His compassion freely gives His righteousness to the believer, and along with this gift bestows, also, full salvation and life eternal. Having grasped this great truth, he was made free. "Now," said he, "I became happy; now the whole of the Bible, even heaven itself, was open to me."

Writing of his work at Wittenberg, his fine interpreter, Professor Lindsay, says that "his lectures were experimental. He started with the fact of man's sin, the possibility of reaching a sense of pardon and of fellowship with God through trust in His promises. From the beginning we find, in the germ, what grew to be the main thoughts in the later Lutheran theology. Men are redeemed apart from any merits of their own; God's grace is really His mercy revealed in the mission and work of Christ; it has to do with the forgiveness of sins and is the fulfillment of His promises; man's faith is trust in the historical work of Christ and in the verity of God." From lecturing he passed to preaching, although in this, as in all other steps of his progress, not without a struggle. He was constantly under an awful sense of the responsibility of speaking to the people in God's stead, and it required the urgency of Staupitz to persuade him to be obedient to the call. He carried with him into this part of his work the timidity of the monk, but the fire and magnetism of a master mind. In the history of the pulpit Luther has had but few equals. His natural advantages were very great. In a large degree he possessed that fulness of being and co-ordination of his powers which are of such immense value in the work of preach-

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ing. He had a boundless faith combined with a boundless and masculine joy in God that put the note of triumph into his pulpit ministrations. His strong and rich voice, his remarkable capacity for popularizing the truths of the Gospel, his full knowledge, quickness of perception, added to overflowing feeling, unaffected sincerity and deep-seated conviction, made of him the most commanding preacher of his day. At Wittenberg, the seat of his teaching and preaching, he soon became a great personality, and his genial manhood, his realism and courage, his frankness, sincerity and homely common sense made him to be both admired and loved.

The degree of Bachelor of Theology enabled him to add to sermons preached in the monastery, in the royal chapel and in the church, university lectures on the text of the Scriptures, and of this work it was said "never in any Saxon professorial chair was heard such luminous explanation." In this field he delighted, and in the preparation of such lectures he sometimes passed whole nights. Eminent doctors came to listen and retired full of admiration. The venerable Pollich, known by the sobriquet "Lux Mundi," heard him, and struck with wonder, exclaimed, "This father hath profound insight, exceeding imagination; he will trouble the doctors before he has done."

In 1511 Luther was sent on the affairs of the Augustinian Order to Rome. This was a welcome mission. To see the imperial seat of the papacy was an ardent desire of his heart. This opportunity to study the papacy in the very center of its power and in its full-blown magnificence was one of the most important elements in the Reformer's education. To one of his thirsting mind and religious fervor such an opportunity was hailed with inexpressible delight. He had been doubting the practices of the Church, but no thought of adverse criticism had yet arisen in his mind. He was yet the devoted Augustinian brother and firm and full believer in the one Holy Catholic Church. He was no schismatic bent upon the division of the body of Christ. Coming in sight of Italy from the southern slopes of the Alps, he fell upon his knees and with uplifted hands cried out, "I greet thee, holy Rome, thrice holy from the blood of the martyrs which has been shed in thee." He soon was aware of the fact that he had not been ushered into the seat of holiness. Upon the pontifical throne he found the worldly, ambitious and warlike Julius II, a

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man thoroughly devoted to temporal prospects. In the convent where he was entertained by the Augustinian fraters they smiled at the simple faith of the German pilgrim, winking at one another over his sober sincerity and making light of his learning. What he saw and heard there made an ineffaceable impression upon him, although not producing any immediate result. He observed priests who carried religious indifference to the point of levity and mockery. "I would not take," said he, "a hundred thousand florins not to have seen Rome. I have said many masses there, and heard many said, so that I shudder when I think of it. There I heard, among other coarse jests, courtiers laughing at table and bragging that some said mass and repeated these words over the bread and wine: *Panis es, et panis manebis; vinum es, et vinum manehis.*"

He was deeply pained by the loose principles and worse than loose practices of his brethren. He saw, heard, studied carefully and thought much, and bold and strong were the impressions made upon his mind and which he carried to the end of his days. The scenes which passed before his eyes had but little influence in strengthening his love for the Church, although for the time the fervor of his monastic devotion burned bright amid all this blasphemy. He went the round of all the churches and believed all the lying legends repeated to him, but while he was ascending the famous Pilate's Staircase as a reverent and penitential pilgrim, the painful task was at least arrested by the voice that kept sounding in his ears, *"The just shall live by faith."*

After his experience and observations here he once more turned his face northward toward his own Germany, where religion had more depth and sincerity, no one in the mighty city there on the Tiber giving even a passing thought to the future of this inconspicuous and scholarly monk, so soon by his words to shake the throne of the pontiffs, which for centuries had even dictated to kings and princes. He took with him an abhorrence of the superstition and immorality of the Church at its fountain head, which never left him. His real sentiments as he turned away from Rome are probably expressed correctly in the words of Dr. Dorner: "Luther returned home with his enthusiasm for Rome cooled down, still without being conscious to himself of inward disaffection toward her, or of departure from the ways of the Church."

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III

In the life of Luther, prior to his excommunication in 1520, there are three events of outstanding significance. The one is associated with the meadow outside of Erfurt, where, as the story runs, the lightning striking at his feet, he resolved to give his life to religious pursuits and become a monk. The second is connected with the Augustinian monastery inside the city gates. There in his religious struggles he tried the medieval theory of salvation by means of penitential works, through and through from top to bottom, tested it out and discovered its inadequacy and unscripturalness. The third of these events is associated with the Castle Church at Wittenberg where he nailed up his theses, proposing to discuss the unholy traffic in indulgences and the effrontery with which it was being conducted by Tetzel, famous for some time as a successful huckster of this order of wares, which had been entrusted to him by the Elector Albert, Archbishop of Mainz. The first was a scene connected with a deeply religious young man's resolve; the second a scene of the earnest search of a deeply religious man for an answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved"; and the third a scene in which this same deeply religious man asserts himself in a decisive action—in which the great reformer inaugurated the great work of his life. "If God permit," said he, "I will put a hole in Tetzel's drum," and history testifies that by the grace of God he fulfilled his own prophecy with far-reaching and permanent consequences.

For the next five years after his return from the visit to Rome Luther lived the life of a hard-working professor of theology and a self-denying monastic. His home was in the Augustinian cloister at Wittenberg, less than a mile from the Castle Church, so called because it was part of the residence of his Electoral Highness, Frederick of Saxony. He was still a devoted son and servant of the Church, but he had felt the power of the new apprehension of how a man is justified before God. He did not yet dream of separation from the Church, and quietly continued his preaching and lectures on the books of the Bible to which he addressed his fine powers of interpretation.

The sale of indulgences was the expedient hit upon by Pope Leo X for the liquidation of old debts and the completion of St.

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Peter's, and Germany, as he thought, presented the most promising field for the prosecution of a profitable business. Here, thought he and his counsellors, among the pious and sincere German peoples we may find a splendid field to sell passports to heaven and vastly increase the papal resources. Luther was at the height of his influence in Wittenberg, when the peddler Tetzel made his way toward Saxony. Turning one day to Staupitz, Brother Martin said with all the indignation of his great nature, "I will declaim against this gross and profane error, write against it, do all in my power to destroy it." Tetzel drove his trade after a wonderful manner, even going so far as to grant indulgences for sins that had not yet even been committed, possibly not even thought of. The alleged object of the plenary indulgence was to contribute to the completion of the Vatican Basilica, while its boasted efficacy was to restore the purchaser to the grace of God and completely exempt him from the pains of purgatory. There were, however, minor forms of the papal blessing, producing lesser favors. For the plenary indulgence confession and contrition were affirmed to be necessary, while "the others could be obtained, without contrition or confession, by money alone."

It can easily be imagined what a system this was in the hands of an unscrupulous, low-minded and voluble salesman as he proclaimed aloud the merits of his paper pardons. It was wonderfully successful, and money flowed in from every quarter to find its way into the papal treasure box at Rome. Half in joy and half in complaint the bishops cried out against the weight of the silver: "Hundred weights of German coin fly light as feathers over the Alps, and no bearer of the heaviest burdens, not even Atlas himself, can drag such heaps of money."

In 1517, when Tetzel came into the neighborhood of Wittenberg on the Saxon frontier, Luther found that the consciences of many of his flock were being debauched and turned from the right ways of the Lord. His spirit was stirred within him at this shocking mockery of the claims of true repentance. This scandalous traffic in holy things aroused him to a high pitch of excitement. He felt the necessity of taking some decided step, as no one else seemed disposed to interfere. He took counsel with God and his own true heart, and with none besides. He was now ready for his great mission. He went over the whole case against Rome as he saw it, and the result was that on the eve of All

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Saints, when the relics, collected with great pains by Frederick for his Castle Church, were being exposed to view and multitudes were crowding in to gaze on them, Luther appeared among the crowd and nailed upon the famous church door his ninety-five theses on the doctrine of indulgences, which theses he proposed to maintain in the University against all opponents, by word of mouth or in writing. It was October 31, 1517, a day great in the annals of the Christian Church and the future of the most advanced peoples of the earth. It was the beginning of the storm which lasted until the day of the Reformer's death, February 18, 1546. It reached even further, until one hundred and two years later the peace of Westphalia terminated the long struggle of the thirty years' war. That walk of Luther down the street of the old town, passing the houses afterward occupied by Melanchthon and Lucas Cranach, on that October day was in its consequences the most momentous ever made by any man, for it inaugurated a new era in the history of mankind.

It did not occur to the Reformer that he was starting a public movement against the teaching of the Church, but the posting of the theses is usually regarded as the starting point of the Reformation. According to the custom of the time, the theses were simply intended to be a challenge for the public discussion of the subject of indulgences and their sale. In a day when there were no newspapers or magazines the method adopted was one of the ways of getting matters of timely interest discussed. To arrest Tetzel's unhallowed hawking of the indulgences, to correct abuses, and to bring about an improvement of religion—these were among the purposes of Luther's challenge. There was nothing revolutionary, not even anything extraordinary in what he had done. Had some one told the Wittenberg professor and preacher that the act of that now famous day would in later times be looked upon as one of the decisive turning points in the history of mankind, as the opening of a new era in the religious, social and political development of the race, his astonishment would have been unlimited.

But Luther had traveled farther toward the restoration of the Pauline conception of salvation than he was aware. He had struck at the core of an infamous evil, when, in his first thesis he declared, "Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ in saying, 'Repent Ye,' meant that the entire life of the believer should be peni-

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tence," while in a succeeding thesis he declared that "the pope had no power to forgive any guilt." In emphasizing the adequacy of genuine repentance to secure remission of sins, in affirming that the papal office in connection with the pardon of sins is declarative only, he was in reality dealing a blow at the foundation of priestly mediation as it was affirmed in the unscriptural and unhistorical assumptions of the Roman hierarchy. True repentance is an inward act of the soul, "a change of mind," as in later writings Luther so often reminded his adversaries, as he from time to time led them back to the meaning of the Greek word. Unaware as he was of the full import of his theses, he nevertheless embodied in them the main principles of the Reformation. The very first words of the first of them, "Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ," constitute an appeal to Christ's authority as the supreme and final requirement and law for all believers.

No one was more surprised at the popular reception accorded the theses than the author of them himself. They were too acceptable to the widespread indignation at the abuse of indulgences not to find rapid circulation. Instead of being confined to a small circle of the learned, they elicited a warm reception and quickened interest among all classes of people. In fourteen days they were being read and pondered all over Germany. Myconius, the contemporary and earliest biographer of Luther, in writing of the theses said that "in four weeks they had spread through Christendom as though angels were the postmen." The excitement produced was intense and widespread. Written in Latin, the theses were soon translated into German and scattered broadcast throughout the land. The interest grew and strengthened, and sympathetic voices were heard on every side. At last the people had found their champion, the man who had dared to speak and voice their dissent and protest. "The reason why popular excitement was so quickly generated," said Prof. Hulme, "was that the fuel was ready for the flame. The leader for whom Germany had long been waiting had appeared upon the scene." Silence was no longer possible, and some attempts at refutation on the part of the Church were undertaken. They were, however, but mere echoes of an old medieval scholastic theology presented in its most commercial and papistical aspects.

Tetzel at Frankfort-on-the-Oder continued to abuse and rave. Hockstratten, Professor at Cologne, and head inquisitor of Ger-

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many, demanded that the dangerous heretic at Wittenberg should be sent to the flames. Sylvester Prierias, the general of the Dominicans and censor of the press at Rome, published a reply, and there were disputes and debates with Miltitz, Cajetan and Eck, the chosen champions of the pope. But the die was cast. Luther, the monk, had become Luther the Reformer. Intimidation, threatening, bribery and persuasion were all in vain. He stubbornly refused to be convinced except upon the authority of God's word, and boldly declared: "The more they rage, the more I go forward." The whole of Germany had been surcharged with indignation against Rome and the indulgences. A spark was enough to set the whole land ablaze; the theses kindled the fire, and the Reformation under Luther began.

The times called for a man of the people, who, with a full knowledge of the damage caused to religion by the abuses that had fastened upon the Church, could help them regain their rights and set them free from their manifold fetters. It is, accordingly, not surprising that Luther's work was so heartily welcomed by the popular judgment when we consider both the man and the existing conditions. To meet the requirements imposed by the conditions, to lead in the new work of mental and spiritual emancipation, he was qualified with popular gifts as a preacher, teacher and polemicist, united with a courage that feared not the powers of the world, the Church or the devil.

Writing to Rome of a formerly good and devoted Catholic city, but two years after the theses, a papal ambassador said that now, of five men there were scarcely two who held fast in loyalty to the papal See. The Church had been smitten with the blindness of decay, and could not discern the signs of the times. Falsehood had enfeebled her judgment and undermined her strength, and she went staggering on her way in the midst of decimating forces to her overthrow.

Luther was hailed more and more as the champion of the rising national indignation and revolt. It was becoming more and more manifest every day that the real and overshadowing questions were Germany or Rome, German independence or hierarchical bondage, and even more fundamental to both religion and civilization, Scripture or Church, conscience or authority; whether the spiritual power has the right to rule in its own distinctive sphere without hindrance from the secular power. During the trying

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period extending from the nailing of the theses to 1520, during which the Reformation was, step by step, progressing along the evangelical way and to the proper co-ordination of soundly Protestant principles into a system—a period full of excitement and necessitating incessant studies—Luther did not relax in his work at the university.

It is of interest to note something of his appearance during this period. The Humanist Marcellanus, describing the young monk on the occasion of the famous Leipzic disputation with Eck in 1519, when he attacked not only indulgences but also the doctrines of the primacy of the pope and purgatory, says: "He was of medium height. His face and whole body were as thin as a skeleton, caused by long study and much care. His voice was clear. His address bore every mark of great learning and acquaintance with the Bible. His bearing was friendly and attractive. He was full of vitality, and calm and joyous amid the threats of his enemies, as one would be who undertakes great things with God's help. In controversy he was defiant and incisive, as a theologian ought to be."

IV

The year 1520 has very properly been called "the great year of Reformation history." Shortly after the Leipzic disputation Luther took occasion to reaffirm, and with more emphasis, the position which he had taken when he confronted John Eck, the most able of the defenders of the papal claims in his day. Early in 1520, in the study of what was known as the "Donation of Constantine"—one of the famous fraudulent treatises put forth in the medieval period to bolster up papal claims—he reached the conclusion, not only of the bogus character of the document, but also the conviction that the whole papal dominion was built upon falsehood. About the same time, also, he confessed that a better acquaintance with the writings of Huss, who had been burned at Constance one hundred and five years before, had assured him that he himself, as well as Paul and Augustine, were genuine Hussites, and had brought home to him the ominous and distressing fact that, along with Huss, evangelical truth had been condemned and burned. He was now looked upon by his people as a national hero, and he was coming to look upon his own work as a national struggle for freedom from the papacy and all that

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that system of ecclesiasticism represented. He was rapidly becoming the mouthpiece and prophet of all those among his people who were sighing under the yoke of papal tyranny, and yearning for national and social liberty. In the constructive work he was now about to undertake, Luther did not shift his position. From the beginning his work was distinctively religious. His motives were of the same order, and to the end of his life they remained the same. The beginning of his struggle with Rome had grown out of his own experience. But the more experience he had with the representatives of the hierarchical machine and its machinations, and the more he studied the questions involved in his controversies, the clearer did he perceive that Rome ruled, not only over the beliefs of the Church and over the conscience of the people, but that she also had the dominating place in the whole of the political and social life of the nation. The papacy he concluded was not only a Church, but a great world power.

No man ever stood more fully as the exponent of his nation's hopes than did Luther at this time, or answered more nobly in response to those hopes.

During this great year of 1520 he issued three powerful, and to this day fundamental, revolutionary and reconstructive treatises of the highest importance. In August he put forth his appeal known as the "Address to the German Nobility." It was an unsparing arraignment of abuses and a triumphant call to the German people to enter upon the work of reforming the Church, and to redress the grievances from which the land had long been suffering. He struck a clear and loud note of national independence, and summoned the Christian powers of his country to his aid. He reaffirmed, in brief and emphatic language, the great truth that had begun to dawn upon him at Leipzic—that all Christians are priests, and that the ministry is an office in the Church and not a special order of men. It is an unscriptural assumption that the laity constitute only a passive element in the Church, and that the management of spiritual affairs belongs exclusively to the clergy, who constitute the spiritual order, having been sealed with an indelible character by the sacrament of ordination, and being endowed with special prerogatives and immunities, which place them in a class apart and distinct from all other men. The claims of a special priesthood to stand between laymen and God are worthless. All Christians belong to the spiritual order, the

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distinction between priest and laymen being only official, the priest being the representative of the people. God is accessible to men without any artificial and unwarranted sacerdotal intervention. "All Christians," said Luther in his appeal, "are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them save of office only," and more, the pope has no monopoly in the interpretation of Scripture or exclusive authority for summoning general councils. This appeal was a firebrand thrown into the ranks of the papal ecclesiastics. Written in their own tongue, wielded with the unusual force of the great Luther, it reached the heart of the German people, aroused them still further and increased their hostility to the long-standing grievances against which they were in a constantly increasing state of revolt.

The "Appeal to the Nobility" was followed at the beginning of October, 1520, with another treatise, entitled "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church." This was intended for the learned classes and was accordingly written in Latin, but was immediately translated and widely circulated. It was a polemical theological document under the form of a critique of the Romish doctrine of the Sacraments, as that doctrine was set forth in the scholastic theology. Their number had been exaggerated and their efficacy made magical. Luther attacked with vigor this medieval conception of the Sacraments, by means of which the Church accompanies and controls the life of the Christian from the cradle to the grave, bringing every important act and event in human life under the power and authority of the priest, with the terrifying adjuncts of excommunication and interdict at his disposal also. This pamphlet of far-reaching consequences was the severest assault he had yet made on the pretensions of the Roman Church. Its tone is that of great boldness, rising at times into a ringing defiance. "Since the Bishop of Rome," says the Captivity, "has ceased to be a bishop and has become a tyrant, I fear absolutely none of his decrees, since I know that neither he nor even a general council has any power to establish new articles of faith." The Sacraments "were intended to be the seals to our titles as free children of God; the pope uses them to keep us in bondage from birth to death. The seven Sacraments are the seven rings in the chain which yoke us to the Roman priesthood." "The papacy is nothing else than the kingdom of Bablyon and of very antichrist."

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Such was Luther's calmness and assurance during this tumultuous year of 1520 that he wrote, before it had closed, another treatise in marked contrast with his other polemical works, which were fierce onsets against Rome and intended to break down the tyranny of the papacy. This was his tract entitled "Christian Freedom," one of the most beautiful and widely treasured of his writings. It sustains the double thesis, "A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to all." It is largely occupied with the office of faith, which is declared to be the medium of liberty as it is also the medium of justification. It is an illustration of the great paradox of Christian experience. The child of God is free, because justified by faith and united to Christ his living Lord and Head; he is a servant through love, because he must bring his body into subjection to his regenerated spirit and aid his fellow man. "A Christian man does not live to himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor, or else is no Christian; in Christ by faith, in his neighbor by love."

The liberty of a Christian man sounds out the message of the Epistle to the Galatians, which inspires this tract. True liberty means not legalistic, Judaistic bondage to the law, but freedom in the Gospel. It is an appeal for freedom in Christ, but not freedom from Christ. It is a clear and tender setting forth of the position of the child of God, who is free from all legal obligations through faith, but a debtor to all goodness and all men through love. It breathes the spirit of the Pauline conceptions of faith, grace and love, never to be dissociated from good works as their expression. It manifests the spirit of tranquillity and comforting assurance in a period of angry controversy, and places its author not only in the list of great Christian leaders, but also among the saints and scriptural mystics of all ages. Prof. A. C. McGiffirt calls this writing of Luther the most beautiful of all his works and the one which contains the finest statement of his Christian faith.

These three documents, which have been called the "Primary Works of the Reformation," mark the crisis of the movement. Appealing on the one hand to the national interests of the German people, and on the other hand to their reviving spiritual life, they sounded the two most powerful chords then vibrating in the nation. "They contain," says Ranke, the historian, "the revival

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of the whole Reformation." They are marked at places by the note of tumult and assault, but the dominant tone is constructive. The note of victory sounds out in all of them. The freshness and power with which the leading principles of Protestantism were stated in them have likely never been equaled, certainly never surpassed. These three documents of the date of 1520 contain the negative and positive program of the Reformation.

Writing of them Dr. David Schaff has said, "Luther in his three reformatory treatises written in 1520, 'The Appeal to the German Nobles,' 'The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,' and 'The Freedom of the Christian Man,' set forth all the distinctive doctrinal positions of the Reformation with a strength of conviction and ardor of expression never excelled since the days of St. Paul." Says Kostlin, the biographer of the Reformer, "These three treatises taken together are the chief reformatory writing of Luther. In the first one he calls Christendom in general to the battle against the outward abuses and pretensions of the pope and of the class that boasted of being the only one possessing a spiritual and priestly character; in the second he exposes and also breaks the spiritual bond whereby this class, through the so-called means of grace, kept souls in bondage, while in the third he reaches the most important and profound question pertaining to the relation of the Christian soul to its God and Redeemer and the way and nature of salvation. Here he lays explicitly and firmly the strong foundation on which the Christian may build his life and character, and of which no spiritual tyranny can rob him."

The man who best of all in his own and later generations represented the German character was now standing as the masterful leader at the head of a great Christian and national movement.

From the nailing up of the theses on the last day of October, 1517, to the close of 1520, Luther had traveled a long and troublesome road, but it ended in the reassertion of doctrines that were essential to the restoration of the Church to its apostolic ideals. The year 1520 was memorable for one other incident. In January of that year Eck went to Rome to secure Luther's condemnation. His malicious but unwise devotion to his task was at last rewarded, and the wily adversary of Luther in the famous disputation at Leipzic was permitted to bring back to Germany a papal fulmination against the Reformer. The bull of excommu-

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nication was issued July 15, 1520, and after being published at several other places a copy of it at length reached Germany in October. It condemned forty-one propositions from the writings of Luther, condemned to the flames all that he had written containing these propositions, and declared the obstinate heretic to be exposed to all the penalties befitting his case unless he should recant in sixty days. But his case had been fully laid before the people whom he had been addressing, and in their sympathy and support he was strong. The bull was felt to be an outrage upon the public opinion of the land and an insult to the Elector Frederick, who took the position that Luther was not to be condemned unheard, and that he should have a safe conduct to and from any place accorded him for a hearing.

The rising spirit of German nationalism was finding in Luther's successive steps rallying points for the expression of its energies. As his correspondence shows, it was with no surprise or trepidation that the Reformer awaited the launching of the inevitable document from Rome that would cut him off from the Church of his fathers. When it came, his attitude was that of defiance. Instead of candid and open discussion and some attempt at the reformation of scandalous and acknowledged abuses in the Church, the sole endeavor had been to silence him at any cost, even of death, imprisonment or exclusion from salvation. Not only was he being condemned unheard, but his enemy had become his judge and executioner. His arraignment of abuses had proven to be unanswerable, and the papal methods of dealing with an earnest and able man's convictions had broken down of their own ineffectiveness. The pope's answer to one of the sincere sons of the Church was that of suppression, and the method drove Luther, the condemned heretic, to become Luther the defiant and effective rebel. His wrath flamed up against a Church that had proven itself to be incapable of reform and seeking only to silence and destroy such as preached the Gospel. It was something for one man, even though that man were Luther, to defy the power which for a thousand years had been supreme in Christendom, but that defiance was necessary if spiritual freedom and the Gosepl of free grace were once more to come to men, of if even Rome herself were to be delivered from the bondage of her own self-imposed abuses. In all their negotiations the papal nuncios had but one demand to make, and that was

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silence, and in case that was declined, that the penalties for obstinate heresy should be inflicted. In the face of the serious situation confronting him, however, the note of confident defiance rings out in Luther's appeal. "I appeal," said he, "from the pope, first, as an unjust, rash and tyrannical judge, who condemns me without a hearing, and without giving any reasons for his judgment; secondly, as a heretic and an apostate, misled, hardened and condemned by the Holy Scriptures, who commands me to deny that Catholic faith is necessary in the use of the Sacraments; thirdly, as an enemy, an adversary, and antichrist and an oppressor of Holy Scripture, who dares to set his own words in opposition to the Word of God; fourthly, as a blasphemer, a proud contemner of the Holy Church and of a legitimate council, who maintains that a council is nothing of itself."

For some time bonfires had been made of Luther's writings in compliance with the papal command, but this was an easy industry at which the two parties could play, and he wanted to show that he, too, could apply the torch to books which were incapable of both physical suffering or resistance. To his spirit of boldness and defiance the unconquerable monk now added the additional offence of action. On the 10th day of December, 1520, at nine o'clock in the morning, in the presence of a large gathering of professors, students and townspeople, near the Elster gate of Wittenberg, he solemnly committed the bull of excommunication, together with the papal decretals, the canon law and some of the writings of Eck and Emser to the flames, using words borrowed from Joshua's judgment of Achan, the thief who had troubled Israel, "As thou, the pope, has vexed the Holy One of the Lord, may the eternal fire vex thee."

Thus terminated the unity of western Christendom. It was a bold and dramatic event which won not only the applause of the youthful students, who had made something of a holiday festival out of a most significant event, but still further aroused the enthusiasm of the German people. It was the irrevocable act which forever severed Luther from the papacy. Henceforth there was to be no compromise, and no truce in the battle begun was possible. The spirit of independence, growing since the days of Tauler and Huss, had asserted itself with a hitherto unrecognized vigor; was shaking off the incubus which had for centuries repressed it, and, defying the powers of the world, was

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proclaiming religious liberty. When, near the Elster gate, Luther kindled the fire that burned the bull, the decrees and the canons, he added to another and greater fire—that of revolution and reform—for both of which the materials were already at hand. He at once regarded his excommunication as an emancipation from all the restraints of popery and monasticism, on the very next day after the spectacular event warning his students in the lecture-room against the Roman antichrist, and telling them that it was high time to burn the papal chair with all its false teachings and abominations.

We can hardly at this day exaggerate the significance of this event. "We may infer from this document"—referring to the papal bull of excommunication—says the older Dr. Schaff, "in what a state of intellectual slavery Christendom would be at the present time if the papal power had succeeded in crushing the Reformation. It is difficult to estimate the debt we owe to Martin Luther for freedom and progress."

V

Early in the next year, 1521, a demand was made upon Luther for a still greater exhibition of his courage than that displayed when he committed the bull of excommunication to the flames. It was in this year that, in obedience to the imperial summons, he made his appearance before the famous diet. On the 28th day of January Charles V opened his first imperial diet of the sovereigns and states of Germany at Worms, that historical town in the Valley of the Rhine. On March 15th the Emperor sent a herald to Luther, commanding him to appear there and give an account, in person, of his books and doctrines. The case of the Reformer was one of the principal matters demanding settlement at that meeting. Aleander, the Vatican librarian and Greek scholar, awaited Luther's coming with great anxiety, because of his increasing popularity among the German people. "There are here so many Lutherans," he wrote to Eck; "that not only all men, but even the sticks and the stones cry out, 'Luther!'" "Everybody is against us," he dolefully informed Rome, "and these mad dogs are well equipped with literature and arms, and well know how to boast that they are no longer beasts without skill, like their forefathers, but that Italy has lost its hold on literature, and the Tiber has flowed into the Rhine."

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A promise of safe-conduct had accompanied the summons, but notwithstanding, some of Luther's friends sought to dissuade him from attempting the perilous journey to Worms, reminding him of the fate of John Huss, who was burned at Constance in violation of the safe-conduct which had been assured to him by the Emperor Sigismund. But his determination was unalterably taken, and from the first intimation of a summons by the Emperor Luther regarded it as a call of God to bear witness to the truth, and declared it to be his purpose to go to Worms even though he should be taken there sick and at the risk of his life. Meeting on the way repeated admonitions about what had come to Huss at Constance in 1415, Luther responded, "Though they should kindle a fire all the way from Wittenberg to Worms, the flames of which should reach to heaven, I would still appear before them in the name of the Lord; I would enter the jaws of this behemoth confessing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The journey from Wittenberg to Worms was a triumphal procession, even though it had been filled with the apprehensions of his friends and the threats of foes. Along the way he had preached and received a popular ovation. One of the priests of the Roman Church reported that "when Luther entered a city the people ran to meet him; everybody wanted to see the wonderful man who was so bold as to oppose himself against the pope and the whole world." The nearer he came to the seat of the diet the more were attempts made by the Romanists either to prevent his coming, or, at least, to delay his arrival beyond the twenty-one days of his safe-conduct. To the messenger who was sent by Spalatin with the advice that he should not enter the city, his answer was the memorable expression, not of bluster, but of his charasteristic courage and trust in God: "I shall go to Worms though there were as many devils there as there are tiles on the roofs."

Escorted by his friends and numbers of the Saxon noblemen, who had gone out to meet him, Luther arrived at Worms on Sunday morning, April 16th, at ten o'clock, preceded by the imperial herald and followed by a group of gentlemen on horseback. As he passed through the city so great was the crowd that pressed to see the distinguished heretic that it was necessary to conduct him through back courts to the house of the Knights of St. John, where he was to be entertained during his momentous visit.

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On the day after his arrival, April 17th, in the afternoon at four o'clock, in charge of the imperial marshal, Luther was led through circuitous side streets, in order to avoid the great crowds, to the hall of the diet in the bishop's palace, where were assembled the electors, the bishops, the reigning princes and the deputies from the free cities of the German nation. At their head was the young emperor, Charles V, who was twenty-one years of age the previous February. He was elevated on a throne, with the three ecclesiastical electors on the right, the three secular on the left, his brother Frederick on a chair of state below the throne, and nobles, knights and delegates around, the papal nuncio being in front. Martin Luther was now thirty-seven years old. He was admitted into the presence of this famous assembly at six o'clock. But few contrasts in human history have been as marked. It was that of a solitary monk, a lonely hero and confessor, slight of figure, pale with recent illness and much study, with thoughtfulness and earnestness finely outlined in his candid German face, facing an imposing representation of the highest forces in Church and State, together with a great company of spectators in and around the building and in the streets, anxiously awaiting the issue; one man, as it has been said, "encircled by the dark flashing line of the mailed chivalry of Germany," facing legates of the pope, archbishops, bishops, dukes, margraves, princes, counts, deputies of imperial cities, ambassadors of foreign courts, and dignitaries of every rank.

Some thought that at length he would be frightened, and would temporize. But he showed in his attitude that the brave heart in his former strong utterances had not been indulging in words of empty braggadocio. Copies of the various books which he had published were placed before him in the hall of the diet, and he was asked two questions with reference to them—whether he would acknowledge them as his own, and whether he would recant their contents. To the first question, as to authorship, he replied in the affirmative; but as to the second and more momentous question of recantation, he modestly and humbly asked further time for consideration, inasmuch as the gravity of the issues involved the salvation of the soul and the truth of the word of God. Luther was somewhat overawed by the great assembly he was facing, but the request for more time was based, not upon any failure of his courage, but upon a profound sense of his responsi-

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bility. He was granted until the next day to prepare his reply, and when that day came—the greatest day in the reformer's great career—all signs of timidity and hesitation had vanished. He had taken time to meditate and pray.

It is well nigh impossible for people of this age to conceive the courage which the task faced by Luther imposed. The question which he was called upon to answer was whether or not he should submit to the judicial decision of the Church of Rome, already pronounced. Could he, the son of an humble miner, facing the world's pomp and power, maintain his independence? Was he sure enough of himself to still affirm that his own deep conviction of the truth of God's word was of more value than the declarations of the great representative councils of Christendom, which were generally believed to have reflected the power and guidance of the Holy Ghost? He stood unshaken in his cause. Being taunted with dodging the questions at issue, he declared boldly and in measured words which expressed his profound convictions: "Since your imperial majesty wants a plain answer, I shall give you a plain answer without horns or teeth. Unless I am refuted and convinced by testimony of the Scriptures, I neither can nor dare retract anything; for my conscience is captive to God's word, and it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I have no guide but the Bible, the word of God. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

It was the most heroic moment of his courageous life. There had appeared a man who knew how to stand and be counted for the truth, and in the face of the powers of the world. His stand marked the opening of a freer, brighter and better age. "Setting aside the scene where He, whose Name is above every name, witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate," says Prof. Smith, "I know of no scene in human history so full of pathos and power, so uplifting and grand in all its relations, as Luther, when he stood before the Diet of Worms." It is, say Carlyle and Froude, the finest scene in modern history. "If they burn you now, they burn all the German princes with you," whispered one of his friends as the council retired to consider. The diet was an assembly before which Luther could not have hoped actually to win his cause. The emperor, Charles V, with his inherited Spanish traditions, fostered by his education, could not fairly estimate and understand the Reformer. His assertion of the infallibility of

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a General Council, and Luther's idea of the supremacy of the Sacred Scriptures, could not be reconciled by any kind of diplomacy, however sincere. Says Professor Hausrath, in his estimate of Luther's attitude at this important crisis of his career: "He penetrated deeper than the well-meaning politicians. The errors in doctrine were to his mind inseparably connected with the abuses in practice, just as the bad root with the foul fruit. If he did not attack the former, he could not resist the latter. From the doctrine of purgatory resulted the abuse of indulgences; from the sacrament of priestly ordination followed the servitude of the laity; the erroneous doctrine of justification led to the whole system of outward works and rites, which choked all living faith and spiritual life. Just because he saw clearer than did his political patrons, he could not acquiesce to their wishes, and consequently all efforts to effect a compromise were doomed to failure at the outset."

All negotiations now having failed to weaken the reformer's determination, the ban of the empire was next pronounced against him. On the 19th of April a message of the Emperor was read to the diet in which, after giving his guarantee that Luther should have a safe-conduct home, he said: "I am determined to proceed against him as a manifest heretic." The Elector of Brandenburg set up the old claim that faith was not to be kept with a heretic. But he was promptly told that if Luther's life were taken there would be blood for blood. So popular had the movement for reform become, and so much of a national idol the Reformer, that the land responded with the opinion that if he was harmed there would be a convulsion which would overturn all authority. He was ordered to quit Worms on April 26th, his safe-conduct protecting him for twenty-one days, and no longer. At the end of that time he was liable to be seized and destroyed as a pestilential heretic. The ban under which he was placed was as strong and decisive as the most violent of the papists could have wished. After describing Luther as being guilty of inciting to schism, war, murder, the utter ruin of the Christian faith, and, indeed, as being the devil himself in the frock of a monk, the ban continued: "For this reason, under pain of incurring the penalties due to the crime of high treason, we forbid you to harbor the said Luther after the appointed time shall be expired, to conceal him, to give him food or drink, or to furnish him, by word or by deed, publicly

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or secretly, with any kind of succor whatsoever. We enjoin you, moreover, to seize him, or to cause him to be seized, wherever you may find him, to bring him before us without any delay, or to keep him in safe custody until you have learned from us in what manner you are to act towards him and have received the reward due to your labors in so holy a work. As for his adherents, you will apprehend them, confine them, and confiscate their property. His writings you will burn or utterly destroy in any other manner."

So ended the Diet of Worms. The papal zealots thought that by destroying the brave monk they could uproot and bring to naught his work and teachings. Outlawed by Church and State, condemned by the Pope, the Emperor and the universities, cast out from society, and branded as an insolent and irreverent disturber of the Church, who had dared to strike at the most time-honored institutions of Christendom and had set himself up as the judge and censor of the Holy Catholic Church, he had, nevertheless, lit an inextinguishable fire of religious faith and hope in Germany. Branded and proscribed, and living from day to day in the constant presence of death, he was more influential than all his enemies. His name was already famous from the Baltic to the Swiss lakes, and the people were gladly following him as their leader and deliverer. His heroism had touched ten thousand hearts, and the movement now inseparable from his name and teachings had well-nigh ceased to need his advocacy.

Never since the days of the martyrs and the apostles had the right of private judgment been so generally asserted and the apostolic doctrine of the rights of conscience been so distinctly reaffirmed. The Lutheran revolt had been merged into opposition to Rome. In the case of the ban issued by the diet, for the last time the empire had recognized its obligation to carry out the decrees of the alleged successor of St. Peter fulminating from his palace on the Tiber. Hutten cried: "I am becoming ashamed of my fatherland." So general was the disapproval of the edict that few were willing to pay any attention to it.

In his interpretation of the stand made by Luther at Worms, Dr. Schaff says that "Luther's testimony before the diet is an event of world historical importance and far-reaching effect. It opened an intellectual conflict which is still going on in the civilized world. He stood there as the fearless champion of the

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supremacy of the word of God over the traditions of men, and of the liberty of conscience over the tyranny of authority. For this liberty all Protestant Christians, who enjoy the fruit of his courage, owe him a debt of gratitude." Interpreting the same great event, Bishop Creighton says that "In the records of human heroism Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms must always rank high. The man is worthy of admiration, who, rather than tamper with the integrity of his conscience, commits himself boldly to an unknown future, trusting only to the help of God. Luther had worked out his own principles, and he maintained them in their full extent. He knew well enough the motives of policy which made his action unwise; but he did not shrink from facing the exact issue. He boldly stated that religion was a matter of the individual conscience, taught only by the Scriptures; and that no human authority could devise any other sanction. He knew that by this avowal he gave himself into the hands of his enemies; he knew that he disappointed the schemes of purely political partisans; but regardless of all else, he spoke out the truth which he believed."

VI

But the issuing of an edict and the burning of books was not the end of the troublesome scholar and monk. Providence did not design that even upon his person should the edict be fulfilled. When Luther was returning from Worms to Wittenberg, and before the publication of the ban against him, a troop of knights, disguised, fell upon him, and scattering his attendants, carried him away into the Thuringian forest and placed him in the Wartburg, the strongest of all the Elector's castles, the ancient home of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, located on the heights overlooking the beautiful Eisenach of his school days. Here he lived for ten months away from the rage of his enemies, by whom it was feared he might be taken and put to death. Here he was known as "Junker George," the title given him by the jovial knights. To the Reformer and the cause for which he was now standing this Wartburg exile was profitable. After the busy whirl and violent commotion in which so much of his life for four years had been passed, and especially after the popular exaltation that had been accorded him after his public appearance before the illustrious gathering at Worms, he required solitude and retirement to regain

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balance and poise, and to store up in his soul those supplies of divine grace and strength he needed for the coming days of his great conflict. He felt that he was a "strange prisoner, a captive with and against my will."

But he was at this charming place tremendously active. To a friend he wrote: "I am reading the Bible in Hebrew and Greek; I am going to write a treatise in German on auricular confession; I shall continue the translation of the Psalms, and compose a volume of sermons so soon as I receive what I want from Wittenberg. I am writing without intermission." During this period of tranquillity and solitude there issued from his pen in rapid succession a variety of writings. At Wittenberg the commanding voice was silent, but the pen at the Wartburg was diligent. "For nearly a whole year," says an historian, "he by turns instructed, exhorted, reproved and thundered from his mountain retreat; and his amazed adversaries asked one another if there was not something supernatural, some mystery, in this prodigious activity." Interpreting the Wartburg experience and withdrawal, D'Aubigne says: "Here God had been pleased to conduct Martin Luther to a place of repose and peace. After having exhibited him on the brilliant theater of Worms, where all the powers of the Reformer's soul had been strung to so high a pitch, he gave him the secluded and humiliating retreat of a prison. God draws from the deepest seclusion the weak instruments by which he purposes to accomplish great things; and then, when he has permitted them to glitter for a season with dazzling brilliancy on an illustrious stage, he dismisses them again to the deepest obscurity. * * * It was requisite that this great individual should fade away, in order that the revolution then accomplishing might not bear the stamp of an individual. It was necessary for the man to retire, that God might remain alone to move by His Spirit upon the deep waters of medieval darkness and to say, 'Let there be light,' so that there might be light."

It was here that the industrious Reformer did his greatest and most constructive service for the German people and the world, in the translation of the Scriptures. Here were laid permanently the foundations of Evangelical Christianity, for from this castle and the seclusion of its friendly imprisonment, first in modern times, there went forth the gospel in the language of the people. Here Luther provided the strongest weapon of German Protest-

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antism, through the pages of which God spoke anew to men in the modern age. From this place there went forth the message of Hebrew prophets and the recorded words of Jesus Himself which had aforetime been spoken to the people of Galilee and Judea. From here went forth that word of God from which men were once more to learn the truth that it was not by means of monastic self-righteousness and impositions, nor through the ministrations of an exclusive priestly class, that man might become reconciled to God, but through that faith which an apostle declares to be the gift of God. Thence, also, went forth some of the Reformer's keenest controversial writings, but chiefest of all, that peculiar biblical inspiration which established the language of a great people, gave them a word of authority that was supreme and final, started a varied literature, and struck so deep into the German intellect that even the ban of Duke George of Saxony was but a ripple on the stream of its national influence. "Martin Luther," says Professor Wilkinson, "is the founder of German literary history. German literature dates its commencement from the moment at which Luther's noble translation of the Bible into his own mother tongue was first given to Germany. Above everything else that proceeded from Luther's pen towers his translation of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. It has for nearly four centuries been to the German-speaking peoples all that the King James' translation since the latter was given to the world has been to the peoples who speak English."

His work here became the anticipation of the coming popularization of the Scriptures in other lands and other languages. In England, for example, the effect of the circulation of the Bible in the language of the people was the same as in Germany. "No greater moral change," says Green in his Short History of the English People, "ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one English book which was familiar to every Englishman; it was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm."

Luther's sojourn in this "Patmos," as he styled the Wartburg,

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marked the opening of a more constructive period in his career than that which culminated in his appearance before the diet, though its underlying principles remained the same. History does not record a grander scene or a bolder act than Luther's appearance at Worms. There he fought the tyranny which the Church exercised over the consciences of believers, and routed the papal marplots who contended for the bondage of the human judgment. But at the Wartburg he attained his greatest literary achievement. Books of devotion, controversial writings, tracts for the times, sermons and letters, issued in quick succession. Add to these his three treatises on "Private Confession," on the "Abuse of Private Masses," and on "Monastic Vows," besides his commentaries and epistles, and his self-accusation of laziness appears as a somewhat strange autobiographical statement and confession. Here in his translation of the New Testament he gave to the world, in the language of the common people, that which really makes men free and independent of human authority, providing an authority in the Bible, illumined by the Holy Spirit and by sane grammatical interpretation. He here provided for his people that which they read and loved, which not only dominated and directed their religious and moral convictions, but which, more than anything else, influenced their mode of thinking and manner of expression.

The years that succeeded were busy with manifold tasks and responsibilities. Luther set himself to the work of purifying the service of the Church, to composing hymns for the use of the people, which were received by them with unbounded enthusiasm, and which, sung everywhere, in church, school and home, greatly forwarded the good fight of the Reformation. In the matter of popular education, also, the Reformer's influence was widely felt. Realizing that ignorance was the blight of the land, and that in consequence of it the people were kept in papal bondage, he urged upon the magistrates and mayors of Germany the duty of maintaining schools for the education of the young. To remedy the appalling religious ignorance that prevailed, he published his Small Catechism, which, in its simple presentation of gospel truth and strong, childlike faith, stands even to this day without a parallel of its kind in the literature of the Christian world. At no time in all the years of his busy life did Luther ambitiously start out to do some great things, but at every time of crisis and

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opportunity he faithfully responded to God's call to duty as it came to him, and the great Reformation, with its restoration of the pure Gospel, was the far-reaching result.

Until his death in 1546, along with his coadjutor and complement, the younger, gentler, more learned but less heroic Melanchthon, Luther guided the course of German Protestantism amid external opposition and internal controversy; while directly or indirectly he also stimulated the progress of the Reformation throughout Christendom.

While engaged in his literary labors at the Wartburg, unpleasant reports reached him about extravagant and fanatical tendencies that were beginning to manifest themselves at Wittenberg. Carlstadt and some others, uncontrolled by the master spirit of Luther, began to carry out to its natural consequences the mere spirit of negation involved in some phases of the movement. The popular mind, aroused to a sense of the deception which had been practiced upon it for centuries, began now to break out into extreme expressions of hostility against the medieval church system in its forms as well as its doctrines. Iconoclasm was engaged in its destructive work. Schoolmasters dismissed their scholars, the university learning was disparaged, and Wittenberg was rapidly sinking into the abode of fanatics. Leaving the Wartburg in March, 1522, against the remonstrances of his friends, Luther hastened back to Wittenberg, where, resuming his place in the pulpit, for eight successive days he reasoned with the people out of the Scriptures. On the first Sunday after his return he delivered his opinion on the principles which should guide them in the great religious changes through which they were passing. He preached about the reality of sin and salvation, the necessity of faith and love; these, said he, being the main things to be concerned about, and not mere novelties or changes for their own sake. Earnestness of principle and moderation in practice were the keynotes of this remarkable series of sermons, listened to by crowds from day to day. He besought them to abstain from asserting their new-found liberty by rashly overturning all that had hitherto maintained in the Church. He admonished them from the Scriptures against that precipitate enthusiasm which menaced the existing social order. They listened to his message and common sense, the positive statement of the truth in love proving to be the best refutation of error. Order was restored

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at the seat of the new movement and radicalism checked. His escape from his retreat at the Wartburg was at the risk of his life. Duke Frederick had warned him not to expose himself. Duke George of Leipzic might seize him. "But," said Luther, "I'll go if it rains Duke Georges for nine days." Casting himself upon the divine protection, he went back to Wittenberg, welcomed by the people, who thought that he never would return. The restoration of order, the expulsion of the heavenly prophets, the installation of sane principles in the direction of worship and ecclesiastical administration, all combined to justify both his faith and his courage. His popular eloquence, his zeal, his courage and capacity for leadership, were never more urgently needed, and never more clearly manifest. "In sovereign sway and masterdom" there was not his equal among the people. They were aware that there was but one man among them who was strong enough to check the rising tide of fanaticism and the oncoming and dreaded revolutionary movements, and that man was Martin Luther.

In the subsequent days of the great Reformer's life there was no abatement in his fidelity to his divinely imposed tasks, his courage in conducting the good fight of the new movement, or of his industry in the constructive work made necessary by the successive stages of its development. A large number of treatises on different religious subjects followed in rapid succession. Meanwhile, Luther's cause continued to gain new adherents and its influence to spread. In the fall of 1522 the Emperor's brother, Ferdinand, who succeeded him on the imperial throne, wrote: "The cause of Luther is so rooted in the whole empire that among a thousand persons today not one is free from it." In the years from June, 1522 to 1525, the Lutheran teaching was accepted by Albert, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who transformed his dominions into a grand duchy, the beginning of the kingdom of Prussia, while the bishops of Samland and Livonia accepted the same faith. Distinguished German noblemen and cities espoused Luther's cause and called evangelical ministers, among them being the cities of Zwickau, Altenburg, Eisenach, Magdeburg, Frankfort, Nuremberg, Ulm, Strassburg and Bremen. The evangelical cause made progress in Dantzic, Sweden and Denmark. During all of this external growth the Reformer was engaged in controversy, planting, building and re-

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construction, in a period marked by transitions and changing conditions.

The Lutheran Reformation in religion, we are always to remember, was by no means an isolated phenomenon in one separate sphere. The rising spirit of nationalism was more and more taking on definite form. The old feudal system of the Middle Ages was slowly giving away to a new social structure, and the common people were more and more coming into prominence as compared with the princely classes. The accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few brought about a more luxurious mode of living. Hitherto unknown luxuries were imported and ostentatiously displayed by the wives and daughters of wealthy burghers. There was also a wide and growing dissatisfaction among the peasants and laborers, who were looking for an opportunity to arise and shake off the oppressive yoke of feudalism and of land servitude. Their position had become well nigh unbearable, and repeatedly they had risen in revolt. In the years 1476, 1491, 1498 and 1503 they had rebelled against their rulers, but had been overcome, and were kept in suppression only by use of violent means. The princes became more and more overbearing in their attitude toward the peasants, and the knights became more and more oppressive. The religious radicalism at Wittenberg which had been restrained by Luther became the prelude of a more dangerous radicalism in civil and social life, which involved the land in riot, confusion and bloodshed. In the present religious convulsion the peasantry saw another opportunity for revolt. A league was formed in 1514; by 1524 the insurrection broke out publicly, and by the spring of 1525 it was general. The movement had its roots in crying abuses, and unquestionably received a strong impetus from the Reformation, its advocates claiming to be carrying out its principles to their logical consequences. If, men said, they are made free by Christ, and purchased by His blood, why should they be the bond-servants of men? If God's word is to be the supreme authority in religious matters, why not in civil matters as well? If the claims of the pope and the priests were to be rejected because they were unscriptural, why should the unjust demands of secular princes be obeyed?

The peasants were largely sympathetic with the Protestant movement, and pleaded the Bible as their justification in demanding liberty of conscience and freedom from civil oppression. The

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work and influence of Luther had come to a critical juncture. He had claimed a holy liberty for Christians, but these men were perverting it into a most unholy and dangerous license. They mistook spiritual liberty for carnal freedom. The great leader of his people and reformer of the Church was now put upon trial in a new direction. The unrest of the oppressed peasants had nothing to do with the reformation of religion, nor did Luther's teachings in any way occasion it. It is not surprising, however, that the peasants saw in the new religious order the coming remedy for their ancient wrongs, or that his enemies should take advantage of the deplorable situation to maintain that this was what came of his teaching. But the charge that he was to blame for the cruelties committed upon the peasants by their captors, and that his teaching had incited their awful insurrection, was unjust and absurd. He had severely reproved the victorious company of the nobles for their cruelty against the peasants, but had not incited the peasants to violent revolution and rebellion against the powers that be. He had shown that they were oppressed by the exactions of Rome, but when they revolted against all authority and rebelled against all exactions, he exhorted even their oppressors to cut them down. He had encouraged the peasants to press their claims, but had charged them to do so with moderation and obedience to duly constituted authority. But when he had heard of unspeakable atrocities, saw the smoke of burning castles and villages, and beheld the drunken and ferocious mob nearing Wittenberg, his indignation was aroused and he burst out in a violent manifesto against the "rapacious and murdering peasants." When they took to plundering monasteries, murdering the nobles and playing reckless havoc, he could endure no longer with patience. He studied the matter closely, and then took the side of law and order.

No act in Luther's life has been more severely criticised, and it had a bad effect on the Reformer himself and on his work. It modified his confidence in the people and his own capacity to control them. He was unjustly held responsible for the ruined castles, the devastated fields, the ravaged villages, and all the untold suffering that ensued from his deplorable reign of lawlessness. Even Erasmus wrote: "Here you see the fruits of your spirit." The princes accused him for having incited the peasants, and the peasants reproached him for having forsaken them

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in their day of distress. The cause of the Reformation suffered great injury, and was at once made responsible by the Romanists for all the horrors that had come upon the land. Much as he lamented the results of the lawless uprising, Luther never repented of having acted as he did in roundly denouncing the princes for their exactions and counseling the peasant to be obedient to their government. The voice of history has spoken out in justification of the Reformer's course in this time of calamity to his people and trial to himself. It has been said by a well-accredited historian: "But the calm-minded Luther was wiser than the fanatic multitudes. With heavy heart he took sides against them. He saw clearly enough that all hope of success in an effort for religious reform would be jeopardized if the cause should be yoked with the schemes of Munzer." "The real greatness of the Reformer appeared in the transaction; for he used his influence with the nobles of the revolted districts to save the peasants from punishment."

VII

It was during the Peasants' War, on June 13, 1525, that Luther was married to Catherine von Bora, an escaped nun from the cloister located near Grimma, in Saxony. The ex-friar at this time was in his forty-second year and the ex-nun twenty-six. Luther was glad rather than otherwise when his enemies denounced his conduct, and his friends never moved him from what he believed to be his duty, entered upon in defiance of the teaching of the medieval Church, but in entire harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures. By his marriage the Reformer protested against the unnaturalness of the monastic ideal of withdrawal from life and the ascetic hatred of the world. Of this important event in his life Gustav Freytag says: "From that time the husband, the father, the citizen, became likewise the reformer of the domestic life of his nation, a pattern for filial reverence, marriage, the training of children, as well as for social family life—the very blessings of this life on earth, of which Protestants and Catholics may alike partake, have sprung from Luther's marriage."

In 1529 Luther prepared his two Catechisms, which grew out of the Saxon Church visitations, from which he returned greatly depressed because of his observations of the ignorance of the people of the most rudimentary teachings of the Christian

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religion. These manuals, intended to correct the evils of ignorance and irreligion, soon became symbolical standards of doctrine and Church teaching wherever the Lutheran Church had extended its borders. In the same year he participated in the famous Marburg colloquy, where he planted himself down squarely upon the plain statement of the divine word, plainly construed, in contrast with the rationalizing method of interpreting the Scriptures employed by Zwingli, insisting upon the doctrine that the true body and blood of Christ are received by the partakers of the Lord's Supper, in and together with the bread and wine.

In 1530 we find the Reformer at the Coburg Castle during the Augsburg Diet, from which place he kept up continual correspondence with Melanchthon, the scholarly "preceptor of Germany," who sought in the memorable confession presented there to set forth the evangelical doctrines in elegant and vigorous German and in agreement with the orthodox doctrines of the one Holy Christian Church. In that great confessional document the conciliatory spirit and theological acumen of Melanchthon are discovered in every line, and of which Prof. George P. Fisher says that it "has obtained more currency and respect than any other Protestant symbol." In 1534 he published the entire Bible in German. In 1537, in the first month of the year, he drew up and published the Smalcald Articles, a clear, concise and forcible protest of the new movement against all the abominations of the papacy and its manifold departures from the simplicity that is in Christ. For the fifteen or sixteen years that followed the Diet at Augsburg the relation of the Emperor Charles V to the Protestants of Germany was largely that of political maneuvering, the Emperor being restrained by the difficulties of his position from any decisive steps toward the repression of the movement. The Reformation cause, however, during all this time was constantly adding to its allies, and by the year 1540 counted nearly the whole of northern Germany on its side.

In January, 1546, Luther went to Eisleben, the place of his birth, to restore peace between the counts of Mansfeld, who were in a state of dispute about certain privileges, rights and revenues. Having contracted a severe cold on the journey, he was taken sick and died where he was born, on February 18, 1546, in the sixty-third year of his age. His departure was in peace and unshaken faith, among his last words being the thrice

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repeated sentence, "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, Thou faithful God."

So ended the stormy but permanently influential life of the Reformer; so passed to his reward one of the greatest men of history. The faithful laborer had come to his well-earned rest and the victor to his crown. His body, worn out with excess of labors, was carried back to Wittenberg, where it was laid to rest in the Castle Church, upon the door of which he had nailed the theses twenty-nine years before, inaugurating the most important and vitalizing movement of the modern age. "By his word and his pen alone," says Prof. Hausrath, "he had wrung Germany from the mighty Emperor on whose empire the 'sun never set.' The professor whose salary was never more than five hundred florins a year had bought out the owner of the whole treasure of all the indulgences. Victor over Emperor and pope he died." Luther had been transferred from the earthly scene of his abundant labors, but dead he was not. To the Elector, Myconius, he wrote these words, which are being fulfilled even now: "This Dr. Martin Luther is not dead at all; he will not die, he cannot die. Now he will be alive more than ever before."

There are historical figures who have dwindled with the lapse of time. In their own day and place they seemed destined to an immortality of fame and influence. There are other figures that pass the way of all the earth, but keep on growing in impressiveness as the years go by. They were recognized as heroes while they lived, but the full measure of their greatness was not then discerned. To this latter class Luther has been deservedly assigned by the most competent of interpreters. The more fully the world comes to understand the benefits of the enduring principles which he affirmed and for which he contended in the day of battle, the more is the estimate of his greatness augmented and his name venerated.

It is not always an easy task to estimate the forces by means of which men of Luther's order come to such splendid success and reach conclusions so audacious for the age in which they lived and wrought. That is a problem which the philosophers of history have never yet solved. At this quadri-centennial of the inauguration of the Lutheran movement in the sixteenth century, could old John Trebonius, the schoolmaster of the olden times, rise from his grave and contemplate the worked-out results of one

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of his schoolboy's achievements in the earth, he would have even more confidence in the modest wisdom of lifting his hat to the youth committed to his tutelage. Coming forth from that obscurity which is constantly surprising men by its contributions to the world's leadership, by the munificence and magnitude of its gifts to lofty achievement, this man, one of the greatest among historic names, assumed wondrous charges, accomplished permanent results, and then left the world in amazement. When he passed away at the age of sixty-two years, three months and eight days, there had dawned in consequence of his life the new age of Christendom. Resolute and fearless, he flung back the gates which one hundred years before had successfully resisted John Huss, and through those gates men are walking to this day in the liberty of the sons of God and the enjoyment of that civil freedom which has marked the enfranchisement of the leading peoples of the earth.

If Italy rightly claims the priority in the revival of learning, to the Germany of Luther's day of right belongs the first place in the real work of the Reformation, and that priority it is not difficult to explain. The opportunity of that land when Luther came to his work was the result of a combination of many conditions. To that land there had first of all been transmitted from Italy the quickening impulse of the intellectual awakening of the Renaissance, which, turning at once into the channels of practical activity and religious seriousness, did much to hasten reformation in the sphere of Christian thinking, reorganization and restatement of beliefs. That country, too, was in a state of social discontent and rising assertion of nationalism. For its rulers, who might themselves be Englishmen or Spaniards, the land was only a huge farm from which to reap revenues for fighting dynastic wars and enlarging the resources of the pope. All those social forces which were finally to break the notorious and age-long dominion of the medieval Church were at hand. There was only needed the man who could so interpret those forces as to cause the land to be conscious of their strength, and tie them up with what was the most fundamental need of the people, a revival of personal religion. There were the increasing industrial independence and the emergence of the middle class, the new learning and the spirit for exploration by the highways of the sea, with the consequent widening of commercial interests and the rise of large

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cities as trade centers. Everywhere there were symptoms that the old order of things was breaking up, and that the forces manifested in industrial activities, educational reforms and the rising spirit of revolt, were fighting their way to recognition and victory. This general interest was favorable to any revolutionary movement in any field and along any lines. Particularly favorable was it to any movement in behalf of the reform of the Church, for in Germany the ecclesiastical abuses of the time flourished in their most exaggerated forms. The enormous wealth of the clergy, the princely state of the great feudal prelates, the extortions practiced under the forms of innumerable levies for all sorts of purposes, had for long time been cultivating a spirit of impatience among the masses of the people and popular hostility to the Church. In addition to all this, there was the traditional antagonism between Germany and Rome, representing the ancient rivalry between the empire and the papacy and reaching back to the memorable conflict between Henry IV and Gregory VII in the eleventh century. The national sentiment, mixed with some resentment, had much to do with Germany's final revolt and repudiation of papal supremacy.

Many causes had thus been at work preparing the way for the great movement of the sixteenth century. The hour was at hand, and Luther came with the hour panoplied and equipped for that leadership into which he was swept by providential currents, the direction and the end of which no one at the moment perceived. He unconsciously and without design on his part, precipitated a crisis in the history of mankind. He stamped his tremendous personality upon the whole movement, so that we always think of him as the actual creator of the Reformation. The Church ignored the cry of her own children, and heaven sent the man who was capable of chastising her for her faithlessness. The conditions he confronted demanded a reformer and not a revolutionist, although some revolutionary accidents were soon associated with the new movement, as the abuse and not the result of the newly-revived doctrines. He met the conditions, and with marvelous common sense he held the reins and kept the wheels of progress from being dashed to pieces upon dangerous rocks, sometimes concealed in the unreasoning hostility of his announced enemies and sometimes in the radicalism of unbalanced friends, revolutionary reconstructionists, and iconoclasts. Fac-

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ing such conditions, this extraordinary man whom God had raised up divided the clouds, which hung over medieval Europe and darkened it, that the glorious Sun of Righteousness might shine through, and men, ignorant, enslaved and lost, might once more find their way back to the oracles of God and the source of salvation. In this great movement, primarily in the sphere of religion, it was Luther who was called upon to voice the spirit and tendencies of the age. While he lived he dominated this vast and complicated movement for the reform of the Church and a reaffirmation of apostolic teaching—that movement, which, uniting in itself all the hopeful features of the age, resulted in the secession from the Church of Rome of the Teutonic peoples, who rejected the medieval hierarchy and scholasticism and secured to Protestantism the inalienable rights of the individual, emancipation from priestcraft, the restoration of spiritual autonomy and religious freedom.

This glorious achievement of Luther in the religious sphere involved the demand for liberty in the political sphere. "The Protestant Revolution," says Frederick Seebohm, "was but one wave of the advancing tide of modern civilization. It was a great revolutionary wave, the onward swell of which, beginning with the refusal of reform at the Diet of Worms, produced the Peasants' War and swept on through the revolt of the Netherlands, the Thirty Years' War, the Puritan revolution in England under Oliver Cromwell, the formation of the great independent American republic, until it came to a head and broke in all the terrors of the French Revolution." Thus Luther's contention for religious beliefs and freedom involved political independence, the just claim to an equal share in civil rights.

But in our search for the genesis of the Reformation movement we are always led back to religion. In the religious struggles, beliefs and affirmations of Luther we come upon that which is fundamental, and any interpretation of the Reformer and his work is inadequate which does not start with and affirm constantly the primacy of that fact. He was mastered by a passion for religion. He had a dominating perception of the infinite, and this was so manifested to him through the Church, the Bible, and Christ and His redemptive work, as well as his own personal experience, that it not merely influenced him, but dominated his whole character and controlled his whole life. This perception

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of the infinite in his case, as in that of many another good and great man, was not always accurate, for no conception of the infinite is always accurate. But it was with Luther a real, a vital and a controlling perception. The supernatural to this man was no mere theory whereby to account for phenomena. God was for him no mere hypothesis gotten up to explain the creation, co-ordination and direction of the universe. In the reverent consciousness of the supernatural he lived from year to year. God in Christ was to him the great Companion, and this experience must be understood if we would understand and rightly estimate Luther's character. The faith in Immanuel, God with us, was his master passion, and there was about it the note of constant and triumphant assurance. In consequence of his study of the Scriptures and his own profound personal experience he had come to hate with a perfect hatred, and fight with a passionate courage, whatever he thought interposed itself as an obstacle between the souls of the people and God. In his case the basal principle, always that of the courageous fighter, the warm-hearted friend, the practical reformer, the student and scholar, the Christian disciple, and the devout soul, was religion.

As one reads the story of his life it requires but little penetration to discover that he was possessed by one profound religious principle, a single inspiring idea, which ran through the whole movement which bears his impress, and which more than any other force gave it direction, strength and triumph. Many other influences were, no doubt, at work. The dawning life of national feeling and of literary culture, all through the southern and western nations of Europe, had their influence in promoting the Reformation, but neither of them, or both combined, can be held as adequate in accounting for Luther or his work. They served to prepare the way, but nothing more.

Luther was a great religious leader because he knew so well what religion was, and which was so real in his own life. He was full of it, was possessed by it, he lived for it, and it made him what he was and what he seemed to be in the eyes of the generation of men before whom he passed his life. When he talked and wrote of religion they somehow felt confidently assured that he knew what he was talking about and was attempting to put in form for other people. In short, it is to be said that Luther had overwhelming religious convictions, that they consti-

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tuted the primary force in his life and work, and that these convictions he knew how to communicate in popular form in either speaking or writing to other people.

The living God, not a philosophical or mystical abstraction—the manifest and gracious God who was revealed in Jesus Christ—was a God to be reached immediately by every Christian: that was at the basis of Luther's greatness and achievements. In this one thing he was great and mighty, the one overmastering man of his time, victoriously overcoming the history of a thousand years in order to force his age and his country into new channels. The rediscovered knowledge of God in the gospel of His grace was the balance wheel of his life. What it means to have God in Christ, what this God is, how He becomes related to us in Christ, and how we can apprehend and hold on to Him—all that Luther experienced and that he proclaimed. Casting himself on Christ in confidence and trust—that was to Luther the sum of religion, the vital thought and power of his life. It was his strong grasp on the great things of religion that forces us to look for the real origin of the Reformation deeper below the surface than in either humanism or nationalism.

This it is which adds so much of abiding interest to the study of Luther's personal religious experience and struggles until he emerged from the bondage of the law into the freedom wherewith Christ makes men free. His earlier conception of Christianity was distinctively medieval. He had been taught to look upon Christ as a new law-giver, even as a second Moses, who had been sent from God to impose anew upon men the requirements, restrictions and regulations of the law. To use his own words in the "Table Talk": "We were all taught that we must make satisfaction for our sins, and that Christ would demand on the day of judgment how we had atoned for our guilt and how many good works we had done." Of him Melanchthon says that "often, when he thought on the anger of God, he was seized with a terror so violent that he was well-nigh bereft of life"; and Luther himself says: "I wore out my body with vigils and fastings, and hoped thus to satisfy the law and deliver my conscience from the sting of guilt. Had I not been redeemed by the comfort of the Gospel I could not have lived two years longer." He struggled with doubt and terror, with remorse and shame. In his religious difficulties he had fancied that he had seen demons and evil

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spirits, and had held frequent contests with the chief adversary himself. He had labored for purity of life, and had attained it in the required self-repressive methods. He had lived as far as possible above the allurements of the present. He was learned, accomplished and creative. He had been a profound student of the Scriptures, and had labored night and day to free his mind from the shadows of human traditions and to hear and attend only to the voice of the Gospel. Before he was prepared for his real work he had to be led back to the assurance of Paul, that "by grace ye are saved, through faith," and the truth that faith is that response of the soul which trusts the love and accepts the mercy of God. If the whole of Luther's religious history, from his entrance into the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt in 1505 to the publication of the Augsburg Confession in 1520, shows one thing more clearly than any other, it is that the movement of which he was the soul and center did not arise primarily from any merely intellectual criticism of the doctrines of the medieval Church. It was the self-torturing cry about his personal salvation that drove him into the monastery, he believing, in harmony with the almost unanimous opinion of his age, that there, if anywhere, he could find that peace which he sought after with such desperation.

VIII

If we are, accordingly, seeking, in a primary way, for the genesis of the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century, the quadri-centennial of which we are celebrating this year of grace, 1917, we shall find it in the struggles of conscience and the resulting action of a German monk. A mendicant, an Augustinian brother, had tortured himself with the question, "What must I do to be saved?" When he had obtained the right and satisfactory answer from the Scriptures the secret of that vitalizing movement in both religion and civilization was out. Judged by its antecedent causes and its worked-out results, whatever may have been its latent tendencies and ulterior consequences, it was primarily an event in the sphere of religion, as it was expressed in one earnest man's search for the way of salvation. From this point of view it must, first and prior to all speculation upon its indirect and remote results, be contemplated. Before that movement began in Luther's experience, a vast institution, articulated

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with unsurpassed human wisdom, had been interposed between the individual and the objects of religious faith and hope.

Schleiermacher, the great German theologian and philosopher —a man capable of marvelous thinking on the greatest of all subjects—never uttered a more fundamental truth and interpretation of unregenerate human nature than when he said that "the natural man is a born Catholic." By this he meant what may be amply verified from the experience and observation of men who have dealt much with other men on their religious side, that they want to come into rightful relations with God by that which they can do themselves. In their moral and religious struggles, as in other things, most people do not desire to cut a small figure. It is this that is at the basis of the conception of salvation held by the medieval Church, in the bosom of which Luther had been nourished, and to obedience to the directions and impositions of which he had devoutly trusted for salvation from sin.

The first question with Luther was not, how may I reform the Church, but how may I be saved and have assurance of my salvation? In attempting to answer that question after the medieval fashion, the struggles of conscience of the Reformer constitute one of the most interesting and deeply suggestive chapters in human biography. In man, heathen and Jew, there is a tendency to make for himself a path back to God, without whom he cannot exist, and in whom he must find rest, if rest is to be obtained. Luther followed this humanly indicated path to its remotest end, only to find a troubled conscience under a constantly increasing burden of sin. If ever there was a man, a son of the Church, who tried the medieval method of obtaining salvation, with its multitudinous impositions, through and through, and from top to bottom, in his own personal struggles in the sphere of religion that man was Martin Luther. He was in many respects one of the most paradoxical of all the great men of history. In him there was an unique combination of depth, even bordering at times on melancholy, but it was associated with a mother wit that was exhaustless. He was a man fond of humor, much of which he had in his own nature; but notwithstanding this, he was in turn bowed down under the burden of the consciousness of his own sin.

We must understand the character of the man when we attempt an estimate of the Reformer's struggles of conscience in his

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thorough testing out of that peculiar apprehension of the method of attaining to peace with God taught by the Church of his day. Inside that Erfurt monastery he applied himself with all the force of his strong and candid nature, using every means that the complicated penitential system of the Church had prescribed, with much elaboration, to help him on his way of making himself pious and a fit subject for the grace of God which procures salvation. With blind obedience he submitted to the orders of his superiors; brought himself into subjection to the most rigorous ecclesiastical statutes; diligently sought for the consolations he was assured would be given by confession of his sins; exhausted the complex system of expiations recommended by the Church; made full use of the sacraments, which were supposed to work effectively in the most mechanical way; and all the time looking in vain for that tranquillity of soul which he was assured would accompany their faithful observance. But in spite of their failure to confer that for which he most of all longed, he persevered in the way marked out.

It is enough to say that the outcome of that struggle, when at last he found his way into the presence of God, and knew by his own personal experience that the living God was accessible to every Christian, was the restoration to Christendom of the unquestioned teaching of the New Testament, with its manifold consequences.

In his conflicts to be free from the terrible dominion of sin he was standing, without thinking of doing any such important thing, for the cause of the rejected Apostle to the Gentiles. He followed in the steps of St. Paul, who, from a Pharisee of the Pharisees, became the strongest opponent of Jewish legalism. In the severity of his struggles, Luther's sole motive was concern for God's pardon. For this end he imposed all sorts of privations willing to be dead to the world and buried from the sight of men that he might, for himself, make sure of eternal life. His one great quest was after the real method of winning the sense of his soul's salvation. To this supreme object he was willing to run counter to the judgment of father and friend, and sacrifice the fairest prospect of life in its worldly aspects. He did not come to the monastery in 1505 to study theology, much as he was devoted to the teachings of Gabriel Biel, Thomas Aquinas and William of Occam, but he had come there to save his soul. He was

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upon himself, mortified the flesh, practiced all those self-inflicted torments which the Church of that period was so clever in inventing. The gloomy and intolerant monastic rigidity, the want of sympathy for any other conception of life, took hold of his character. His theological training had taught him that God's pardon for sin could be had through the sacrament of penance, and he was determined that no penitential exaction should remain untried. He was seeking after inward satisfaction, the sense of spiritual tranquillity, and his devotion in the monastery was based upon a direct aim at that much-sought result. He proceeded to search for it by means of vehement ascetic practices. He watched long and rigorously, together with his prayers and fastings. "Often on returning to his cell he knelt at the foot of the bed, and remained there until daybreak." His asceticism, mingled with the internal unrest and tumult of his mind, gave him an unnatural strength, and he relates how that once for a whole fortnight he neither ate, drank nor slept.

Under the stress of such severities his health gave way, and, becoming pale and emaciated, he was brought near to death's door. Not satisfied with the feeling of having done something to atone for a fault, he wanted the feeling of having annihilated the fault itself, and of having put himself exactly into his original state as he was before the fault had been committed. In this way Luther went on seeking, with all the eagerness of direct penitenial effort, an absolutely clear conscience. But the pursuit was not successful, and at the close of each successive stage of his penitential asceticism he found himself as discontented as when he began. "At the foot of the altar, his hands clasped, his eyes full of tears," he prayed for peace and found none. "One morning, the door of his cell not being open as usual, the brethren became alarmed; they knocked, and there was no reply. The door was burst in, and Fra Martin was found stretched on the floor in a state of ecstasy, scarcely breathing and well-nigh dead." Vexed, wearied, harassed and faint, he was proving to the full the death-working power of all attempts to justify oneself by means of works carefully elaborated and minutely prescribed by the Church.

The last word of the Pelagianizing school of the Scholastics was that a man must work out his own salvation, and Luther was addressing himself to the task after the most approved medieval

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fashion. What, in an earlier age, had tortured Augustine, the greatest of the post-apostolic fathers, was now torturing and terrifying Luther. In the long history of the Church, if ever there was a man who tried to find peace of soul and commend himself to God by means of self-imposed austerities, that man was Luther. Staupitz, the vicar-general of his monastic order, had told him that true repentance began in the love of God, and bade him to love the Saviour who had first loved him. But he did not at once grasp the significance of the advice. The difficulty he experienced in extricating himself from the meshes of the medieval theology which he had zealously studied can only be appreciated by looking into that theology itself, wherein the Church had changed the evangelical interpretation of repentance into a mere round of exacting penitential exercises. It was a merely legal system of justification, which required a round of works in order to make the pardon of man complete.

This system found a support in the form of language used in the Latin Vulgate. Repentance, in the Greek of the Gospel, is an internal process, whereas, in the Vulgate, it is largely an external process. At a critical incident in his youth Luther had become possessed of an intolerable dread, believed that he had heard a voice from heaven calling him to repent, and he promptly vowed that he would henceforth give his life to asceticism and monastic gloom. With the impulsive inconstancy of youth, he passed the next evening with his youthful companions in the pleasures of music and song, possibly anxious to see if he could drown in the joys of the world the pains of a wounded spirit. The day after he hastened to the convent of the Augustinians at Erfurt and took the irrevocable vow of a monk. He had resolved, through monastic seclusion and by means of the practice of the severest austerities, to escape the consequence of sin and find peace of conscience.

In this place, apart from the world, he was the most faithful of ascetics. All his early powers, all the exuberance of his youthful and temperamental joyousness, the abundant capabilities of his fine intellect, were shut up in the narrow cell of a monastic and wasted on the observance of unevangelical rites and impositions. The result, as we have but indicated, was appalling. He was weighed down by an ever-increasing consciousness of sin. Despair and death seemed to be his only portion. His life became

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a real agony, and at times he would sink down in his cell in a deep swoon, from which he could only be aroused by the gentle touch of a stringed instrument. The coming reformer of the Church and most dominant personality in modern history was trying to commend himself to God after the most approved order, as that order was carefully prescribed by the medieval doctors of religion. With him, at this time, the exactions of the hierarchy had usurped the place of his personal Redeemer. In all these doleful practices of self-abnegation, that he might give himself in the most uninterrupted manner and under the most favorable conditions to the useless undertaking to which he was addressing himself, he clothed his body in the white woolen shirt in honor of the Virgin, assumed the black cowl and frock, tied with a leathern girdle, undertook the most menial monastic offices to subdue his pride—sweeping the floor, begging bread through the streets, and submitting without a murmur to other ascetic severities, said twenty-five pater-nosters, with the Ave Maria, in each of seven appointed hours of prayer, regularly confessed his sins to the priest at least once a week, solemnly promised to live until death in poverty and chastity, and to render obedience to Almighty God, to the Virgin Mary and to the prior of the monastery.

Writing in 1518, he tells us that no pen could describe the mental anguish he endured. With his high cheek bones, emaciated frame, gleaming eyes and look of settled despair, in the performance of these pious exercises Luther presented an aspect that was sad and forbidding. How long this famous, and, in its outcome, influential struggle lasted is not certain. There are indications that it endured for two years, during which the sense of sin as an all-pervading principle, as a corruption of human nature, as a state of alienation from God and of hostility to God, weighed upon that fine mind and soul like an incubus that brought him at times to the brink of utter despair. In religious biography there are but few such accounts of the severity of the conflict between the law of God and the law of sin.

But in spite of this melancholy and medieval state of mind, a great development was taking place within Luther. He scourged himself, but pursued his studies. In the midst of these agonizing mental and spiritual conflicts he was thinking and praying himself out of those inadequate and erroneous views of salvation which had prevailed in the Church for a thousand years, which the

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people had inherited from their forefathers with their very existence, in which they had been educated and under which all their faculties had been formed and moulded. The question agitating him was one of vital importance to the whole Church and to all men in their craving after reconciliation with God. It is so in every age, but was of special significance then. The real reformation of the Church could only be effected by the recovery of the evangelical methods of attaining the grace of God which passeth all understanding. But the difficulties in the way of that recovery were almost insuperable. The Bible was but little read. Luther himself was nearly twenty and a bachelor of arts before he had ever seen a copy of the Scriptures. What he knew about it had been gained from the liturgical practices of the Church. At that time he was finely versed in Scotus, Aquinas and William Occam, but as for the Bible he knew but little. But the difficulties were at last overcome in the experience of the greatest of the Reformers. He grasped the significance of faith, of salvation by grace and the right and scriptural way to find peace with God. Then the secret of the Reformation was out.

IX

Luther by and by came to understand, through the influence of his friend Staupitz and the New Testament, that according to God's promise the righteousness of God might become man's possession in and through Jesus Christ. Fellowship with God is founded on personal trust of God. By and by the fact of the true relation of the believing soul to God came to him suddenly with all the force of a revelation, and his vexed and troubled conscience was at rest. In his struggles Luther reached the conclusion that some medium was necessary by means of which a man was to lay hold of and appropriate to himself a perfect righteousness. That medium, according to St. Paul, he discovered to be faith, the act of commitment of oneself to Christ, by which he is assured of that of which he most of all wants to be assured. The great cardinal principle with Luther was the divine assurance of pardon and reconciliation with God.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century began when, in this pious monk, the soul demanding assurance of salvation found it in the gratuitous justification of the sinner before God. Luther

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never speaks more frequently of anything than of the change which took place within him when he grasped the significance of salvation by grace, when he learned once for all that assurance and peace come not as the result of man's works, but as an expression of the divine benignity. The attempt to commend himself to God by means of austerities only saddened him, but when he once apprehended the meaning of the words of Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith," he rejoiced in the freedom wherewith Christ doth make men free. He perceived, as but few men have in the fulness of its meaning, the content of the Gospel which had been aforetime proclaimed with such clearness and such strength by Paul, and which for the instruction and guidance of the Church in all times has been written down in the Roman and Galatian Epistles, "Therefore we hold that man became just without the works of the law, through faith alone." When he came to know that salvation was not a negotiable quantity, not something for the pope to sell, but something rather that God proposed to give, that it was not a human achievement but a divine bestowment, as something not of man but of God, he had the longed-for spiritual tranquillity. When he saw that Christ was not come as a law-giver so much as a Saviour; that love, and not wrath or justice, is the motive of His mission and work; that the forgiveness of sins through Him is a free gift, and that good works are the fruit of faith, then he had a clue to the understanding of the Bible. He then came to realize that he was something more than a member of a vast ecclesiastical machine, something more than a single factor in an external institution, even an individual soul who was to deal directly with God through the mediation of Christ. When once he grasped the evangelical conception of the forgiveness of sins, he swept away the barriers between man and the free sovereign grace of God which the medieval Church had so elaborately constructed.

His own theology was the outgrowth of his own personal experience. He had to receive the peace of forgiveness as the free gift of God before ever his voice was lifted up against the dogma of the merit of good works. It was his firm grasp on the Gospel of justification by faith, which in the last analysis was the force that delivered from priestly domination and self-imposed ascetic observances. Henceforth men came to know that they could realize the true Christian life without either priest or

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cloister, and that they could come into immediate access to God in Christ and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ doth make men free.

Thus with Luther in his struggles of conscience all turned on his discovery of the Gospel method of justification. The difficulties which he encountered in extricating himself from the meshes of the medieval theology, to the study of which he had so diligently devoted himself, can only be appreciated by looking into that theology itself in which the Church had changed the Gosepl conception of repentance into a round of imposed penitential exercises. It had been hardened down into a mere system of legal justification, which required works in order to make the pardon of man complete. This discovery of the Gospel at the end of his almost unprecedented spiritual struggles by Luther was the greatest gift of the Reformation. It was the discovery of that which more than anything else distinguishes Christianity from all other religions on earth. That discovery restored the right of the soul to answer directly to God; the right proclaimed by Peter and John when they defied the Sanhedrin with the exclamation, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." For ages the right of Christians to go unhindered to God had been denied and withheld by the old Church, which had usurped all other authority, social and civil. Luther broke the fetters and found not only soul freedom but thereby also inaugurated the era of modern liberty and democratic independence.

Thus, in his own personal religious experience, the beginning of the Reformation meant for Luther a movement away from a mechanical to an individual conception of salvation. It taught men once again to seek an individual and personal relation to God, maintaining that a man's relation to the Church was determined primarily by his relation to Christ. That experience of the Reformer was the nucleus about which was gathered all that was most vital in the thought of that age—the return to the Bible, to Augustine and to mysticism, the protest against the sophistries of the scholastics and the corruptions of the Church, and the restoration of a simpler and more personal relation of the soul to God in and through the mediation of Christ, the one and only and all sufficient High Priest.

Luther was fitted to be the prophet of his age because he had

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the most searching experience in what that age most of all needed—personal religion as contrasted with corporate religion. That experience bade every human mediator stand out of the way. To a large extent it proclaimed the democracy of the saints and prepared the way for the coming larger democracy and virtually for all the freedom we now enjoy. In his religious struggles Luther proclaimed a declaration of the independence of the human mind and soul from the bondage of human authority. Hitherto, in the medieval Church, the minister of Christ had been enthroned in awful isolation beyond the reach of his brethren in the same faith. But one of the very first results immediately flowing from Luther's standpoint was an emphatic qualifying of the mediatorial power of the hierarchy and its official priesthood. If the individual can come directly to Christ, and in the exercise of living faith in Him can find assurance of salvation, as did Luther, then he is evidently released from any absolute dependence upon the priest. The mere apprehension of Christ in the Sacrament gave him the personal assurance of the communication of grace.

Along with this stand for independence it is well to remember that it was his candid and unambiguous intellect, in alliance with a positive and unambiguous faith, that made Luther always strong, free and courageous. It was his religious conscience, it was the question of his soul's salvation, it was the inward craving for assurance which gave him that high and godly disregard which cared neither for pope, emperor, councils, nor any other human authority, because his conscience was bound by God and His word as the supreme authority.

This man could contend in the day of battle as but few men have been able to contend. He could smite the apostasies of his time with the mailed fist. Much of his capacity thus to strive, when the issues were of fundamental importance, was due to the fact that he had in him the simplicity and joyous trustfulness of a little child, and bowed always with implicit and beautiful obedience to the authority of the Highest. His acceptance of the Bible as the infallible rule of faith and practice, the source of regenerate character and of all man's heavenly hopes, was always clear and undoubting. It was here that he made the grand discovery which became the cornerstone of the new Protestant temple, the "material principle" of the Reformation, that the just shall live

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by faith—not by faith in self-righteous works, but in the merits of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Accordingly the most constructive work of Luther's life, and to which he gave himself with impetuous ardor, was to flood Germany with the Scriptures in the strong and virile language of his people, to the creation of which he was the chief contributor.

We have dwelt thus upon Luther's religious struggles chiefly because this is the factor that is most fundamental in its importance in estimating his work, and the one most worthy of reaffirmation and reinterpretation in the religious life of our day. Neither the demands of ecclesiastical politics nor any critical doubt of science became his starting point, but that which was distinctly, profoundly and personally religious. It was a genuine medieval fear of the wrath of God which drove this deeply religious young man into the Augustinian monastery, where, in the fierce struggle to attain to mental and spiritual tranquillity, he tried the medieval system elaborated by the Church to give peace to the troubled conscience, and experienced as but few men have the inadequacy of the papal system of redemption, the highest expression of which was monkish self-abnegation. Going back to the fertile fields of the New Testament, he found release from the oppressive weight that burdened his soul in the grace of God and justification by faith alone. Grasping in all their comforting and transforming significance these great evangelical truths, he came early into conflict with the papal huckstering of indulgences being carried on by the Dominican, John Tetzel. This conflict precipitated his great work in the human leadership of one of the few most important movements in the history of mankind—the Lutheran Reformation. His inner religious life is the practical exemplification of the Reformation doctrines, the deep sense of sin, justification by faith alone, child-like trust and fidelity to the word of God. In a true and proper co-ordination he grasped these great fundamental truths more firmly than any man before or since. Others have formulated them, but he gave them voice.

To his sound and evangelical apprehension of the Gospel, his deep religious convictions, and the popularity of his gifts, Luther added an industry in the application to his manifold tasks that has not been surpassed. From the nailing up of the theses in 1517, on to his death in 1546, he always had pressing work to do, and to that work he addressed himself with a diligence and productivity

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that are amazing. He had upon him the care of the Church, the conduct of controversies, the training of preachers, translating the Scriptures, writing pamphlets, books and commentaries, giving counsel to princes and people, in addition to his much-loved work of preaching, which he prosecuted at home and wherever he went on Sundays and during the week. Both the quantity of his writings and their immense circulation would be remarkable even in our day, much more so in the sixteenth century, when the art of printing was still in its infancy. In one year he wrote and published 183 books and pamphlets, so busy was he with his pen. He attacked the papacy, argued with bishops and cardinals, and showed their errors in doctrine and practice. And all this in addition to his work as professor and leader of many widely separated minds. He was constantly bothered with the petty scruples and small questions of inferior men who had associated themselves in one way and another with his work. Letters from all directions pressed for immediate decisions on different points of faith and Church practice, while a multitude of tender consciences appealed from this and that part of the new order of things in worship, each wanting an answer agreeable to the inquirer or insurgent, as the case might be.

The first edition of his collected works (commenced in 1539 and finished in 1558, twelve years after his death), numbers twelve large folio volumes in the German language and seven volumes in Latin. But these nineteen volumes contain only the smallest portion of his literary work. One of the modern editions of his works, that known as the Erlangen edition, published from 1862 to 1865, fills sixty-seven large octavo volumes of German and thirty-eight volumes of Latin writings. His sermons, letters, controversial writings, tracts for the times, commentaries, books of devotion, and theological discussions, present a variety and range of subjects associated with but few names in the literary history of mankind.

In addition to his academical posts, he was, by the appointment of his patron, Staupitz, made visitor of the monasteries of his province. In a letter to a friend he writes with a touch of humor about his tasks and responsibilities: "I had need," says he, "of two secretaries to keep up my correspondence; pity my unhappy fortune. I am conventual concionator, table preacher, director of studies; I am a vicar, or in few words, eleven priors

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in one; conservator of the ponds at Litzkau, pleader and assessor at Torgau, Pauline reader and collector of Psalms; add to all these the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil."

His strong sense of humor, his satirical vein, combined with his deeply religious and poetical soul, present a strong combination of literary qualities, which enabled him to produce the most diversified writings of any man of his time. But all of them, widely different as they were in their varied aspects, were used in the one great service—the religious and moral regeneration of his people.

X

Luther was pre-eminently the Reformer. Beside him his contemporaries in the good fight of reform can claim but the second place. They were in a very large measure dependent upon him. He was the Reformation, chiefly because he had experienced the movement in his own soul, and all that he afterwards said, wrote or did in Wittenberg, Worms and elsewhere was but the outgrowth of that one primary struggle and experience. Out of his great and commanding personality the Reformation proceeded as a refreshing stream out of hidden springs in a great rock.

"If we compare Luther with the other reformers of the sixteenth century," says Prof. David Schaff, "he appears as the preeminent leader of the Reformation. To say this is not to disparage the genius or the work of Calvin, Zwingli, Knox or Latimer. But in two respects these men all followed Luther. In point of time they spoke after he had spoken, and they added not a single fundamental religious principle to those which he had announced. Zwingli did not enter upon his work as a reformer until several years after the theses were posted. Calvin was not 'converted' until 1533, sixteen years after the posting of the theses. The Reformation in Scotland did not fully begin under Knox's leadership until 1560, fourteen years after Luther was in his grave. As for the English reformation, Luther's books were being shipped into England in 1519 and 1520 'in vats full,' whereas the first printed English New Testament, that of William Tyndale, was not published till 1526, more than four years after Luther's German translation had appeared. Cranmer was first a Lutheran, and exerted himself to have England adopt the Lutheran principles as stated in the Augsburg Confession of

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1530. It was the Augustinian monk of Wittenberg who inaugurated the movement and marked out the doctrinal path it should take." These leaders of the movement to reform the Church differed widely in temperament and in their approach to truth. Luther was poetical and mystical, Zwingli was rationalizing and practical. Luther looked at coming events through the medium of faith; Zwingli through the medium of human understanding. Luther was conservative in his attitude toward the past; Zwingli was iconoclastic, finding it easy to dissociate himself from the past and to discard what had been. Luther came to the truth of the doctrines of salvation through the medium of his personal religious experience; Zwingli always under the influence of that humanism of which he was enraptured.

Calvin differed from Luther in some important particulars. He was not, as in the case of Luther, a peasant by birth, and had no experience of poverty in his early life. In his personal characteristics Calvin cannot compare with Luther in geniality of temperament, in natural and popular eloquence, in imaginative vision, in tenderness, humor and pathos, in that indefinable grace which adorns all that it touches, and in that contact with the life of humanity which made of the one a popular leader as contrasted with more of the spirit of the recluse in the other. In religion, the moving impulse with Luther was the sense of sin, in Calvin it was the love of truth alike as an ideal and as reality. Luther found in the Scriptures a way of escape from sin; Calvin, not only that, but an ideal social and civic state which men are bound to realize here and now. Luther's passion was to believe and teach the true way of salvation; Calvin, not only that, but to build a system and a state in the image of the truth of God. Luther's fundamental thought is justification by faith alone, or the mode in which the guilty man may be made right with God; with Calvin it is the absoluteness and sufficiency of the will of God, as the gracious will which purposes and achieves salvation.

In contrast with the vacillation and trimming of Erasmus, Luther was steady, well poised, consistent and established. Erasmus had no thought of being a martyr for the truth, and he says so plainly. His cowardice reaches its culmination when he says of himself: "I never taught any erroneous doctrines, that I know of, and never will, nor will I be an associate or leader in any tumults. Let others affect martyrdom; for my part I hold

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myself unworthy of that honor." His constant efforts at neutrality and negation led Luther to declare that "He will die like Moses in the land of Moab." While vigorously attacking the monks and satirizing the abuses of the Church, Erasmus was afraid to side openly with the Reformer, who was willing to follow out to their final consequences the newly discovered truths of the Gospel.

In one of his "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography" Sir James Stephen has summed up Erasmus as contrasted with Luther in these words: "He belonged to that class of actors on the scene of life who have always appeared as the harbingers of great social changes; men gifted with the power to discern and the hardihood to proclaim truths of which they want the courage to encounter the infallible results; who outrun their generation in thought, but lag behind in action; players at the sport of reform, so long as reform itself appears at an indefinite distance; more ostentatious than anxious for the well-being of mankind; dreaming that the dark page of history may hereafter become a fairy tale, in which enchantment will bring to pass a glorious catastrophe unbought by intervening strife, and agony and suffering; and therefore overwhelmed with alarm when the edifice begins to totter of which their own hands have sapped the foundation. Erasmus was a reformer until the Reformation became a fearful reality; a propagator of the Scriptures until men betook themselves to the study and application of them; depreciating the mere outward forms of religion until they had come to be estimated at their real value; in short, a learned, ingenious, benevolent, amiable, timid, irresolute man, who, compelled to bear the responsibility, resigned to others the glory of rescuing the human mind from the bondage of a thousand years."

No two men could be more unlike at once in intellectual aspiration and moral temper than Luther and Erasmus. Luther wanted dogmatic certainty in all matters of faith, while Erasmus, latitudinarian and philosophical in religious opinion, was indifferent as to exact truth, was cautious, subtle, refined and cowardly. Erasmus made his contribution to the flourishing rise of letters and the right understanding of the Scriptures, but when the day of battle came on he plainly showed that he had not the courage, the candor or the consistency to become a reformer. If covert and ingenious sarcasm, subtle point and pungent

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dilemma could have overthrown the papal supremacy, then had Erasmus been a valiant and successful reformer. But that peculiar medieval supremacy was elaborated with too much of human wisdom to be overturned with that sort of weapons. The conflict called for the hot temper, the fearless candor and that commanding confidence in God and His Word which made of Luther the man who trusted the truth to the final issue rather than juggle with it at any point. Erasmus was strong in denial, but weak in affirmation. He saw the necessity of the conflict, but was destitute of those elementary natural and spiritual forces which alone can bring forth the grand creative deeds of history. Men like Erasmus need apologists, whereas men like Luther trust God, do what He sent them to do and are justified by their works.

That the Reformer was a primate among men in his personal force, his mental endowments, his spiritual insight and capacity as interpreter of truth and leader of men, is widely affirmed by men of all varieties of religious views. In their places, one after another, they rise to affirm the greatness of Luther in his place and work among the sons of men. This is the eloquent testimony of Dollinger, the old Catholic, the fairest of Roman historians: "It was Luther's overpowering greatness and wonderful many-sidedness of mind that made him the man of his age and people. Nor was there a German who had such an intuitive knowledge of his countrymen and was again so completely possessed, not to say absorbed, by the national sentiment, as the Augustinian monk of Wittenberg. The mind and spirit of the Germans were in his hand what the lyre is in the hands of the skilled musician. He gave them more than any man in Christian days ever gave his people—language, popular manuals of instruction, Bible, hymnology. All his opponents could offer in place of it was insipid, colorless and feeble by the side of his transporting eloquence. They stammered, he spoke. He alone has impressed the indelible stamp of his mind on the German language and the German intellect, and even those among us who hold him in religious detestation as the great heresiarch and seducer of the nation are constrained in spite of themselves to speak with his words and think with his thoughts."

Thomas Carlyle, much of a cynic, but wonderful interpreter of men and movements, says of this man: "I call this Luther a truly great man—one of our most lovable and precious men. Great,

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not as a hewn obelisk; but as an Alpine mountain, so simple, honest, spontaneous, not setting up to be great at all; there for quite another purpose than being great. A right spiritual hero and prophet; once more, a true son of nature and fact, for whom these centuries and many more that are to come yet, will be thankful to heaven." In an eloquent and oft-quoted passage another strong writer has said, "Kings and emperors have made pilgrimages to the tomb of Luther, and nations cherish in their hearts his imperishable name. Charles V, Frederick the Great, Peter of Russia, Wallenstein, and, lastly, Napoleon, visited the spot where the remains of the Reformer lie; and even these names, the sound of which still shake the casements of the world, seem but ciphers beside the dust of Martin Luther." This is the estimate of the late Philip Schaff, the chieftain among Reformed ecclesiastical historians: "Luther's greatness is not that of a polished work of art, but of an Alpine mountain with towering peaks, rough granite blocks, bracing air, fresh fountains, and green meadows. * * * He roused by his trumpet voice the Church from her slumber; he broke the yoke of papal tyranny; he recognized Christian freedom; he reopened the fountain of God's holy Word to all the people, and directed the Christians to Christ, their only Master. This is his crowning merit and his enduring monument." The calumnies which have been poured forth against the memory of Luther have been vile, numerous and vindictive, and diligently revamped from generation to generation. They have all been met and vanquished by the famous Archdeacon Julius Charles Hare, the author of the "Vindication of Luther." This is his estimate: "To some readers it may seem that I have spoken with exaggerated admiration of Luther. No man ever lived whose whole heart and soul and life have been laid bare as his have been to the eyes of mankind. Open as the sky, bold and fearless as the storm, he gave utterance to all his feelings, all his thoughts. * * * No man has ever been exposed to so severe a trial; no man was ever placed in such difficult circumstances, or assailed by such manifold temptations. And how has he come out of the trial? Through the power of faith, under the guardian care of his Heavenly Master, he was enabled to stand through life; and still he stands, and will continue to stand, firmly rooted in the love of all who really know him." It is of Luther that the renowned Goethe speaks thus:

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"We scarcely know what we owe to Luther, and the Reformation in general. We are freed from the fetters of spiritual narrow-mindedness; we have, in consequence of our increasing culture, become capable of turning back to the fountain-head, and of comprehending Christianity in its purity. We have again the courage to stand with firm feet upon God's earth, and to feel ourselves in our divinely endowed human nature.

"To Luther more than to any other man since St. Paul, the Church of Christ is indebted for its grasp of two essential principles; the first is the fact of justification, or forgiveness of sin, by faith and not of works. The second is that the Divine Word is supreme in all faith and practice, and in all organization of the Church. More today than to any other man of eighteen hundred years men owe to Luther freedom of thought, of speech, of conscience, of action; the right to worship God according to what conscience indicates." Many years ago one of the strongest writers of his day in the London Quarterly Review wrote these graphic words of portrayal: "There is no second Mont Blanc; the present monarch would in that case doff his crown. So there are no two Luthers. Luther is alone—alone in capacity at once to dare and to do, alone in device and achievement, alone in hardihood and patience, alone in boundless resources and exhaustless buoyancy, alone in the majesty of his self-reliance and in the genialness of his wide sympathies, alone in untiring industry and unflagging perseverance, alone in lofty faith and never-clouded hope. Such was the Luther of the Reformation, the quondam (former) monk, the newly-awakened and never-dying man." Today no one who has noted the transitions from age to age, since the period of the Reformation, will call in question the prophecy of the late Dr. C. P. Krauth: "Four potentates ruled the mind of Europe at the time of the Reformation, the Emperor, Erasmus, the Pope and Luther. The Pope wanes, Erasmus is little, the Emperor is nothing, but Luther abides as a power for all times. His image casts itself upon the current of ages, as the mountain mirrors itself in the river that winds at its foot—the mighty fixing itself immutably upon the changing." Our country has known no more accomplished historian than the late Prof. George P. Fisher, of Yale, who says: "What is it in Luther that, after four hundred years are gone, stirs the heart of the Protestant nations? It is the great heart and the great mind, united together. * * *

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His catechisms, his sermons, his printed comments on portions of Scripture, his spirit-stirring hymns, his controversial treatises and tracts, productions, all of them, called out by the exigencies of the time, and most effective for their ends, constitute a copious literature." Of him, one historian, Hallam, says: "In the history of the Reformation, Luther is incomparably the greatest name," while another, Ridpath, says, "He was regarded as the exemplar and epitome of the Reformation. To him the other leaders of Protestantism looked as to a general whose right it is to command." Speaking of the great Reformer, Dr. Alfred Plummer, the able author of the "Continental Reformation," says: "Luther's influence on religious and political ideas, on literature, on social life, and on the map of Europe, has been enormous, and this influence has been won largely without effort on his part—through his massive character, through his sincerity, earnestness, unselfishness, and above all these, through his splendid courage. We may differ widely from some of his opinions, but we live in a world which is a wiser and better world because of Luther's work." Comparing him with the great Apostle to the Gentiles, Dean Farrar, in his "Life of St. Paul," says that, "As a reformer who altered the entire course of history, Luther alone resembles him. What the Reformer did when he nailed his theses to the door of the cathedral of Wittenberg, that St. Paul did when he wrote his epistle to the Galatians. It was the manifesto of emancipation; it marked an epoch in history." "Blessed be the day of Martin Luther's birth! It should be a festival second only to that of the nativity of Jesus Christ," says Robert Southey, the crowned poet of England. And the American, Edwin D. Mead, says: "Luther is the most influential and significant man in the spiritual history of mankind since Christ." The German Catholic scholar, Friedrich von Schlegel says: "I think there are few, even of his own disciples, who appreciate Luther highly enough." We give these citations, not as expressions of hero worship, but as the sober estimate of the greatness of the place of one of the outstanding spiritual heroes of mankind.

The German Reformation, especially in its beginnings, is but little more than Luther's biography, and no man could have been better fitted for the accomplishment of the mighty task which he carried forward to such a successful issue. If the estimates of

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such men as we have cited (and they could be multiplied almost indefinitely) are fair and just, it may be doubted if any of the religious leaders of the Christian Church since the days of St. Paul were more richly endowed than he with gifts of the highest order, and that peculiar co-ordination of qualifications which fitted him for his great place in human history. If he was great and industrious as a writer, he was equally great and tireless as a preacher. The freshness of his thought, his grasp of the great truths of the Gospel, his rare insight into the meaning of the Scriptures, the simplicity and directness of his speech, together with the mastery of his mother tongue, vivid imagery, sincerity, earnestness, fervor and pathos, never failed to arrest and keep the attention of the people who heard him. He who would understand the secret of Luther's spiritual greatness and masterful religious influence may find the key to both in these words written to one who suffered, and but a few months before his own death: "God has given us His Son Jesus Christ, that we may daily think of Him, for apart from Christ everything is misery and death, but in Him is nothing but peace and joy."

In his attitude toward the truth there was an absolute destitution of mental duplicity, and in its statement in language a manifest incapacity for ambiguity. When he took the oath of a doctor of divinity, "I swear to defend the evangelical truth with all my might," his conscience scorned mental reservation and he felt a tremendous eternal obligation not to seek peace, like so many other monks, by easy indifference, but to battle with fiery impatience and indignation against all forms of error. Dissimulation and hypocrisy were not in him. He hated them with a vehemence that was inexpressible. "If I despised the pope," he says, "as those men really despise him in their breasts who praise him with their lips, I should have trembled lest the earth should have instantly opened and swallowed me up alive, like Korah and his company."

The difference between Luther and Leo X, the reigning pope whom he encountered, was that the one was a reality and the other a sham. Under the friar's cowl there throbbed an earnest and sincere heart conscious of high responsibilities, afraid to speak or act a lie, believing with all his soul that Christ was the Son of the living God and that no man could be redeemed from sin and death except by His intercession and merits. On the

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other hand, under the Pope's triple tiara there was an accomplished brain, but one that was false, insincere and unbelieving. "Every age," whispers Leo to the friends about his throne, "every age knows how useful this fable of Christ has been to us and ours." It was the hollowness and profanity and luxury, the beastly ignorance and scandals of the priesthood, that at last aroused the reality that was in Luther's manhood, shocked him into resistance and caused him to thunder out anathemas against all dishonest and insincere deceivers of the people. His convictions reflected a strength of character that was exceptional in his day. To him it seemed to be natural to hold the fortress of truth with unconquerable tenacity. Had he been more amiable and less heroic in decision, the Reformation in his hand would doubtless have gone down in many a crisis when he seemed to stand alone as its strong tower of strength.

Luther had, indeed, faults and weaknesses too manifest and prominent to be concealed. His nature was too strong, sometimes vehement, for uniform evenness and consistency. He committed errors. He occasionally misjudged with deplorable consequences. He was combative and sometimes violent in his intolerance toward error. His zeal for the faith ran at times into what looked much like an unseemly passion, the steadfastness to his convictions into apparent wilfulness and stubbornness, his abomination for the shams and apostasies of the Church and its chief representatives into disdain and abuse. But all candid men know that Luther was governed by no mere considerations of policy, but acted with a good conscience. Errors of opinion and conduct, had they been tenfold greater than they were, would not suffice to eclipse the brilliancy or permanency of his fame. His greatness belongs to his character. He was great intellectually, but that which most of all elicits continual enthusiasm at the mention of his name is his heroism. Courage, conscientious fidelity to the truth, obedience to the voice of God, the setting of duty always before expediency—these are the factors that dominated a deeply religious nature and a peculiarly faithful embodiment of strong national traits. In himself he embodied the chivalry, the patriotism, the lyric talent, the domestic affection and the religious depth of the German mind and heart. His words thrilled the men of his time, and today are in large part as fresh and living and popular as when he lived. They made of

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him, as the late Dean Farrar has affirmed, "The Reformer who altered the entire course of history."

XI

There are two classes of particularly influential men in the world's history, the practical men who do things and the men who propagate great ideas. Luther belonged primarily to the latter class, at least in the beginning of his career as a reformer. His mind was dominated by certain great and fundamental ideas, certain basic truths in religion, and these he wished to make known to the life of his day. The history of his people brings him before us for the first time in his conspicuous work as a reformer, in doing something that is specially practical. It is a scene of action that confronts us at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. But a careful study of his biography shows that even then the doctrinal was dominating what he was doing. All he was and all he did are rooted at last in his strong grasp on central principles and his relentless adherence to them. He had a sublime faith in those principles and in their power to work out all desirable and wholesome results. Fanatics and extremists sprang up on every side, but Luther maintained through it all a serene confidence. Sorely tried by their extravagances, he uniformly cast himself back on the Word as the instrument for righting things. Carlstadt and the image breakers at Wittenberg, Munzer, Stubner, the illuminated prophets of Zwickau, the revolutionary peasants of Thuringia, the Anabaptists and their exaggerations, all of which served to divert the Reformation from its regular and orderly course, which disgraced it by monstrous associations, aroused the reproaches of the papists and made the conservatives more cautious—all these troubled Luther and increased his burdens. But this was his constant assurance, that while the storms might roar and beat upon the ship, he knew that he was in the right path and that all would come out well. Shallow, noisy men had taken advantage of his absence at the Wartburg and had gone off into those excesses which were revealed to his own eyes, when, upon his return to Wittenberg in 1522, he came into the town church to see the fragmentary blocks of the old statuary that had adorned that famous building strewn upon the floor. But all this scandal, confusion and discord did not in any measure loosen his grip at

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any time upon his great central truth of salvation by faith and the associated doctrines of the New Testament.

He came to Worms in April, 1521, in the full assurance of triumph, knowing that he had given a challenge that could not be answered and demanding a proof that he knew could never be given. He went away in the full assurance of an intellectual and spiritual triumph for himself and an intellectual and spiritual defeat for the representatives of the papacy, who had realized their incapacity for answering his challenge. The ground of his assurance at the beginning and at the ending was that he had a living perception of the meaning of the Gospel of forgiveness through Christ. This truth of justification by faith alone he saw that the Lord and His apostles taught. It had the sanction of the Scriptures, and for him there was no higher authority and no human power that could dictate an interpretation different from that which had brought life and light to his own soul. He stood before men who were clever, active, shrewd and elegant, with a powerful and strikingly religious mind. He stood before them possessed of an intensity of religious belief and ardor to which ordinary men had nothing comparable, and confuted them all because of the momentum of his confidence in great and overshadowing aspects of the truth. This it was, again, that marked the real difference between Luther and his brilliant contemporary, Erasmus, the lukewarm indifferentist and the time-serving victime of his own vacillation.

Of all the great men of history no one is more paradoxical than Luther. In the richness of his endowments, his many-sidedness, his frankness in the communication of his experiences; as man, poet, musician, preacher, theologian; he seems not only providentially chosen for the work to which God called him, but even in the contradictions of his nature to have been qualified in every way for his tasks. In a singular combination he had the qualities which were needed to make a new world. He had force—the force of a big nature, with vast depths of feeling and of tenderness, combined with an intensity of personal conviction seldom seen among men. He seems to stand up among the best of his day and the ages preceding, a revelation of the strength and beauty of the new world of truth, the embodiment of individual force in his intellect, conscience and will. But this force was not so individual as to separate him from his fellow-men. To them

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he spoke, as if, gathering in himself all the passions and spirit of his time, he felt and expressed all that most moved their minds and hearts. Dealing truly with others, he also dealt truly with himself. Few men have had so great self-knowledge, and fewer still have expressed that self-knowledge with as much freedom. He was always frank and simple, courageous and truthful, but was utterly destitute of craftiness and cunning. While he lived no man wielded such immense power, but with it all vanity was not in him. Few men have been so open to the attacks of his enemies, and no great man who has lived has it been easier to attack and misrepresent than he, while at the same time but few men have elicited such unstinted admiration and affection from friends. Passion, indeed, was one of his strong features, but it was always passion without dissimulation. No man was more submissive to the divine Word and Power, but in his relations to the powers of the world and the Church he did not know what it was to hestitate or waver. He seems to have been incapable of trimming, and there are no indications of his ever in his controversial career having said to himself, "Shall I say this or not?" He was an agitator, but vastly more than an agitator. He was a real agent of reconstruction. He had weight and solidity, but these were always associated with practical power. He could not only preach a theology, but did much to establish and fix its metes and bounds. He led in one of the most revolutionary movements in the history of mankind, and yet was a conservative even to the extent of stubbornness. He was not the founder of a Protestantism that had no respect for the past, the marks of which were a rapacious and senseless iconoclasm. Step by step in his religious development he became the antithesis of Rome, but he did not advocate that the reformed Church should cut off its continuity with the Church of Augustine and Anselm, and much less with the Church of Paul. He was no leader of a merely negative movement, but the positive leader in the reassertion of living truths which found their basis only in the Word of God. With him the right of private judgment was never independent of the frontiers established in the Scriptures. He did something more than protest against the abuses of Romanism. He also claimed and reasserted as its divine right the power of the human mind under the guidance of the Holy Ghost to discern the truths of the Bible.

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Thus the practical Reformer was essentially conservative and moderate. To some who are acquainted only with his opinions on isolated subjects, that may seem a surprising statement. But anyone who impartially considers Luther's whole work as a Reformer will recognize the justice of the estimate. No religious leader has been more careful to insist on the paramount importance and the sacred duty of holding with an immovable grasp to what is of fundamental importance and of maintaining both tolerance and charity where diversity is possible and desirable. He is an example of an intense conservative summoned to a radical reformation of Church doctrine and life. He obeyed the apostolic injunction to hold fast that which is good and established, but he was so modern that today none of the reformers and leaders of the Church since Paul appeals to that which is universal in the heart of man as do the sermons and popular religious writings of Luther. His spirit was sometimes extravagant and excessive, and in some of his writings one is startled by the unmeasured violence of his language. But in his rude, and at times boisterous, speech there was no resentment. He had a temper that was rudely frank, and a tongue that was always ready to say with promptness and boldness what the man back of it believed, and an argumentative fervor that sometimes passed beyond the frontiers of delicacy and good taste. But Luther's coarseness in speech was that of his age rather than of the individual. In his evidently enjoyed sallies at the follies of monkish superstition, the degeneracy of popes and cardinals and the apostasies of the Church, there was no admixture of bitterness. About Luther there was none of that covert and ingenious dissimulation we may frequently find in Erasmus. He was blunt, but never cynical in the day of battle. His speech was oftentimes strong, but not harsh. He could talk back, and it must be confessed, when we remember some of the violence of his assailants, that he was frequently stimulated to exercise both his privilege and his capacity. He was called at various times "the most pernicious pest that ever attacked the flock of Christ," "a poisonous serpent," "a wolf of hell," "a limb of Satan," a man "rotten in mind" and "execrable in purpose."

He was humble, but down deep in his heart there was a spirit of defiance, which, on occasion, rose up to assert itself against such a classification of the bad things we have noted as defining

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who and what the Reformer was, as well as against the emperor, pope, cardinals and lesser prelates, who believed all of them and more to be correct. Considering the many abusive and suggestive names he was called, it is not entirely unexpected that in a rude age as good a man as Luther said in reply some violent things, and that he was not unsparing in even decking out some of his opponents with long ears.

He had a brilliant and fertile gift of humor, but with it an unique combination of depth, even bordering at times on melancholy. His abounding mirth and happy flow of spirits were always associated with a strong natural counter sadness. In spite of his sometimes uproarious hilarity and his overflowing and abounding mental energy, he was in turn bowed down under the oppressive burden of the consciousness of his own sins. He had his times of outburst of joyfulness and laughter, but also his times of depression; but even at such times, after he had emerged into the light and liberty of the Gospel, he was tranquil and self-possessed in his faith in God. It was such a combination of geniality, sadness and sense of sin, along with his manifest faults and weaknesses, that made Luther one of the most human among all the great and good men of whom we have any knowledge. Under all his capacity for wit and humor there lie great depths of tenderness and sadness, a passionate unrest, and what has been called his "unnamable melancholy." He had a glad heart and a big one, but one that was also shadowed and saddened, as well as one that felt unutterably the awful mystery of life and death. But whether he spoke in seasons of gladness or sadness, his perfect candor and frankness, together with his disregard of possible consequence to himself, constantly commended him to the generous judgment of all who, from partisan considerations or traditional prejudice, did not hate him with an unreasoning hatred.

Luther was the leader of a cause. That cause he had not only to lead, but inspire, maintain and support. To his big task he brought the resources of a strong and not always tranquil nature. He could not have done what he did and push on to success the cause associated with his name and leadership had he not been endowed with a somewhat vehement nature and strong powers of action. In it all he was a courageous hero, who was always ready for battle, a man who ever did his fighting well, but whose ca-

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pacity for contention was associated with the simplicity and trustfulness of a little child.

He had unusual gifts for impressing the popular judgment and leading the masses, but he never catered to popular favor, and did not hesitate to risk personal popularity when the popular judgment ran counter to his convictions, as in the case of the peasants' uprising in 1525, when they appealed to him to sanction and support their claims, set forth in the famous twelve articles in which they recited their rights and their grievances. He rebuked the nobles for their rapacity and oppression and the peasants for their insubordination and license, and, at last, the frightful atrocities into which they were plunged. He was all in one man a courageous, energetic, deeply religious and statesmanlike leader, preacher and reformer, who could defy all man-made authority, but who bowed in submission to the authority of the Highest and sought to do whatever He commanded.

The state of the medieval Church in his day was calculated to provoke and excite such a mind as Luther's to revolt and arouse him to deep indignation, but in the face of it all the sounds and sights of nature all touch him, now with joy and now with poetic aspiration. Of all the reformers, we see in him alone, in the fierce conflicts through which he passed, this elevated susceptibility to natural grandeur and beauty. When other men, of fine gifts, who were his contemporaries were rhyming and writing verses, he kept quiet on that particular line, but when the rising revolt against Rome called for popular religious song as one of its effective adjuncts he was the man who became the real founder of a new school of churchly and popular hymnody, unequaled for richness and power in spiritual and devotional expression. His love of music and nature and liberty, and above all his heroic faith, inspire his noble hymns in which the note of triumph always sounds out with a rapture of lyrical feeling and excellence rarely equaled in hymnological productions. These beautiful and stirring utterances of the Reformer, escaping from him, as Heine says, "like a flower making its way between rough stones, or a moonbeam amid dark clouds," somehow serve to add grace and grandeur to his rugged life and put the note of harmony and joy into its battling discords.

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XII

Luther became all the fashion in his day of triumph when progress was the word. The young and aspiring intellect of the day was mainly with him on the great and fundamental question which the Lutheran movement soon brought to the front, viz., who or what was to be the judge and arbiter in the controversies of faith? He held the strong ground, and intellectual men soon saw it to be so. They rallied about him to a degree that sometimes serves to turn the heads of good and wise men. When he was born the human mind was entering upon a new and mysterious stage of its history. In his developing manhood, planting himself down confidently upon ground he had taken, he became the leading factor in that history. He was the leader of his age and the counsellor of princes, but with it all he was destitute of the airs of a great man, affected no station, courted no great men, was one of the common people, and one of the plainest among them; a manly man who, in the midst of his masterful influence, continued to radiate social heartiness and comfort, so that men loved to be about him. Others may have surpassed him in some of the fields of scholarship, but none of his contemporaries approached him as a popular hero, and none was cast in so great a mold. In contrast with his loved and accomplished coadjutor, Philip Melanchthon, who was frequently dominated by his native timidity and vacillation, he had the firmness and balance necessary for the successful issue of the new movement. Calvin was cold and intellectual, systematic and legalistic; he was kind, genial and sympathetic. This is a reflection of the Scotch preacher and writer, the late Dr. John Watson, known in letters as "Ian Maclaren": "No one can estimate how much Germany has gained from Luther's genial and robust nature, or Scotland lost through Calvin being a chronic invalid and Knox being a broken man." He could be severe and denunciatory in his outbursts of indignation when smiting with a mailed first the apostasies of his day, but in him sympathy and warmth find full sway. He could fight, and successfully, with men as varied as the serious but ordinary Cajetan, the shy and convivial courtier, Miltitz, the brow-beating and bustling Eck, and Aleandro, the papal nuncio and literary star, but he was all heart, love and generosity to his friends. His liberality was genial, but out of all proportion to his limited re-

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sources. Wandering students, monks who had escaped from their convents, and beggars of all kinds got what money he had, and if he had no money, he gave away, it is said, the silver cups he had received as presents, his generosity frequently becoming the despair of 'Katie,' his patient and long-suffering wife."

In his domestic life he overflows with affection, warmth and tenderness. He was fond of his "gracious dame Katherine," and had the greatest delight in his children. "I am sufficiently contented," he writes, "for I have three noble children, which no papist theologian has, and the three children are three kingdoms which belong to me by inheritance more surely than Ferdinand's Hungary, Bohemia and the Romish Kingdom." In his relations to his family, whether we find him writing in rollicking fashion to his wife, or giving a description of beautiful horses with silver saddles to his "voracious, vivacious and loquacious" little boy John, or in the agony of overpowering grief when falling upon his knees at the death-bed of his favorite daughter, Magdalena, weeping and holding her in his arms and praying that God would receive her, we are always seeing in Luther the same exuberant and tender as well as energetic character. Few great men have been honored and loved as Luther has been by his fellow-men who knew his big heart, his candid and unambiguous intellect and his inflexibility in righteous purpose. There have been more tranquil, it may be, more complete or even more symmetrical characters, but none that has been richer in the various factors of human greatness. The manifold gifts with which he was endowed, together with that special mixture of character which is always to be regarded as contributing to his dominating personality, have continued from generation to generation to keep alive discussions about him and his work, and induced wise men of varied and sometimes contradictory religious positions and differing tastes to continue to attempt to interpret both the man and his work. He has been one of the chief characters in history to arouse antagonism and to quicken defence. His enemies have made him an object of special attack and his friends one of sympathetic vindication.

The number of truly great men is greatly restricted, but to this number this man, with his honest and magnanimous nature, swayed by a living faith and glowing earnestness, and moved by a divine conviction, unquestionably belongs. As it has been ex-

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pressed in the estimate of Bayard Taylor, he was "one of the creative spirits of the race," "a man of great intention," "the only Protestant leader whose heart was as big as his brain."

The sudden and critical turns in his career, the free play of all his powers, his manly independence, his impulses, his music, his humor, his words, his courage, his triumphs in many a crisis, and his steadfast loyalty to his divine Lord and Redeemer, have charmed the writers and readers of his life. He needs no official canonization to give him an exalted place among the saints who have adorned the Christian profession. A poor miner's son, born, as he himself says, of a race of peasants, in his school days singing at the gates of kindly disposed people; later passing through a religious struggle, scarcely equaled in human biography, seeking for the real meaning of the Gospel, avowing his convictions with unflinching fidelity, he stands today as the recognized leader of these modern times. As a personal factor in the history of religion and civilization he has been adjudged by wise and sagacious interpreters of historical forces as one of the most commanding in the entire record of the progress of mankind. Were the influence of the doctrines and principles he restored and persistently and successfully reasserted subtracted from what is most cherished in our day, the result would not only be depressing but appalling.

One of the strongest tokens of the greatness of Luther's place is found, in the continued estimates placed upon him by thoughtful and informed writers, in every generation since he lived. He has been the most widely-interpreted man of modern times. Of him Prof. Seeberg, of the University of Berlin, in our own days, has said: "But in the midst of the dark forebodings of those days appeared a man who had something practical to propose in the face of all the vague possibilities. He trod like a giant through his age, tramping to earth what a thousand years had held in veneration, but everywhere new life blossomed in his footsteps." Of him also in recently published words Gustav Freytag says: "His picture has the remarkable quality of becoming bigger and more lovable the more closely it is approached." No finer words have been spoken about Luther than those found in the estimate of one of his latest biographers, Prof. Lindsay, Scotch Presbyterian, who says: "History shows no other man with such kingly power. This king among men was also the most human. He

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had his fits of brooding melancholy, his times of jovial abandonment, when one can hear his great jolly laugh and his rich sonorous voice caroling forth songs, his moods of the softest tenderness with wife and children, and his abiding sense of companionship with the eternal."

In the closing pages of his generally fair and always interesting estimate of Luther, Prof. McGiffert says: "He was built on no ordinary scale, this redoubtable German. He was of titanic stature, and our common standards fail adequately to measure him. But his life lies open to all the world, as do few other lives in history. To know it as we may is well worth an effort."

There are historic figures that have dwindled with the lapse of time. In their own day and generation they filled a wide space, made something of a stir and to their contemporaries seemed destined to an immortality of fame and influence. But their activities were inspired by personal and selfish considerations and ambitions. They stood for no great and abiding principles. With the passage of the years they have become more and more receding memories rather than permanent and growing forces in the progress of the race.

There are other figures that grow in impressiveness with the passage of the years. They may have been recognized as heroes while they lived, but the full measure of their greatness was not then discerned. These men, who wrought in a kind of sublime self-forgetfulness, and were concerned the least of all about their personal futures, who were stirred by the wrongs and apostasies of their times, by cruel tyrannies and brazen impostures, had that prophetic vision which looked beyond the present and saw the brighter future, when great truths, for which they contended, but which had been obscured, perverted or denied, for a time. and for a long time as in the medieval Church, should come again to their own. To this latter class belongs Luther, the hero of the Reformation. The most obvious indication of his greatness is his fame. Far beyond the circle of scholars, of theologians, of the learned class, beyond the pale of all the ecclesiastical bodies, Luther is known, and his name is even more potential today than when he was laid to rest in 1546 in the old church at Wittenberg, where, in October, 1517, he inaugurated the great revolt and constructive reformation of the Church and became the leader in the modern era of the history of mankind, the greatest movement

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since the beginning of the years of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

In our attempt at an estimate and interpretation of this extraordinary man we have not encountered one who was perfect. He had faults. To err is human. He lived in an age which encouraged roughness of speech, and he must not be judged by the standards of the better day which he himself inaugurated. But take him all in all, and estimate him in the length and breadth, the height and depth of what he was, and he ranks among the first of the magnates of mankind. He threw off the spiritual despotism of the medieval hierarchy and challenged the false assumptions of the popes and the councils. "He proclaimed," as has been said by Mr. James Bryce, "that the individual spirit, while it continued to mirror itself in the world spirit, had nevertheless an independent existence as a center of self-issuing force, and was to be in all things active rather than passive." It was given to him to divide the clouds which had for a thousand years been hanging over medieval Europe and darkening it, so that the glorious Sun of Righteousness might shine through, and men who were ignorant, enslaved and lost might find their way to God, to salvation and liberty.

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SECTION III

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MOVEMENT

There are three great elements of human progress, the religious, the intellectual and the productive; or, under different terms, virtue, knowledge and industry.

History is something more than a mere record of historical events, whether those events be intellectual, moral, social or political. It is a phase of the universal process in which we live and move and have our being, and of which we as men, created in the image of God and as free moral agents, are a part. It is the continuous stream of human life flowing ceaselessly on from times even more ancient than those of which we have any written records. Whatever has contributed to the course of human development, or has even come in contact therewith as an opposing force, becomes a part of the subject-matter of history. Mr. James Balfour, the distinguished English statesman and scholar, has observed that the great movements which history records have in every case been "irrational." In the use of this word he seems to incline to the belief that such movements have come to life not as the result of intellectual statement or appeal, but always in obedience to forces at first so obscure, and, in the day of their power, so complicated and diverse, that it is impossible to isolate or name them, or in any way to co-ordinate them with man's average behavior.

We may accept Mr. Balfour's generalization as expressive of the impression which history makes upon an intelligent and thoughtful observer, but this generalization must not be interpreted as meaning that the leading events and crises in human history have occurred without any display of reason, but only in obedience to some force which was looked upon as a new element that entered into the life of any particular age, an element not always easily distinguished and interpreted in that particular age.

In its broader and nobler aspects, history is a long series of struggles to elevate the character of mankind in all of its aspects, religious, intellectual, social and political, rising sometimes to an

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agony of aspiration and exertion, and that sometimes followed by a period of relapse and retrogression, as is the case frequently in the moral and religious struggles of individual men. The periods of onward movement, and even those of reaction and retrogression, serve to illuminate Browning's oft-quoted declaration of faith made in striking poetical form:

"God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world."

These movements are always sufficiently definite to indicate, at least in broad outline, the sweep of God's steadily maturing plan through the centuries. Bunsen's great conception of "God in History" is not exclusively a Christian teacher's conception, but is likewise that of representative historians. In the introduction to his "History of the United States," Bancroft, accordingly, could say that his object was, "as the fortunes of a nation are not under the control of a blind destiny, to follow steps by which a favoring Providence, calling our institutions into existence, has conducted the country to its present happiness and glory;" while in his chapter on the Pilgrims he likewise recognizes the divine factor in this way: "The mysterious influence of that Power which enchains the destinies of States, overruling the decisions of sovereigns and the forethought of statesmen, often deduces the greatest events from the least commanding causes."

Any adequate interpretation of history begins with the postulate that God is, and that God is in history ordering, directing and overruling. "We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth." We believe in "Immanuel," which being interpreted means God with us. The existence of God and His hand in the history of mankind does not depend upon the last bright thought of the advanced new theologian, with his revised interpretations expressed in the latest popular essays, for this is the central fact of the universe and the most significant truth known to the human mind. With the individual and with the nations of the earth, life is from God. In the simple truth that God wills a life for a man or a nation are unfolded all the possibilities of that life for the individual, and for the nation, which in its assigned environment and in its given measure of time, shall unfold itself in accordance with the plan of Him who always "sees the end from the beginning." Holding, as we do as Chris-

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tians, to such primary convictions concerning the existence of God and His controlling and directing interest in our race, one of our fundamental beliefs is that the real genius of human history is the doctrine of divine Providence. If it requires mind to construct the universe, it is certainly a primary presumption that the direction of the affairs of mankind will not be left to mindlessness. "History," as has been said by one of the fine interpreters of the workings of the medieval mind, "is a living organism whose parts have an inward, vital connection, each requiring and completing the rest. All nations form but one family, having one origin and one destiny, and all periods are but the several stages of its life, which, though continually changing its form, is also substantially one and the same."

If such reflections as these are correct, both the writers and the readers of history form an unworthy estimate of its province if they restrict it simply to the cause of the rise and fall of empires, the factors in national prosperity or decline, to a presentation of the absoluteness or adaptation of the various forms of government, and to the contemplation of the evidences of growth and transition among the peoples of mankind. The science of history, when rightly understood, deals with something more than a simple narration of occurrences and controversies, a record of human progress or a triumphal eulogy pronounced on the growth of civilization. They only estimate it aright in its true mission who see in its transitions from stage to stage the successive pages in the on-goings of that Providence, which is its informing spirit, and which, without pause or failure, is constantly working out the counsels of the divine will. If we would understand the history of mankind aright, it is not enough that we follow in the wake of battle in the world's decisive conflicts, listening to the triumphant shouts of the conquerors and to the wail of the vanquished, or that, like Hegel, we attempt a philosophical examination of the causes of upheaval and readjustment among the peoples of the earth, or that we regard it as a school for the study of human biography, or that we look upon it as a mere chaos of incidents, as a "mighty maze and all without a plan." We only apprehend aright the true ideal of history when we discover God in it, shaping its ends for His own mighty designs, bringing order out of great confusions, resolving its complications into a manifest unity and continually raising up men who are qualified to enter

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the lists as the real leaders of their fellows along the pathways of a continual progress.

The traditions of a nation are potent influences in the development of national character. The memory of its heroes who have brought to it power and influence in the earth, of its prophets of the higher spiritual life, as contrasted with that which is secular and material; of its scientists and philosophers, who have interpreted nature and given direction to human thinking along elevated lines; of its poets and philanthropists, who have sung its songs and organized its charities; of its good and great men, who have brought it both honor and distinction; all these are factors in a nation's education and aid us in forming an adequate estimate of its career and destiny. But more potent than any or all of these causes are those great movements which from time to time arise in the progress of human events to stamp a new form and superscription on the world. The sacred isolation of the Hebrew commonwealth; the schools of philosophy of Greece; the legal genius and militocracy of Rome; the invasion of the barbarians, whereby the Germanic and Romanic elements of civilization were blended and the new peoples were brought under the tutelage of the Church; the crusades beginning in the closing years of the eleventh century, whereby the stagnation of European society was broken up and peoples of different civilizations were brought into contact; the Reformation under Luther, whereby the Church was purified and the human mind emancipated from medieval sacerdotal bondage; the French Revolution, a mighty, and in some of its aspects, disastrous, struggle for political equality; the rise and spread of the Mohammedan imposture; feudalism, with its mingling of barbarity and blessing; the advent of the world's Redeemer; the invention of printing; the discovery of America, which opened up a new field wherein were to be presented conditions of social and political life such as the world had not hitherto seen—all these were not only historical incidents, but dominating influences in the formation of the character and the direction of the nations of mankind. They all serve to show that God is no meaningless factor in the progress of the race in its upward movements, and that there are no blank pages in His volumes of history.

Such views of God's relation to historical movements have led the wise and sagacious interpreters of that science to look upon

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the Reformation of the Church in the sixteenth century—the Quadri-Centennial of which the Protestant world is now celebrating—as the most permanently influential and vitalizing movement in modern history, and Luther as its dominating figure, as the man raised up of God to start the peoples of the earth along paths leading back to the fertile fields of New Testament Christianity and forward into the new and modern era in which we now live.

I

Unity in history implies that the life of the human race will be the working out and the illustration of some great principle of abiding importance. To the Christian thinker this principle is the redemption of mankind by means of supernatural power, and the direction of man's noblest energies, under the inspiration of this principle of redemption, in science, art, politics and the organization of society. To the non-Christian or the half-Christian mind other universal principles in history are made to serve as the basis of this unity.

The estimates and standards of the Christian are never purely or chiefly naturalistic. "The Church," says the elder Dr. Schaff, "is the continuation of the life and work of Christ on earth, though never, indeed, so far as men in their present state are concerned, without a mixture of sin and error," and the primate among the historians of the Church, Neander, expresses the same thought: "Although Christianity can be understood only as something which is above nature and reason, as something communicated to them from a higher source, yet it stands in necessary connection with the essence of these powers and with their mode of development; otherwise, indeed, it could not be fitted to elevate them to any higher stage; otherwise, it could not operate on them at all. And such a connection, considered by itself, we must presume to exist in the works of God, in the mutual and harmonious agreement of which is manifested the divine order of the universe. The connection of which we now speak consists in this: That what has by their Creator been implanted in the essence of human nature and reason, can attain to its full realization by means of that higher principle, as we see it actually realized in Him who is its source and in Whom is expressed the original type and model after which humanity has to strive."

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Thus God in man, which is the incarnation, becomes God in men through the working of the Spirit in the body of Christ, which is the Church. To the Christian philosopher and the simple and humble disciple as well, the basal principle in the interpretation of world movements and personal salvation alike, is the doctrine of the divine incarnation and the supernatural redemption wrought in the individual and in society through Christ, for with both "there is none other name given among men" whereby both individual and corporate salvation are to be attained.

There is a theory of the Reformation which regards that great movement as nothing more than the self-assertion and influence of a group of men of unusual mental and moral capacities. It is a theory that rests upon the opinion of writers like Goethe, Carlyle, Treitschke, Emerson, Canon Barry and others, and proceeds upon the assumption that it is, after all that may be said, individuals that create and stand for great movements and that history is nothing more than the biography of a few great men. Even so great and competent an historian as Leopold Von Ranke looks with some favor upon this view. We have been treated by Mr. Buckle, the able author of the "History of Civilization in England" to a theory of history which aims to make it an exact science, and to reduce all events under a law of causation. "In regard to nature," says this ingenious but somewhat eccentric writer, "events apparently the most irregular and capricious have been explained, and have been shown to be in accordance with certain fixed and universal laws. This has been done because men of ability, above all, men of patient, untiring thought, have studied natural events with a view of discovering their regularity: and if human events were subjected to similar treatment we have a right to expect similar results." In opposition to the view of Buckle, who believed that the great events of history were determined by physical laws in which men had, so to speak, no part and of which they are only the instruments, Von Ranke believes that history is nothing more than the work of certain minds fulfilling more or less certain conditions, and each having a certain peculiar sphere of influence. It has not been doctrines that have overthrown the world, but the powerful personalities who became the incarnation of those doctrines. Great men are a product of nations, and they do not appear save at a comparatively advanced stage of civilization." But in another place the

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same writer goes to another extreme, asserting that "no one has any right to speak of mistakes committed, opportunities lost, and culpable omissions. Events rule men; they live their lives under a sort of inevitable necessity; they have on them the seal of fate." In the light of history itself, and any adequate philosophy of history, this "great men theory" is unsound. It is only when it is superficially estimated that the good work of the Reformation is regarded as the work of one great man or any group of men. God undoubtedly raises up great men of powerful personality, who, enlightened with clear apprehension, become teachers and sages to their fellows, and persuade them to move along new and higher lines of development, and thus to become helpers in the carrying forward of the divine purposes.

But no genuine and permanent reformation ever springs forth full grown from the brain and heart of any single great and good man. It cannot be called into being by some mere herald of revolt or by some self-willed enthusiast. If it be real and is to be permanent it must express a common aspiration after things that are both good and true, and assert itself as the deep and unappeased hunger after spiritual manna, and come to maturity and dominate the people in consequence of its own internal energy and capacity for assertion. Back of it there must be principles of abiding value, truths of fundamental importance, which are always potential in times when men are feeling after mental and spiritual certainty and tranquillity. Great men are just as much the product of their times as they are forces to stimulate them. The functions of the leaders lie chiefly in giving expression to, and in wisely directing, movements of which they are merely a part and by no means the creators. A skeptical attitude toward the existing order of things, or mere revolt against the abuses of the medieval Church, could never have united men as they soon became united around the standard of Luther. The Reformation was something more than a revolt against abuses existing in the Church of Rome in the year 1517. It was Protestant against falsehood, but it was positive in its reaffirmation of New Testament conceptions of the Christian religion. The battle waged by the great leader of that movement was a conflict between two entirely different views of the religion of Christ. It was the assertion of a clear, consistent and intelligible conception of Christianity as antithetical to another conception that is clear, consist-

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ent and intelligible, and which was held by the Church of Rome. If the principles contended for by Luther were correct then Rome was fundamentally wrong. "The Lutheran Church," says the late Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, "was organized by a body of beliefs and in order to their realization. These beliefs were of a kind that could not live under Catholicism, nor could it allow them to live. They were throughout the negation of the right of a sacerdotal institution to be, to hold any place or exercise any function as between God and man." The Reformation was a movement of reconstruction, a restoration of principles that had been lost sight of, and a renovation by means of these principles of what had already been established. The questions involved were vastly greater than whether a man had his membership in a pure or a corrupted Church. They went down to the root of things, and dealt with the question, "What is the religion that is called Christianity?" It was not only an assault upon the false, and an effort at supplanting that which had become obsolete, but an aggressive assertion of positive and scriptural principles. It aimed by means of these to rectify that which had been perverted, and at the driving out from the sacred places of the Church of that which had been shown to be an useless, arrogant and unnecessary intruder. It sought to lead men back again to a belief in New Testament doctrines, to a reassertion of the principles of the Gospel in its unadorned simplicity, and to a reaffirmation of the consistent teachings of Paul as contrasted with contradictory and unwarranted decrees of councils and popes. It rejected with firmness and energy that which, during a period of a thousand years, had engrafted itself upon the life of the Church, which was not of the Gospel of our Lord, and enlisted princes and nobles, scholars and artists, peasants and barons, in the new movement which marks the turning point from the medieval to the modern period of human history.

In seeking for its origin we are not to regard the Lutheran movement, begun in October, 1517, as having found its expression only in protesting against something, and in particular, against more or less of the religion taught by the Church of Rome, or as having its beginnings in either personal or transient interests. That would have represented essentially a merely negative attitude of mind. The great and permanently valuable affairs in the history of men and the Church proceed from causes more pro-

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found, from principles of perpetual validity and importance. In the sixteenth century, before any real reform could take place, three antecedent conditions were necessary, viz., a manifest need for reform in established institutions; the necessity for that reform must be popularly recognized, and the principles upon which the new order was to be inaugurated must be rooted in the past. Such being the conditions at that time, the dawn of the Reformation was at hand.

Luther was a man of superb gifts. He was largely endowed by nature, but he did not become so prodigiously effective in the use of those gifts and endowments until he had once for all planted himself down defiantly upon certain great truths clearly taught in the Scriptures which had been amply validated in his own experience, and until he had broken into God's liberty and by faith had become a prophet of the Most High. With due allowance for the evolutionary process of human development, and recognition of the forces at work, Prof. Preserved Smith, a great and sympathetic Luther scholar, has shown clearly that the courage of this one great man made the Reformation possible. "If some such crisis was inevitable he, at least, determined its time, and to a large extent its method." His profoundly religious nature, sturdy personality, great moral courage, indomitable will; his loyalty to conscience, as Smith says it, his "gift of seeing the essence of things and revealing what he saw," his warm heart and keen sense of humor, are constantly appearing before us in clear relief as we contemplate the career of the great Reformer. All these were fine adjuncts in his work. But all these kept in a fine co-ordination, as they were in him, would not have made the Reformation the greatest event in the world's history since the opening of the year of the incarnation of the Son of God. "A great part of his sublimity," says Horace Bushnell of Luther, "lay in that awful robustness of nature that could be tremendously kindled by God's inspirations, burning on, still on, in a grand volcanic conflagration of faculty, yet never consumed." And all this is no doubt true of the great Reformer, but back of that "sublimity" lay the germinal thought and experiences out of which his work sprang, and which are vividly exhibited in his life, and are constantly giving strength and color to all that he did. Reformers are always thinkers, and out of formulated and unambiguous thinking on great and vital principles came the

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Reformation. About these Luther was not only brave enough to think, but also courageous enough to say what he believed. In isolated cases others had been thinking some of the same things, but had hesitated to express them, or at least to co-ordinate their thinking into anything like a consistent system. He uncovered ancient principles and readjusted laws that had been misapplied, and in consequence an artificial piece of ecclesiasticism was demolished.

The Reformation came in a period in which the agencies of restoration, destruction and discovery were all put into a proper co-operation, and accordingly the past four hundred years have constituted an epoch of unsurpassed, and as we fervently believe, of permanent progress and renewal.

This is the reason why Christendom today is pronouncing the name of Luther not only with admiration, but with the profoundest feelings that can stir the human heart. The significance of his name, however, and the innumerable celebrations held in honor of the four hundreth anniversary of the great work he inaugurated with his theses, lies in the fact that he represented more than any one man the principles which have given true Protestantism its existence and made it the greatest permanent factor in modern civilization. He became the leading spirit in that mighty upheaval of human thought, which was more than a revival of letters, although that revival was one of its powerful adjuncts. With the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Turks in 1453 there ensued a dispersion of Greek scholars over Western Europe. With them they carried a genius for the ancient learning, and with the help of Petrarch, Agricola, Reuchlin, Erasmus and others, they awakened a new and enthusiastic appreciation of classic heroes and works. Schools and universities sprang into life, and thus in a large degree the soil was prepared for the good seed of the Gospel. But a literary revival is not a reformation of religion, and in itself is not a proclamation of salvation.

Neither was this great movement an incidental result of the invention of printing. True, the quickening influences of the press had just then burst upon the world. Just at the right moment this fine accessory of the new movement came in to afford its help. In 1455 Gutenberg was enabled to send out into the world from the press at Maintz the first printed Bible. In the

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same year Reuchlin was born, and not long thereafter, probably in 1466, Erasmus, of Rotterdam. Together with the appearance in type of such works as Boccaccio's Decameron and Greek Grammars, there appeared the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Latin and Greek. In many lands the desire for knowledge was both created and fed. There was inspiration, stimulus, and knowledge in the rapid appearance of books. But books and pamphlets, which appeared in such rapid succession, never could have made the Reformation.

Nor, again, is this movement so fraught with blessing to be identified with the astonishing development at that time of the vernacular tongues of Europe. Hitherto, indeed, Latin had been the language of religion, of diplomacy, of science, of all communication between learned men in different countries of the earth. The native speech of the great masses of the people in each of the nations was rude, barbarous and wholly destitute of information worthy of being recorded or taught. This deep and deplorable ignorance was broken up when approved scholars began to transfer their attainments out of the Latin into their mother tongues, and were forced, in the process of breathing new life and beauty into them, to make them the medium henceforth for the intellectual as well as the moral elevation of their uneducated brethren. This supplanting of the old tongue of the Church in worship was one of the most significant changes wrought in Luther's work. The universal use of Latin had been one of the deep marks of Catholic and European character of the old religion. Henceforth worship became a privilege of the people to be expressed in their own tongue. The theory of worship which had prevailed in medieval Christendom was that the believer was a passive spectator only in rites and ceremonies wrought for him by priestly hands, an attendant at a sacrifice wrought through sacerdotal intervention at the offering up of prayer and praise by priestly lips. This was now rejected in the interest of the common worship of the people. Expressions of adoration, thanksgiving, praise and supplication became henceforth functions of the whole body of worshipers. The "mass" became a communion of the whole body of believers. The priest no longer was looked upon as the only one to be entrusted with the offering up of mysterious sacrifices, as the one and only mediator between God and the worshiping believer. Placed on a level with other

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members of the universal priesthood of believers, instead of a mediator, necessary for another man's access to God, he became the simple mouthpiece of the congregation, its recognized leader in a worship conducted in the language of the people. But excellent and desirable, yea, even essential, as this transformation of the European vernacular was, that was not the Reformation nor its underlying cause.

Nor was this movement the offspring of the free cities of Germany and the struggles for national independence that were then beginning to assert their influence in the regeneration and ennoblement of different peoples. Liberty is something great and glorious, but it is not efficacious in the restoration of correct religious principles. Greece had liberty and rejoiced in its possession, and that beyond measure, but liberty did not lead the peoples of Greece to confession of sin, to outcries for holiness, to a recognition of the only living God, and to the reconciliation of the soul with Him by means of His infinite pardon and endless peace. This great movement inaugurated by Luther was not the result of the contemporary emancipation of men from intellectual and civil bondage.

A variety of causes, it is true, contributed to the Reformation. Experience teaches that neither individuals, nor groups of men, nor nations or races of men, are uniformly controlled in their actions by single or dissociated motives. A variety of contributing causes was at work, acting differently and with varying degrees of force in the production of that epoch-making movement. But notable changes do not come to men or nations unless they are based upon great and vital principles. Progress is, for the most part due to the leaven of an idea, which, sometimes long half dormant in the minds and hearts of cautious souls, at last breaks forth with revolutionary power in the bold act of some courageous and qualified leader.

It has been noted with interest that great movements during the Christian era have come about in periods that may be reckoned approximately at four hundred years. During the earliest period the Roman Empire held sway, but that was terminated in 395 A. D. There followed another four hundred years of contact between Roman civilization and Germanic barbarism, when successive invasions from the north and east threatened for a time, as it seemed, to crush out all civilization. But these two conflicting

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forces clashed, struggled and coalesced until at the time of the Great Charles, about 800 A. D., there came about as the result a new and fairly homogeneous society, which, though rude and undeveloped, contained some of the forces that looked forward to national organization and religious reform. Upon the heels of this there followed four hundred years of strife and turmoil, during which the Church was the single unifying force and the one institution that conserved the factors which are permanent in civilization, such as religion, education, the spirit of kindness, commerce and building. By about 1200 A. D. "the land had rest" in a measurable degree, and there followed another period of new intellectual activity, educational organization, progress in science and art, an increasing freedom of thought and its assertion in isolated examples, all of which were leading up to the revival of learning and the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Looking back today over the four hundred years that have ensued since the nailing up of Luther's theses on the 31st of October, 1517, which has appropriately been called "the birthday of the Reformation," we can form something of a true estimate of the principles and forces that at that time entered into the making of the modern era of human history. Back of the idealism and the moral and spiritual dynamic which then enabled the people under Luther's leadership to throw off the yoke of political and ecclesiastical tyranny, and the assertion of that freedom of thought and purpose, were great and fundamental principles, especially in the sphere of religion.

It may be said in all truth that no new forces entered the ecclesiastical and civil institutions at the opening of the new era inaugurated by Luther, but truths that had long been suppressed, or at least subordinated, sprang into new life and reasserted themselves as dominating and compelling forces which soon swept Church and people along the lines of a new development. In that period the most significant feature was the release and reinstatement of certain principles that possessed sufficient power to transform the world of that day. No such movement has its strength in falsehood, nor any more in mere negations, and no victories of a genuine Protestantism in the future will be of any real and permanent value which are not marked by a return to those ennobling principles, which, since Luther's day, have been connected with the best life of mankind.

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II

The groundwork of this great movement was religion and the primacy of its place among men. Its essence is not to be found first of all in opposition to errors and abuses that had fastened themselves upon the medieval Church, but in the reassertion of positive truth. The attitude of Luther was constructive and positive and not destructive and negative. That which is worthy of the name of reformation, a movement such as carries with it those factors which insure permanency, cannot be manufactured by any kind of human ingenuity. It was not a matter of human invention, for had it been it would not have endured for four hundred years, and would have had no permanent influence on the future of civilization. In its true sense, a reformation is always the worked out result of regenerating forces and powerful tendencies which have been for a long time at work in human history, the outburst of spiritual forces that have long been operating and whose energetic presence at last has reached the point of restoration and reassertion. A genuine reformation is the result of an urgent necessity, which, with persistency and power, pushes to the front the deepest needs of an age and which dominates the minds and hearts of earnest men with irresistible power. In the last analysis that power which so promptly, when the fulness of time had come, permeated the social structure of the German people and gave expression to their deepest desires and profoundest thoughts, was the Word of God in the hearts of good men.

Speaking from the human side, the new power came with the dominance and extension of a very simple idea based upon the sacred Scriptures, viz., that men are to be reconciled to God through faith, which is the unmerited gift of God. The prevalence of that idea not only wrought for salvation from sin and its entailments, but established a new sense of the dignity of man, of individual responsibility and initiative. For hundreds of years prior to Luther the dominant conception of the meaning of life was this: That it meant to know and do the will of the rulers in both the ecclesiastical and political spheres. To obey absolutely the voice of authority was looked upon as the supreme duty and chief end of man, that authority being vested in the State or the Church, and more frequently in the Church, when for long

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periods it dominated the State, named its rulers and dictated its policies. It was the work of Luther, by the force of his great personality in combination with the assertion and insistence upon certain great and enduring principles, fundamental alike in the first, the fourth, the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, to break the spell of this species of authority, to dare to defy it and to lead men back to the essential vantage ground where their actions were once more based upon the will of God made known through His revealed Word, as interpreted and applied, not by pope or council, but by every man who devoutly studies that Word under the guidance of the Spirit of life and truth.

In its ultimate results there never has been a movement which has contributed so largely to the emancipation of the human mind from all superstitious terrors as the Reformation of the Church in the sixteenth century. It had strength enough in the principles upon which it was based to successfully reject an immense proportion of the dogmatic and ritualistic conceptions, that in the departure of the Church from the teachings of the Scriptures, had almost covered the entire field of religion. It was the changed attitude toward God and man in the one distinctive sphere of religion which reversed many things that had become established and set the world going on its new and better way.

The new age was inaugurated by a contribution to the interpretation of the Gospel that still maintains its dominion over the most enlightened portions of mankind. From its very beginnings it was based upon certain positive and constructive principles of thinking and teaching. Because of the character of these principles and their popularity among the most enlightened peoples of the earth, the Protestant movement has taken its place among the most memorable and far-reaching events in human history, as the most important event since the days of the apostles, from the time when St. John, the aged and beloved disciple of the Lord, passed away in his sea-girt home in the Ægean. That movement did great things and accomplished permanent results in religion and civilization, not only in its negative aspects as a protest against abuses that had grown up in the Church, but much more in its positive aspects. It was a process of spiritual advance and not retrogression, a re-proclamation of the Gospel, a giving back of the Scriptures to the people in popular form, an assertion for

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all men alike of the right to go at once and direct to God for pardon and life, to repair at once to the Chief Bishop and Shepherd of souls for a forgiveness not mediated by an order of men, but which, rejecting the monastic ideal of the Christian life, with its seclusion and bodily self-abnegation, once more taught men that every creature of God is good, and that nothing is to be despised if received with thanksgiving.

That the chief of the Reformers had faults and was somewhat subject to limitations, all will admit, but we cannot on that account go back on the main verdict which history affirms and our experience validates. Because of the vitality of the truths for which he contended, the Reformation was a mighty movement of the Spirit of God leading the Church forward to a fuller understanding of the Gospel, and bringing to all who sincerely received it the gift of spiritual enfranchisement. It implied the parting of the roads and was a disclosure of the new conception of the Christian Church. The unity of the Church must in the future be consistent with the right of private judgment, instead of resting on the authority of a hierarchy which claims an exclusive divine right by the title of a presumed divine appointment.

One of the things alleged against Protestantism by Romanists, and by some pseudo-Protestants even today, is that it is negative and negative only; that it consists in mere empty allegations that this or that is not so, in exposing and denouncing error. But such is not the case. Protestantism is not negative, but positive in all of its triumphant aspects. It is primarily a witness for and not merely a witness against. It has lived and grown powerful, not in consequence of its negations, but in consequence of its affirmations. The negative condition for such an event as the Reformation had been fulfilled in disconnected assaults upon the alarming corruptions of the Church, isolated reaffirmations of single truths of the Gospel, the dismal failure of the reformatory councils and the widespread clamor for a reformation of morals. Something more and of greater account was necessary, and that was the positive assertion of great and fundamental truths of religion and their co-ordination into a consistent system. The firm conviction that salvation comes not from man but from God, the fact that pardon of sin is not something negotiable, but a divine bestowment—this one truth, firmly grasped and affirmed, made the Reformation not only possible but a matter of assured

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success. Going back to the Scriptures as the pure Word of God, in contrast with human teachings and traditions; the firm conviction that perfect peace with God and true happiness cannot spring from any human activity or works prescribed by the Church, but from divine grace revealed in Christ and received by a living faith; that the matter of primary concern was not so much a matter of a man's relation to the Church as of his relation to Christ; that the most direct way to God was not through the elaborate prescriptions of the Church, much confused with human traditions, but through Christ the Redeemer and one all-sufficient Mediator and His promised Spirit, Who maketh men free and leadeth them into the truth and holiness—these are truths which once firmly grasped and held made the new Lutheran movement an assured historical fact.

Thus the Reformation was more than a reform, for it marked the re-establishment of primitive Christianity. Its purpose was not the destruction of the Church, but to lead the Church back and place it anew upon the one abiding foundation of which Jesus Christ was the chief cornerstone. The Reformers knew that the existence and continued work of the Church demanded the rearing of a new temple upon the old and tried foundation of the apostles, martyrs, prophets and teachers of the one true Church, made up of the congregation of souls who really and truly believe in Christ, and among whom the Gospel is properly taught and the sacraments rightly administered. That great movement was a real re-establishment of Christianity in the world. It reaffirmed the principles upon which the true Church had been placed by its Head and His apostles at the beginning, and continued its life by means of a resurrection of what had been to all appearances dead and buried. In painful experiences men had become aware that the existence and work of the Church demanded that a new superstructure must be raised on the old rock interpreted and elaborated in the Epistles of the New Testament. Luther was no ruthless iconoclast who aimed at destruction, but rather a most cautious reconstructionist, always careful to plan and work within the limits prescribed by the sacred Scriptures. The objective foundation upon which to build was for him Christ and the salvation conferred upon men by Him. To this he added, with renewed emphasis, a long-lost and much-ignored truth of a moral creation as the basis for the personal expression

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of the Christian life. He reaffirmed the fact that the Church, if it is to remain a Church at all, must start from a real regeneration. He kept the objective and subjective elements in religion in proper co-ordination, properly relating the certainty within a man to the certainty for a man. There was thus provided a safeguard against mere mystical impressions and unstable opinions, the pit into which all certainty that is merely subjective is always liable to fall.

Theology waited for renewal and regeneration until at last Luther came, the needed successor of Paul and Augustine, who led this queen of all the sciences back from its long exile from the simplicity that was in Christ, and refounded it upon the great truth that men are justified before God by faith alone. The Reformer's heart cried out for the living God, and as opportunity came he studied the Word with rare diligence. Becoming a university professor, he was deeply convinced of the supremacy of the Bible over all the teachings and interpretations of men. As he continued his study of the Scriptures this conviction deepened. The two biblical books which he selected for his first lectures at Wittenberg are those books of the New Testament which are especially strong in their teaching that the sinner has immediate access to God, and that salvation is not of works but by faith alone. All through his carefully constructed, and to this day deeply interesting comments, one may discern the great man struggling, in spite of himself, with the old medieval system of salvation, and seems to hear him at times breaking forth in exclamations of rapture as he attains to his new apprehension of the Gospel and experiences the newly found blessing of freedom in Christ. More and more was he dominated by the Pauline conception of free grace, as he came step by step to discard Aquinas and Aristotle, the chief among the authoritative teachers of the Middle Ages, and as Augustine, the greatest of the post-apostolic fathers, more and more became his chief human authority.

Another striking feature appears in Luther's university work as Bible lecturer, in making Scripture to interpret Scripture, thus establishing a principle which later the Reformers put into a formula. When his adversaries, to prove their case, in discussions from 1518 to 1521 heaped up the customs of the Church, the decretals of the popes and councils and quotations from the fathers, he confidently appealed to the oracles of the living God,

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drawing his proofs from the spiritual arsenal of the Word of God. Another notable thing for his times, in Luther's study of the Scriptures, was that he devoted himself with much diligence to the study of the original languages, Greek and Hebrew. When this capable young man had completed his university course as a student he knew no Greek and very little, if any, Hebrew. For centuries distinguished theologians and doctors of the Church had known neither of these languages in which the original Scriptures appeared. Neither Wiclif nor Huss, heralds of the coming Reformation, knew Greek, and Thomas Aquinas, "the angelic doctor," Bonaventura, "the seraphic doctor," and Duns Scotus, "the subtle doctor," had never entered this linguistic field. The study of these biblical tongues had been introduced into Germany by Erasmus and Reuchlin while Luther was yet a young man, and, in keeping with its dominating stupidity in such matters, in the face of strenuous opposition on the part of the Church. Largely by his own unaided efforts the chief of the Reformers gained a knowledge of these two languages as a part of his equipment for his work, and from the year 1517 on, in his controversies with the papal chieftains, he was able to point them to the original text of the Bible, a province into which their ignorance, for the most part, did not permit them to enter. In the linguistic and exegetical contests of the day Luther always held the strong place from which he could not be dislodged.

Especially was the doctrine of justification by faith, which Luther had found in his careful study of the Scriptures, to be wrought into his experience, for, as has been said by Prof. Lindsay, "The beginnings of the Reformation were not so much doctrinal as experimental." Luther headed a reformation because men felt and knew that he had, as he said, found a gracious God by trusting in His grace as revealed to him in Jesus Christ. The driving power of the whole movement, as we have seen earlier, was a great religious experience kept in a true co-ordination with the Word of God. "If thou holdest faith," said Luther, "to be simply a thought concerning God, then that thought is as little able to give eternal life as ever a monkish cowl could give it." Such was not the Reformer's conception of that faith which saves. For him, on the one side, there stood the Father, revealing Himself in sending down to us His promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus; and on the other side, there are the hearts of

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men ascending in faith to God, receiving, accepting and resting on the promises of Him who always gives Himself in those promises.

For modern Christianity he had done what Augustine, in an earlier age, had done for medieval Christianity. From the accretions of a thousand years of blighting sacerdotalism it was his mission to call the Church back to what had been ignored or destroyed, back to that immediate communion between the personality that is human and the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is divine. He made war upon that system which, in effect, stands between the sinful yet trustful soul and the Lord who hath redeemed it at a great price, and through faith in Whom it is granted reconciliation and peace. He assailed the imposition of penances and penalties of priestly invention and exaction. He made a break with the old ecclesiastical order, and there arose new churches not from it but entirely independent of it. He planted those scriptural principles that gradually grew into a freedom of religious thought, which would never have come to the world had Christendom gone on under the dominance and direction of one great and all-comprehensive ecclesiastical control. The most valuable principle in the doctrinal system of Augustine, the doctrine of the necessity of grace in salvation, was practically suppressed until its reassertion by Luther. In his progress from stage to stage of his break with the papacy, he was forced more and more into open hostility to the fundamental principles of the sacerdotal theology, because the refutation of their conclusions depended upon the destruction of their premises. In two sermons preached in 1518 he swept away the whole system of canonical penitence, while in another series of propositions issued for public disputation he approaches very closely to his great foundation principle of justification by faith in his repudiation of the necessity of sacerdotal intervention between God and man for the remission of sins. His position then taken would lead logically to the breaking down of all the spiritual machinery of confession, penitential exercises, absolution and excommunication, on which the whole temporal and spiritual authority of the hierarchy depended. In another sermon on excommunication, preached about the same time, Luther reveals the mental transition through which he was passing and the inevitable struggle into which he had been thrust between his efforts to attain to freedom from the law and the long-cultivated habit of obedience to ecclesiastical authority.

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These and many other phases of the spiritual development taking place in Luther were indications big with meaning. In the initial stages of his break with Rome he might have deceived himself as to the consequences of his attitude, but the leaders of the papacy labored under no delusion. They could observe the signs of the times, and could perceive the end to which the principles asserted in succession by the Reformer were leading. They discovered that his defiance involved a rift down deep and permanent in western Christendom. As the spectators gazed wonderingly at his bold act of defiance of all the powers of both heaven and earth, as they supposed, on that 10th day of December, 1520, when, surrounded by magistrates, students, professors and citizens of the town, near the Elster gate at Wittenberg, he burned the papal bull and decretals, they may not have grasped the full significance of what was transpiring. But on that fateful ceremony hung great consequences. The bold Reformer had burned the bridges, and henceforth retreat was not only impracticable but impossible. Not only had he become a preacher of damnable doctrines, an advocate of condemned heresies, and a turbulent schismatic, but he had defied the old hierarchy which had been consolidated through a thousand years of historical vicissitudes, and in that act had made a return to Rome impossible. It soon became manifest that the movement was not to be retarded, much less arrested, by edicts of condemnation and papal acts of excommunication. That conflict of freedom and faith with supersition and tyranny was based upon principles so scriptural and invincible that the usual papal methods of repression were no longer available for effective service. Luther's own experience was the nucleus about which was gathered all that was most vital in the thought of the age—the return to the Bible, to Augustine and to Mysticism; the protest against the sophistries of the schoolmen and against the corruption of the Church, and the restoration of a simpler and more individual relation of the soul to God. That great man was fitted to be the prophet of his age, because, first of all, he had the most searching experience in what that age most needed—personal religion.

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III

In her condemnation of the Reformation the Church of Rome has been rabid, untruthful and persistent in the face of rejoinders that have been historically unanswerable, and satisfactory to all reasonable and fair-minded people. In her eyes that movement, led by Luther, was nothing more than an impious heresy, leading men on to an abyss of Pantheism, Materialism and Atheism, tending to overthrow the very foundations of human society. She has contended that the principles upon which that movement was based are revolutionary, dangerous and not to be tolerated. She has asserted that it was a wicked error to admit Protestants to equal political privileges with Romanists, and that to coerce them and suppress them is a sacred duty. As recent a pope as Gregory XVI has denounced freedom of conscience as an insane folly, and the freedom of the press a pestilential error which is not to be endured. No pope since Gregory has reversed or dissented from the judgment of his alleged infallible predecessor. At first the Church looked upon Luther as nothing but a vulgar, insubordinate and quarrelsome monk, a pestilential disturber of things established by ecclesiastical authority, an inconspicuous upstart to be easily suppressed. In the centuries which have passed since the day that he was laid to rest in the old church at Wittenberg, where he inaugurated his great movement, the villification that has been poured out upon him and his work has been so bitter as to have become ludicrous in some of its aspects. It has been declared that his father was not the husband of his mother, but a wicked and designing scoundrel, who had deluded her; that after ten years' struggling with his conscience he had become an open and declared atheist; that he denied the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; that he had composed hymns in honor of drunkenness, a vice to which he was unrestrainedly addicted; that he had blasphemed the Bible, and especially the writings of Moses; that he was insincere, not himself believing a word that he preached; that he had called the Epistle of James nothing more than an epistle of straw; and, above all, that the Reformation was no work of his, but in reality was due to certain astrological causes, to a certain malignant arrangement of the stars. Rome kept on in the mistake that the movement was nothing more than a casual outbreak, failing to

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discern that it was, in fact, the culmination of forces that for hundreds of years had been at work in Europe, and which had all been anticipations of Luther.

But notwithstanding all this abuse, misinterpretation and blundering of Rome, those regenerative and world-uplifting principles set forth by the Reformer became very soon the cause of the emancipation of the human mind from ignorance, the citizen from tyranny, the Christian believer from priestcraft, and the soul from every form of spiritual thraldom. They had in them the popular appeal, and became at once the cause of a general change in intellectual and spiritual conditions, in the processes and tone of human life. There sprang up an expression of freedom, joyfulness and independence hitherto unknown. There were great changes in the actual conditions of life, which once more brought fresh power and courage to men and altered their attitude toward ultimate questions about God and man's relation to Him. There sprang up a belief in the possibility of a spiritual and divine life even beyond the pale of ecclesiastical forms and prescription. Radical social changes were inaugurated, and these led on to yet newer and larger developments. Very soon Luther's masterful and concrete grasp of things became more and more manifest, and that served much to fill the whole movement with glowing life and irresistible attraction. He succeeded in transferring the religious problem, in all its essentials, to the immediate personal life of the individual, there working it out in its full scope in the sphere which had been usurped by the Church, with its sacerdotal machinery and catalogues of good works. The chief characteristic of the new life among the people was freedom, so that Melanchthon could exclaim, "in the end, Christianity is freedom." This freedom was not something that came as a gift of nature, but from the favor and gift of God. It was a liberty, not of the man in himself, but of the "Christian man," a liberty under which we are no longer oppressed and compelled by legal enactments, but impelled by motives which induce men to do good of their own accord. It was the kind of freedom unto which a man attains when he passes out from the minute and detailed requirements of the Levitical code into the freedom of Paul's man in the Epistle to the Galatians. It was a freedom from works—not as though works could in any sense be dispensed with by free men in Christ, but in the sense that they

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do not bring the gift of salvation—a freedom in which we are not emancipated from works, but from the ascription of saving value to works. Everything that in any way obscured the work of Christ and weakened trust in the efficacy of grace alone, was compelled to stand aside. Ceremonies of the Church were to be regarded as subject to change and adaptability from time to time, while to look upon them as essentials to salvation was to diminish our dependence on the divine benignity expressed in the gifts of God's grace. The spiritual was exalted above the sensuous in religion, and in consequence the externalism of the ancient papal hierarchy, which expressed religion in a vast structure outside the soul, was shaken out of its usurped place of supremacy.

At the inauguration of the Reformation the times were full of new forces, intellectual and moral, political, social and economic. These forces were everywhere at work, tending to make religion the birthright and possession of the common man as well as of a special priest-caste among men to which the transmission of the blessings of salvation had been entrusted. But what gave its popularity to the movement was the strong appeal made by these distinctively religious principles to the popular mind and heart. These gave it its peculiar democratic tone and made of it a mighty force of liberation and the dawn of the new day.

Mistakes have been indulged in regarding the popularity of pre-Lutheran efforts at reform. We are sometimes reminded of the fact that the medieval absoluteness of the papal claims had been questioned and even assailed, both in its dogmatic teachings and hierarchical claims, long before Luther was born. By one of the philosophical historians we have been reminded that "they who endeavor to trace all modern negations to the Reformation ignore, or affect to ignore, the fact that in the ninth century Scotus Erigena denied eternal punishment; that in the twelfth century Abelard declared the teachings of the Greeks to be superior to the Old Testament; that in the thirteenth century scores of Catholics refused to believe in the miraculous conception of the Virgin and the resurrection of Christ; that two hundred years before the Reformation, when the Holy See was at the height of its power, St. Thomas and Duns Scotus found themselves obliged to prove with all the arts of logic the need of a revelation and the credibility of Scripture." The great French critic, Taine, writes much in harmony with what we have just

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cited from Weber. "One hundred and thirty years before Luther they said that the pope was not established by Christ, that pilgrimages and image worship were akin to idolatry, that external rites were of no importance, that priests ought not to possess temporal wealth, and that the confessional has not power of absolving from sin." Without giving endorsement to the theological bias indicated by both, it may be said that these claims of Taine and Weber are historical and true. Others before his day had spoken words that were as true and brave as those spoken by Luther. Others had refused, even for life itself, to give up the truth which they were glad to believe and confess. Others had from time to time made what has well been called the "grand refusal," and had gone courageously and triumphantly to the stake. But these were the advanced souls who confessed the truth and protested against the abuses of the medieval Church. In the troublous times that were leading up to the irrepressible conflict of the sixteenth century there were those who stood up in their own time and place, and, as the heralds of revolt, defied the power and the terror, the prestige, the fascination and the grandeur of the medieval Church. They were the advance heralds of the great army that was then organizing to march under the banner of freedom and light. The mystic, who was seeking only the inward assurance of divine love, was uttering his testimony in the obscure places of the earth. We read of mothers who were burned alive for teaching their little children the Lord's prayer in their mother tongue; of children who were compelled with their own hand to light the fagot of their own father's martrydom; of gentlewomen who refused to cease singing their sweet hymns of patience and trust as they lay in the pit where they were condemned to be burned alive.

There were those who helped forward the cause of reform by demonstrating the difficulty of the regeneration of the papal system from within. There were others who stimulated the desire for the moral betterment of the clergy. There were others still who fixed in the minds of the thousands the thought that was destined by and by to bear much fruit in the early history of the German Reformation, the thought that there was in a General Council of the Church an authority superior to that of the pope, and which might be invoked at any time if the exigencies in the life of the Church were sufficiently urgent. There were brilliant

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opponents of the papal claims. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Marsilius of Padua, one of the keenest sighted among the antagonists of papal usurpation, anticipated in his contentions much that was later embodied in the real Reformation—the universal priesthood of believers, the sole authority of the Scriptures, the human origin of the papacy and the power of rulers to control ecclesiastical appointments. In his writings this Italian publicist and author of the *Defensor Pacis,* in his views of the popes, of the people and of religious liberty, was a forerunner of modern organized expressions of democracy in both Church and state. He was sufficiently sound in his doctrinal and administrative discussions as to have influenced Luther.

Arnold of Brescia, the preaching monk, the disciple of Abelard, the opponent of St. Bernard in the doctrine of the Hildebrandine polity, was undoubtedly put to death in the twelfth century for criticising the tyranny of the Roman court. He employed his eloquence against the papal theory of government, advocated the return of the clergy to something of its primitive simplicity by having each state confiscate their property and introduce the voluntary method of support. He even advocated that the pope, the honored but presumptuous occupant of the seat of St. Peter, should be reduced to the same level. Arnold had kindled the spirit of republicanism in Rome which served to drive Lucius, another man of advanced views, from the Holy City, and made of him a wanderer in towns and a refugee in castles, while he was vainly expecting restoration at the hands of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who had been called "the Xerxes of the Middle Ages." Arnold himself was banished by Pope Hadrian IV and the nobles, while Rome, in punishment for giving even a small measure of sympathy to his views, was placed under the interdict. The papal religion triumphed speedily over liberty, for Arnold was ordered into exile, while Frederick Barbarossa, coming to Rome to be crowned, had the brave heretic seized, secured his excommunication from the Church and at last had him put to death by both hanging and burning.

It is also true that John Wiclif in England, one hundred and thirty years before Luther, was expressing doubt about transubstantiation. He had long been a student and professor at Oxford, where he ranked as the ablest schoolman of his day. Like a true patriot, he opposed papal encroachments in England,

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and denied the rights of temporal rule, taxation and amassing of property by the papacy, the prelates and the monks. The true Church he declared to be composed of the invisible number of the predestinate. In that true Church he affirmed the Scriptures to be the fundamental law, while later he declared Christ to be the only head of the Church, and that the pope, unless he be one of the predestinate who rule in the spirit of the Gosepl, is the vicar of Antichrist. In 1381 he startled his countrymen by declaring the doctrine of transubstantiation to be an error to be condemned. He further denied the infallibility of the Roman Church in matters of faith, rejected the necessity of auricular confession, criticized the doctrine of purgatory, pilgrimages, worship of saints, and veneration of relics as unscriptural, and maintained that the Bible speaks of no other offices than priests and deacons as necessary for the Church. But though sympathized with by many in positions of influence, the views of Wiclif did not gain any wide acceptance or attain to any organized permanency. He quietly passed to his eternal rest at Lutterworth in 1384, but the bigotry of the papacy again displayed itself when, in 1415, the Council of Constance declared him to be a stiff-necked heretic and placed him under the ban of the Church. Not only was it decreed that Wiclif's books should be burned, but that the same judgment should be visited on his bones. About a dozen years later the impotent malice of the papacy found expression in the command of Pope Martin V that the order of the council should be carried out, when the reformer's bones were dug up and burned and the ashes cast into the Swift, which flows through Lutterworth. This was an amazing example of ecclesiastical stupidity, even for bad times, but it became a symbol of final triumph:

"The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea;
And far as ocean throws her waves
On lands of chapels and of graves
Shall Wiclif's doctrine be."

In consequence of the Emperor Sigismund's infamy, and by order of the Council of Constance, as a reward for the evangelical character of his sermons, preached in the Bethlehem Chapel in the city of Prague, in Bohemia, John Huss calmly heard his sentence. Stripped of his priestly garments, and with a mitre of

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paper on his head on which devils were painted, and bearing the inscription, "A ringleader of heretics," he was burned at the stake on the green slopes of the Lake of Constance, on July 6, 1415. His books had already been burned at the gate of the town church, and to add to the diabolism of the occasion the bad work was consummated when the ashes of the martyr were carefully collected and thrown into the Rhine.

The Dominican preacher, Jerome Savonarola, was a great moral, political and religious reformer, but his love of liberty brought upon him persecution and at the last the crown of martyrdom. In 1483, the very year in which Martin Luther was born, and nine years before the discovery of America, this strange man, honest, eloquent in speech and gifted with an insight which led to prophetic utterances, made his appearance in Florence, and Lorenzo the Magnificent expressed his surprise that such an eloquent and practical friar had come to town. The times were evil, especially so in Florence, and the reformer soon had struggles on every hand. The Church of San Marco was too small to accommodate the people who crowded in to hear the wonderful preacher. In the history of the pulpit no preacher's voice has been more commanding and no message more courageous. The opposition, ever on the increase, now began to organize for effective demonstration. Savonarola arraigned the iniquities of the city and the rulers. The pope demanded his surrender and threatened to interdict the city. The brave preacher was advised to be more discreet and not to excite the people.

In reply to the advice he said, "I attack only crime and injustice, and the earliest preachers did nothing less." Surmising who had sent those giving the advice he said further, "Go tell Lorenzo that he would do well to repent, for God will call him to judgment. Tell him that I am a stranger and he is a citizen; but I shall remain and he shall go." In 1492, when Lorenzo was dying at his country home, after receiving the sacrament he sent for the reformer. It is said that the friar abjured him to rely on the mercy of God for his salvation and to restore all unjust gains. To this the dying man assented, when the bold preacher said, "and now, one thing more; give back to Florence her liberty." Lorenzo silently turned his face to the wall, when Savonarola left him. The incident shows the fundamental differences between men.

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Jerome held advanced views on the matter of papal supremacy and infallibility and the seven sacraments. Still he did not renounce mariolatry, the mass and other unscriptural papal doctrines. He still adhered to the Romish Church. In recent years he has been canonized, and thus accorded a place in the list of approved and duly qualified saints. He was an Augustinian who believed strongly in the Pauline theology. Of faith he spoke much in the terms of Luther. "Faith," said he, "alone justifies; that is, makes righteous in the sight of God, without the works of the law." While in prison he wrote a commentary on the fifty-first Psalm, which Luther published in 1514 with words of praise.

There followed in quick succession the threatened interdict, the mob, the riot, the false charges (among these being the glorious one that he taught justification by faith), the tortures and the condemnation, without a fair hearing, at the hands of the bitterest enemies. Before the Signoria in Florence, for lashing the sins of the Roman hierarchy and arraigning the wickedness of an apostate city, Savonarola was hanged on a gallows, his body burned and the ashes thrown into the Arno. He was only forty-six, but he had done the work of many more years and had suffered the woes of a generation. His mighty voice had been stilled, but the truths he had so bravely affirmed, like the current of the river into which his ashes had been cast, flowed on into the mighty ocean of the swiftly oncoming historic events.

But these men were in no wide sense successful in their reformatory movements. It is a mistake to look upon them in any considerable degree as popular idols among even the people, not to say anything of the bigoted and brutal hostility of the ruling classes. Although the papacy was sinking under the weight of its own unscriptural but mighty claims, and had become a source of countless abuses and even a cause of schism, there was as yet no popular uprising to support the claims of the valiant pre-reformation reformers. True it is that the field of the new age was alive with growths, and that the nations of Europe were astir with new enterprises, and becoming more and more dominated by new forces. The people of all ranks and classes were in fear, or in hope, of great and impending changes, but the principles of a perfect reformation, as to their developments and proper co-ordination, were reserved for a later day, when the

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people should be prepared to accord them a wider acceptance and popularity. It was well said by a Dutch historian two hundred years ago, in writing of the gradual progress of reform, even near to the close of the medieval period: "That the wonderful work of reformation was small and of very little account, apparently, in its beginnings, and yet it hath been advanced with wonderful progress, will, I believe, be denied with none that have with attention and due consideration read the history of its first rise, since God, the beginner and author of this glorious work, proceeding by steps and degrees, used therein such singular wisdom and prudence that, every circumstance duly considered, instead of censuring any part thereof, we shall be obliged to cry out, 'Thou, O Lord, knowest the right times and seasons to open the eyes of the people and to make them capable of Thy truth.'" The successive reforms undertaken by such men as Peter Waldo, John of Wesel, John Wessel, John Wiclif, John Huss, Jerome of Prague and others, were often partial, and, apparently, ephemeral and local, and were in their scope by no means perfect or free from many of the errors of the old system. But to the discerning man it is apparent that their local and ephemeral character was more in appearance than in reality. Although the chief promoters of these reforms, from time to time, perished, and often without seeing "the travail of their souls," the strong hand of authority covering their names with reproach; although for a time the voice of their testimony seemed to have been stifled, such was not the end of it, for it lived on, and was like the "bread cast upon the waters," which was "found after many days," to become the strength and power of those who came after to "fight the good fight of faith," and to succeed in a larger way in the reaffirmation and re-establishment of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The proclamation of the truth by such men did not fall to the ground. It had in it an irrepressible influence, and became, in a considerable sense, a platform for future reformers to stand upon in the days when they found the hearts of increasing numbers prepared to rally to the standard of truth that seemed for a time to be trodden under foot.

But we are in far greater danger of exaggerating the popularity of pre-Lutheran reforms and reformers than we are of underrating them. One brave man in Germany, England, Bohemia, France, or in Rome itself, stood out for spiritual freedom, and

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a few only followed him. A little reforming sect would spring up, but it was yet easy for some usurping king or papal lord to stamp it out with a small company of merciless dragoons, or to drive it into mountain fastnesses with sword and fire. Forces of various orders were easily at command that could speedily make it appear that men, like these we have cited, had "labored in vain and wrought no deliverance in the earth." The people were not for Wiclif, Huss and Savonarola, but they were with Luther, whose theses came one hundred and two years after the burning of Huss, twenty years after the martyrdom of Savonarola and one hundred and thirty-three years after the death of Wiclif. The appeal of the principles we have named above became irresistible. In spite of the prohibition of unauthorized printing by the edict of Worms in 1521, Germany was flooded with books, pamphlets, and leaflets insisting upon freedom and popularizing the contentions of the Reformer, who had come, not in advance of his age, but in the "fulness of time" to create an age. A public opinion was created which prevented the execution of papal bans and edicts. The campaign, started with the ninety-five theses in 1517, had so aroused the popular interest that within four years it had become irresistible. The elder Dr. Schaff declares that "Luther was by far the most original, fertile and effective controversialist and pamphleteer of his age. He commanded the resources of genius, learning, courage, eloquence, wit, humor, irony and ridicule, and had, notwithstanding his many physical infirmities, an astounding power of work. He could express the deepest thoughts in the clearest and strongest language, and had an abundant supply of juicy and forcible epithets. His very opponents had to imitate his German speech if they wished to reach the masses and hit the nail on the head."

But notwithstanding the ability and fertility of Luther, and this resourcefulness in the use of learning, wit, humor and sarcasm, his work would have failed, even in his day, had it not been for the popular estimate placed by the masses upon the principles for which he was standing fast. The same class of common people who jeered at John Huss when he was enveloped in sheets of flame at Constance, in July, 1415, defied the emperor and the pope, and were clamoring for approval for Luther at Worms in 1521. The great mass of people in 1415 thought that Huss was getting what he deserved, but in 1521 they were determined that

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Luther should be both heard and protected. There were but few to sympathize with Savonarola when he ascended the scaffold at Florence in 1498, but in 1521, when the word had spread that harm had likely come to Luther from the pope's men when on his way from Worms to Wittenberg, there was a tidal wave of indignation and resentment that swept over the land from the shores of the Baltic to the Swiss Lakes.

Before the man whose word should kindle the land into a flame could speak, the forces which were at work to overthrow the absolute tyranny of the Middle Ages had to gain popularity, not with single isolated reformers—brave, courageous and valiant in their day and place—not only in little sects and brotherhoods, but in large circles of society. There came trial, enmity and persecution, but more and more leaders and people ranged themselves on Luther's side, and in Germany and other lands the movement for freedom in thought, worship and life swept on apace. Not only in the primary way of popularizing in literary form certain great principles and co-ordinating them into a consistent theological system, was Luther the leader of the Reformation; but also by translating the Bible from the original text, by urging popular education, by introducing popular church song among the people and catechetical instruction among the children, and by advocating other large matters which we associate with the movement, was he in the forefront in giving a wide popularity and acceptance to truly democratic principles in both religious and civic life and organization. In the good fight of that great day he brought in the era of not only freedom from the pope, but also freedom from the tyranny of the state. The popularity of these principles serves, in a large measure, to account for their rapid spread when the time was fully come. Starting at Wittenberg, in Germany, the movement spread to Switzerland. It extended to Holland and crossed over to England and Scotland. The new views completely replaced the old in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. In Hungary it divided the population. In France it promised well for a time, but met with royal disfavor, and in bloody persecutions was almost blotted out. In Spain and Italy it encountered the brutalities of the inquisition and was soon crushed. This extensive spread of the uprising shows, not only how widely the religious dissatisfaction prevailed, but also the strong hold the new views had obtained among the people. The

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reformers had no thought of constituting a new church. Their purpose was to bring the Church, already more than amply organized, back to the charter of the New Testament, and plant it once more securely upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. The reformers no more created truth than Columbus created the American continent. What they sought was to open up once more to their countrymen the Bible and make known what they found therein. To Luther it was given to be the leader in this new movement and to state its leading biblical principles. This he did with an honesty and success rarely equaled in the annals of human leadership, giving to his people, according to the Catholic historian, Dollinger, what no other man ever gave to a people—the Bible, the catechism and the hymn book. For death there is but one remedy, and that is life. When once death has come and life has gone, nature knows nothing of its return. Life never comes back again to the house it has deserted. But above nature there is a power of God that can give life. There is One who has said that "in the time that now is the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live." It was this life to which the great Reformer led men back in his day that remade the world. It was this that made him victorious in the good fight for Protestantism, which was, as later history has abundantly demonstrated, the fight for truth, for freedom and for righteousness.

IV

The ferment which had been going on in men's minds was certain to lead to an effort at emancipation, though no one could exactly forecast when it might burst forth or what character it might assume. When Luther, asserting certain great and living principles, led men back to the rich fields of truth revealed in the New Testament, Latin Christianity found itself involved in a death struggle, in which the great piece of ecclesiastical machinery, which had been so patiently built up upon a basis both unscriptural and unhistorical and through centuries of time, was at last threatened with destruction. The cry for renewal of the Church's life, and the continued assaults upon the abuses which had for so long a time been tolerated, had done much to alter the

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whole situation, not only outside but inside the Church. The laxity which had been tolerated in the tenth century, for example, was no longer to be regarded with allowance even in Rome itself, and the utterances of the orthodox were to be judged by standards somewhat in advance of those hitherto in use. Freedom, and even license, of speech had been allowed when it was once shown that the heresies of the thirteenth century had ceased to be dangerous. There had been reformers in the Church who had expressed their indignation at its corruptions in safety, while the big and powerful worldly organism called the Church only smiled with amused contempt. But the time came with Luther when that attitude could no longer be tolerated. If such a time was to pass never to return, and the Church, which was now battling for its existence with half of Europe threatening revolt, be forced to abandon its good-natured indifference toward heresies it could, if necessary, easily suppress, then the minds of men must be led back to see what the true Church of Christ really is. They must be led to contemplate it once more as a divine ideal as contrasted with a vast human organization, which one of the dogmaticians of the Romish Church declared to be "as tangible as the Republic of Venice." If there was to be any permanent reform, someone must come who would assail the supremacy of the papal ecclesiastical monarchy over the Western Church and overthrow its pretentious and arrogant claims. It early became one of the features of Luther's work to contend so vigorously and successfully against the extravagant claims of the medieval hierarchy that, as a consequence, men once more might be brought into direct and personal relation to God. He overturned old and venerable falsehoods in order that he might establish the eternal verities of the Word of God. The Church of Rome had long ignored the royal priesthood of believers, and had introduced the law as a schoolmaster expressing itself in an elaborate ecclesiastical organization. But the leaven of the Gosepl as the religion of God's pardoning love, as of God's working, and not merely of man's winning, continued among men and by and by began to work effectively. Medieval Catholicism had come to be an externally guaranteed knowledge of God and salvation. It had developed a carefully articulated system necessary for an externally conferred salvation. Intellectually the Church had been transformed. From being a congregation of the saints, a

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brotherhood of good men, who are one because of a faith which is also a life in Christ, the Church had become a school in which any man may be guaranteed against error in doctrine and assured of salvation by placing himself absolutely into the care of the visible Church and implicitly obeying its requirements. "Catholicism," says Professor Sohm, "arises from the desire of the natural man to make religion external. It is the natural religion of the natural man. But the natural man is precisely the problem of every redeeming idea and influence which has ever entered the world. Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, all higher religions, as Harnack says, have passed through a similar stage, setting up a legally fixed tradition as a divine ecclesiastical order. Even orthodox Protestantism has not escaped." "Not priests impose it on guileless laity, but the laity create the authoritative priests and the ecclesiastical Church order." To conform the Church to this conception in the Middle Ages it had been transubstantiated into a legalistic, worldly kingdom, with the angry God of the Law on the throne and Christ transformed into a stern and unrelenting judge. The official Church was exalted above the Bible, and the pope, the alleged head of the Church, was universally feared as the lord and master whom all Christians must believe and obey. The priest became the supernaturally equipped functionary, set apart by God, and wielding the power of Christ. who had transferred His authority to him. The bishop had been clothed by divine law with the right to the unlimited and unqualified obedience of the faithful, while the state could only claim a limited and qualified allegiance of the citizen. Should the two powers at any time come into conflict, according to the claim of the carefully elaborated ecclestiastical conception of dominion, divine law, of course, must over-ride human law, the Church as the divine institution necessarily becoming the arbiter whose authority the state is bound to respect in its particular sphere.

The ancient and once powerful dominion of Rome had passed away. During the period of its dissolution the Church had grown stronger as the state had grown weaker. Rome perished, but Christianity had survived the wreck of the empire. In the break-up of the old order the Church alone lived. It had subdued and then absorbed the barbarian hordes that swept down from the north and the east, and so became the center around

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which the new order was to be crystalized. The Church that organized the new society became, by right, the dominating force, and so remained for centuries. But it must be confessed that, in spite of all its unscriptural claims and departure from the law of righteousness for long periods of its history, being administered mostly by men who did err when they most claimed to be above error, the Latin Church preceding the Reformation served Europe well in many aspects of those troublous times. Its supremacy was the supremacy of law, if it was not always the law of God. Its idea of law was a religious idea. It was born of the belief that God must have an order, and that this idea must be revealed and realized in the visible Church, which was the society that was to express the divine will.

There is a form of religious romanticism that has painted for us a medieval period in the history of the Church full of seraphic sweetness and light, without even the appearance of a cloud. But it is an entirely inadequate and prejudiced portrayal. There is the dark side of the history of the Church in this period that has been presented in terrible distinctness alike by saints and sinners, by doctors of the Church of Rome and heresiarchs who antagonized Rome. Medieval iniquities were upon the same scale as medieval virtues, and there was in all that was contemporary a blending of light with much darkness, and of darkening superstition with a real saintliness in character.

But in all fairness we are not to judge that age by the standards of our own. There were forces at work in that time that were debasing and depressing, but there were other forces that were uplifting and silently at work in anticipation of a better age that was ahead, when a man should come to be the leader whose feet were shod with iron and brass, and who was to prove himself, with vast significance for these later times, as mightier than the wisdom of medieval theology and wiser than the rulers of the medieval Church. "It would be an ungracious and a foolish thing," says Prof. Schaff, "for this generation, the heir of twice as many centuries of Christian schooling as were the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to boast as though Christian charity and morality and devotion to high aims had waited until now to manifest themselves." Resting, as it did, upon the morality of self-renunciation, the social state of that period was superior to the preceding time in all that makes up civilization in

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the higher sense of that word. That age, is indeed, disgraced by the conspicuous badness of some of the alleged successors of St. Peter, but that badness is relieved by the exemplary virtue of some others. There were then pontifical scoundrels who disgraced manhood as well as the papal tiara, emblematic of the unscriptural claim to temporal, spiritual and purgatorial authority, but there were others who were vastly better than their times and a contradiction of their unwarranted claims. Against a Stephen VII, guilty of the brutal indecency of dragging the body of his dead predecessor through the streets, might be set Leo VII, a man holy in life and humble in spirit; against John XII, accused publicly of homicide, perjury, sacrilege and incest, of drinking wine in honor of the devil, and of invoking, in his pontifical gambling, the aid of Jupiter, Venus and other pagan gods and goddesses, may be set John X, a good man, zealous for the restoration of discipline in the Church and the deliverance of his subjects from the Saracen invader. If it was the time of John XXIII, who had at one time been a pirate on the high seas, and who never was reformed from the scandalous profanity of his piratical days, and who was deposed by the Council of Constance —the one creditable thing to be set down to the credit of that council—it was likewise the time of the virtuous and learned Sylvester II, who was a fitting successor of the learned, virtuous and severe Gregory V.

In attempting to estimate the permanent worth of the contribution made by this age to future civilization and progress there has frequently been error and exaggeration, into which it has been abundantly easy to fall. There is the error and exaggeration, on the one side, of unduly depreciating that age of thought and action mingled with superstition, an error to which some Protestant writers have been most addicted. On the other hand, we encounter the error and exaggeration of magnifying that age overmuch and extolling it as the "age of faith," with the tacit implication that all which has come after has been an age of unbelief—an error into which papal apologists and writers almost uniformly fall. There is much to explain and account for both excesses.

With all of the unwarranted claims made by and for the Church, which so much needed to be led back or driven back to New Testament ideals, it is a grave mistake to regard this period

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under consideration as a time of depressing stagnation only, if not of positive retrogression. It was a period in the history of the human race filled with a long series of movements, changes and developments in the state of European society which were destined to have an abiding influence on the centuries to follow. The power of the emperor and the power of the priests—these two keynotes sum up the history of the ancient world from Constantine to the Reformation. Notwithstanding the fact that in this period there was so much that was selfish, venal, earthly and sensual; in spite of the abuses that had been accumulating through centuries and culminating in the papacy from Sixtus IV to Leo X, other forces were at work which have entered largely into the life of the most enlightened and progressive peoples of our day. Questions raised by the intellectual refinements of scholasticism, and others about fastings and ceremonialism, appeared to the popular mind to be immeasurably more important than what we should now call the fundamental principles of right and wrong. But in the midst of all the triviality and superstition there can be no question that in most respects the religious agencies were operating for good. There were bishops who were worldly, wicked and apostate, but there were others who were sincerely striving to be true shepherds of the flock of Christ. There were unworthy cardinals, abbots and priests, but all did not fall before the temptations offered by the sinecures and benefices of the Church. A rising spirit of freedom was constantly manifesting itself in one way or another. Let it be remembered that it was Duns Scotus, known as the "subtle doctor," a scholastic of the thirteenth century, who anticipated the inductive method of Bacon and Newton, thus forming a communicating link between the schools of ancient and modern philosophy. For administrative purposes, the ideal of the Middle Ages was the union of the Church and the state. But in the twelfth century men like Andius and Arnold of Brescia taught, and with much acceptance, that the Church was suffering from its union with the state. True it is that there were disintegrating forces at work, but there were other forces that were highly constructive, and there was passing over the minds of men one of those changes which we can neither define nor wholly account for. There were obscuring shadows a-plenty, but there were also anticipations of the dawn of that new day in the splendor of which we live.

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To make effective the forces of righteousness that had not become entirely extinct during the Middle Ages what was required was not so much a change of constitution, but an inspiring co-ordination and consolidation of those principles which were rooted deeply in the religious life of the people, and which had been generated always by the gospel of salvation through grace.

A work was needed which neither princes nor kings, bishops nor popes, could accomplish, but God alone, working through His Word and some man of faith and leadership. A work of both restoration and readjustment was the one commanding need at the close of the medieval period. That work could be done only and effectively when the individual soul would be awakened by the voice of the truth as taught by Jesus and Paul, and which, once more finding entrance, could purify the Christian Church and society. That truth which had proven itself to be more powerful than Teutonic or Slavic barbarisms—which neither imperialism, barbarism nor ecclesiastical corruption could subdue or expel—proved itself once more to possess stupendous forces, spiritual and civic, which were capable of organizing great states, producing literature, of fashioning and maintaining great religious establishments, and of putting certain impulses into society whose influences are today unspent.

But giving all due credit to the Church of that period, and the contribution it made to the civilization of the times, it had gone astray from the ways of the Lord, and needed to be brought back from its perversions and usurpations and worldly ideals, and once more planted on the basis where it had been founded by its Head and His apostles. It had to be dethroned as a vast political machine, such as it had come to be, and reinstated as the Bride of Christ, constituted of all who, in all places and dominions, in sincerity and truth believe in Christ and trust to His merits and grace for salvation.

The Church is an institution for the salvation of souls. It had from the beginning been entrusted by its Lord and Head with the administration of the means of grace. But it had, during the medieval period, taken on an elaborate legal system. In consequence of the intermixture and interchange of the Old and New Testament dispensations, together with the introduction into the Church of elements of heathenism, alien and uncongenial features were early introduced into its life. Later still, in the sympathetic

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and reciprocal relations that were established between Christianity and the imperial throne, and the introduction of masses of untutored and unregenerate barbarians into the Church, and by means of methods that were purely external, coercive and alien to all true methods of Christian propagandism, other evils were admitted. In consequence of the introduction of such extra-scriptural elements into the life of the Christian community there arose a Church over which the spirit of the Gospel did not exert exclusive control, and in which the principles of the earthly kingdom were accorded a dominion not warranted in the unmistakable teachings of the New Testament. Men came to look upon the minister of religion as a new representation of the revived and reinstated Levitical priesthood. Its representatives were looked upon as endowed with a peculiar "character," imparted at the administration of the sacrament of ordination, that had associated with it miraculous powers and judicial authority that gave this priest caste power not only over the souls of men but over their bodies as well. This power and authority that these men were affirmed to possess was held to have been transmitted through a professed "apostolical succession" of bishops, whose claims had no kind of foundation in the Scriptures or the organization of the early Church, and which had, in the course of the history of the Church, been subjected to a long series of jolting contradictions, extending from the time of Leo "the Great" to that of Leo X. These bishops possessed even greater authority than the ordinary priests over whom they held extensive powers of jurisdiction, while yet above them there were placed one grade of the hierarchical extension after another, until it reached its culmination in the primacy of the pope, who was claimed to be the official successor of St. Peter, to whom there had been attributed a supposed particular distinction and authority in the company of the first apostles of the Lord, who reigned as the vicar of Christ, the lord over kings and the vicegerent of heaven. He was the real head of the "body of Christ." having, in its departure from the plain teaching of the New Testament, been elevated to that totally unwarranted distinction by the apostate Church.

From top to bottom the Church was a carefully constructed and well-regulated machine, provided with an elaborate system of ecclesiastical courts that were governed by an exact legal code,

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the canon law, and whose decrees it often became the business of the state, usually in alliance with or subjection to the Church, to enforce.

Salvation through faith in Christ alone was supplanted by the righteousness of ecclesiastically imposed good works. A man's relation to Christ was determined by his relation and obedience to the visible Church. The legalism of the Old Testament once more came to the front to supplant that freedom from the law and liberty in Christ for which Paul contended in the conflict of opinions that soon emerged in the history of the early Church. The beautiful and grace-communicating sacrament of the supper instituted by our Lord gave place, in conformity to the decrees of the Church councils (made up in some instances, for the most part, of bad men), to the mass, looked upon as a continually repeated offering up of the sacrifice of Christ, our one and all-sufficient High Priest, together with the shocking crudities of transubstantiation. The gospel of grace was transformed into that heresy, so agreeable to the natural man, of salvation by means of what man can do himself, by that which will throw him into the forefront. The Church, by law, had changed the Pauline conception of freedom in Christ into a system of external precepts. That the papacy had performed some notable service in times past we are not disposed to deny, but in the main its influence has been to corrupt and pervert for its own ends the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It has changed the Church from a spiritual organism of faith, uniting all true believers in Jesus Christ, into a worldly organization, with a man for its visible head and with all the marks and insignia of the kingdoms of this world. It came to be regarded, as an organization, as essential to Christianity, the visible Church and the kingdom of God being looked upon as identical. The works of the Pseudo Dionysius, the Areopagite, with their supposed revelation of the heavenly hierarchy, after which the earthly hierarchy was presumably modeled, succeeded in imposing on the minds of the credulous the belief that the Church as an institution, in the form in which it then existed and now exists, was the divinely instituted ark of safety, outside of which there was no salvation. In the end, accordingly, Christianity became a mere form of government, and everything in it and of it must be interpreted from that point of view. The monastic vow of obedience was char-

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acteristic of the entire system, and from that fact the whole complex arrangement of ascetical practices got its particular kind of value. The penitential system of the Church, too, was reduced to a mere matter of administration. The ritual was observed as an "office" of the Church, and all of its features had official validity when observed with the end of doing what the Church requires. Official authority was necessary to give validity to any act of worship. The virtues and graces which appear in the lives of men issue also from the administrative sacramental acts of the Church. Even mental acts of the Church were viewed, not so much as the utterances of that which is the truth and for truth's sake, but as the authoritative enactments of the Church, to which the intellect must humbly bow in unquestioning submission. In fact, it was the Church which exercised authority not only over the natural life of men, but also continued its jurisdiction and authority even beyond the frontiers of this present life into the world to come, and terminating only at the last judgment.

The priesthood had become the active Church and the laity but passive recipients. For a period of one thousand years, extending from 200 A. D. to 1200 A. D., the people had been gradually dispossessed of their privileges and rights. They had, in consequence of the usurpation of the priesthood, been gradually prevented from doing their proper duty and service as members of the Church. Participation in the administration of discipline had been entirely removed from their hands. Even Pope Leo the Great, conscientious and thorough-going autocrat as he was, had once declared that "he who is to preside over all should be elected by all." But this permission was withdrawn, though in some cases as late as the eleventh century laymen continued to cast their votes in the election of bishops. At times this voting was done in an irregular and even violent manner. An instance of this may be found in the case of Ambrose, the Governor of Milan, who was only an unbaptized layman in the Church, and who, while trying to quell a tumult which had arisen in the congregation over the election of a bishop, was himself chosen for the position by a loud and tumultuous acclamation of the people. Another instance may be found in the case of the great Augustine, who, while quietly sitting as a visitor in the church at Hippo, in the midst of a sermon by Valerius, the pastor, was eagerly called upon by the congregation then and there to become the assistant

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pastor, and, in the face of his protestations and tears, was constrained to accept the office. But even these outbursts of popular expression of democracy in the Church afforded the ecclesiastics of the day something of a reason, and more of a pretext, for taking all such privileges out of the hands of the people. All such rights were afterwards universally denied them, and, the priesthood having become the active Church, they were reduced to subjects and mere passive recipients.

The idea of organized Christianity as a Church to be governed by priests under the control and direction of the pope, the chief of all priests, was completed and perpetuated in world-wide enterprise by the Church of Rome.

In addition, that Church had developed the doctrine about pains and penalties of the future life into a carefully elaborated system of moral and political terrorism and revenue, so that the financial side of the dogma of purgatory overshadowed all else. Not Peter, nor Paul, nor David, nor Abraham, nor even Jehu, the son of Nimshi, to say nothing of the Lord and Head of the Church, could have been conceived of as having given sanction to a theory of salvation as mercenary as that taught by the Church, and which aroused the indignant revolt of Luther when it was coarsely propounded by Tetzel. Now, if there was to be any hope of reform, it was not only expedient but necessary that in the fulness of time this old temple of ecclesiasticism, unchristian and worldly in type and organization, should be destroyed, that men might no longer feel, when far away from some sacred mountain or city or shrine, that they were in consequence away from God. When Luther came upon the stage it was necessary that a humanly instituted priesthood should be stripped of its sanctity and unwarranted claims, so that every one of God's children once again might rejoice in the freedom and blessedness of immediate access into the presence of God the Father, solely upon the basis of the atoning work of the world's Redeemer and the sufficiency of His priestly intercession.

This medieval Church, against the pretensions and abuses of which the reformers revolted and contended, presented these three main conceptions: That of the papal monarchy, that of the sacerdotal system and that of the inquisition. The papacy insisted that it must be regarded as the final arbiter in all things human. By the famous bull of Pope Boniface VIII, issued in 1302, the

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pope has authority over two swords, the one religious and the other secular, and it is declared to be "altogether necessary for salvation that every human being be subject to the Roman pontiff," a somewhat queer and contradictory assertion, it must be confessed, in view of the oft-repeated words of the only Lord and Head of the Church, that "he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." And this large claim made by Boniface, in his famous bull, known as *unam sanctum,* was reaffirmed by Leo X, in the sixteenth century, and that only six months before the nailing up of Luther's theses. The sacramental system, too, as we have seen, placed the priest at the gate of heaven and vested him with authority to open or close. Without his sacerdotal mediation no man could enter therein. The sacraments which he dispensed work magically, containing and conferring salvation by a virtue inherent in themselves, and without the application of which there is no grace or salvation. By means of the methods of the inquistion the Church took away the right of private judgment in matters of religion, making lawful the excommunication and death of all who dissent from the dogmas of the Church, who decline to retract and submissively return from their attitude of profane insult and rebellion.

Before there could be any permanent reform in the Church these three conceptions of the papal Church must be overthrown. They were overthrown by the reformers, who opposed to them the appeal to the open Bible and its central teaching, that justification is by faith alone, that every man has a right to go immediately to the throne of grace to find mercy and obtain help in every time of need, and that to every man must be accorded the privilege of untrammeled thinking in the sphere of religion. The new Church had to be led back from the apostasies of the old and placed upon the basis of restored principles drawn entirely from the Scriptures. "The two governments, spiritual and temporal, are not to be thrown together and mingled one with another," as said the Augsburg Confession. To the Church belongs spiritual authority, and spiritual authority alone; to the state temporal authority, and temporal authority alone. The Catholic distinction between bishops and pastors or ordinary ministers had arisen by human ordinance only. Hence neither Peter, nor any other minister of the Word, may ascribe unto himself any authority or supremacy over the churches, for St.

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Paul teaches that the Church is more than the ministers, and that the keys, *i. e.*, the spiritual authority, is not given unto one man alone but to the whole Church. By the old view, religion had been identified with the papal system, and the often immoral will of the Church had been enforced on men and states as the will of God. But under the new view no polity was able to command conscience or coerce reason. Religion could not become an organized political unity without ceasing to be religious.

These new principles of the Church soon became victorious principles. They soon demonstrated their capacity as constructive forces creating conditions best fitted to make religion a living moral power in the state, and to force the state to stand in its proper relation to religion, and showing that the surest note of the Christian Church is that it shall be working in Christ's way for Christ's ends.

V

Because of the fundamental importance of one of the principles of all true Protestantism, that known as the universal priesthood of believers, it is fitting that the character and importance of that doctrine be the subject of further remark. With justification by faith and the sole authority of the Scriptures, the two great principles of the Lutheran movement, there is always to be associated this other doctrine that marks the antithesis of Lutheranism and Romanism. Men soon began to ask the question whether the Church was only a sort of ecclesiastical judicatory or a real communion of the saints; whether the Church created the ministry or the ministry the Church; whether the benefits of the Gospel are tied up to a priestly order and the blessings that order claims to control, or whether it is bound to the Word of God. It was one of the features of Luther's work that he led in the restoration of that which had long been forgotten and denied by the Church of Rome, the indefeasible right of personality in religion, popularly known as the universal priesthood of believers—the social principle of the Reformation in contrast with the religiously privileged rank of the priesthood. This hierarchical and unscriptural claim must be rejected. Recognition and respect of the individual is one of the marks of a true Christianity. By precept and example our Lord restored the worth and place of the common man. The papal policy in the

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Middle Ages blotted out all individuality, making of men mere automatons, destroying individual conscience and substituting the control and direction of the priest, through the tyranny of the private confessional. The business of every abject subject in the ecclesiastical dominion was to loyally obey the laws and enactments of the pope, to believingly accept the doctrines approved at Rome and fortified by a presumptuous claim for infallibility.

The medieval conception of the Church was always and everywhere sacerdotal. In its idea the relations of the individual to God was always subordinated to his relation to the priest, as in the older Judaistic conception of religion. In the Romish hierarchy the pope occupied the place and bore the name of the "sovereign pontiff," the *"pontifix maximus,"* which, in the older time under Augustus, belonged to the official head of the Roman religion. Then, as now, the ministers of religion formed a hierarchy and a caste endowed with religious privileges which elevated them above the people. The regularity of the priesthood even was necessary to the efficacy of the administration of the functions and blessings of religion.

The Roman Catholic system even to this day is the rule of society by a sacerdotal class, which is one of the most pronounced characteristics of the system. The guidance of the conscience of individuals and of the policy of nations, so far as their policy may be regarded as touching the province of morals and religion, is relegated to a body of priests, or, according to the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870, to the head, who is the pope. To this body of ecclesiastics there has been committed the right to decide upon questions of the highest moment. It is the rule of a limited ecclesiastical aristocracy, which admits to its ranks none whom it chooses to exclude, and which assumes the exalted prerogative of pronouncing upon questions of truth and duty, and of conveying or withholding the blessings of salvation. Romanism is to this day a corporate conception of the Christian religion. It is a system in which man approaches God very much the same way as the pagan approached the gods—simply as a member of the state.

It was one of the principles of Protestantism to deny this prerogative. It broke down the wall of separation between priest and layman. It accorded to the laity the full right to determine for themselves those questions over which the clergy had claimed

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an exclusive jurisdiction, and once more declared, with the sovereign voice of truth, that the heavenly good offered in the Gospel is accessible to the humblest soul without the intervention of any mediatorial priesthood. It was the Reformation that led them once more into the right ways of the Lord in this emancipation of the laity from clerical rule. The movement led men back to the reassertion of the spiritual priesthood of all believers; to an insistence that no mediating priesthood besides that of the one all-sufficient High Priest, Jesus Christ, could longer be tolerated; that no human mediator could be allowed to stand between the soul and God, and that no individual believer in the Gospel or son of the Church could shift his responsibility of confessing and defending the truth to the most elaborately constituted hierarchical corporation and perversion of the true doctrine of the Church, as that doctrine is properly defined in the New Testament and later stated as "the congregation of the saints in which the Gospel is properly taught and the sacraments rightly administered." The question was whether every Christian man has an individual responsibility to God and all equal rights in the communion of saints, or whether they were to submit to the bondage of a worldly legalism expressed in papal traditions and controlled by medieval canon law. The reformers broke through the artificial restrictions of the canon law and once more confessed the truth that "for the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments," and showed that the only true apostolic succession, that of the faith once for all delivered unto the saints, was the important thing to maintain, while the unscriptural relic of a merely mechanical suggestion had to go. Faith makes Christians, and Christians make the Church. In contrast with the Roman idea that the Church was an institution to save souls, Luther set forth the idea that it was an assembly of believing Christians—that it was not so much an institution as an association. His hammer not only broke the chain that bound the Bible to the convent altar, but also that which bound the laity in a bondage enforced by priests and other ecclesiastical chieftains.

The work of Luther has been criticized by the representatives of Anglican tractarianism as a "deformation"—a movement which sent the evangelical Church in Germany adrift from its

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moorings of historical continuity with the past. But such superficial critics are blind to the fact that the Reformation of the Church in Europe in the sixteenth century was a necessary movement towards a fresher and fuller realization of personal relationship with God as the birthright of every Christian soul. Access to God had been choked rather than assisted by the very channels through which it had been designed that communion with God should be maintained. Men had to be taught once more that grace was not something that could be detached, as it were, from God, who, as some imperial personage directly inaccessible, was dwelling far away in the secluded center of some great and august heavenly court. The sacerdotal mind and practice is invariably disastrous to spiritual religion, and if pure and undefiled religion was to be saved to the world it was necessary that men should once more be taught that God, through Christ, was so near to them that an intervention of the priest was an impertinence and an affront; that the New Testament conception of the universal priesthood of believers should supplant the predatory priesthood of the old Church. The whole story of the medieval priesthood is summed up in Luther's story of his own experience while a schoolboy at Magdeburg. It was in that city that he saw in a church, as an altarpiece, the painting of a ship "wherein was no layman, not even a prince or a king; there was no one but the pope, with his cardinals and bishops at the prow, with the Holy Ghost hovering over them, while priests and monks were at the sides with their oars. Thus they went sailing heavenward. The laymen were swimming along in the water around the ship. Some of them were drowning, some were pulling themselves up to the ship by ropes, which the monks moved by pity, threw out to them. And there was no cardinal, nor bishop, nor monk, nor priest in the water, but laymen only." The picture made a powerful impression upon the receptive mind of the young student, an impression from which he never seemed to have escaped. It presented not only the unscripturalness but the inordinate selfishness and absurd restrictions of priestcraft. It is, accordingly, not surprising that the reformers early insisted upon the restoration of this principle to its rightful place in the teaching and life of the Church. This cardinal principle of the Reformation flowed directly from the biblical principle and experience of justification by faith. In this there is a vital relation.

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The Bible clearly teaches that Christ's people are all "kings and priests unto the most high God"; that they constitute "a royal priesthood," and when Christ made atonement for the sins of the world upon the cross "the veil of the temple was rent in twain," symbolizing that the individual soul is to be brought henceforth into direct contact with God in Christ, without any human or angelic mediators; that Christ Himself is the only mediator; that in Him each believer is reconciled to God through the simple act of faith, and that thus there is no need of a hierarchy of priests as a special class or order to mediate between God and man; that the ministry, even, does not constitute a special order of men, but, like other Christians, belong to the universal priesthood, needing pardon and salvation on the same terms; that this ministry is only a divinely instituted office in the Church, the function of the members of that office being to preach the word and administer the sacraments.

When Luther stood up and defied the Church of his day he took his stand upon his inalienable rights as a man—upon rights which Christ Himself had recognized, and to which He had appealed. The Church said to him: "You are not fit to decide in matters of faith for yourself, and must believe what the Church tells you to believe. You cannot approach God directly and for yourself; you must draw near to Him through the Church, and access is mediated by the priesthood." To all that Luther's answer was clear, defiant and invincible. He said: "Get quit of the pope, get rid of the priests, rid of all that stands between the individual soul and God. Let God and the soul stand face to face. Let God and the soul know and be known to each other. Here, in this immediate knowledge given by God, I stand; I can do no other; God help me, for God commands me." His watchword, that summed up his belief, was justification by faith—that faith which signified a face-to-face knowledge of God, and that justification that meant peace in the conscience when God's voice is heard, reverenced, believed and obeyed. That was the cry that wakened Germany and called its people back to newness of life.

In August, 1520, there appeared what is known as "The Address to the German Nobility." It is an unsparing arraignment of the abuses of the Church, and a ringing appeal to the German nation to take in hand the reformation of Christianity because

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the priests of religion had become unmindful of their duty. In one of the notable passages in that writing the Reformer expresses his views on this subject. "There is no difference," says he, "among Christians save of office alone. We are all Christians by a higher consecration than pope or bishop can give. The bishop's consecration is just as if, in the name of the whole congregation, he took one member out of the community and commanded him to exercise the power for the rest, in the same way as if ten co-heirs as king's sons were to choose one from among them to rule over their inheritance; they would all of them still remain kings and have equal power, although one is ordered to govern. If a little company of Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert, and had not among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were there to agree to elect one of them, married or unmarried, and were to order him to baptize, to celebrate the mass, to absolve and to preach, this man would be as truly a priest as if all the bishops and all the popes had consecrated him. A priest, therefore, in Christendom should be nothing but an official; as long as he holds his office he has precedence over others; if he be deprived of it, he is a peasant and citizen like the rest. A cobbler, a smith, a peasant, every man, has the office and function of his calling, and yet all alike are consecrated priests and bishops, and every man in his work must be useful and beneficial to the rest."

Upon nothing did Luther continue to insist more stubbornly than this great truth, that the real spiritual estate consists of the whole body of believers in Jesus Christ, and they are spiritual because Jesus has made all His followers priests to God and to Christ. He insists that it is foolish to say that the pope alone can interpret Scripture, and that if that were true, where is the need of the Scriptures at all? In that event, he says, "let us burn them and content ourselves with the unlearned gentlemen at Rome, in whom the Holy Ghost alone dwells, who, however, can dwell in pious souls only. If I had not read it, I could never have believed that the devil should have put forth such follies at Rome and find a following."

The importance of this principle of the Lutheran movement has been widely recognized and its deep significance emphasized. "The universal priesthood of Christians," says Luthardt, "is a great truth, for whose rediscovery and recognition we are in-

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debted to the Reformation, and from whose admission no misuse that may be made of it must be allowed to deter us. It is based upon the Reformation perception that, though the individual is brought to faith in Jesus Christ by the ministrations of the Church, his faith is not to stop at the stage of dependent nonage, but to advance to independent certainty of that salvation, the knowledge of which he owes to the Church. Every believer is a priest, *i. e.,* he has through Christ direct access to God in Christ, and it is at once his privilege and his duty to offer to God the gifts and sacrifices of his prayers and life. This is the first and also the chief meaning of the universal priesthood. It is, however, true that this does not exhaust it. For as the Old Testament priest returned from the sanctuary, where he had been offering prayers, to bless the people, so, too, it is the privilege and duty of the New Testament priest, *i. e.,* of the Christian, to be a blessing to others, by those works of love which prove the reality of his faith."

One of the most accomplished and qualified theologians of our own Church and day, in writing of this doctrine, has said that "never since the first days of Christianity had religion been made so much a personal relation to God instead of an institutional conformity; an individual consciousness of riches in God by faith instead of what a visibly organized Church would grant to man. The right and duty of direct approach to God without the intervention of a priesthood was regained from the position of the freedom of the Christian which faith in Christ vouchsafes. The right of the personality to possess what he had in his mind, soul and experience, as against a dominating Church, the freedom of the individual as against organization—this was a great step in the progress of Christian humanity."

Considering, now, its fundamental importance in itself and in its applications, it is not surprising, influenced as he always was by his rare insight into the truths of the Scriptures, that Luther should have grappled as he did with the dogmas lying at the roots of sacerdotalism, and that Christendom, in consequence, became involved in a conflict where quarter could neither be asked nor given. From his day to ours this is the rock on which all attempts at reunion of a genuine Protestantism with all sacerdotal expressions of Christianity have been wrecked and will continue to be wrecked. It is this principle which has delivered

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men from the vague fear of the clergy, and which, under Luther's influence, incited them to arise in their might and assist in the Reformation so much needed.

The papal system had answered man's search for God by bidding him leave it to the ordained officials, but the reinstatement of this principle in the life of the Church once more, as it were, ushered man straight into the presence of his Creator, with no human intermediary to come between man and his highest good. It once more bade every human mediator stand out of the way, and God was again heard saying to men as He had once said to Ezekiel, "Stand upon thy feet and I will speak to thee."

The man who stands where only Christ should stand, between man and God, obscures faith and hides God behind his office and his rites. The Reformation was a great attempt to escape from what was in fact a pagan element which had been introduced into Christianity, and to get back into a purer and nobler, because a more primitive, aspect of the Christian religion. It was a revolt, in the last analysis, of the people against the hierarchy. A few simple religious truths opened the way to yet larger liberties. These principles under Luther's leadership established the democracy of the saints, and prepared the way for the coming of the larger democracy and virtually for all the liberty we now enjoy.

VI

The incomparably great questions of human life are those which relate to the existence, the character, the government and providence of God, and to man as created in God's image and considered as the creature of His power and the subject of His law. The questions which thus pertain to God and man, and to the relationships existing between the two, will always emerge as the supreme questions to every one who will properly and candidly consider them. He will, of necessity, be driven to look upon them as the questions of deepest and widest interest, confronting all men with an imperative summons to serious thinking and action. It is, accordingly, the gravity of the questions and interests involved which makes of the problem of authority in religion a matter of such vital concern, the really "burning question" of these and all earlier times. "Truth," said an English philosopher, "is the most unbending and uncompliable, the

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most necessary, firm, immutable and adamantine thing in the world. Of no sort of truth may this be as persistently affirmed as of the truth which is distinctively religious." In consequence of this truthful affirmation it may be said that, notwithstanding the protracted assertions made in behalf of notoriously objectionable hypotheses, proclaimed to be within the limits of liberty allowed to scholarship and opinion, it is a matter of the gravest concern in the sphere of religion whether the question as to what is to be looked upon as indisputable be answered after the fashion of the Unitarian mystic, James Martineau; the gifted pervert from Anglicanism to Romanism, John Henry Newman, or of those evangelicals who postulate and believe in a divinely inspired revelation from God such as we have in the Bible, consisting of the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The free inquiry that had been developed in Europe in connection with the revival of learning could not be smothered by mere external authority, and hence it is not surprising that this principle in modern times has been weakened, and that the unreasoning docility and blind deference to ecclesiastical dominance which characterized the life of the Middle Ages should have become greatly limited. Whether it be the tendency of a reactionary movement to swing to an opposite extreme, or whatever may be the cause, certain it is that since the early Protestants disallowed the functions claimed by the Church of Rome in the good fight of the Reformation, there has been, in wide circles, a growing and wide-spread aversion to authority in the field of religion. It is an inadmissible assumption, however, that true Christianity consists merely of a collection of dogmas arbitrarily demanding assent on merely external grounds and affirmations of authority, and that it coerces conviction and duty by the assertion of certain terrors and punishments in case of non-acceptance. This is to mistake the entire genius of the Christian religion. On this question of authority in religion there are two extremes. There is the merely external view that would rest everything on the mere word of authority, and giving no value to any proof but that of miracles, regarding all human judgment as to the truth and worth of Christian doctrines as of no account. The other extreme is to be found in the rationalistic or mystical position that nothing is to be received except that which commends

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itself to the human understanding or that which is felt to be true. The right position—that which is apostolic in character and which was reaffirmed at the Reformation—is neither of these.

One of the theories regarding the origin of the movement, that of Guizot, asserts that it was primarily an insurrection against authority. In the judgment of that able interpreter of civilization it was an effort to deliver the human reason from the bonds of authority; "an insurrection of the human mind against the absolute power of the spiritual order." It was not an accident, the result of some casual circumstance, nor a squabble between rival monks, as the pope alleged, in which an Augustinian fell to assailing certain practices of a Dominican. The one influential cause was the dominant desire of the human mind for freedom. Free thought and inquiry are the legitimate product and the real intent of the movement. Such is the interpretation of Guizot. In entire harmony with this theory of the author of "Civilization in Europe," Romanists have also always maintained that Luther's assault on the hierarchy in the sixteenth century broke up the foundations of faith in western Europe, and for this he deserves to be held in eternal infamy and have the chief place among the heresiarchs who have vexed the Church. The right of private judgment is, in the opinion of such writers, the chief glory of Protestantism. Thus it comes that the champions of Romanism and the supporters of free thought are practically agreed in attributing to Luther and Protestantism a large measure of the responsibility for that form of modern unbelief which is distrustful of everything supernatural. It has been affirmed that free inquiry and revolt against authority were thus marks of the Reformation, and that, therefore, those who, in the exercise of the right of private judgment in matters of religion, have lost their faith in Christianity, have a right to claim Luther as one of the great leaders in the movement which has terminated in their emancipation from all religious authority and the abrogation of every species of supernaturalism.

But it is a gross perversion and an entire misapprehension of the spirit of that epoch-making movement to characterize the Reformation as a revolt against all authority in matters of religious belief and practice, and a nullification of all standards in the matters pertaining to man's higher nature and thought. It was a revolt against an arrogant and presumptuous hierarchy

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which claimed to be the permanent incarnation of Christ, the body of the Lord, the organ of the Holy Spirit, equally with Scripture, able to guide to God, and assuming to be alone competent to determine the meaning of God's revealed and inspired Word. That movement in the sixteenth century was a rout of papal marplots, not, in the name of freedom, from all authority, but for the restoration of the only one safe rule of faith and practice. It was the restoration of an authority which was believed by devout and holy and learned men to be true against an authority that had been found to be false, arbitrary and unethical. It was not a struggle on behalf of the competency of the individual Christian man, without a revelation from God, to answer the most solemn and awful questions concerning himself, his duty and his destiny, so much as a struggle of the competence and right of the individual Christian to recognize for himself the voice of God when God speaks in His Word, and to understand the divine meaning of that Word. It was not so much a revolt against authority as it was against usurpation. The particular kind of authority which was now claimed for the Scriptures was a very different thing from that which had been exercised over men since the days of the consolidation of the hierarchy, with its unwarranted claims to direct the thinking and control the consciences of men. It was the authority of a father over his children as contrasted with the authority of a master over his slaves. Faith and freedom were reconciled in the recognition of this new idea of authority, for faith was the highest act of freedom, and because the soul recognized for itself in God's divinely inspired rule of faith and practice a divine majesty and glory and word of truth, it yielded its obedience and its trust. Let it be understood, then, that no right-thinking or ethically sound man is eager to claim intellectual freedom to such an extent as to abrogate all authority in any sphere. Such was never the attitude of the reformers. As to the source and seat of that authority there have been three chief answers; that of the Romanist, who locates it in the Church; that of the Rationalist, who finds it in the human reason, and that of the real Protestant evangelical, who finds it in the Word of God as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

A favorite method of describing the theological or doctrinal principles which gave distinctive shape to the Reformation is to

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classify them under two heads, the one of which is known as the "formal" and the other as the "material" principle of the movement. This was the classification made by the well-known historian, the late Dr. Dorner, in his great work entitled the "History of Protestant Theology." But back of both of these principles we find that fundamental impulse which must inspire every genuine revival of religion, such as the Reformation was, and that is the earnest desire of the human soul to come near to God, the yearning to come into rightful relations with Him who has revealed himself for salvation in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Both the formal and material principles are united in and spring out of this desire after God, and that salvation which is the gift of the divine benignity. All of the reformers believed that in His divinely inspired Word God was speaking to His people even as He had spoken to them in earlier days by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In their estimate of religion the people, who, having the Bible in their own hands, translated into a language which they understood out of the original languages, the Hebrew and the Greek, in which that revelation had been expressed, could hear God speaking to them, and to that Word they could resort for instruction, warning and admonition, for enlightenment in times of ignorance, for fellowship with the Highest and strength for daily living. They taught that in the Bible all believers could hear God speaking to them directly and authoritatively, and that He could be heard by all who had the Bible in their hands. The Reformation doctrine of the Scriptures thus expresses in the most certain way the fulfilment of the yearning for entrance into the presence of God, which is the underlying and primary principle, not merely of the Lutheran Reformation, but of every revival of religion that, in the unrestricted use of that word, has had any permanent influence among men. The great work accomplished in that movement was not the result of some genius, or profound philosopher, or far-seeing statesman. It was not brought about by Luther's rare endowments, his courage, and his great moral force. We may appraise his gifts as being immensely greater than those of any of the valiant defenders of the truth since the days of St. Paul. The most exalted estimate of the Reformer as an unsurpassed moral force, when there was so much of wit and sagacity, ingenuity, cunning and treachery arrayed against him, does not explain his success. That success is

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traceable to but one force, that inherent in the revealed Word of God, through which the Holy Spirit worketh when and where it pleaseth Him. No man knew that better than Luther himself. "God's Word," says he, "has been my sole study and concern, the sole subject of my preaching and writing. Other than this, I have done nothing in the matter. This same Word has, while I slept or made merry, accomplished this great thing." It was this truth revealed in the sacred Scriptures that was powerful enough to call men from death and lead them back to the true source of life, from which at last they were once more to obtain the reassuring answer given to the insistent cry of men: Who shall give us the truth, the final and authoritative expression of truth, in the great matter of the soul's salvation and the recovery of men to rightful relations with God, and restored peace and reconciliation? The very first words of Luther's work as a reformer make this appeal to the Scriptures, for the opening words of the theses nailed on the Wittenberg Church door are these: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said," while the conclusion contains the same appeal in these words: "I am not so senseless as to be willing that the Word of God should be made to give place to fables devised by human reason"—an appeal that in that day and generation of papal authority and usurpation sounded strangely. In the matters of religion no man has authority to speak for God, for the Scripture is the only source of doctrine, and upon that to the last the Reformer stubbornly insisted, for at the end, in the last sermon preached at Wittenberg, he said: "I shall swerve not one finger's breadth from the mouth of the Lord who said, 'Hear ye Him.'"

This principle found its best-known public expression in the courageous and defiant answer made by Luther in April, 1521, to the Imperial Diet assembled at Worms, when the Emperor, Charles V, had demanded that he should retract. To this demand the brave Reformer made this famous reply: "Since your Imperial Majesty, Electoral and Princely Graces, demand a simple, artless and true answer, I shall give one which shall have neither horns nor teeth. Unless I am overcome and convinced by proofs of the Holy Scriptures, or by manifestly clear grounds and reasons—for I believe neither the pope nor the councils alone—because it is an open and known fact that they have often erred and opposed each other, and I am convinced by those passages

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adduced and intfoduced by me (and my conscience is bound in God's Word) I can or will recant nothing, since it is neither safe nor advisable to do aught against conscience. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. Gold help me! Amen."

In view of the great principles involved it is not surprising that wise and sagacious interpreters of history and the entire Protestant world should have come to think that four o'clock on the afternoon of April 18, 1521, was one of the world's most decisive hours, and that Frederick of Saxony should have exclaimed, "How grandly did Brother Martin speak before the Emperor and the estates of the Empire!" That battle ended in victory over papal tyranny, not only, but led men back once more from the unwarranted and often contradictory decrees of councils and popes to the clear teaching of the Word of God, which each man was to read with his own and not another's eyes, and to which they were to bow in all matters of faith and practice. Henceforth men were to be released from all authority of the merely external institutions of religion. No man on earth has the right to tell another man who is a Christian what he must do to please God, or to promise him salvation, for God has done both, and that in an authoritative revelation. Luther rose to utter a solemn protest against every practice that ran counter to that. Accused of breaking the laws of the Church, he uniformly pointed to the Scriptures, and proved that the laws of the Church are the commandments of men. Being asked to compromise, he declared that there could be no compromise with the truth of the Word of God. The battles of the Reformation were largely won by this constant and insistent appeal to Holy Scripture. In Luther's thinking, that Word is primarily the promises of God in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. On this language his own explanation or comment is this: "One thing and one thing only is necessary for Christian life, righteousness and liberty. That one thing is the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ. * * * The soul can do without all things except the Word of God, and where this is not, there is no help for the soul in anything else whatsoever. * * * Nor was Christ sent into the world for any other ministry than that of the Word. * * * You ask, what is this Word of God and how shall it be used, since there are so many words of God? I answer, the Apostle explains that in Romans 1. The Word is the Gospel of God concerning

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His Son, Who was made flesh, suffered, rose from the dead and was glorified through the Spirit Who sanctifies." Because the Word of God is the promise of salvation through Christ, Luther can call it "the Word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of righteousness, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of power, of grace, of glory and of every blessing." He can say, "the soul can do without everything except the Word of God." He can declare, "Through faith alone, without works, the soul is justified by the Word of God."

The Church of Rome had set up other standards of authority, all of them purely human, such as tradition, the teaching of the Church fathers, the decisions of councils, and all of them co-ordinate with the Bible. But for Luther and from his day for all Protestants, the authority that is purely religious is the authority of that Word which is the means by which we come to faith, the one means by which we are brought into contact with Christ and instructed in the significance and meaning of His life. Thus the Lutheran Reformation provided again the occasion for laying the foundation stone of Christianity and the reaffirmation of the fundamental principle that the Word of God is the ultimate ground of appeal in all religious questions and the final arbiter in all doctrinal contentions and differences; as the Lutheran Formula of Concord says, "the only rule and measure according to which all doctrines and all leaders ought to be judged."

At the time of the Reformation and for centuries before, the Church of Rome had drifted to the place where it placed the decisions of popes and the contradictory decrees of councils above the plain and simple meaning of the Bible as received and interpreted by the enlightened private judgment of every Christian. Against this usurpation in the sphere of religious authority Luther lifted the standard of revolt, demanding with all the urgency and importunity of his earnest nature and forceful leadership that the Bible alone should henceforth be open to the mind and heart of every man. It was through his influence that that book became popular, and an established authority for daily life in a sense that was neither legalistic nor ascetic. He insisted that the Bible was perspicuous, and that the reader can for himself discover its teachings about what is necessary for salvation; that it tells him everything that it is essential for him to know in the domain of Scripture, which is that of religion and redemption. Men

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once more were taught that which had long been obscured, that it was to the Bible, and not to popes, councils and a graduated prelatical system that men were to look for all necessary information about God, Christ, salvation and eternal life. By means of preaching, which for hundreds of years had been pushed into the background, when it had not been entirely neglected, the Reformation, at a time when religion had become external and legal, reopened these sources of religious life and from those sources streams have flowed forth from that day to ours.

Along with the restoration of the Bible to its rightful place in the sphere of authority came the demand for an appreciation of its popular exposition. The new movement had something to assert and expound as well as something to deny. If it discarded one interpretation of Christianity, it espoused another. Deeply rooted, as we have seen it to be, in the experience, first of all, of one great soul and in subjective impulses and convictions, it owed its origin to the direct contact of the mind with the Scriptures. It was there that it found alike its source and its regulative norm. It was not a new phase of merely natural religion, but had its fountain head in the writings of prophets and apostles, those holy men of old who were inspired by the Holy Ghost. The new valuation of faith as the essence of religion it was which brought this about. That Word the new phase of Christian development affirmed to be God's means to produce faith, and accordingly that must be preached in popular form and faithfully explained.

The great events and achievements of that mighty revolution were largely the work of preachers who expounded it to the popular mind and heart, and in the language of the people. It was by means of the Word of God appealing to the heart through the intelligence of earnest men who believed, loved and taught that Word, that the best and most enduring work of the Reformation was done. There was at that time a special call for faith, a demand for some definite appeal to conscience, and the deepening and widening of the knowledge of Christians. The means depended upon by the chief of the reformers, especially for the awakening of a robust faith and the energy of Christian activity, was the quickening message of the Gospel. His theory of that Word of life and salvation, his profound confidence in its power, mightily reacted upon preaching, giving it at once a new spirit,

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new potency and new forms. The relation between the Reformation and preaching, increasingly insisted upon in Christian assemblies for worship, in contrast with the celebration of the mass, which had hitherto occupied the chief place in worship, may be adequately described as one of mutual dependence, aid and guidance. Because of what the Bible was in itself, and the primacy of the place assigned it, a distinctly new epoch in the history of the pulpit and its triumphs meets us now, the greatest and most fruitful epoch since the fourth century, the period of John Chrysostom "of the golden mouth," and the great Cappadocian preachers, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, his brother, and Gregory Nazianzen, his chosen friend. "The age of the Reformation," says Christlieb, "makes the deepest cleft, the sharpest turning point, in the historical development of Christian preaching, as to contents and form, spirit and character." It is true that the reformers used other means to promote the good work that is historically identified with their names. In fact, every legitimate means of advancing their cause, such as the use of the press, and of correspondence, both private and public, teaching, personal influence, discussion and debate, seem to have been used, but none the less, it remains true that the chief instrument in their hands, and diligently used, was the preaching of the divinely inspired word of God, the one and only decisive judge and standard.

In that men were once more to find the only source of the saving doctrine. In such matters no one is to speak with authority save God only, and when He speaks through His Word that, and that alone, is the truth not to be added to nor subtracted from by the pope, the councils, or any other organization, and not to be supplemented by decrees, traditions, or citations from apostolic or post-apostolic fathers. In Luther's view, especially, it was an unalterable divine ordination that spiritual life and salvation, and the faith which lays hold upon them, are bound up with the use of the Word of God and of the Sacraments, as deriving all their efficacy from that Word, and instituted by the Head of the Church Himself.

Viewed from any standpoint, the Reformation was a revival of that which was distinctively biblical in Christianity. "To the law and to the testimony" was its constant appeal. Scripture, said the great leader of the new movement, is our one authentic

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and trustworthy source of the knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ; and he had the best grounds for refusing to admit the co-ordinate, not to say superior, authority of an alleged apostolic tradition, whose original scope was unknown, which had been exposed to the changing influences of the passing centuries of papal history, and which, especially in later periods, he well knew not to have been honestly administered. The Church of Rome had dethroned the Word of God from its supremacy, and virtually withheld the vernacular Bible from Christendom. The teaching of the hierarchy was supposed to mean that it is the authority of the Church which gives the Bible the value of the Word of God, the position being emphatically maintained that the Church itself derives its authority from God alone. It had been overlooked that the Bible is the Word of God because, as it stands, it is God's supreme gift, and is perfectly suited for the doing of the work to which it had been divinely designed in the economy of salvation. It was the primary work of the Reformation to restore the Word of God, in contrast to such erroneous teaching, to its rightful position, to reinstate it as the formal principle of Christianity, to make it once more the determinative factor in the Church's doctrine, in the regulation of her practice, in the teaching of her ministry and in the homes of her people. This objective principle, made so prominent in the period of the Reformation, once more gave to the Bible its supremacy over ecclesiastical tradition as a co-ordinate rule of faith, remanded to its rightful place the teaching of the Church as subordinate to the Word of God, and once more gave to men the inspired history of redemption, the inspired source of religious truth, and the inspired standard and test of such truth, reviving once more the idea that men can get from the Bible not only information about God, but fellowship with God; not merely knowledge about religion, but communion with the Highest; not only new truth about divine things, but an actual quickening of the divine life in man.

That movement went forward on the assumption that it was inconceivable that God, who dwelleth in perfect light, and in whom is no darkness at all, should have doomed the soul of man to the dreary prospect of endless doubt and uncertainty growing out of a disputable standard of authority in religion. It affirmed that however men may differ respecting the teachings of the

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Scriptures, there can be no dispute about this, that the soul was created to know the truth and as finding enduring peace and satisfaction in that knowledge. Up to the time of the Reformation, in the long course of papal development, the voice of the Church had been regarded as final in all matters of belief, and a practical infallibility, even in advance of the famous Vatican Council's decree of 1870, had been attributed to its decisions. When the Church principle about that authority began to be questioned, and was finally set aside, it became necessary to reinstate another source of authority, to which all men alike could go in search of that absolute truth which God had communicated to men.

Luther's revolt was against a Church which had intrenched itself behind the arrogant assumption that the Bible was only a "deposit" in the hands of the episcopally constituted hierarchy, and that to it alone belonged the right of determining what was the meaning of the revelation given in the Bible. He made the first emphatic protest against the appeal of Irenæus to tradition, the priority of which was guaranteed by the episcopate, and against the claim of Augustine regarding the divine prerogatives of the episcopate to teach infallible truth. He stood in a majesty unsurpassed, confronting the world which had been and that which was to be. It made no difference that he stood alone, opposed by all the revered traditions of Latin Christianity—traditions that ran so far back that they seemed almost to be coeval with Christianity itself. He stood there alone before his age with an uplifted Bible, and the truth which he read therein so corresponded with his inner experience that it made no difference, as he said, though a thousand Augustines, or a thousand Cyprians, or a thousand councils were against him.

All genuine Protestantism, from the very beginning, not only respected tradition, but also affirmed that creeds are to be received because they have the warrant of Holy Scripture, and not because they are given on the authority of the Church. Luther's perpetual challenge was this: "If you will not refute me by the Word of God, here I stand," while Calvin's supreme and solemn answer, when he was preaching, lecturing, journeying and formulating a theological system and making catechisms, when disease was disputing his life at every inch, was in the words with which he uniformly closed his addresses and sermons: "If God's

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Word be on our side, who can be against us?" It was in the constant reiteration of this truth in the controversies of the times that this distinctive and fundamental principle of Protestantism, the formal principle of the Reformation, was reached, and the traditional belief in the authority of the Roman Church overthrown for large sections of western Christendom.

In our day, in much of the critical and theological discussion, we need a return to the safe and sound principle of the place and doctrine of the Scriptures maintained in the time of the Reformation. In the somewhat specious use of the term, "the Christian consciousness," there have grown up some serious departures from that proper co-ordination of Word and experience meant by Luther whenever he talked about the self-evidencing power of divine truth. The danger in the use of the term "Christian consciousness" lies in the way of introducing into it, or imposing upon it, one's own conception of what the term ought to contain, the latter becoming elastic, even almost pliant, beneath the touch of the interpreter. "The Christian consciousness," says the late Professor Stearns, whose early death caused wide-spread sorrow in theological circles, "has its importance and its inalienable rights. But whether it be the consciousness of the individual or the collective consciousness of the Church, it is human and subject to error, and it must be measured and judged by the standard of the Bible." Good men, even, can lay no rightful claim to an illumination such as the supernatural inspiration of the Lord's apostles, and the entire history of the Church has made it plain that to trust to any inner illumination or "Christian consciousness," or "experience," or any other merely subjective test of Christian truth, has ended in a reaction to unbelief, in fanaticism or ecclesiastical anarchy. There can be no Christian consciousness of which the Scriptures have not been, through the influence of the Holy Spirit sent into the world to teach and lead men, the source and rule. It is only by means of the Word of the living God that we are able to attain to that consciousness and correctly understand and interpret it. A fine statement of the evangelical position on this subject has been given by the late Dr. Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian. "There is," says he, "a norm of conviction more intimate and irresistible than that which arises from the inward teaching of the Spirit. All saving faith rests on His testimony or demonstrations (1 Cor.

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11:4). This inward teaching produces a conviction which no sophistries can obscure and no arguments can shake. It is founded on consciousness, and you might as well argue a man out of belief in his existence as out of confidence that what he is thus taught of God is true. Two things, however, are always to be borne in mind. First, that this inward teaching or demonstration of the Spirit is confined to truths objectively revealed in the Scriptures. * * * And, second, this experience is depicted in the Word of God. The Bible gives us, not only the facts concerning God and Christ, ourselves and our relations to our Maker and Redeemer, but also records the legitimate effects of those truths on the minds of believers."

A better and more satisfying statement is that given by one of the best accredited theological and historical scholars of this country now living, Dr. Henry E. Jacobs. Speaking of Christian experience, Dr. Jacobs says that while it is "an important element in the interpretation of doctrines, in so far as it declares the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in applying God's Word, it must constantly be tested and adjusted by the Holy Scripture. The spiritual sense of believing men is not to be depreciated (1 Cor. 2:15, He that is spiritual judgeth all things), nevertheless it is always to be recognized by its complete subjection to Holy Scripture (1 John 4:1-2; Gal. 1:8; Acts 17:11). A true and normal faith is one that holds implicitly and exclusively to the revelation of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. It is a faith that lives in communion with Christ, but Christ in the heart of the believer and Christ in His Word are always one and the same."

If such statements as these of Drs. Hodge, Jacobs, Stearns and a multitude of others that might be cited, are true and correct reflections of the Reformation principle of the relation that must be maintained between Word and experience, then the "Christian consciousness," which Dr. Francis L. Patton has denominated as "that compound of Hegel and Schleiermacher," must be looked upon as the importation into the religious thought of our country of a dubious and discredited source of authority in religion—the exaltation to an unwarranted and dangerous place in many of our schools and churches of a truth over-emphasized by Schleiermacher, the great German scholar and thinker, the man who opened up a new era in the history of re-

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ligious thinking. He did not invent the "Christian consciousness," but in calling renewed attention to its existence and importance, came to look upon it as an independent source of theology, making it the task of systematic theology to reduce its contents to order and unity, without regard to the Scriptures, and with the result of producing a merely subjective theology, based on pious feelings, in many respects, particularly in its later development, not only defective but arbitrary. In recent years, especially since the introduction and wide acceptance in some churches and schools of this theory, its inadequacy and dangerous features have been shown to be many.

True Protestantism, from its beginnings in the sixteenth century, has welcomed criticism of a serious character, believing that such criticism must ultimately help to a better understanding of the Divine Word. It asks no franking privileges, and shrinks from no fair and legitimate use of critical apparatus. From its opening controversies on, it has not assumed to be true because it has been an unquestionably useful factor in both evangelization and civilization. It expects to prove its claims, and challenges the candid and honest critical investigation of its Scriptures, in which men have found the revelation of that "faith once for all delivered to the saints."

There is but one frontier which it sets up, beyond which professed Christian men should not even want to pass in the use of critical methods. That frontier is this, that the critical spirit shall not be allowed to falsify what has already been verified in human experience; that it shall not start with the assumption, as so many destructive critics of our day do, that the supernatural in our religion is to be at once disallowed because it cannot be a matter of knowledge. This was the quiet assumption of that school of German criticism of the New Testament which, forced back from position to position upon the very person of our Lord, and more and more hemmed in after the death of its Master, was outwardly broken, which since has fallen to pieces and now exists no more, not even at Tubingen, the once powerful seat of its vaunting assumptions. True and permanently valuable criticism will never dissociate itself from that Reformation principle of the experience of good men of that divine mercy coming through the application of the written Word. In this always lies the one final and complete refutation of the un-

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scientific assumption of Baur and his school. It is this that guarantees first-hand knowledge of the truth. "Only the man," says Professor Stearns in his strong work entitled "The Evidence of Christian Experience," "only the man who comes to the experience of the Bible and its phenomena with that first-hand knowledge of the truth of its great facts and doctrines which comes from personal experience is competent to enter upon these critical and historical investigations, and likely to find a satisfactory solution of them. What we complain of is that these investigations have been so largely carried on by men who have distinctly repudiated the Christian experience, and have come to the subject with naturalistic presuppositions. And still more do we complain that Christian scholars often allow themselves blindly to follow such men when their own standpoint, if they could only understand it, is altogether different. When, however, the evidence of Christian experience has been given its proper place, the way is opened for the fullest and freest investigation of the historical and critical questions relating to the Bible. It is not the Christian who has the witness in himself and knows what he believes, who is timid about subjecting the Bible to the tests of criticism. Such a Christian has no fear that the Bible will suffer by dealing thus with it, but is convinced that whatever new facts may be discovered concerning it will only serve to bring out more fully the divine claim of the precious Book to truth and authority."

The test in this matter is the absence of hypotheses and presumptions that are destructive to revelation and antagonistic to spiritual religion. For us, as for Luther, the great original certainty which attests all religious truth is not the authority of the Church, nor that located in the processes of the human reason, but that Word of God which, however different may be its forms of expression, is able to attest itself to the hearts of men as the veritable Word of God by itself and its divine power. The Romanist has alleged that Protestants put a book between the soul and God, but this they forget, that the book is so written, explain it how you will, that those who read it devoutly forget the book and are brought to rejoice in the vision of God. In fulfillment of His promise His spirit guided the apostles, not only in preaching the Gospel to the people of the time, but in putting on record all that was necessary for the guidance of the Church in the

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ages to come. These records of apostolic doctrine have been, in the providence of God, marvelously preserved, and if, availing ourselves of all helps toward the understanding of the Scriptures, we ultimately rely on the Spirit Who guided the apostles into the truth in their teaching, we shall be guided into truth in the understanding of what they teach, and be led into the experience of the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.

Whenever the impression prevails that the truth of God's Word is problematical, that it deals with mere pious opinions rather than with vitalizing Christian doctrines and facts, it is no longer the Word of a King that has power, and its magisterial note of authority has been silenced. No matter how carefully the modern critical inquest may be guarded, if once the anti-supernatural hypotheses are granted standing room, and myth is introduced in order to explain miracle; if the withholding of faith in the Word as supreme is to be justified by an appeal to philosophical or philological reasons, then the gates are open to unbelief, the idolatry of reason and scholastic criticism, and then cometh the deluge. If hypotheses that have been affirmed in the name of the "accepted results" of alleged scholarship, that the Psalter is simply a monument of the church consciousness during the centuries immediately preceding Christ; that Job and Jonah are only similitudes of the people of Israel; that the name of Samuel is enigmatical, and that the book which bears his name is undoubtedly of Maccabean origin and contains no Messianic traces; that Ecclesiastes is nothing but a record of doubts and unbelief rather than pious faith, and marked by cold, skeptical philosophy and tempered with pessimism; that the pathetic fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is nothing more than a prophetical dirge of Jeremiah used for Christian purposes; that the prayer of Solomon (2 Chron. 6) is a literary fiction; that the song of Hannah is the work of some unknown redactor; that the story of Joshua is due to a misunderstanding—if such revoluntiary hypotheses are maintainable, can we any longer predicate the supreme authority of the Bible, or any longer revert with confidence to the Reformation principle of the Word of God as the means of grace, efficacious for life and salvation? Certain it is that no heresy ever yet became orthodoxy which has dealt with the Scriptures after this fashion. Principal Fairbairn has given expression to the singular and striking harmony in all the factors entering into the dis-

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cussion of this phase of our subject. In his great book, "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," he says: "Without God the Church has no head and no end, the Word no truth and no function, the reason no goal to reach and no object to revere; without the Church the Word has no medium to live in; without the Word the Church has no truth to live by." It is certainly the business of the Church to keep in active touch with approved results of modern critical methods. It is not, however, called upon to retreat before unproved and audacious hypotheses destructive at once to both real scholarship and faith. No Christian may despise true science, for it is the gift of God, but not everything is true science and culture which have been arrogantly claimed for both. The Church is not called upon to shun legitimate criticism that is both veracious and candid, but it is to be watchful lest some sophisticated Barabbas be thrust upon it instead of the Lord from glory.

VII

Under whatever varieties of form it has appeared during its history of four hundred years, and notwithstanding the variety of opinion that has maintained among its leaders, all true Protestantism has been distinguished as a system of belief by two primary principles. These are the one just discussed, the exclusive authority of the Scriptures, and the other, justification by faith alone. Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher, once said that it was the business of philosophy to answer three questions: (1) "What may I know?" (2) "What ought I to do?" and (3) "For what may I hope?" Attempts of philosophy to answer these questions summarize all that the world has done on that subject from Plato to Herbert Spencer, Bergson and Eucken. But these questions of the philosopher are all anticipated and stated with equal clearness thousands of years before Kant had made Koenigsberg, where he passed his life, famous. In one of the oldest books in the canon of the sacred Scriptures, the book which Carlyle called the grandest book ever written by man, Job cries out (1) "Oh, that I knew where I might find him"; (2) "How shall a man be just or right before God?" and (3) "If a man die shall he live again?" The philosopher's questions are but echoes of those of the patriarch, the man of Uz, "who was

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perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil." One of these questions pertains to salvation, the restoration of man to rightful relations with God—the principle round which the Protestant discussions revolved, and out of which they originally sprang. The Augsburg Confession, the mother confession of Protestantism, deals in the second article already with the sad fact, which a bitter experience had forced upon the reformers, and which had been fully established by the experience of the Church at large, of the impotence of human nature in spiritual things and of its consequent inability to obtain forgiveness, peace or holiness by means of its own efforts or sacrifices. It was the work, especially of Luther, to lead men back once more to the real remedy for this bankruptcy of human powers and to reaffirmation of the true grounds of reconciliation with God. The Lutheran theology, says Principal Fairbairn, "is essentially a soteriology, a science of the Redeemer's person and work, profoundly conscious of man's sin and the grace by which he is saved." The controversy waged by the reformers with the papal hierarchy did not so much relate to those branches of theology on which the ancient councils of the Church have spoken. The Apostles' Creed, together with those of Nicea, of 325 A. D., and of Chalcedon, of 451 A. D., were accepted by both Romanists and Protestants. In respect to the Trinity and the deity of our Lord both parties stood on common ground. On the subject of anthropology, or what is designated by that word, the doctrine of sin, the reformers went back to Paul and Augustine, while the Romanists were less hostile to the modifications of the British monk Pelagius. But it was in their profound sense of sin and its dominion over the human will, of man's natural inability to come into rightful relations with God, that the real issue at once came to be made and the basis of a truly Protestant theology was laid. The real point of difference between the two parties, the one around which all others very soon ranged themselves, was the vital question as to how the soul, burdened with self-condemnation, is to obtain the forgiveness of sins and be brought back into peaceful reunion with God in the character of a reconciled father as contrasted with the aspect of a stern and implacable judge and lawgiver.

A profound regulative principle was found by Luther in his study of the Scriptures, and especially in his personal experience of the truth. It has been termed in Protestant theology the

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"material principle" of the Reformation; the principle that sinful man is justified before God out of pure grace for Christ's sake through faith. In the teachings, injunctions, services and ceremonies of the Church, he had sought for this good in vain. He found it in the doctrine of gratuitous pardon, a pardon that waits for nothing but acceptance on the part of the soul—the belief, the trust, the faith of the penitent. The Church had been teaching for centuries that faith and good works are co-ordinate sources of justification, and then laid the chief stress on good works. That Luther came to deny, claiming upon the basis of both Scripture teaching and experience that we are justified by faith alone, meaning by this that the only way the sinner can obtain salvation is through the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Everything of the nature of merit or satisfaction on the part of the offender is precluded by the utterly gratuitous nature of the gift, by the sufficiency of the Redeemer's expiation. Every claim that works for merit on the side of the offender as the ground of forgiveness was looked upon as a disparagement of the Redeemer's mercy and of the adequacy of His expiatory office. Man cannot merit his salvation, for Christ has done that. All the sinner can do is to accept Christ. He is saved, as St. Paul has declared, "by grace alone, lest any man should boast." In order to be saved he must appropriate this grace of Christ, and this he does through faith. Just as soon as he believes in Christ he is justified; that is, he is released from the guilt of sin. This is justification by faith, which Luther, recalling what he himself had experienced, declared to be "the article of a standing or falling Church." Faith thus laying hold of a free pardon and reuniting the soul with God, becomes the fountain of a new life of holiness, a holiness which is produced not out of fear and homage to law, but which springs from gratitude and filial sentiments. To justify signifies, not to make a man righteous but to treat him as though he were righteous, to deliver him from the accusation of the law by the bestowal of a pardon which is not to be regarded as in any sense an achievement, but as a bestowment. Faith is not some meritorious work to be rewarded, but something that apprehends the good and unmerited gift of God—the hand that is stretched out to take that which is freely bestowed. This is justification by faith, which at once became the great central doctrine of the Lutheran movement. It was the cardinal principle

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of the new interpretation of the Gospel. It soon came to be looked upon as the substance of the Christian religion. It placed the center of the Christian life in the experience of forgiveness, out of which the evidences of Christian character and victories over temptation were to grow as legitimate and expected fruits. Thus the Reformation did not take its start so much in Luther's head as in his heart. To him the greatest of all questions was what must I do to be saved? How can I obtain forgiveness of sins and become just before God? He had been told, as we have seen, that the way to insure his salvation was by the way of obedience to the commandments of the Church and by securing the intercession of the saints. In his efforts along this proscribed and burdensome line he had tried until amost driven to despair in his efforts to appease an angry God and make amends for his sins. Not until he had grasped this great central truth of the Gospel, "the just shall live by faith," did the troubled conscience of the great man find rest, and no sooner did this blessed truth shine upon his soul than he began to preach and confess it before others. It at once became the heart of all his teaching and preaching. the burden of all his sermons, the silver thread that ran through all his writings, the dominating force of the renewed life of the Church. It was not by an accident nor by an ecclesiastical decree that this doctrine became the regulative principle of Lutheran theology. Not only was it taught in the New Testament in unmistakable prominence, but it had been wrought out in the unusual experience of the greatest of the reformers. He had diligently sought assurance of salvation by acts of penance, by the deeds of the law, and by works of imposed righteousness. But all his efforts had proven vain. Being too earnest and sincere to be satisfied with mere outward works, he craved for an inner assurance which could only be wrought through faith in Christ. This assurance was given him when he clearly recognized the great truth that "the just shall live by faith," that Christ had wrought a perfect righteousness for man, and made complete atonement for sin; therefore, only by accepting Christ and His merit could inner certainty be obtained. Thus it has come about that all the credal statements of genuinely evangelical churches continue to this day to confess that Christ is true God and true man in one person, who is "the only propitiator and mediator ordained between God and man, the only Saviour, the

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only High Priest and Advocate before God." This experience of Luther was wrought in and through the Word of God, and, accordingly, if that Word is, as we have seen, to be regarded as the "formal principle" of the Reformation and justification by faith the "material principle," we can see how the two are so beautifully co-ordinated in the Lutheran apprehension of the Gospel. Organically and vitally they belong together. Without the Bible the doctrine of justification by faith could not be known. By means of the Scriptures the Holy Spirit brings justification and salvation into human experience. The objective truth taught in the Bible, according to Lutheran theology, especially, must become subjective in the Christian experience. Thus are the Bible and the doctrine of Christian assurance indissolubly bound together. In times of legalistic preaching and teaching, in a time when we are so frequently reminded, in a revived Socinianism, of "salvation by character," the Protestant Churches need to be constantly called to reassert and proclaim with unmistakable definiteness and without any ambiguity their great and vital doctrine of justification by faith alone and salvation by grace alone without the deeds of the law. This restoration of rightful relations with God can thus only be effected by faith, just as it is rendered impossible by unbelief. This is the bond which connects the soul with Christ, so that being now in Christ Jesus the soul is partaker of the virtue of all that Christ has done, and heir to the fulness of all that He is. He that refuses to believe remains outside of Christ, while he that consents to believe is in Christ Jesus and is reconciled to God the Father. This is the condition of salvation according to the Scriptures. From the beginning to the end of the Evangel of God, from the call of Abraham in Genesis to the last invitation of the Spirit recorded in the Revelation of St. John, on this subject the divine testimony is clear and unmistakable.

Jesus Christ was to Luther, first of all, not as he was to the schoolmen, the second person of the Trinity, but the Saviour from sin. He had come to look at Jesus Christ primarily from the standpoint of his own sin and needs. What he needed was not what he had done or what he could do, but what Christ had done, and from the moment he apprehended that truth the Reformer's whole horizon changed. Life became to him a new thing, and he understood that henceforth his chief business in religion

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was to accept in gratitude the grace and mercy of God, and not to go on striving in penitential exercises to work out his own salvation, thus attempting an impossible thing. To use a modern word of some of the theologians, Jesus Christ henceforth had for him the value of God reconciling the world unto Himself. His grasp of this great truth it is which gives such an abiding value to some of his characteristic words. "To know Jesus," for an example, he says, "in the true way means to know that He died for us. There are many of you who say Christ is a man of this kind; He is God's son, was born of a pure virgin, became man, died, rose again from the dead and so forth; that is all nothing. But when we truly say that He is Christ, we mean that He was given for us without any works of ours; that without any merits of ours He has won for us the Spirit of God, and has made us Children of God, so that we might have a gracious God, might with Him become lords over all things in heaven and on earth, and besides, might have eternal life through Christ—that is faith, and that is true knowledge of Christ."

In the consideration of this principle of the Reformation, it is not to be affirmed that the Church of Rome did not assign to faith a large share in bringing men back into a right attitude toward God. But this faith consisted in man's assent to certain propositions concerning divine things stated authoritatively by the Church, and being a part of divine grace, this faith is communicated to man exclusively through the channels of the seven Romish sacraments, the absolute control of which is in the hands of the priesthood. Rome did not deny access to God, but did in Luther's day, and does yet, make that access indirect. It holds with us that God is in Christ, but it makes the priest a necessary mediator between the soul and Christ. Unlike the Protestant pastor and preacher who stands in his place pointing the soul to Christ to hear His word, the priest professes to act in behalf of Christ, receiving confession and pronouncing absolution, the error of it all being continually aggravated by the multiplication of intermediaries and intercessors, and by the imposition of rites and ceremonies as means of obtaining salvation. According to the teaching of Romanism, salvation was something restricted to the members of a certain closed corporation; that, except in certain very special cases, the blessing of being right before God was confined to the members of the visible Church, of which the pope

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was the one and only official head. Thus a man's relation to Christ was determined by his relation to the Church, and the chief matter of concern came to be obedience in the use of the prescribed steps for becoming a full and duly certified member of the corporation in which certain men, set apart by the sacrament of ordination, were authorized to declare officially that the security of the salvation they have to offer is guaranteed by their own sacerdotal word. The Church held that salvation was dependent upon the obedient accomplishment of a certain routine of outward acts, the meeting at certain prescribed times and places of certain enjoined ecclesiastical requirements. The road to heaven was marked out with the definiteness of the old Levitical Code, through a multitude of prescribed ceremonials. The Council of Trent maintained that at least six other acts on man's part were equally necessary for justification, faith being only the first and most fundamental. These were fear, hope, love, penitence or purpose of receiving the sacrament, and beginning a life of obedience. Men busied themselves in climbing up the rounds of a ladder of man's construction that was supposed to end in heaven at the top of the exacting ascent. Everything in religion was officially classified and numbered. It was all a matter of prescription and classification in the great matter of salvation. "The life of the believer," as has been so well said, "had become in some way separated from the life of Christ, and his virtue, instead of being a stream flowing forth from the throne of God, and descending upon the earth, had come to be regarded by him as a pyramid upon earth, which he had to build up step by step, that from the top of it he might reach the heavens. It was not possible to measure the waves of the water of life, but it was perfectly possible to measure the bricks of the tower of Babel; and gradually, as the thoughts of men were withdrawn from their Redeemer and fixed upon themselves, the virtues began to be squared, and counted, and classified, and put into separate heaps of firsts and seconds; some things being virtuous cardinally and other virtues being virtuous only north-northwest. It is very curious to bring into close relation the words of the apostles and some of the writers of the fifteenth century touching sanctification. For instance, hear first St. Paul to the Thessalonians: 'Thy very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless until the

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coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' And then the following part of a prayer from a manuscript of the fifteenth century: 'May He (the Holy Spirit) govern the five senses of my body; may He cause me to embrace the Seven Works of Mercy, and firmly to believe and observe the Twelve Articles of the Faith, and the Ten Commandments of the Law, and defend me from the Seven Mortal Sins, even to the end.'"

In contrast to all this Judaizing legalism in religion, the reformers properly understood by faith a gift of God's grace which leads men to repentance and creates in the heart trust in God and obedience to the divine will; that a trusting heart sets men right before God and inevitably leads to good works. Now Luther had tried all this through and through. He had in all sincerity, consuming zeal and punctilious diligence, performed all the required fasts and vigils, had done the most menial services and had humbly obeyed all that the Church prescribed in order to attain its assurance of salvation and forgiveness. But all had been done in vain. The depth of his nature and piety, his penetration into the mystery of godliness, made him go deeper in his search for the way of peace and salvation. With a good and real man's dread of shams and a great man's love of standing on realities, he pushed on back of the Church's word that he was forgiven in his painful search for the experience of pardon. Pushing on back of the priestly absolution given him, he sought for something in his own private and personal experience that would assure him that, without external mediations, there was between him and God established that reconciliation and peace which passeth all understanding. Not satisfied with the Church's official assurance that all was well, he craved the divine assurance to be found only in an acceptance of certain great facts which the New Testament had revealed, and in the belief that God Himself was freely offering forgiveness to all upon the one condition of repentance and faith. The secret of his masterful place as teacher, preacher, leader, reformer and constructive theologian was out when Luther discovered in the midst of his spiritual struggles that he himself could never do anything to deserve salvation, but that he must accept it as a free and unmerited gift. Delivered from the bondage of medieval conceptions of salvation, he became aware that he had entered into fellowship with God, that he had come

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to deal directly with Christ, his adorable Lord and Saviour. Not in consequence of an elaborately articulated ceremonialism, but by personal dealing with his ever-living Redeemer had he come to spiritual tranquillity. He found that routine externalism could not secure salvation. His despair of ever achieving salvation by merit at last set him to searching for another method of being saved. He found a Bible, and there at once ensued a rediscovery of what Paul had taught and elaborated with such masterful argument centuries before. Coming upon such declarations as these: "That he might himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus;" "we reckon, therefore, that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law," and "but to to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness," the sins from which he sought for deliverance no longer filled his soul with terror. The truth revealed to St. Paul at last flashed upon Luther, that the divine mercy transcends all the heights and depths of human hope, that the weakest and guiltiest of our race may receive absolution from the very lips of God and have access by Christ into that grace wherein all saintly souls have stood. It was this gospel which Luther preached and which came to the heart of Europe like the light of a new day after a dark and desolate night of tempest and storm, making all who received it glad with an inexpressible joy.

Roman Christianity had gradually been shaped into ceremonial, ascetic and sacerdotal forms until at last the Roman element in it had become supreme and the Christian subordinate. The Reformation, as in a sense also monasticism and mysticism, was a revolt against the corporate conception of salvation and a plea for personal religion not entirely dependent upon the offices of the Church. More and more for centuries Rome had set forth obedience to the Church as the comprehensive ideal of duty, and summed up all sin as the crime of disobedience. Now at the end of the long night of these depressing errors, men once more heard a gospel that was worth preaching, that of direct access to God, not for saints alone, but for sinners as well, that they may be assured of the forgiveness of sin and inspired with strength to sin no more. To all the hesitating questions that might be raised this gospel had but one comprehensive and assuring reply—you may trust God and trust Him perfectly and trust Him now; that

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through Christ we have grace, righteousness and the remission of sins. This Gospel, at once new but old, was the gracious proclamation, in consequence of which the cloud was suddenly lifted. The face of God was revealed as gracious and propitious to them through Christ, and they were only asked to love him, and for their Saviour's sake to try to do His will and to live in faith and trust towards Him, and in love towards their neighbor. It was that glad gospel that once more began on earth the development of a characteristic type of free, confident, generous, energetic and childlike Christianity.

In consequence of this new apprehension of the Gospel, there came about a great change in the whole outlook and standpoint of the Christian Church. This new conception of Christ and of God in Christ, of sin, forgiveness and assurance altered the whole face of Christianity. The gulf between God and man was bridged. The priest, who was without warrant interposed between God and man, became an impertinence, and the old methods of approach to God, through the saints and indulgences, became as rubbish and had to be cast away. There sprang up in the Church a living faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of man, the source of grace, righteousness and hope for the life that now is and that which is to come. The new principle of salvation became the source of all that was best in modern life. The grace of God in Jesus Christ had come again to men, and there sprang up a quickened and more intelligent devotion to the Person of the Lord, Son of God, Son of man and Saviour of the world. Deliverance at last had come from a conception of salvation that makes the sinner fall into the hands of man rather than into the hands of the all-merciful and all-sufficient God. The Church had at last emerged from the book of Leviticus, with its minute legalistic requirements into the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews, in which we have the chief blessing of the Christian dispensation represented as access to God, and the contrast presented between immediacy of approach in Christ and the way in which, under the old dispensation, it was fenced and cumbered by the intervention of a human priesthood. Augustine, the greatest of the post-apostolic fathers, and Luther, the greatest of the reformers, both alike rested upon the fundamental religious assumption of the free grace of God, as constituting the one saving power for man. But they parted company in their con-

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ceptions of how that grace was to be obtained. Augustine's views held him to subject himself humbly to the Church, and to become the chief exponent of the theory that outside the visible Church there was no salvation. Luther, on the other hand, transferring the emphasis from the mechanicalism of the sacramental system to the truths and provisions of the Christian Gospel, and rejecting that which he had come to regard as the chief offence against true religion, the Judaizing doctrine of human merit, that which had thrown doubt on the sufficiency of Christ's work and thus creating a feeling of religious insecurity, soared aloft with an incomparable fervor of faith to the very heart of God and grasped once more the significance of the salvation that found its source in the divine mercy. Faith became for him what it was for Paul, what it was in the words of Christ our Lord and Saviour, that power which enables a man to throw himself into the arms of the Almighty with Whom all things are possible. Men were once more brought back to a confident, steadfast trust reaching into the unseen, into that joyful sense of assurance that since Luther's day has been the religious ideal of Protestantism.

VIII

This Lutheran doctrine of justification entered at once upon an important and influential career. It was impressed deeply and fixedly upon the peoples of northern Europe and upon a theological posterity. It is difficult to over-estimate the power of a doctrine which brings to a point and concentrates in one definite and comprehensive principle a whole mass of vague thought and inclination existing in human nature. With a basis of that kind, and an even stronger basis in the Scriptures, this great doctrine at once laid marvelous hold upon the minds of multitudes, penetrated them, and became at once their central and informing principle in religion. It went forward, being the comfort and stay, the one Christian creed and religious strength of many minds. The more it is studied the more will it be found in all the controversies of the Reformation period to be fundamental, and that almost all the errors of the Roman Church, and of the sacerdotalism which is in essential agreement with it, arise from failure to accept without reserve this central truth of the New Testament.

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From the very beginning the theologians of the old Church fully understood the far-reaching consequences of the Reformer's insistence upon the newly revived doctrine of justification by faith alone. Luther might deceive himself as to the extent of his acceptance of this Pauline conception of salvation, but the Roman Curia labored under no such delusion. The famous historian of the Council of Trent, Paul Sarpi, says that "all the errors of Martin Luther were resolved into one point—justification; for this denies the efficacy of the sacraments, the authority of priests, the purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass and all other remedies for the remission of sins. Therefore, he that will establish the body of Catholic doctrine must first overthrow this heresy of justification by faith alone." That Luther succeeded so fully where others had failed was not expected, but the reason of his success is indicated in the answer given by the able Cardinal John Henry Newman, who went over from Anglicanism to Rome, when he says of him that "he adopted a doctrine, original, specious, fascinating, persuasive, powerful, against Rome, and wonderfully adapted, as if prophetically, to the genius of the times. He found Christians in bondage to their works and observations; he released them by his doctrine of faith." This famous writer, in his "Lectures on Justification," says that it was Luther's wish to extirpate all notions of human merit; next to give peace and satisfaction to the troubled conscience." A noble end this, certainly, to be attained, and that he succeeded in the undertaking, the same strong writer, in harmony with the Pauline interpretation on the same subject, indicates in these words: "Luther's view of the Gospel covenant met both the alleged evils against which it was provided. For if Christ has obeyed the law instead of us, it follows that every believer has at once a perfect righteousness, yet not his own. That it is not his own precludes all boasting; that it is perfect precludes all anxiety. The conscience is unladen without being puffed up."

The vitality of this great doctrine as a reformatory principle soon became manifest after a long and dismal catalogue of failures. How unspeakable these corruptions in teaching and living were we have already seen. The measures proposed to reform the Church by Councils at Pisa, Constance, Basel and the Lateran had all signally failed. Even Cardinal Bellarmine had dolefully declared that "religion was almost dead," and the

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fairest historian Rome has ever had, in the person of Von Doellinger, has said that "the last hope of the Reformation of the Church was carried to the grave." None of the measures proposed went to the root of the growths that had troubled Israel, none had proven themselves effective enough to give direction and strength and triumph to any of these efforts to heal the hurt of the Church. Even men like Colet, More and Erasmus imagined that there might be a humanistic regeneration and exorcism of evils that had fastened themselves upon the Body of Christ, which might in turn lead to the removal of abuses, to a moral quickening and to a new and more ethical interpretation of the dogmas of the Church. But this humanistic dream was dispelled when the real Reformation came to pass. When Luther at Worms, in 1521, refused to retract what he had written, he planted himself down upon the principle of the supremacy of the human conscience. This principle insisted upon, effected much that was essential to any real reform in the Church. It cut up, for example, by the roots the doctrine that there is any justifiable and scriptural distinction between clergy and laity, between the religious and the secular life. The Reformer's whole attitude found its highest expression in his doctrine of justification, which, according to his understanding of St. Paul, as we have seen, meant that man needs no external process by means of which he is to attain to the pardon of sins. He was able to grasp the great truth that God is revealed in the absolute self-surrender of Christ, and that through faith we may have His righteousness imparted to us; that the believer through faith becomes united to God and has the assurance of liberation from sin. He set aside all the traditions of the Church as despotic over the religious consciousness of the individual, and yet affirmed that man can only find his true self in direct union with God in Christ. Scholasticism on the one hand, and monasticism on the other, had crushed out the element of individualism in the Church. A vast system of traditionalism covered every phase of thought and every sphere of society, leaving no room for any fresh and healthy individual life. The shadow of ecclesiastical authority rested on everything, and imposed its arbitrary restraints. The individual was nothing, the Church was everything. Within the Church there was no mental or spiritual freedom.

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But Luther's doctrine of justification stood for a revival of individualism, a reassertion of Christian personality, for the truth that righteousness could not begin in what a corporation required of a man, but in a divine bestowment upon a man in his personal relations to God. It was the reality of this personal freedom in Christ that, in the final list of the causes of reform, more than all else gave impulse and triumph to the Reformation. It laid hold upon the great heart of the German people and moved it profoundly. More effective than councils or humanism, this principle made a living way for itself among the nations, and carried with it liberty and strength. It "shook the ancient cathedrals to their inmost shrines," and brought moral renovation to Europe. It showed itself to be of God and powerful with the might of God. Professor Rudolph Sohm has expressed the judgment warranted by his fine capacity for interpreting the movement: "The face of the whole world was changed by the Reformation, with its doctrine of justification by faith alone. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, so shalt thou be saved, thyself and thy whole house; that is the complete, the whole divine Gospel, that can neither be added to nor taken away from."

One of the secrets of the primacy of Luther's influence as leader of the people, reformer of the Church, and as theologian, is to be found in the fact that he so strongly grasped this principle not only, but passed through the evangelical experience of justification. When he came to define what the Gospel was he rose above the level of mere intellectualism and moralism. He advanced beyond Romanism, with its perpetuated Jewish and Hellenic ideas, and produced a rift in western Christendom which could not be passed over, and recognized, as others of his contemporaries did not, that the points of antithesis between the two apprehensions of the Gospel were so wide and deep that they could not be reconciled—which accounts for the fact that he was never sympathetic with any of the numerous proposals of compromise. He discovered that the Church was not to be really reformed by the elimination of current superstitions, the correction of flagrant abuses, and the rejection of unwarranted claims; that the cure of the ills of the Church was not to be found in mere criticism of its unscriptural dogmas or the change of its organization. Remedies of this kind had been tried and found

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inadequate always by medieval reformatory sects, reforming councils (that were not reformatory at all), Mystics and Humanists. It is the Catholic historian, Gasquet, who says: "The most zealous sons of the Church never hesitated to attack this or that abuse and point out this or that spot, desiring to make the edifice of God's Church, as they understood it, more solid, more useful and more like Christ's ideal. Before 1517 or 1521 no one, at this period, ever dreamed of wishing to change the basis of the Christian religion as it was then understood." But these pre-Lutheran efforts at reform, as we have seen, were ineffective, because they went not to the root of the trouble in dealing with the hurt of Israel.

Romanism was, as we have seen, the product of an unique conception of God and salvation, and upon that basis it had for a thousand years been building up and consolidating its mighty superstructure of ecclesiasticism. That conception was the formative idea in its worship, its polity, its doctrines and its morality. Upon that basis it had built up a vast and complicated hierarchy that never could have been reformed by critics, philosophers, theologians or ecclesiastics, but only by a great prophet, a qualified leader, a courageous spirit, who had found in the depth of his own experience the God who was a God of grace, and a fellowship that was the fellowship of faith. Luther having experienced this in his own life, became the heaven-anointed leader of a real and abiding reformation. He was, it is true, excommunicated in 1520, but he had in fact become separated from Rome earlier, because, in the depths of his own profound religious life, he had already gone beyond it so far that he could not retrace his steps and recant without stultifying his higher and better nature and trampling upon his deepest convictions. The result of it all was not simply a protest, with some phases of resulting ecclesiastical reform, but an intellectual, moral, political, social and religious transformation and reconstruction of society, which were so far-reaching in their influence that a new era in the history of mankind was inaugurated. No real reform was effected until one big and sincere soul had passed through the evangelical experience of sin, atonement, forgiveness, faith and justification, and the initial stages of sanctification.

Centuries before, the Gospel, as a distinct message of redemption, had won its way into the Roman Emipre in the face of a

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multitude of religions and cults which had the sanction of an alleged divine origin and centuries of tradition behind them. It then had something to offer which the world longed for and had not hitherto received from the old cults. Its message of grace and power then differentiated it from all other religions. It was reserved for Luther again, in his day, to grasp anew, with all the intensity of a Paul and an Augustine, the idea that redemption through Christ was something more than the driving away of evil passions and vices—a deliverance from death, and an assurance of eternal life—that it was, first of all, a joyous forgiveness of sins. It was this which gave the movement from its inception its note of triumph and its unique and world-conquering power.

There never has been a day when this principle of the Lutheran Movement of the sixteenth century, which has shown not only its scripturalness, but its vitality and effectiveness as a corrective agency and reforming power, together with other sacred and lofty principles, needed to be more clearly understood, defended and maintained, than today. We would reproduce, in proof of this, the strong words of a writer and leader of recognized distinction in our own day. President Butler, of Columbia University, holds the lesson of the Reformation for our day to be a new emancipation of the individual. He says:

"To recall to the mind of the twentieth century the signficance of the great movement known as the Reformation is valuable public service. The modern mind is threatened, as was the mind of the sixteenth century, with the dominance of a philosophy of life and of religion which operates to minimize the functions and the freedom of the individual, and to make each individual merely a cog in the wheel of a powerful and dominating group. The pious zeal and the individual's everlasting desire for expression and for responsibility, which were foreshadowed in European history by St. Dominic and St. Francis, as well as by Roger Bacon, and which later found such an epoch-making voice in Martin Luther, need to find new expression today. The tyranny which threatens in the twentieth century is not the tyranny of any Church, but the tyranny of a majority in the state, a majority so constituted that it is not content with guiding the ordinary business of government, but which seeks to conform to a single narrow type the occupations, the gains, the amuse-

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ments and the mode of living of every individual. If the world needed a religious and philosophical reformation in the sixteenth century, in order to emancipate the individual, surely it needs a social and political reformation in the twentieth century for the same purpose."

IX

What has been said in the foregoing gives us the reason why Luther, in all the steps of his progress as theologian and reformer, assigned such a primacy to faith. He gave the world a new valuation of religion as faith, reinstated the conception that Christianity in its inmost, vital element, is faith. Underlying all he said and did was the idea of the sovereignty of faith. For him faith was man's real life toward God, that attitude of the soul by which alone he had any standing and acceptance with God. Whatever the Christian life may be in its various manifestations, it is all the outgrowth of faith. The Reformer recognized that there were two kinds of faith. One was that by which men believe what they are told to believe—a kind of knowledge rather than faith—a mere mental assent to certain statements and facts as true, while the other was a kind of faith which is a trust in God, a casting of one's self upon Him for help, believing without doubt that He will fulfill His promises. Faith according to the medieval theology was an effort of man to know and see God. Luther recognized this kind of faith as legitimate, but calls it worthless because it gives us nothing. It is the other and real kind of faith which gives us the assurance of a loving God, who makes us to see His love in Jesus Christ. This true faith cannot be secured by effort, for it is the gift of God. It is important to note that the practical demands of the religious life were the impelling power in Luther's experience, both in its genesis and growth, and in its application to the problems of his age. He so estimated faith. In the medieval theology the emphasis had been placed on external things, on the doing of good works, on the observance of laws. Even some of the radicals among the reformers were influenced by the same error, for Carlstadt and men of like mind soon fell into the fallacy of reforming people by means of iconoclasm practiced on church buildings more than by means of accent upon the principle of faith in the hearts of the people. The emphasis was shifted by

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both Romanists and radicals from what God does in man by means of faith, which is God's gift, to what man himself does. The greatness of Luther's place as preacher and reformer, and his abiding influence in the world to this hour, is due to the fact that he had learned anew the meaning of that great word, faith, and had come to recognize in it the vital principle of religion, the real essence of the Christian revelation in the Gospel.

Prof. Voigt, one of our own most accomplished theologians, has given to it a fine and inclusive statement in these words: "He (Luther) never formally defined faith in technical terms, but in the greatest variety of representations he shows its source, its possessions, its power, its effects. He realized in his own experience that it is the work of God in the human soul; it is the regeneration of the Holy Spirit; it lays hold of Christ and all God has promised to men in His grace; it is man's freedom and redemption from the powers of evil, the devil, death and sin; it is the life of the soul in God; it is the spring of love and all good works. 'If you believe, you have. If you do not believe, you do not have.' So he sententiously declared that religion and all its blessings are included in faith. This was a new understanding of Christianity from its very heart. Those, who, in earlier centuries, like Augustine and Bernard, had come nearest to it, still had missed it. This valuation of religion as faith made it intensely personal. It brought man face to face with God, and not only to the Church, with its doctrines and requirements. It showed to souls that yearned for God the true and only way to come to Him and live in Him. All in religion is of faith because all is grace." What the Reformer had learned was to trust God courageously and count all things of but little moment as compared with this, the greatest principle in religion. "Out of a complex system of expiations, good deeds and comfortings, of strict statutes and uncertain appointments of grace, out of magic and blind obedience," says Prof. Harnack, "Luther led religion forth and gave it a strenuously concentrated form. The Christian religion is the living assurance of the living God who has revealed Himself and opens His heart in Christ —nothing more."

It was a vital part of this fundamental experience that the living God who had manifested Himself in Christ was accessible to every Christian. The Church and its sacraments had really

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become the soul's saviours, having usurped the primal place of faith. The rightful order of importance had to be restored, and again Harnack says: "Rising above all anxieties and terrors, above all ascetic devices, above all directions of theology, above all interventions of hierarchy and sacraments, Luther ventured to lay hold of God himself in Christ, and in this act of faith, which he recognized as God's work, his whole being obtained stability and firmness, nay, even a personal joy and certainty which no medieval Christian had ever possessed." This fact of God's giving the believer power to cast himself directly and unreservedly on God for salvation once more placed the accent in religion in the right place, on the inner things, on the disposition of a man's heart, on the way he thinks of God and Christ. The constant emphasis placed on this by Luther has led to some misunderstanding. It has been alleged, especially by high Anglicans, to be one-sided and contrary to Scripture and reason, and even to savor of unethical antinomianism. It is well, accordingly, to hear what Luther himself says in his explanation of the Creed. "There are two ways of believing. One way is to believe about God, as I do when I believe that what is said of God is true, just as I do when I believe what is said about the Turk, the devil or hell. This faith is knowledge or observation, rather than faith. The other way is to believe in God, as I do when I not only believe that what is said about Him is true, but put my trust in Him, surrender myself to Him and make bold to have dealings with Him, believing without doubt that He will be to me and do to me just what is said of Him. * * * This faith, which is life or death and dares to believe that God is what He is said to be, is the only faith that makes a man a Christian. * * * This faith no false and evil heart can have, for it is a living faith. * * * Wherefore the word *in* is rightly used; and it is carefully to be noted that we may not say, "I believe God the Father," or "about the Father," but "in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost." This faith we should render to no one but God. Therefore we confess the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost when we believe in them, even as we believe in the Father; and just as our faith in all three Persons is one and the same faith, so the three Persons are one and the same God."

In his great treatise on "Christian Liberty," one of the three

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"Primary Works" of 1520, the most central in its significance of all of Luther's writings, he again says: "The inward man cannot be justified, made free and be saved by any outward work or dealing whatsoever, and works, whatever their character, have nothing to do with this inward man. On the other hand, only ungodliness and unbelief of heart, and no outward work, make him guilty and a damnable servant of sin. Wherefore it ought to be the first concern of every Christian to lay aside all trust in works, and more and more to strengthen faith alone and through faith to grow in knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, Who suffered and rose for him." And this faith which leads men thus to throw themselves on God is no mood of mere mystical abandonment, no losing of one's self in mere abstract contemplation, or pietistic introspection, or pious meditation. It is, as Luther was never weary of saying, our very life; not simply God within us, but God impelling us to all good activities in spheres of Christian usefulness. By means of it not only do men secure the forgiveness of their sins, but are by this life principle of religion also inspired to that righteousness which finds expression in good works. Hear Luther again in speaking of this subject: "It is a living, busy, active, powerful thing, this faith; it is impossble for it not to do us good continually. It never asks whether good works are to be done; it has done them before there is time to ask the qusetion; and it is always doing them." In his "Treatise on Good Works" once more the fruitful pen of the reformer is found saying: "Everyone can note and tell for himself when he does what is good, or not good; for if he finds his heart confident that it pleases God, the work is good, even if it were so small a thing as picking up a straw. If confidence is absent, or if he doubts, the work is not good, though it were to raise all the dead and the man were to give himself to be burned. * * * Faith as the chief work, and no other work, has given us our name of Christians (believer in Christ); for all other works a heathen, a Turk, a sinner may also do, but to trust firmly that he pleases God is possible only for a Christian who is enlightened and strengthened by grace." The very First Commandment means, "Since I alone am God, thou shalt place all thy confidence, trust and faith in Me alone and on no one else." "Having a God" is "to trust Him with the heart, and look to Him for all good, grace and favor, whether in works or

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in sufferings, in life or death, in joy or sorrow." * * * "This faith * * * is the true fulfilling of the First Commandment." * * * "So faith is the very highest and best work, from which all others must proceed." Elsewhere he calls it "the captain of good works."

"Lo! thus must thou form Christ within thyself and see how in Him God holds before thee and offers thee His mercy without any previous merits of thine own, and from such a view of His grace must thou draw faith and confidence of the forgiveness of thy sins. Faith, therefore, does not begin with works, neither do they create it, but it must spring and flow from the blood, wounds and death of Christ. If thou see in these that God is so kindly affectioned toward thee that He gives His Son for thee, then thy heart also must in turn grow sweet and kindly affectioned toward God, and so thy confidence must grow out of pure good-will and love—God's love toward thee and thine toward God."

Thus this conception of what is the vital principle of Christianity became the soul of the Reformation. No matter what Luther was writing about, we always find him assigning the primacy to faith. This resting of the heart upon Christ was a very simple but at the same time a very comprehensive matter. So completely does it dominate the life of a real Christian that he cannot do a Christian act or think a Christian thought without it. His conception of faith it was which led to his view regarding the Scriptures. It made the Word of God to him a personal and not a merely dogmatic or legalistic revelation. To him God was speaking in the Bible even as he would have spoken to his fellow-men. The chief function of these Scriptures was to bring Christ to him and to all men, and as Jesus is the full revelation of God, the chief end of the Bible must be to bring God near to every believer.

These Scriptures became to Luther the record and portrayal of blessed spiritual experiences of the past, such as he had now experienced in his own life. Hence his eagerness to translate the Bible into the language of the common people that they, too, might know at first hand the way of salvation and have reproduced in their lives the same experience of communion and fellowship with God. He perceived, as but few men have, in the fulness of its meaning, the content of the Gospel, which had been

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of old time proclaimed with such clearness and strength by St. Paul, and which for the instruction and guidance of the Church in all times, has been written down, especially in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. It is no exaggeration to say that for a long and desolate period these great writings of the Apostle were not fully understood. It was Luther's mind, gradually disentangled from traditional conceptions that had grown up through long centuries of perversion and misunderstanding, that was to learn anew the meaning of Scripture faith. Indeed, the debt which the Christian world owes to Luther is so great and so varied that it is difficult to conceive it in its full extent, or to exhibit it in all its length and breadth. But certainly one of the principal occasions of that indebtedness is the fact that the chief of the Reformers succeeded in restoring to Christendom once more the presence and principles of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

The struggle between what is known as Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity was the chief ground of division in the minds and sympathies of the early Church. That struggle between two apprehensions of Christianity has not entirely subsided even in our day, when we sometimes encounter the remains of a Puritanic and work-righteousness aspect of religion among ultra Protestant sects. In the controversy of his day pertaining to freedom from the exactions of the Jewish law, Paul seemed to have the best of it, but his triumph was not of long duration. During his life-time he achieved a leading position in the Church at Rome in a city which, from force of circumstances, afterwards became the center of Christianity. But what influence the apostle had won there soon passed away in the presence of the energy, persistency and popularity of the reintroduced sacerdotalism of the ancient Jewish dispensation. By tradition and by theory Rome was equally the seat of Paul and Peter, but the latter soon ascended to a primacy that has no adequate basis in either Scripture, history or in the comparative gifts or influence of the two apostles. Paul at Rome was soon retired into the background, his latest appearance, according to tradition, having been in the capacity of a ghost, when, at the famous and decisive battle of Chalons, fought in 451 A. D., to resist the efforts of Attila the Hun to establish an anti-Christian empire upon the ruins of Rome, the chief of the apostles stood by the side of Leo the Great, the real founder of the papacy, to assist in frightening

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away the plundering pagan from his diabolical enterprise in one of the most important contests recorded in history. Petrinism had triumphed over Paulinism, and the great writer of the Epistle to the Romans was scarcely remembered except in the study chambers of the scholastics and the hermitages of the mystics. But the time at last came for a revival of interest in Paul, and to Luther was accorded the memorable honor of being the advocate of the apostle's doctrines, and henceforth his chief strength was found in the circumstances that he stood upon the basis of the great writings of the New Testament.

The whole of the indulgence controversy, which precipitated the Reformation movement, came about because that infamous traffic was conducted in contravention to the plain teachings of the Scriptures about sin, grace, forgiveness, salvation, and justification. The ends sought were purely sordid, but the basis of the business was theological. It has been alleged that Luther did not attack indulgences themselves, but only their abuse. It was the abuse that was the immediate point of his criticism, but he knew that he was bringing the system itself into question. He saw very clearly that anything that conflicted with the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins solely because of the merits of Christ, and annulled the duty of Christian charity, must be radically wrong. Indulgences were a compound of truth and error. In the practice of the early Church they grew out of one of the features of Church discipline. The indulgence theory had its beginnings a thousand years before Luther's day, and continued to pervade the whole penitential system of the later medieval Church, and had done so from the beginning of the thirteenth century. According to the teaching of the Church in its earlier history when persons had been guilty of mortal sin, before they could be restored to God's favor, they must not only humbly and sorrowfully confess their sins to the priest, but also perform certain works of penance indicated authoritatively by the Church. Sometimes it was fasting and vigils, and sometimes self-laceration and self-torture, but always self-denial of some order. This was declared to be necessary as a satisfaction for their sins. When our Lord underwent the sacrifice of the cross more merit resulted than was necessary to save those who had lived on the earth up to that time. This superabundant merit was further increased from the life of Mary, the mother of Christ, and it is

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still further and constantly being augmented by those saints whose lives have been such as to enable them to earn merit more than sufficient for their own salvation. This store of supererogatory merit is in the keeping of the Church and can be dispensed by means of indulgences, at the discretion of the pope, the vicar of Christ on earth. These indulgences were granted for prayers, pilgrimages and other good works, while later the penalties were more frequently remitted by the Church on condition of the payment of a sum of money. In the conduct of the traffic in these indulgences the old innocent words of penance, confession and satisfaction took on new meanings. The theory of indulgences, it is said, has never yet been authoritatively defined by the Church. Originally an indulgence meant the remission of the penitential discipline, which, even when a sin was forgiven, was deemed necessary for its expiation. Later on it took the form of commutation, almsgiving to the poor, money payments for religious or charitable purposes, pilgrimages and other pious works being substituted for regular canonical penalties. For a long time they were issued sparingly and care was exercised concerning them. Their enormous multiplication followed, along with many other abuses, what is known as the "Great Western Schism." They were no longer proofs of repentance, but penalties of sin. The beginning of the business which called out Luther's revolt is well known; how that Pope Leo X, in need of money for many purposes, and more especially the building of his splendid new cathedral of St. Peter's, in Rome, determined to obtain it by a liberal granting of indulgences to penitent sinners. "The indulgence," says Professor Fisher, in his "History of the Reformation," was a simple bargain, according to which, on the payment of a stipulated sum, the individual received a full discharge from the penalties of sin, and procured the release of a soul from the flames of purgatory. The forgiveness of sin was offered in the market for money."

The whole system had long been a scandal to the devout. It is enough to say that in the way in which he served his papal master, the pope, Tetzel signally exhibited the impostures and abuses of the whole indulgence theory. Coarse, vulgar and brazen, he carried on the business with a swing, hawking his commodities in churches, public streets, taverns and ale houses, like those spirited dealers in meretricious trinkets to be en-

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countered today in the streets of almost any city or town. At a cross set up in the market place, from which the pope's arms were suspended, the auctioneer extolled the merits of his goods, the crowd in the meantime standing about with a mixture of fun and business, very much like a crowd that may now-a-days be encountered at a country fair. His methods, as Dr. McGiffert observes, were those of the modern traveling evangelist. This was the usual form of Tetzel's address to the crowds who flocked about him, as reported by the historian D'Aubigne:

"Indulgences are the most precious and the most noble of God's gifts. The cross (pointing to the red cross, which he carried with him) has as much efficacy as the very cross of Jesus Christ. Come, and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins you intend to commit may be pardoned. There is no sin so great that an indulgence cannot remit. Reflect then, that, by means of these letters, you can, once in your life, in every case except four, which are reserved for the Apostolic See, and afterwards in the article of death, obtain a plenary remission of all your penalties and all your sins. But, more than this," said Tetzel, "indulgences avail not only for the living but the dead. Priest! noble! merchant! wife! youth! maiden! do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss: 'We are suffering horrible torments! a trifling alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not!' At the very instant," continued Tetzel, "that the money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies liberated to heaven."

In his strong denunciation directed at this abomination we discover one of Luther's marked characteristics, which among others indicate his bigness. His indignation became fierce when he discovered that his own people had been buying the indulgences and using them as a cloak and excuse for gross offences against the moral law. But in Luther there was no resentment and his denunciation was never personal, and hearing later that the Dominican huckster, Tetzel, had become seriously sick, he wrote him a tender, sympathetic and comforting letter, commending him to the mercy and grace of God, who was abundantly able to save. The violence of his language was never personal with his most odious opponents, but was directed against the abuses and apostasies represented by them.

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Many rejoiced that at last one man had been bold enough to declaim against what he called a "gross and profane error," while earnest souls were made glad that the vital truths about sin, repentance, confession and forgiveness had been so clearly stated and boldly published. Erasmus, at this stage, bold enough to at least indulge in a reflection, said: "I observe that the more genuine their piety and the purer their morals, the less are men opposed to Luther. The world was weary of a doctrine so full of puerile fables, and thirsted for that pure and living water which springs from the veins of the evangelists and apostles." The preamble to the theses set forth in the academic usage of the day what Luther, at this stage of his work as reformer, contemplated. "From a desire," says he, "to elicit the truth the following theses will be maintained at Wittenberg under the presidency of the Rev. Father Martin Luther, of the order of Augustines, master of arts, master and lecturer in theology. He asks that such as are not able to dispute verbally with him will do so in writing. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen." The grossness and iniquity of this business, that without design made Luther a reformer, is apparent in the schedule of prices affixed to the indulgences. Every sin was on the tariff save heresy alone. Among the relatively cheap ones we may note:

Absolution for him who has carnal connection with mother, sister or other kinswoman, 5 gr.

For him who deflowers a virgin, 6 gr.

For the killing of a layman by a layman, 5 gr.

From the more expensive luxuries of a too exuberant and swift life may be noted these:

Annulling or putting off a vow of pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places, 18 gr.

And among the indulgences, a general dispensation for life, 25 gr.

In 1482 the Paris theologians had condemned this pecuniary poetry:

> Soon as the coin in the chest doth ring,
> Souls out of purgatory spring.

Kings, archbishops and princes were to give twenty-five

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Rhenish gold gulden; abbots, counts and barons, ten; people with incomes of five hundred gulden were to give six; the next class, one; poorer ones, one-half, or one-quarter, or even less. The poor could beg till they had the price. Upon payment a receipt was given, quite business-like; in fact, the thing was called "The Holy Business." There was a regular price list; perjury and robbing a church cost nine ducats, murder eight ducats, etc. Dispensations for marriage within the prohibited degrees, the most expensive of all the holy luxuries for sale and usually indulged in by monarchs only, were rated at from three hundred to six hundred ducats, according to circumstances. The system was marvelously fruitful, and it is accordingly no matter of surprise that the audacious Reformer was met with one aim and policy by the ecclesiastical chieftains whose resources of ducats and gulden had been imperiled. Some were for mild suppression; others for fierce suppression, but all were for suppression without delay. "It is high treason," exclaimed Hochstraten, the inquisitor of Cologne, "against the Church to have such a heretic alive for another hour. Erect instantly the scaffold for him."

The general view of those in power, even when less violently expressed, was essentially the same. But there were others who were more considerate in their judgment, and who, with a better forecast of coming events, with more moderation discussed the signs of the times. The shepherd of the Wittenberg flock, the bishop of Brandenburg, discovered nothing heretical in them, while Albert Krantz, of Hamburg, said: "You speak the truth, good brother, but you'll not do anything; back to your cell and pray, 'God have mercy upon me!'" At Steinlausig Prior Fleck told his Franciscans, "There is a man who will do it!" and he wrote Luther: "Venerable Doctor, proceed! Press forward! These papal abuses always displeased me, too," etc. Germany's greatest artist of all times, Albrecht Durer, sent his approval from Nurnberg. Kaiser Maximilian told Frederick's counselor, Pfeffinger, Luther's theses were not to be despised, and the Elector would better take care of him, for he might some day be useful against the prelates. If Sylvester Prierias, the pope's confessor and master of the papal palace, in giving an expert opinion of the theses, expressed his resources as an expert in scurrilous personal abuse, even denouncing Luther's father as a

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dog, for biting was the habit of dogs, and calling the Reformer himself a leper with a nose of iron, a head of brass, and like billingsgate, there were others, who, with more of serious-mindedness, sensed the situation and discovered that Rome had at last found its match and had encountered a foe difficult to deal with.

But this was the great truth: the significance of the theses was to be found in their doctrinal teachings on the old subjects of sin and salvation. In them for the first time in a thousand years the evangelical doctrine of a free and gratuitous remission of sins had been sounded out in statements publicly professed and heralded to the world. Listen to the note of St. Paul once more sounded out in the theses: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says, 'Repent,' he means that the whole life of believers upon earth should be a constant and perpetual repentance." "Still our Lord does not mean to speak solely of internal repentance; internal repentance is null if it produce not externally every kind of mortification of the flesh." "The commissaries of indulgences are in error when they say that by the papal indulgences a man is delivered from every punishment and is saved." "They preach mere human follies who maintain that as soon as the money rattled in the strong box the soul flies out of purgatory." "Those who fancy themselves sure of salvation by indulgences will go to perdition along with those who teach them so." "Every true Christian, whether dead or alive, participates in all the blessings of Christ, or of the Church, by God's gift, and without a letter of indulgence." "The true and precious treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God."

That the indulgence represented a different and antithetical aspect of religion is manifest in these words, taken from a copy in common use at the time: "I, in virtue of the Apostolic power committed to me absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments and penalties that thou mayest have merited; and further, from all excesses, sins and crimes that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be and of whatever kind. I efface all the stains of weakness and all traces of the shame that thou mayest have drawn upon thyself by such actions. I remit the pains that thou wouldst have had to endure in purgatory."

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At the time of the publication of the theses Tetzel was at Frankfort on the Oder, pressing his sales with archiepiscopal endorsement. He fulminated with rage and alarm, and tried to offset their effort with frenzied harangues and publicly abusing the bold propositions, but all in vain. With no desire at this time to separate himself from the Church, loyal to the pope and laboring and praying only for the reformation of the Church, Luther had fired the opening gun in the most significant conflict of modern times. In the progress of the disputations that ensued, he could not help advancing step by step, as the logic of his adversaries forced him to recur to the fundamental principles of sacerdotal medieval theology, since the refutation of their conclusions depended so largely on the destruction of their premises. "Thunder," as has been said, "was now everywhere breeding in the air. Strong men were rising up on both sides, either in defense of principles or from motive of policy." Though Luther himself could not fully understand it, this indulgence controversy was the inception of a mighty revolution. The words of Froude, the great English historian, correctly interpret the significance of his attitude: "The spark kindled the powder which was lying everywhere, ready to explode. That one act opened the lips of Germany, and from all parts there rose instantly the cry of denunciation against the Church administration. Erasmus, best of witnesses for her, himself standing apart from the movement, testified to the universal delight at what Luther had done. Kings, princes, bishops, priests, some even among the monks themselves, equally applauded. A brave man at last had been found to utter the thoughts of them all. There was no question of teaching them any new doctrine or breaking the unity of Christendom. All honest men knew that the indulgences were a scandal which it was impossible to defend."

X

It would be a contradiction of well-known facts of history to deny the strong influence exercised on the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century by the intellectual and social forces that were contemporary with that movement. There was then, as we have seen, a great awakening in the mental life and political activity of Europe, and it is but truth to say that the movement

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inaugurated by Luther in the nailing up of his theses was much influenced by both.

But however much that movement may have been aided by these factors, its primary and dominant cause is to be found always in the new religious convictions above noted, and which were then taking such deep root in the hearts of men. It was, as we have seen, first and above all, a return to the fountain of life opened up in the sacred Scriptures, and a revival of spiritual life. The longing for closed fellowship with God and a more assured peace, that had been so prominent in the spiritual conflicts of Luther, were present to a greater or less degree in thousands of good and devout men and women around him. The results of his long-continued personal religious struggles may all be summed up in a few brief phrases: That right and duty are for all; that there is no longer a privileged religious order, or ecclesiastical usages which can exempt men from moral obligations; that in matters of duty and religion all men are equal. He had, at the beginning, no idea or faintest desire of bringing his views into great publicity. He had quietly and unostentatiously expounded them to his students at Wittenberg, and preached them to his parishioners from the pulpit in the same town. When he exposed the abuses of the indulgence traffic being conducted among his own people he had only meant to serve the Church, and that only by pointing out in an academical debate the danger in these abuses. The attempt to intimidate and browbeat him into subjection by an assertion of ecclesiastical officialism aroused his manly spirit, led him to further investigation, and by and by to the conviction that he had a cause to plead for the Church and for the truth as it is in Christ. The Church attempted, by methods of cajolery, threat, argument, and, finally excommunication, to suppress him. But supporters sprang up on every hand, until by and by a new Church system, a new development of religious culture, was the outcome.

Protestantism and Romanism do not differ so much as varieties of one and the same religion, but as two distinct religions, because of the diverse and, so frequently, antithetical ways in which they define what is at the basis of all religion—a man's relation to God and the duties depending upon that relation.

At its best, Lutheranism stands for the power of personal religion, for the spiritual freedom of the individual as answer-

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able, in the final issue, to his Maker alone. It further stands for the prophetic Word of God as the dynamic which alone can vitalize the ritual of the priest, make efficacious the sacraments of the Church, and by means of which alone the Holy Ghost can work where and when it pleases Him in effecting man's restoration to rightful relations with God. The true Protestant witness stands for the Word of God, which, not being bound, has borne such splendid witness to the truth of evangelicalism and the liberty wherewith Christ doth make men free. It has always warned its own disciples, and many times not without cause, of the deadness of the letter, excepting as it expresses and mediates the efficacious working of the third Person of the adorable Trinity.

It was, as we have seen, the sense of sin and the experience of salvation which determined Luther's conception of Christ as a Saviour. He had something of the Pauline experience of sin and came, accordingly, to the Pauline conception of a Saviour needed and actualized. With him the necessity for and the doctrine of the atonement were not based simply on Scripture passages, but the Scripture passages received their proper value because he had actually experienced what those passages revealed as possible and that which they described. The atonement was a revelation to Paul and to Luther of something that was deeply rooted in God's nature and man's need. Luther grasped the scriptural conception of man's inability to save himself, whether by mental culture or moral effort; came to know that a real salvation was an act of God in Christ to be appropriated by faith. In our day, the point of departure of all liberal theories from the evangelical conception of salvation is found, not so much in radical literary hypotheses and canons, as in its conception of a Saviour and of salvation.

Thus it is not from the scientific or social conscience that the reformational movement of the sixteenth century proceeded. It was a distinctly religious development. The form it took in Luther was due, as Kostlin, his biographer and interpreter, declares, to his direct and mighty grasp, his intuition and his unifying view of religious truth. In his apprehension of the truth and interpretation of it, he had what amounted almost to genius, a balance of judgment in keeping the various aspects and applications of the truth in such a proper co-ordination that a real and

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permanent Protestantism was the result. In their prosecution of the work of reform the men who forsook his way were soon found resorting to compulsion and physical force, rooting out heresy to supplant it with their own religio-political views propagated with fire and sword. Such fell an easy prey to anabaptism and its excesses, to socinianism, to enthusiasm and rationalism, sacramentarianism and spiritualism, secularism and political methods. By the soundness of his principles and the sanity of his methods the chief of the reformers not only reformed Christendom, but incidentally led the whole world into new channels of liberty, knowledge and culture, and this mighty work was accomplished without a weapon save the Word of God only and the principles that by fair interpretation are deduced therefrom.

Dr. Philip Schaff has said, and with justice, that "It is impossible to reduce the fundamental difference between Protestantism and Romanism to a single formula without doing injustice to one or the other. Nor should we forget that there are legalistic and Romanizing tendencies in Protestantism." But ignoring the exceptions and looking only at the prevailing character and various aspects of the two systems, there are strong points of divergence. In the development of Protestantism in its early history, not only did the primary principles soon become manifest, but a goodly number of secondary and inferential principles, all of which served to show the irreconcilable opposition between Romanism and Protestantism of every shade. It would be easy to show that the principle which assumes one form in our vindication of the right to private judgment, another form in the contention for the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and yet another form in the doctrine of justification by faith, is implied and actively present in every one of the controversies between the two apprehensions of the Gospel and the Church. The antithesis between the one and the other is manifest at many points.

The Romanist believed in the authority of the Church, while with the Protestant the center of gravity was liberty; the one yielding his conscience absolutely to the priest, while the other subordinated his to God alone. In a terse and comprehensive statement of Dr. Schaff we have it all: "Freedom in Christ is the ultimate root of evangelical Protestantism, while bondage in the law is the essence of Romanism, and freedom from Christ

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the essence of Rationalism." The Romanist believed in the pope as the official and visible representative of Christ on earth, and in the hierarchy, which was the depository and administrator of all truth; the Protestant looks upon all men as equal before God, regards the ministry as an office in the Church and not the Church itself, and calls the Church "the congregation of the saints and true believers." The Romanist insists that all authority is to be found in the one visible Church of which the pope is the head, while the Protestant always harks back to the inspired Word of God, the only source and norm of spiritual truth, and that not supplemented by any verdict of human reason or pretended immediate revelations. The Romanist, content with the teaching of the Church, was willing to leave the interpretation of the Bible solely in the hands of the Church; the Protestant held that it was diligently and reverently to be studied by all as the Word of God, multiplying its translations and seeking to give it to all the peoples of the earth in their own language. Romanism was chiefly concerned to make known to men what their relation to the Church must be in order to insure salvation; Protestantism was more concerned about making known the fulness of the message of God, who for Jesus' sake pardons and saves sinful men. The Romanist held that the merits of Christ could be made ours only through the sacraments, and that these were dependent in their administration upon a sacerdotal class of men duly ordained and being in an alleged "apostolical succession." The Protestant, on the other hand, estimated the two sacraments instituted by our Lord as divine appointments, that they are real channels of divine grace, but attaching to them no efficacy because administered by priestly hands, and holding that the merits of Christ were bestowed upon the soul only in response to sincere and humble faith. According to Rome the Church was not exclusively a religious organization, but was something of an ecclesiastical state. Protestantism rediscovered the true and spiritual character of the kingdom of God on earth, with its loving Father and merciful and gracious Saviour. Romanism sought God through a succession of mediators, the priest, the saints and Mary, the Holy Virgin; while Protestantism affirmed that there was but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. The one of these forms of the Christian religion teaches that a man's relation to Christ is determined by his relation to the Church,

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while the other declares that his relation to the Church is determined always by his relation to Christ.

Thus the two systems stood in absolute and irreconcilable opposition, one being the embodiment of individual liberty and direct responsibility to God, while the other was the assertion of unlimited priestly authority and the demand for silent and submissive obedience to Church authority. That the Roman Catholic Church in some of the aspects of its teaching and organization makes a powerful appeal to vast multitudes of people in indisputable. That it is a mighty organization for doing in an external way what is essentially an inward work of grace in the believer's soul, is not to be successfully controverted. It presents to the inquirer an imposing system. He comes to her seeking salvation, and she offers him a refuge, a visible fold of Christ, an organization out of which is no salvation, but within which the believer, who, as a faithful child, yields himself to her guidance, has assured to him his own personal salvation. She guarantees on the ground of obedience that she will see him through. In the performance of all her offices for the soul that Church begins at birth, and readily offers her services to the end, covering the entire round of a man's life with a system of mechanically working sacraments, and even reaching beyond the frontiers of this earthly life, teaching that the prayers of good men on earth, and especially the offering of the divine sacrifice of the mass, will avail to even abridge purgatorial sufferings.

The claims are imposing, and the appeal is powerful. But when the inquirer asks for the proofs he finds himself at once lost in a maze of unscriptural claims and of bad and irrelevant reasoning. The Romish method of proof has ended in such a mass of artificiality and inconsistency, even with itself, that it constitutes an argument against its own unwarranted claims. In contrast, every expression of a genuinely Protestant faith presents the claims of a religion that is at once scriptural, reasonable, personal and spiritual. In carrying out these principles different Churches have arrived at different results as regards details of organization and doctrinal emphasis; but all Churches true to the principles of the Reformation have accepted the decrees of Nicea and Chalcedon, the Augustinian representation of the theory of the necessity of divine grace in salvation, and the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith alone; while they reject papal

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authority and an exclusive priesthood, mariolatry, saint worship and image adoration, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the withholding of the cup from the laity, and all but two sacraments, indulgence, purgatory and prayer for deliverance of the dead therefrom, monasticism, compulsory celibacy, obligatory confession, and the use of Latin in public worship.

Some have seen in this great Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century nothing more than a revolt of the laity against the clergy, of Teutonic people against the Latin, of the kingdoms of Europe against the universal monarchy of the pope. Some have seen in it nothing more than the bursting forth of a long repressed spirit of revolt against the luxury of prelates and the abuses of ecclesiastical power. All these, indeed, to some extent it was, but our study of its fundamental and its secondary principles has shown it to be something more profound and fraught with mightier consequences than any or all of these interpretations. Let us recall here the words of James Bryce, the author of the "Holy Roman Empire." "It was," says he, "in its essence the assertion of the principle of individuality; that is to say, of true spiritual freedom. Hitherto the personal consciousness had been a faint and broken reflection of the universal; obedience had been held as the first of religious duties; truth had been conceived as a something external and possible, which the priesthood, who were its stewards, were to communicate to the passive laymen, and whose saving virtue lay, not in its being felt and known by him to be truth, but in a purely formal and unreasoning acceptance."

The result of the introduction of the principles herein discussed was that all this was reversed. The visible Church and the priesthood lost that magisterial importance which had hitherto belonged to both, and instead of longer being the depository of all religious truth and the guardian of traditional growths, the source and dispenser of religious life, the arbiter of eternal happiness or misery, a large part of western Christendom at least became an association of Christian people, "the congregation of the saints," the "blessed company of all faithful people," organized for the expression of mutual sympathy, for the better attainment of common ends, and most of all for the orderly and becoming administration of the means of grace. The honors and powers which had been conferred upon the Church by its Head

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and Founder, and which are necessary for the full manifestation of the glory of the kingdom of God on earth, and of which it had been stripped by the papal hierarchy, were once more restored to it.

These are critical times, and even those whose hearts are loyal to Protestant principles may sometimes grow faint. But in the presence of dangers that menace the fair inheritance of faith and freedom which we have had passed on to us by our Protestant ancestors, we may still have faith in God and the vitality of His truth, and ask for but one comprehensive privilege —that of preaching the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, demonstrated in the conflicts of past days not only to be the power of God unto salvation, but mighty in the overthrow of principalities and powers and the pulling down of strongholds.

There stands in the old town of Wittenberg, in Germany, where Luther posted his famous theses on the church, in 1517, a solid monument, on the base of which are engraven the Reformer's own words:

"If it be man's work it dies;
If it be God's work it lives."

The history of the Reformation and its principles is written in that inscription even unto this day. What was man's work then has passed, and what is man's work now is passing. But the truth that was and is of God then and now endures, and before that truth in the age we have had under contemplation the magnificent medieval Church began swiftly to wane, and the Church of the Reformation, with its rising vigor, came in. The impulse toward reform, which had been inspired by disappointment and shame at the vain pretensions, empty claims and manifold apostasies of the spiritual chieftains of the medieval Church, had not been lost, but at last, inspired by the truth, rose up to smite the evils of the times and to push on the future progress of mankind.

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SECTION IV

SOME OF THE ATTAINED RESULTS[1]

It is now four hundred years since the brave monk of Wittenberg, defying the ecclesiastical and imperial powers and following his own convictions regarding religion and duty, nailed his immortal theses upon the door of the old Castle Church. We who are now living are far enough down the track of the centuries which have ensued since that act to fairly estimate its deep significance, inasmuch as we have shared so largely in the new world of faith, of social advancement and Christian civilization that was then begun. True, we are still in the mid-process of the great movement which had its inception with the theses, and dwell amid many yet unsettled questions of faith and church life and organization, as well as amid currents and counter-currents in social and civic life; but we are, nevertheless, able to make such an induction into the facts involved, and so read them in connection with Christian history, that we can plainly discern in the events of that day, not merely a strife of doctrines, but a most important step in the whole growth of Christian civilization. We are able to discern in the Reformation of the Church then inaugurated, the ripe fruit of struggles that had preceded and a fact bound up with all that was best in the future. We now know more than any generation which has preceded us has known about the place and work of that epoch-making movement in the Providence of Him who is the inception of all good things and who knows the end from the beginning.

Hitherto we have endeavored to discover some of the causes which made that movement under Luther a necessity, if the Church and civilization were to be saved; to give something of an interpretation of the chief among the personal forces that gave it scope and direction; and then to disclose some of the primary principles which lay at its foundation and the causes which shaped its growth. The task that now lies before us is to indicate, in a fragmentary way only, some of the manifold results of that movement as they soon began to manifest themselves in

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the sixteenth century, and as they have reached to our own day, and shall yet reach and influence all later times. What greater attestation of divine approval could there be than the work accomplished from its beginnings to this hour by that greatest movement in the history of religion since the day of Pentecost? It found Europe dead, and reinvigorated it with life; it saw Christendom languishing in the stupor of medievalism, but quickened it into the light of the new and better day then at hand. That the soil had to a large extent been prepared, and the age made ready by various forces that had long been at work, does not detract from the glory of the man who co-ordinated those forces and struck the decisive blow.

To the question regarding the results of this movement, however, it must be said various and discordant answers have been given. They have been pronounced "bad and only bad," as was to be expected, by the bigoted papist; "disappointing," by some alleged Protestants of the "High" Anglican order, and "insignificant," according to the interpretation of modern rationalistic radicals. Even in our own day of ample tolerance for all sorts of antithetical views in the sphere of religion, in a period when much of the thinking on theological lines has been smitten by the spirit of negation; neutrality and compromise, the reigning pope, Benedict XV, so late as November, 1914, has had the old-time papal prejudice to refer to Protestants as "the emissaries of Satan, who set up pestilential pulpits, and, like Luther and Calvin, by diabolical machinations commit abominable robbery of the peoples' faith and seek their perdition."

But notwithstanding these misinterpretations, partial views and outbursts of individual papalism, the history of the Protestant influence, with scarce an exception, is the history of the enterprise, discovery, arts, science, invention, learning and philanthropy which have been the best expression of modern civilization. It would be hard to show one great movement in the past three hundred years, that has been attended with marked and permanent success, and which has effected widely the welfare of mankind, that had its origin in the Church of Rome, or from any people dominated by its teachings. Not to the peoples under the control of its ancient hierarchical system are to be set down such achievements as the great political reforms of England, the colonization of America and the consolidation of the Germanic

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peoples and their marvelous development down to the great war, together with the progress and organization of popular education and the conquest of nature inaugurated by modern science. Achievements along all these lines are to be credited to the emancipated energy, the wider intelligence, the individual strength of conviction, and that moral energy which Protestantism set free as factors contributing most largely to the advancement of mankind.

In answer to all that has been alleged against the Reformation, because of some of the abuses that early sprang up in its wake, it may be said that the habits of centuries, which were deeply rooted in the medieval system, were not to be unlearned in a few years, and that the new ideas then coming to the front and struggling into existence and activity, would sometimes work not only imperfectly, but even frantically, in the hands of enthusiasts and radicals. Much of that which may be classified as radical and iconoclastic in that period was not any legitimate fruitage of Protestant teaching, but an inheritance from the old system of Roman imperialism and ecclesiasticism. The sudden emergence of a people from restraints to which they had long been accustomed, and which the reformers had come to regard as unnecessary, is frequently attended by some moral loss and excessive measures. In a time of revolt, revolution and reconstruction, such as the period of the Reformation furnishes us, the risks that some discordant elements of radicalism and false mysticism will come to the front with impudent and self-righteous assertiveness, must be taken, otherwise stagnation would ensue and the world would be dominated by a dead and unprogressive conservatism.

In the period in which the good fight of the Reformation was being waged, the truth and true Christian life had become so tied up with a worldly and wicked hierarchy that the truth could not prevail and the real Gospel was well-nigh forgotten. Great doctrines antithetical to those proclaimed by that hierarchy, and which have been proved to be such influential factors in modern religion and civilization, were then being framed into speech. Men were then emerging from the powerful and forbidding dominion of the penitential system of the Church of Rome into the liberty of the sons of God, leaving behind them the exactions of the canon law, the bewildering labyrinth of patristic opinion, con-

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ciliar decretals and the burdensome exactions of the priestly caste. The transition was great, and in some cases abrupt. It is accordingly not surprising that there sprang up at once in the new movement strong antagonisms, misinterpretations, excesses, and mental and spiritual hostility when this fruitful period was estimated as to its immediate products and worked-out results.

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It is not a matter of surprise that the advocates of the old medieval system of Church life, doctrine and organization should have denounced the Lutheran movement, pronouncing it, when it saw some of its extravagant results, as they appeared, to be a dangerous species of individualism and an unguarded and unbalanced display of subjectivism. From small beginnings, as we have seen, the hierarchical idea had taken possession of the Church, and the tyranny of the old system which was later assailed by Luther became established as a matter of divine authority over the minds and conscience, as it claimed, of all men. The Reformation, with its emphasis on inward holiness, which inspired a new ideal of the Christian life, and its rightful insistence upon the fact that a man's relation to the Church was determined by his relation to Christ, ran counter from its beginning and at many points to the official judgments that were handed down by the big ecclesiastical organism on matters of faith and practice. Monasticism, that unnatural conception of the Christian life, which for centuries had been presented as the highest expression of piety, no longer controlled as it once did the minds of aspiring youth, while the asceticism commended by the Church, with its ideal of flight from the world, had ceased to be longer looked upon by multitudes with that respect and veneration once accorded it. These and other factors in the life of the Church which had been brought together into a great and powerful ecclesiastical organism, were passing into a state of distrust and aroused hostility.

"Truth does not regard consequences" was a noble saying about that which is always endowed with capacity to overcome in the final issue. But history furnishes many instances in which the consequences have been something of a test of the truth, and in some of which the perversions of the truth have proved to be

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embarrassing. In fact, it may be said that history is a long series of struggles to elevate the character of mankind in all of its aspects, religious, intellectual, social and political. But scarcely any step has been made in this upward movement that has not been embarrassed and retarded by the eccentricities, radicalism and excesses of some of its advocates and mistaken friends. The Reformation was in none of its aspects a wild and unregulated rebellion. Had it been that it would early in its history have broken itself to pieces and been completely swept away. There were no lawless elements concealed in any of its fundamental principles. It was based upon no radical methods of procedure. Luther, its leader, did nothing in mere revolt against authority, but everything for the sake of the truth. He realized, as did none of the contemporaries, that to cast off the yoke of Rome, intolerant and insufferable as that yoke had been, was a perilous undertaking, and he accordingly always proceeded with caution and conservatism. He was no advocate of that license which is born of self-will, and the liberty he advocated was always the child of law. His appeal was always to an authority, objective, sane and safe, and which through all of its history has conserved mental balance and obedience to attested principles. But every good thing is followed by its counterfeits, and sometimes by a train of impostures instead of expositions. Medicine has its expression many times in quackery, and freedom has not infrequently been perverted to the lawless purposes of anarchy. The very best things have been proven liable to perversion and violent abuse. But the excesses of the French revolution, for example, do not brand liberty as immoral and necessarily dangerous, because in that movement in the closing years of the eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth centuries disastrous and irreligious features were associated with it under the guise of a devotion to liberty and its blessings.

Any line of revolt against long-established modes of thinking and plans of organization in any sphere brings to the front the restless enthusiast and unreasoning radical who mistrust a man like Luther, who not only dreamed dreams, but was withal a practical and far-seeing statesman. That he could not go all the way with the extremists of his day led them to regard him as but a half-way reformer. His wisdom and poise, however, have been amply justified in the light of history. Such a movement

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as that which he headed, and started, so far as he was concerned, all unconsciously, which Guizot suggestively called "a great insurrection of human intelligence," was destined from its very beginning to quicken currents and counter-currents of mental activity and a variety of reformatory methods. In any period the pulling down of worn-out institutions brings perplexity and sometimes even reproach. Every great clash of human opinion is certain to be accompanied by some wild and unregulated outbursts, and every revolution calls out the uncontrolled and the uncontrollable, such as Nicholas Storch, Andrew von Carlstadt, Marcus Stübner, Gabriel Zwilling, the Zwickau prophets, as they were called—people who combined inward mysticism with practical radicalism, who boasted of visions, dreams and direct communications with God and the angel Gabriel, who disparaged the written Word and the regular ministry, rejected infant baptism, and predicated the overthrow of the existing order of things and the near approach of a democratic millennium.

The history of the Reformation is one of enduring glory, but of transient shame if we consider fanatical expressions as belonging to the substance of it, instead of mere incidental deflections from it. The great instrument of political progress is generally allowed to be liberty, but that good word in both religion and civic life and organization is not responsible for some evil things in both spheres that have been perpetrated in its name. It is a gross perversion when certain outbursts of radicalism and enormities perpetrated by fanatical sectaries in the period of the Reformation, who took the Old Testament for their Gospel instead of the New, are seized upon by its enemies to cast discredit upon that remarkably fruitful movement. In every reformatory movement certain radical forces are released which serve to either drive the newly won truth to wild extremes, or, by distorting it in various applications in other and totally alien fields, afford its enemies an opportunity to cast discredit upon it, by charging that it is fraught with dangerous and disastrous tendencies. This soon began to be the ill-fortune of the Lutheran Reformation, which was forced to fight for its life against the radical tendencies both in the Church and the state, and which, in turn, afforded the polemicists of Rome their chance to pervert the facts. They persistently refused to have any regard for the fundamental difference between Luther's teachings about the

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Gospel and what it is, the sphere and relation of the Church and the state, and the position of those unregulated enthusiasts who soon parted company with the Reformer, and who antagonized him and his teaching no less bitterly than did the papists themselves. It is not to be denied that as the Reformation advanced it caused more and more of a popular upheaval, and a more pervasive influence, that affected every department of life. The proclamation of the freedom of the Christian man, in opposition to Rome's long-time tyranny over the soul and conscience, not being rightly apprehended by some, and in consequence misapplied, induced fanatical and impatient spirits to put the reformatory principles into practice in violent and legalistic ways, confusing essentials with non-essentials, turning the Gospel into a species of law, disregarding weak consciences and employing force to accomplish their ends.

Luther's positions had been taken with caution and were firmly grounded and carefully guarded, the distinction always being made between essentials and non-essentials, the Word being invoked constantly as the only power and authority. With the assurance that with that Word alone the ultimate result must lie, time must be allowed for some principles to ripen into their legitimate fruitage, and in the meantime love must be exercised and a tender regard maintained for weak consciences. But this method of Luther, which trusted the truth to work its own changes, was too slow, too gradual and too destitute of spectacular features to appeal to the impatient spirits of the fanatics who endangered the good work of reform by their destructive zeal, thereby turning a reformation into a revolution and demonstrating that a beneficent movement may be undone by being overdone, and that freedom is liable to great abuse in a time of change when old things are made to pass, and when that freedom is limited to the external phases of life.

The extent to which some of these abuses were carried will appear in the citation of a few facts drawn from the delusions and errors of the Anabaptists, as well as from the violent speech of such leaders as Thomas Munzer, who led in a war for communism of the most immoral sort, which was ended by the battle of Frankenhausen in 1525, when Munzer was beheaded, not as a heretic but as a rebel. It was his custom to inflame the much-abused peasants by such appeals as this: "Thomas Munzer, serv-

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ant of God, against the wicked: Be pitiless; heed not the groans of the impious; rouse up the towns and villages, above all, the miners of the mountains! On! On! while the fire is burning, and the hot sword reeking with slaughter. Kill all the proud ones. While they reign over you it is no use to talk of God." Such violent speech, associated uniformly but unfairly by its enemies with the Reformation, greatly hindered the good work and proved hurtful to all wholesome aspects of religion. In her delusion one poor woman, it is related by a contemporary, at the bidding of the angel Gabriel, invited all her neighbors to a feast. The table was set and the company assembled at the appointed hour, when the woman began to pray with all her might, comforting, by turns, the guests, who as yet saw no preparation for the feast, with the assurance that it was the intention of the angels to bring the food, even as the Lord had once miraculously fed Israel with manna. But the angelic provision came not, and finally, at a late hour in the evening, the deluded, hungry and at last undeceived neighbors, left dejected and disappointed, and with hunger unrelieved. The poor woman had apprehended the promise of the Lord in the most literal sense, when he said, "Ask and it shall be given unto you," until at last both she and her guests found themselves with wants unsatisfied and the Scriptures wrested to the humiliation and exasperation of both.

There were others who took the same literal signification to "become like little children." In order to indicate their conception of child-likeness some of the adult Anabaptists might be seen in the streets skipping about in juvenile fashion and clapping their hands, while others would join in a childish dance, or seating themselves on the ground engage in some game, or roll and tumble with each other in the dust of the highway. Still others played with dolls, or dragged fir cones that had been strung together on a thread along the ground after them. One of these brethren, in his deluded effort at exemplification of the Lord's injunction, sat for a long time on the bank of the Rhine, after the fashion of a little boy, building little heaps of sand, and then taking water from the stream in the hollow of his hand let it trickle through the sand heaps. When asked for a reason for this queer conduct on the part of a full-grown man, he replied that he was trying to obey his Saviour's command to become a little child. But this religious delusion expressed itself in ways

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vastly more extravagant than these ludicrous performances, melancholy as they are when viewed as aspects of religious extravagance. It sometimes manifested itself in even dangerous forms. It assumed sometimes an antinomian type, and there were those who concealed the basest sins of the flesh behind the most profuse expressions of piety. But even this was not the limit of this prodigal method of expressing religious devotion.

The story is told of Hans Schucker, a man of eighty, who dwelt with his family in a lonely farmhouse near St. Gall, in Switzerland. In this family all manner of religious extravagance had been talked and practiced. On the 8th of February, 1526, one of the younger brothers of the family, called Leonard, addressed Thomas, an elder brother, thus: "It is the will of our Heavenly Father that thou shouldst strike my head off." In the presence of the brothers and sisters of the family Thomas besought the Lord that he might receive a will for the task, but was not made aware of any answer to his prayer. The two brothers then exclaimed together, "Thy will, O Father, be done." Leonard kneeled down, when Thomas seized a sword and in an instant the head of the murdered brother fell at his feet. After the commission of this horrible act, the fanatical murderer took his lute and praised the Lord for the successful issue of his work, after which he delivered himself up to a magistrate, all the time obstinately insisting that it was not he, but God through means of him, who had done the foul deed.

These and other excesses followed when radicals, fanatics, and unbalanced revolutionists, who thought that Luther had stopped half way and that they must complete what he had begun, took the matter of destruction and reconstruction into their own unskilled and inexperienced hands. In consequence, order was displaced by confusion and the Reformation threatened with disastrous failure. Both Rome and liberalists have always been glad to enlarge upon such outbursts of the new Protestant radicalism and set them down to the discredit of the new movement. But the principles set forth by Luther were not the exciting cause of these commotions and excesses. It is undeniable that there is a large democratic element in Christianity, and much that has been falsely placed to the discredit of the Reformation is due entirely to an attempt to take that demorcary in too literal and material a sense. In times of commotion it has always been

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difficult to draw the line where disavowal and destruction are to end and toleration and reconstruction begin. But one thing is always to be set down to the credit of Luther. It is that notwithstanding his natural earnestness and vehemence he always maintained his poise and balance, and was never the man to go to aimless extremes, always asserting the right of Christian freedom in matters non-essential, and maintaining that one who claimed to be an inspired prophet and came with alleged revelations and inspiration must either be ordinarily called to account by Church authority or prove his divine commission by miracles. Radicalism with its unhappy accompaniments was not of the Reformer, nor yet of his principles. Following his career, we discover not only that it is one of heroism, and one in which step after step is taken with unhesitating confidence, but a career, also, in which its conservative instincts are constantly asserting their power. The principles of the new movement were in no sense responsible, for example, for the Peasants' War. That ill-fated enterprise would have taken place even if the Protestant doctrines, which have been blamed for its excesses, had never been preached at all. It was caused by age-long abuses, for which the princes of Germany, as a consequence of their extortions and tyranny, were chiefly responsible. The abuses brought about under the leadership of men like Munzer, and which were contemporaneous with the Protestant innovation, of course were to be deprecated. But the new principles are not to be blamed, as they have been by papists and latitudinarians, for the perversions and reckless activities of lunatics who thought they heard in the voice of men of the Munzer order the tocsin calling them to plunder, destruction, lawlessness and bloodshed.

Speaking of excesses in periods of religious reform and revolution, reminds us of the fact that times long after the period of the Reformation were not destitute of such outbursts. A hundred years and more after that great movement Puritanism in England, for example, as an austere reaction against frivolity, pushed Sabbath keeping to its extreme, reprobating even the most innocent domestic recreations and changing a day of rest and refreshment into one of alternate periods of abstinence and religious worship, with sermons three hours in length and long extemporary prayers measured by the hour glass and fashioned entirely at the will of the leader. Ministers began to teach that to throw

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a bowl on Sunday or to do any servile work was as great a sin as murder; that to make a feast or dress a wedding dinner on that day was as bad as for a father to cut his child's throat; and even that the ringing of more bells than one as a summons to attend church was "as great a sin as might be."

A glance at several selections from a typical list of offences in the times of the Puritans will show how varied were the responsibilities of an officer of the law: "Robert Terry for profaning the Sabbath day by catching eels"; "Richard Court for coming irreverently into the church, never removing his hat till he cometh to this seat"; "Robert Brown to misstepping up our usual way on going the perambulation of our parish"; "Thomas Giles for not sending his servant to be catechized." The well-known "Blue Code" was a satire, but there was some basis of fact in the regulations of the times for such a bit of legislation as that which forbade reading the common prayer, keeping Chrismas day or saints' days, making mince pies or playing on any instrument, except the drum, the trumpet or the Jew's harp, which instruments were supposed to have something of a biblical flavor about them. To bathe on Sunday was a sin, and by some was regarded as of questionable propriety at any time, a boy being reported once to have been struck dead while indulging in that carnal amusement on the Sabbath. Every outward demonstration of good spirits was a sort of sin to be as far as possible suppressed. Certain recreations were rigorously forbidden. The festivities of New Year and Shrovetide, of May and Michaelmas, were looked upon as reprehensible. The Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide festivals, with other holy days, were abolished by the ordinance of 1647.

Unreasonable interferences with the Christian observances of good and devout people produced popular tumults. As an example, the mayor of Canterbury insisted upon a market being held on Christmas day, with the result that people who on that day desired to attend divine worship in the cathedral were roughly handled. The discontent which was thus produced burst out in open revolt, and the military was called in to put an end to the uproar, in consequence of which several people were committed to prison.

In his search for a scriptural warrant for things permitted the Puritan obtained some queer results. Ladies had their

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sober and stinted diversions in the parlor and the garden, and gentlemen had theirs at home and in the field, but all measured out sparingly and by Scripture line and rule. The Word of God, said these stern Puritan licensers, permitted shooting according to Samuel 1:18; musical concerts, according to Nehemiah 7:67; putting forth riddles, according to Judges 14:12; hunting of wild beasts, according to Canticles 2:15; searching out or the contemplation of the works of God, according to 1 Kings 4:33. The Puritan, too, played at bowls, billiards and shuffleboard, but would not touch cards, except to burn them.

In the bestowing of names upon his children, he also showed something of an excess. "Edification" was the factor to be made prominent in the selection of names. Accordingly, the Puritan parishes became full of little Hepzibahs, Jehoshophats, Mehetabels and Nahums, to say nothing of such compound titles as "Hold the truth," "Fight against Sin," "Know God," "Faint Not," and "Be Faithful," together with an extensive use of Christian graces and theological terminology, such as "faith," "hope," "charity," "providence," "preserved," etc.

In the calling of harsh names, too, these Puritan saints were as advanced as Luther and his contemporaries. Archbishop William Laud was especially hated by these zealots for simplicity. Laud, it must be said in the interest of veracity, was not the most amiable of ecclesiastics, but he hardly deserved the measure of aversion that is indicated in the abusive and suggestive names applied to him by the Puritans, among them being such as these: "arch piety," "arch wolf," "arch agent of the devil," "Beelzebub himself become archbishop and the devil's most triumphant arch to adorn his Satanic victories." In one pamphlet after another this martinet of an archbishop was abused for his birth, ridiculed for his size and called in turn, as the case seemed to the Puritan taste to require, "dirt," "filth" and "poison."

It has been affirmed that the prevention of cruelty to animals was not the motive of the Puritan in his commendable efforts at the abolition of the highly popular diversion of bear baiting. In his essay on John Milton Macaulay pays a generous and deserved tribute to the nobler side of Puritanism. But in his History of England he contributes this judgment about this aspect of Puritan character: "The Puritan hated bear baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the specta-

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tors. Indeed, he generally contrived to employ the double pleasure of tormenting both spectators and bear." In his intolerable interference with private and social life, and his efforts at legislating uprightness and piety into people, willing or unwilling, the Puritan traveled far, and as was inevitable the time of reaction came on apace. There was clearly a destitution of the sense of humor among a people who could decree officially that "no person shall be employed but such as the House is satisfied of his real goodliness"; that books in the royal libraries which contained pictures of Jesus or Mary should be destroyed by burning; that sculpture or graces should be destroyed or rechiseled; that public amusements of all sorts should be discontinued; that bear baiting, jumping the rope, wrestling matches, horse racing, stage acting, puppet shows and ball playing should be counted as criminal offences and severely punished; that sports on the village green should be accounted scandalous and every May pole be hewn down; that Christmas should be converted into a day of fasting and prayer; and that all men should keep it, as Macaulay says, "in humbly bemoaning the great national sin which they and their fathers had so often committed on that day by romping under the mistletoe, eating boar's head, and drinking ale flavored with roasted apples." It was not sumptuary legislation that the Puritan so much indulged in as trying to legislate men into piety. The outward emblems of sanctity, according to the dramatists of the restoration, came to be plainness in dress, short hair, unstarched linen, pine benches and wooden bottom chairs, a talking through the nose, a showing of the whites of the eyes, and calling little children by such names as Assurance, and Patience, and Praise God, and Tribulation.

Luther has been much reflected upon by writers of various orders, and with ample justification, for his use of strong and abusive speech. But in all fairness it may be said that he was not more resourceful in this respect than representative controversialists in the contests between the Calvinists and Arminians in England in the eighteenth century. That controversy is long dead, but the temper in which it was conducted reminds us very much of the stormy speech sometimes indulged in by Luther and his papal contemporaries. We are somewhat amazed at the spectacle of two deeply religious men, one of whom had written "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me," a hymn which the Church of

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Christ will sing until earthly hymns are no longer needed, and the other, in himself, the greatest single evangelizing force in the eighteenth century, cudgeling each other with the temper and language of angry fishwives.

In one of the theological tilts over election and predestination, Toplady declared John Wesley to be guilty of "Satanic shamelessness" and accused him of "acting the ignoble part of a lurking, sly assassin," of "uniting the sophistry of a Jesuit with the authority of the pope," and of sinking the discussion "to the level of an oyster woman." Wesley was in turn called "a designing wolf," "a lying apostle of the foundry," "an old fox," "Pope John," "little John," "a dealer in stolen wares," "a gray-headed enemy of all righteousness," "a venal profligate," "an apostate miscreant," declared to be "holy and sly, one who could pilfer and lie." In a pamphlet published in 1749, entitled "The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared," George Lavington, the bishop of Exeter, calculated (if he did not deliberately intend) to countenance the absurd calumny that Wesley and Whitefield were papists in disguise. In his reply Wesley declined to discuss further until this Christian bishop could show at least "a little heathen honesty," while Lavington, in a rejoinder, which was not a reply, declared what his protagonist had said to be "a medley of chicanery, sophistry, prevarication, evasion, pertness, conceitedness, scurrility, sauciness and effrontery." In his reply to this Wesley declared the Exeter bishop, who does seem to have been equally careless of both truth and courtesy, to have displayed the "temper of a merry Andrew," while he concluded his onsets with Toplady by declining "to have any further controversy with a chimney-sweep."

We have introduced these chapters from the later history of the Church to show that even extravagance in speech and custom in the sphere of religious controversy were not all terminated in the era of the Lutheran movement in Germany.

II

But face to face with discordant and depreciating answers that have been given to the question as to the result of the Reformation, such as that given by its pronounced foes, that it was "bad and only bad," or that of its lukewarm friends, that it was "dis-

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appointing," or the estimate of modern radicals, that those results were "insignificant," we are warranted in giving some fair estimate of the real life of that movement. Certain it was that in the reformed Germany, and the new-born Switzerland, and in Huguenot France and the heroic "low countries," a new world had arisen. There came to pass a household purity that was grave and sweet, an education in university and common school, a social thrift and a noble freedom which Europe had not hitherto known. Henceforth, it was impossible for the Latin Church to remain uninfluenced and to avoid some efforts at reformation and reconstruction. Rome, with its imperial antecedents and traditions reaching back beyond the Christian era, had now at last ceased to be the sole mistress of the conscience of western Christendom, while Wittenberg and Geneva had been advanced to central places in the sphere of independent religious life and thinking. The ferment engendered in men's minds was certain to lead on to changes in the ancient hierarchy itself, even though no one could foretell just what or how deep they might be.

Luther came, and Latin Christianity found itself involved in a death struggle in which the theocracy, patiently built up through the labor of centuries was threatened with destruction. Even Spain, in which the Church and the state were more firmly united and more solidly organized than elsewhere, did not wholly escape the infection of the new views and ideals. The old Church, still bitterly intolerant of any sort of heterodoxy, was forced to reform itself in head and members, and at last to throw off her long-time indifference to laxity of morals, which had not been corrected by the invasion of the neopaganism of the Renaissance in the center of its power and authority at Rome. It was left to the reaction of schism, and the rise of the Protestant communions in the face of the old Church, to bring to pass in Rome itself that reform of discipline and morals which three reformatory councils had found it impossible to effect. The Church was driven to a realization of her danger. If it stood still the Reformation would sweep it away. She was forced, willingly or unwillingly, as the case may have been, to impose a moral change upon herself. She was at least driven to insist that never again in the chair of St. Peter should be seen atheists, men who poisoned other men to make places of holy advancement for themselves, thieves, murderers, blasphemers, pirates and adulterers,

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but men, who, if they were sometimes found, as was to be expected, considering the infirmities of human nature, incompetent to deal with the perplexing problems that fell to their official hands, were yet of such personal uprightness of intention and conduct as to command profound respect. Had the Lutheran movement produced no other result than this, it would have been an unspeakable blessing to the world and of incalculable, though unrecognized, benefit to the hierarchy itself.

For the purposes of reform, to which he had been driven by the new spirit that had arisen, the pope accordingly summoned the Council of Trent in the year 1545. Its first sessions were held in January, 1546, and when it closed in 1563 it had established the doctrinal system which still expresses the beliefs of the Roman Church. A definite bulwark was thus raised against Protestantism, and able scholars came to the defence of the long, massive line of walls the old Church had builded up for its own defence. During the three periods of the council, extending over eighteen years, Catholic dogma was formulated, under the influence of papal legates, and in the form that maintains to this day. Romanism is really of a later date than the Evangelical doctrinal systems, having been set forth expressly as a counter-poise to the Lutheran and Reformed apprehensions of the Gospel. In that council, too, much plain speaking was indulged in by some from among the more zealous of the assembled fathers. The monstrous declension of the Church, the secular spirit that dominated the clergy, the greed of the Curia, the ignorance, laziness and lewdness of the secular clergy and the corruption of the monastic orders—in short, the degeneracy and apostasy of the official ranks, were by them laid at the door of the Church.

Thus one of the points in the general historical significance of the Lutheran movement is to be found in its direct influence upon the old Latin Church itself. A primary result of the Protestant revolt was a reformed Catholicism, at least in its religious aspects. By positive action or by apathy the papacy had hitherto rendered ineffective every effort, whether of individuals or of councils, to correct even the gravest abuses that afflicted the Church. But the great reform movement at last forced the big ecclesiastical organism to take notice, and she became aroused to a realization of her true position and peril, and the wholesome results at once became manifest in a variety of ways.

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In intellectual matters, and in its attitude toward scientific and other forms of advancement, the Church made no concessions, but stubbornly decided to remain a medieval institution in a modern world, made so by the new forces that had entered in the path of the great religious revival. The counter-reformation, accordingly, was not a matter of intellectual emancipation so much as a moral reformation. That frivolous laxity which had vaunted itself in the court of Leo X was at an end. There was a change of spirit, which became manifest during the pontificates of Adrian VI, Clement VII and Paul III. Rome had been compelled to listen to the voice of Luther and to abandon much that was a depreciation of Christ as the Redeemer and Saviour and Example of mankind. Certainly she had been improved by her contact with the Protestant forces, and now manifests a sincerity she did not exhibit in the days when Erasmus uttered his pleasantries and Rabelais laughed his scorn at money-grasping pontiffs and indifferent and dissolute priests.

One of the immediate results, therefore, of the work of the Reformation was an improved Romanism. Looking more widely over the field of modern history, we can now see that the Protestant revolt meant the introduction of a new spirit into the world, and the liberation of new and transforming forces, from which the papal system, with all its self-sufficiency and unwarranted claims, could not escape and by which it was unconsciously effected.

Turning our attention to the results of the Protestant movement in the sphere of the ethical life of the people, we are at once confronted with the old charge of the Romanist that the immediate effect was a relaxation of the restraints of religion and a consequent increase of immorality. Indeed, the reformers themselves, who, no doubt, expected too much of suddenness and thoroughness in the transformation to be wrought, made some frank confessions of disappointment and discouragement at the moral outcome of some of their work. "Germany is," as was said by Amsdorf, a Lutheran superintendent, "as it were, drowned in gluttony, drunkenness, avarice and luxury." That the reaction that came after the preaching of the freedom of the Christian man and other fundamental principles of the new movement, produced some pernicious results was to have been expected. The Church of Rome had endeavored to include in its

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scheme of religion the entire round of a man's life, including everything from birth to death, in its inclusive grasp, control and direction. Men could neither be born, baptized, married, conduct business, die or be buried without the intrusion and control of the Church. To release men from all this kind of ecclesiastical supervision and control, and call them back into the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free, could not be expected to be unattended with some outburst of freedom from the law, that did not always express itself in harmony with the highest ethical standards. Leaven does not all at once permeate the mass into which it is introduced, and salvation and its fruits cannot be forced suddenly on men. That salvation is a bestowment from above, but that character which ensues is something of a matter of habit and growth. It is, too, as unjust to cite instances of coarseness and rudeness, met with among some Protestant and Romanists of that day, as disproving the moral efficacy of the Reformation, as it would be unjust today to allege—as is frequently done—that the Church has failed in its task because examples of downright heathenism in life are to be found in Christian lands, and even under the shadow of great and imposing churches.

The ascetic life was the highest ideal of Christian excellence in the medieval Church. But few, relatively, could live this life, and these were looked upon as the highest and most venerated exponents of Christian living. It was one of the effects of the Protestant movement to supplant this type of religion, and to reinstate what was more in harmony with the New Testament representation under our Lord's own figures of "the salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." The new view contemplated the Gospel as a renovating and purifying influence among men. It stood for contact with the world, and not withdrawal from the world. The followers of Christ were not to retreat from the world, but to transform it by their presence and contact. The kingdom of God on this earth was not to be made up of ghostly cœnobites, who had voluntarily segregated themselves from the world in order to attain to holiness, but of men and women not indifferent to the labors and pleasures that legitimately belong to life, but infusing into all things a spirit of religious devotion and dedication, not only to their Lord, but to the welfare of their brethren. This ascetic type of religion, with its exploitation of

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self-abnegation, interposes a gulf between religion and the affairs of the world, between things natural and supernatural. It abjures family life, art, science, amusement, trade and commerce, and all things that should experience a quickening, and at the same time elevating, power from contact with the Gospel. The compulsory rule of celibacy stigmatized the divine institution of marriage, and cast reproach upon the dearest domestic relations of fatherhood, motherhood and childhood, always looking upon such relations as belonging to an inferior condition of sanctity and religion. Conscience, which is the faculty of deciding between right and wrong, was at that time placed entirely in the keeping of the priest.

Now the Reformation reversed all this, and set new estimates and forces at work; and in such a period of overturning and unsettlement moral relations sometimes meet with reverses. It is not to be set down to the discredit of the newly introduced principles that they did not at once overcome all moral abuses, which were inevitable when men were once more relieved from that spirit of implicit faith and unquestioning obedience to ecclesiastical authority that was destructive of all individuality. The admissions of disappointment on the part of some of the reformers were the confessions of men, for the most part, who were disheartened because the movement they had espoused did not at once effect sweeping and incontrovertible reforms in all directions. It has been said that "oftentimes it is the friends of a movement or an institution who are its most exacting critics." They expect more from it than has been accomplished or could reasonably have been looked for.

The sixteenth century was a time in which we might expect an increase of immorality. In extirpating false ideals in religion, the individual found himself in a process of liberation from the power of those feudal and ecclesiastical bonds which had been so strong, but which for generations had been gradually diminishing. The individual man was in process of emancipation and enlargement, and oftentimes these made for license as well as liberty. In such a time of revived individualism and spiritual upheaval, when human affairs are agitated by the introduction of new and tempestuous forces, the pendulum frequently swings to the other extreme, loosing forces of lawlessness and unrighteousness, with the effect of a relaxation of public morals.

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After all that may be said, the question is simply this: "When the principles of the Reformation came into active operation did they not exert a beneficial influence over morals?" That they did exert such an influence is made manifest by the history of the new principles, and by any comparison that may be instituted between countries dominated by those principles with those dominated by the principles of the old faith and church order. The religious and moral rejuvenation of persons, as well as of nations and the Church, was the real aim of that movement. That this design was in great measure accomplished is abundantly manifest in the history of the past four hundred years, during which many abuses perilous to good morals have been done away with, and many domestic and public virtues called into being. Many lovely traits of humanity, much of bravery and exaltation of mind, enthusiasm for truth and right, have been developed side by side with human passions, and in victory over them. Even cloisters which have been abolished as useless have been replaced by beneficent institutions and humane associations.

History verifies in a multitude of ways the statement of Pfleiderer in his "The Development of Christianity." In referring to Luther he says: "But the founder of the Protestant minister's home, the loving father of the family, the host who joked gaily with his guests, released the Protestant world from the unnaturalness of Catholic monasticism and from ascetic hatred of the world. He became the creator of the Protestant morality, in that he freed the temporal, moral life in family and vocation, in state and society, from the Catholic blemish of unholiness, and reinstated them in their dignities and rights as God willed. As Goethe says: 'Through Luther we have recovered the courage to stand on God's earth with a firm foot and to feel ourselves God-given human natures.'" Thus the Reformation was an ethical as well as an intellectual revolt against medievalism. It rejected the moral ideal that had maintained for hundreds of years, and set up another in its place. That ideal had, as we have seen, been ascetic. The monastic was the highest expression of a good life. Celibacy was more conducive to holiness than marriage, and virginity than chastity. It was a reversal of the divine order indicated in man's creation and nature. The road to perfection lay through a multitude of prescriptions for the subjugation of the flesh. Piety was to find its expression in long fasts,

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scourgings, coarse and painful clothing, sleeping on a hard and uncomfortable bed, and frequent prayer vigils through the hours of the night. But this expression of the moral life, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, had completely broken down. It produced some saints after that particular type of saintliness, but a fearful mass, also, of deliberate licentiousness, appalling degeneracy and monastic scandals that were frequent and grievous.

The Reformation inherited the sins of that kind of an age. It arose, in part, out of the dissolution of morals in which the medieval type of Christianity had ended, and with which it had more or less successfully to cope. As crowning all, it is sufficient to say in its behalf that the new movement headed by Luther wrought a vast emancipation of the conscience from ecclestiastical tyranny, not only, but that it imparted an immense moral energy to the human mind throughout the Europe of that and succeeding times.

III

The spiritual awakening of the sixteenth century was almost as much a revival of education as a revival of religion. That movement was, as we have seen, an insurrection against the absolute power of the spiritual order—a great endeavor to liberate the human understanding, and a vast effort in behalf of freedom for the human mind. Accordingly, we discover in this movement almost as much of an upheaval in the sphere of the intellect as in that of the spirit. Prior to the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century most of the education was abstract and theoretical. It was, for the most part, a work of memory and the dogmatic disputation of ancient texts, with Aristotle as the chief master and great authority. Before the invention of printing books were few in number, and what there were, were largely in the hands of the clergy. Latin was the language of the Church, as it is yet today, and also the language of most of the books, which were in consequence unintelligible to the mass of men. For this reason education was religious rather than secular, the pupils, for the most part, being those who were in preparation for the priesthood. The emphasis in the beliefs of the age was disproportionate, being placed upon things supernatural rather than upon things natural, on theology rather than on science, toward which there was a pronounced spirit of hostility. Truth

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was to be accepted on the authority of the Church, rather than as the result of individual research. It was a period of intellectual stagnation, during which learning was neglected.

Of course, the Renaissance—the arousing of Christendom by means of the revival of Greek learning after the fall of Constantinople—did much to quicken intellectual activity, which was helped, also, by that group of significant events—the discovery of America, the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus and the invention of printing. There had come, along with the Reformation in religion, a general atmosphere favoring the right of the individual to think and speak for himself, and a consequent quickening of intellectual activity and education. From the very beginning the spirit of Protestantism favored universal education. It was a necessity created by the new principles. If the right of private judgment is guaranteed, and the lay Christian is to read and interpret the Scriptures and to take part in the administration of the affairs of the Church, he dare not, for the sake of his own soul and the great interests involved, remain an illiterate blockhead. Knowledge, intellectual balance and enlightenment are necessary adjuncts of the Protestant system, and soon after the inauguration of Luther's work, accordingly, emphasis was placed upon the various aspects of the training of childhood. The weight of personal responsibility for the culture of his own intellectual and spiritual nature, which Protestantism in a large sense imposes upon each individual, makes the training of the mind something of a matter of universal concern. This is no doubt one of the underlying reasons why in Protestant, as contrasted with Roman Catholic countries, so much more has been done for the popular instruction of all the people.

And more than this, the free circulation and popular use of the Bible in the language of the people, which is a feature of the religious and intellectual life of Protestant lands, has proved to be an instrument of intellectual as well as religious improvement, producing effects which have been of immeasurable value. The popular use of the sacred Scriptures has always exerted an influence on the popular mind and heart and conscience which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Aside from its use as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and as man's guide to heaven, the study of its biography, history, poetry, ethics and as a rule of faith, has afforded a mental discipline of a high order. It has

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stimulated that breadth and refinement of intellect found in no land untouched by its influence, and which no agency ever yet employed by the Church of Rome has been able to produce. It is one of the most gratifying and striking results of the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century that the same influences which promoted so much the growth of national language and literature, also did so much to open the gates of knowledge to the people by fostering education and schools. In Italy and the rest of the south of Europe the influence of the Renaissance was aristocratic and æsthetic, the prestige of the Hellenic ideas having an almost heathenizing effect on the Church. Among the Teutonic peoples of the north it was different, the reaction assuming a democratic type, the people crying out against the profligacy of the priests and the abuses of the Church, the revival of learning at once forming an alliance with the reformation of religion.

The Bible having been made accessible to the people in both theory and in fact by means of Luther's principles and translation, the next problem was that of instructing them so that they might be able to understand it; and accordingly Luther's thoughts were promptly turned toward education and its relation to state as well as Church. The platform of education which he formulated was one of the very first of the new era. The plan reflected some of the limitations of the age, but was far in advance of anything contemporary. In this matter, as in others, Luther became the master spirit at Wittenberg, and with him Melanchthon was in full accord. The chief of the reformers has been rightly regarded as "the father and founder of popular education." He himself declared that if he were not a preacher he would choose to be a schoolmaster, and to him, at least in part, the noble calling of the teacher owes the dignity which belongs to it and the exalted estimate placed upon it. His appeal for the establishment of schools has been pronounced "the most important educational treatise ever written." In 1524 he wrote his address to the aldermen of all the German cities in behalf of Christian schools. He declares that "for the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the home, society needs accomplished and well-trained men and women. Such men are to come from boys and such women from girls." He lays great stress on the languages, calling them "the scabbard in which the

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Word of God is sheathed, the casket in which this jewel is enshrined, the cask in which this wine is kept, the chamber in which this food is stored." One of the first results of Luther's visitation of the churches was the founding of something like a universal common school system for all Germany. The education of boys and girls—not merely those from the upper and burgher classes, but of the whole people—was an end for which he untiringly strived. His primary concern was for the spiritual emancipation of his countrymen, but he at once discerns that for the spread, acceptance and permanent influence of the new views they must be proclaimed and defended by Gospel preachers and enlightened and godly rulers. These, he saw, could never be secured without the aid of schools, and for their acceptance and practice among the common people educational uplift was an essential factor. In his appeal of 1520 to the "German nobility," he proposed that a number of the useless convents be restored to their primary use, which was the education of boys and girls. His correspondence is full of the expressed desire to see good and sound education spreading throughout Germany. "Remember," says he, in one of his striking epigrams, "the devil much prefers blockheads and drones." He pleaded with all the earnestness of a Christian and patriot for a minimum of education for every child, and showed, also, how good high schools for girls as well as boys can be established by using many needless ecclesiastical foundations for that purpose.

Much that he said on this subject has a modern tone in it, and is an anticipation of much that now maintains. He believed that the state should not only support and control the school system, but that it should likewise make attendance at such schools compulsory. "In my judgment," says he, "there is no outward offense that in the sight of God so heavily burdens the world and deserves such heavy chastisement as the neglect to educate children. * * * Your children are not so entirely your own that you can withhold them from God. He will have justice, and they are more His than yours. For the sake of the Church we must have and maintain Christian schools. Young pupils and students are the seed and source of the Church. When schools prosper the Church remains righteous and her doctrine pure. There is nothing more necessary than to educate men who are to succeed us and govern. If we were dead, whence should come

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our successors, if not from the school?" "I maintain that civil authorities are under obligation to compel the people to send their children to school." "Wherever the Government sees a promising boy, let him be sent to school. If the father is poor, let the child be aided with the property of the Church. The rich should make bequests to such objects." "The welfare of a city does not consist alone in great treasures, firm walls, beautiful houses and abundant munitions of war; indeed, where all these are found, and reckless fools come into power, the city sustains the greatest injury. But the highest welfare, safety and honor of a city consists in able, learned, wise and cultivated citizens who can secure, preserve and utilize every treasure and advantage." Melanchthon was accustomed to say, "every good theologian and interpreter of the heavenly doctrine must be first a linguist, then a dialectician and finally a witness."

In harmony with such educational views, Protestantism created new universities and reorganized old ones, so that the present state of higher education as well as that of the more popular order is due to the Protestant spirit. "Protestant Germany," it has been truly said, "is still building on the educational foundations laid by Melanchthon more than three hundred and fifty years ago," while there is much in the spirit of the Church of Rome that adds force to a declaration of Treitschke, made upon the basis of his own personal experience at the University of Freiburg: "It is impossible to speak of academic liberty in an institution controlled by the Roman Church." That Church insists, by means of the confessional, on superintending the lives and secrets of all ranks and conditions of men, women and children. With a similar educational comprehension she insists on educating the young and the old, and that training of the mind, in its primary, intermediate and higher departments, must all be committed to the recognized officials of the Church. The theological and pedagogical conceptions of Rome are not conducive to the free investigation of truth for its own sake and on the assumption that truth is one, and that all truth is catholic and should be sought after for itself alone.

The other reformers, with scarcely an exception, exerted themselves in behalf of the schools as nurseries of religion and virtue, realizing, as they seemed to do, that a real and permanent reform must spring from the people. Zwingli, Calvin and Knox, in their

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respective countries, had an interest in the schools equaled only by their interest in religion. These men, with the Wittenberg reformers, anticipated by the space of three hundred years our modern law of compulsory school attendance, their teaching, too, clearly favoring a gradual emancipation of secular education, especially in the higher schools, from too much sectarian control. Thus it is obvious that the best educational influences and systems and all the provisions for intellectual culture among the most enlightened peoples of the earth were created by the men raised up of God as the leaders in the great Reformation movement. In forceful language the ex-president of Harvard University writes of the origin of that intellectual freedom manifested (sometimes in exaggerated forms, it must be said) in that land in which the Reformation had its origin. "No thinking," says he, "has been so wide, so deep, so unfettered, so free as German thinking. Two great doctrines which had sprung from the German Protestant Reformation had been developed by Germans from seed they planted in Germany. The first was the doctrine of universal education, developed from the Protestant conception of individual responsibility; and the second was the great doctrine of civil liberty—liberty in industries, in society, in government, liberty with order, under law. This academic freedom meant to the Germans emancipation from tradition and prejudice as well as from authority, whether governmental or ecclesiastical. The Teutonic peoples set higher value on truth in speech, thought and action than any other people. They love truth; they seek it; they woo it. America is more indebted to Germany than to any other nation, because the range of German research has been wider than any other nation."

Thus, again, do we see that the Lutheran movement was not only an uprising of religious convictions, a demand that each man should himself look up to the eternal, realizing his personal responsibility and claiming without intervention the divine forgiveness and grace, but it was also the beginning of a great era of popular enlightenment. The Renaissance was intellectual and artistic, a means of culture for but the few; the Reformation was religious and popular in all of its aspects and worked out results. When Luther gave the Bible to the people in their own language along with the principles of the new movement which he had inaugurated, and demanded that every man should have

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the faculty of reading them given to him, he awoke a thirst for knowledge in the people which very soon took shape in the form of popular education and popular power. In the Middle Ages the ecclesiastical schools were designed chiefly for candidates for the priesthood. The parochial schools were intended to fit the young for Church membership. The burgher schools were intended for the artisan and commercial classes of the cities, while knightly education was training for chivalry. Thus the laboring and poorer classes of the people were left to toil on in ignorance and want, remaining always in a dependent and servile condition, their lives being unillumined and uncompensated by any kind of intellectual pleasures. But the Reformation swept away many of the pedagogical follies of the monks, the unreal philosophy of education, and the sophistries prevalent on this as on other subjects. Erasmus laughed to scorn the absurdities which had been provided as the mental aliment of the preceding centuries. But the darkness passed away, not so much because men mocked at the darkness, but because a real and true light had arisen to dispel that darkness with the true and inexhaustible "Light of the World."

Thus in the important sphere of education has the Reformation in religion shown itself to be of immense value to human progress, breaking the fetters of the past and giving the course of human development a new direction. Well might our great historian Bancroft say in words that have been oft quoted, "We boast of our common schools. Calvin was the father of popular education, the inventor of the free system of schools." What was true of Calvin was even in a larger sense true of Luther, for Calvin was but eight years of age when Luther nailed up his theses, and the great Genevan reformer and systematizer constantly in his career expressed his indebtedness to and dependence on the more popular leader at Wittenberg.

IV

The pulpit has been not only the chief instrument in the spread of the message of salvation, but a great factor in civilization. It has exercised in the past and still continues to exercise, after all deductions have been made, a wide influence not only upon the minds and hearts of countless individuals, but also upon social,

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civil and industrial life as well. Preaching is one of the forces which has contributed much to the building of nations and the culture of great and influential peoples.

One of the most valuable results of the Reformation was its influence on this important factor in the life of the Church and the revival of apostolic Christianity. To this feature of the new movement, more, perhaps, than to any other, did it owe its strength and influence. By means of preaching Luther and his contemporaries instructed, persuaded and fired the people with enthusiasm for pure religion and aroused them to revolt against the abuses of the Church, and by means of the same agency animated them in their break from the domination of Rome.

During the medieval period there was not such a dearth of preaching as has been sometimes represented by writers not always fair minded in estimating the value of all the forces at work in that era. Yet good preachers, even when most numerous in that age, were the exceptions to the rule. In general the clergy did not preach. In the darkest hour of that time there had never entirely failed men who had the gifts to preach and fidelity in the use of their gifts, but the Reformation brought with it as one of its adjuncts, formidable and popular, a great outburst of preaching such as had not been since the close of the apostolic age of the Church. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the pulpit of the Latin Church may be accurately described as having passed into such a state of decadence that preaching as a Church institution and agency had almost become non-existent. The forces of decline were, for the most part, in the ascendant. Toward the close of the thirteenth century the great representatives of the scholastic type of preaching had passed away. They were succeeded by a class of imitators who made the use of that method ridiculous. Of their work it has been said: "The wearisome divisions, the tedious refinements, the useless distinctions and vapid subtleties made up only a galvanized corpse, or a dancing skeleton as in some puppet show, instead of a live and vigorous body." It may be recalled that in his "Praise of Folly" Erasmus satirizes this style of preaching and illustrates the degeneracy with which it had been smitten. He tells how that, in the first place, the preacher would begin with an invocation borrowed from the poets, then would have an exordium of some far-fetched and extravagant nature drawn from

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the River Nile, or Bel and the dragon, or signs of the zodiac, or squaring the circle, or from the elements of grammar, or forced etymologics and the forms of words, all artificial and pedantic to a high degree. The third stage would be that, which, in the old rhetoric was called "narration," or the "statement of the case," and here the text of Scripture would be given or slightly alluded to. The fourth part—the main part of the discourse—would introduce almost a new person, for here our scholastic becomes a mighty theologian and propounds the most wonderful theological subtleties, touching on things found in neither heaven nor earth, and to tickle the ears of the hearers, would adduce the great doctors, the "subtle," the "irrefragable," the "seraphic" and the like; and then would come syllogisms and corollaries and all sorts of scholastic fooleries. Finally, there would be the fifth act, in which the preachers show the greatest art by bringing as application and illustration some fable or legend—the more marvelous and absurd the better—which they proceed to interpret "allegorically, tropologically and anagogically." This caustic description of Erasmus is not overdone in its portrayal of a time when ardent logicians went to absurd lengths in hair-splitting and frivolous disputation.

Throughout the whole of the medieval period there are many indications that preaching had declined to the level of the burlesque, the sensational and the pedantic. It is incredible what irreverence, absurdity and even indecency were perpetrated in the name of the pulpit. "Even some of the better preachers," it has been said, "men with really serious aims and personally of excellent character, were not free from such faults, and in the hands of less able and serious men, it became a shame and a disgrace, which no amount of special pleading can justify, and the bad taste of the age can only palliate." Much of the preaching was of the grotesque and pedantic order. In an Easter sermon Gabriel Barletta, by far the most famous Italian preacher of the fifteenth century, next to Savonarola, of whom it was said, "if one doesn't know how to preach like Barletta he doesn't know how to preach at all," discoursed thus: "After His resurrection the Lord was looking for a messenger to carry the good news to His mother. A number offered themselves. Adam said let me go, because I was the cause of evil. No, you won't do because you are too fond of figs and might stop in the road. Abel said,

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let me go. No, you might meet Cain, and he would kill you. Then Noah would undertake the business. No, you drink too freely. John the Baptist couldn't go because he wore hairy clothes, and the penitent robber was rejected because his legs were broken, and more of the same order. In one of his sermons this same famous preacher tells this story: "A certain priest in celebrating the mass observed a woman who freely wept and seemed much moved as he intoned the service. The service being ended, the priest asked the woman the cause of her emotion, when she told him that it was his voice, which reminded her so tenderly of her recently deceased donkey." That a man of real talent, and usually a man of serious aims, should have indulged in such trifling and irreverence is a fair indication of the stage of degeneracy reached by preaching for a long period in the history of the pulpit. Of the orderly explanation and enforcement of the Word of God there was none in this kind of homiletic trifling and pedantry. Even in the sermons of a man like Gregory the Great, who attached much importance to preaching, and left a book on the subject, may be encountered exegesis of the most extravagant order. He sometimes found not merely three, but as many as seven senses in the same text of Scripture—senses historical, moral, spiritual, mystical, analogic, anagogic, and so on through the various orders of meaning. He dealt, too, with such questions as why the angel at the grave of Christ sat on the right hand instead of the left, and what was the significance of the one hundred and fifty-three fishes caught by Peter. This was the period, too, when all sorts of homiletical helps abounded. Much predigested food of this order was provided for customers then, as there are customers now, for that kind of goods. The vast apparatus of this species that was constructed in that period in the history of the puplit is another evidence of the prostration of the work of preaching, and of the absence of concern on the part of the Church to remedy the fault. Such brain-saving devices were plentiful, some of the more serious of which might have been legitimate and useful if wisely used, and when they were not perverted into snares for the weak and temptation to the lazy. The happy, and certainly enticing, title to such as were attracted to that class of wares, of one such contribution to homiletical literature was this—"Sleep Well Sermons." In a brief introduction, suggestive of mental tranquillity, this is said:

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"Here, happily, begin the Sunday sermons with expositions of the Gospels through this year, quite well known and useful to all priests, pastors and chaplains, which are also called by the other title of Sleep Well, or, Sleep Without Care, for this reason, that without much study they may be appropriated and preached to the people." One outline will serve as a specimen of the skill displayed by the benevolently disposed author of the sleep easy method of help for the hard pressed homiletician. The text is Mark 6:48, "The wind was contrary to them," and this is the plan of treatment: "There are four spiritual winds which are contrary to us and move on the sea of this world: (1) the east wind blows when a man reflects on the sorrowful condition in which he entered this world; (2) the west wind blows when he reflects on bitter death; (3) the south wind, when he thinks of eternity; (4) the north wind, when he thinks of the terrors of the last judgment."

Such was the character of most of the preaching in a period when the doctrines of the Church had become corrupted, when the interpretation of the Word of God had become strained, allegorically and otherwise bad; a time when ecclesiastical legends and tales abounded in great variety, and pedantic and scholastic excesses and ludicrous refinements were widely prevalent. If men were to be saved by the foolishness of preaching a new note must once more be heard and all this reversed, and that demand for preaching that had all along come from the people rather than the Church must once more be heeded.

Sacerdotalism is not conducive to good preaching. The medieval Church had thrust the sacraments, with the theory of their mechanical efficacy, into the foreground and relegated preaching to the friars. Even most of the popes reserved themselves for official benedictions and sacramental grace. For centuries before the Reformation this priestly conception of the ministry was in the ascendant and preaching in a state of decline. To save men by the externalism of the one was much easier than to bring the appeal of the Gospel to the understanding, hearts and consciences of men by means of the preached Word. It is an easy thing to make a priest, but a prophet is sent of God. From its very beginning, and in harmony with its genius, Protestantism has been a preaching religion, and during its entire history, and in harmony with its genius, it has assembled the people together to

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hear the Word rightly preached and to properly observe the sacraments. From its beginnings in the earth the open Bible has been its textbook, while its saving facts and doctrine of redemption have been pressed home upon the people by men called of God and set apart by the laying on of hands, and always with salutary and uplifting influences. One of the finest results of the Reformation was the re-instatement of preaching. It was at once a revival of biblical preaching, as contrasted with the recital of fabulous stories about saints and martyrs; of controversial preaching directed against the sinuous errors and practical evils of the times; and of the joyous proclamation of the doctrines of divine grace and justification by faith alone. "The resolution then accomplished in the cultus was deeper and more extensive than any changes in organization," says Prof. Allen in "Christian Institutions." "The accretions of religious symbolism from the fifth century, together with the philosophy which inspired them, had lost their meaning and their attraction."

From the beginning of his reformatory work Luther displayed his rare gifts as a preacher, and to the prosecution of that work he brought a tireless devotion and diligence. In the history of the Christian pulpit the chief of the reformers has always been assigned by unbiased judgment the place of a primate. As a preacher he stands in the front rank of those, who, by means of the ministry of God's Word, have moulded the characters and destinies of men. Among all his other duties and achievements as a scholar, theologian, a writer and an unfaltering leader, he was first of all and chiefly a great preacher, who created in this important phase of the religious history of his time a new epoch. In this work we marvel at the fruitfulness of his mind and the number of sermons preached by him. For years he filled every Sunday the pulpit in the old Stadt-Kirche, that still stands in the old town square at Wittenberg, besides conducting regular Sunday services with the monks and in later years with his family, his "Hausgemeinde," as he called it, and which included all the guests and servants about the place. When away from home he was called upon continually to expound the Scriptures. He was heard with eagerness and profit by the people always, as they listened to a preacher who knew that the first merit in a sermon was that it could be understood. During the troubles created by Carlstadt he preached at Orlamünde at a time when the whole

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population was in the fields harvesting, but who left their work and assembled in the Church to hear a preacher, who, no matter what was the text, was always sure to get around in his sermon again to that great doctrine of grace which he had finally got hold of after sore conflict in the Erfurt Monastery—the doctrine of saving merit made over once for all to every believer in Christ, the doctrine that faith is not a mere belief in propositions, but a trust in, and a personal fellowship with, a crucified Lord. At Zwickau, whither he had gone shortly after returning from the Wartburg in order to counteract the influence of the heavenly prophets, an immense assembly of people came together to hear him. He preached in the use of the vigorous mother tongue of his people, which he had done so much to create, from a window in the city hall to over twenty-five thousand people, who crowded the market place of the town, and a little later he addressed an audience that filled the castle court.

As a leader in the restoration of scriptural preaching, Luther was eminent in a combination of excellent qualities. He had in a rare degree that commanding fulness of being which is of such immense service to the preacher. His love for humanity, his fine natural gifts and character, his strong intellect and imagination, his happy temperament, combined with courage and honesty, his learning and knowledge of the Bible and theology, his subordination of rhetoric to the great purpose served by preaching, his sturdy straight-forwardness, added to his spiritual power in the experience of divine grace and his overwhelming earnestness of conviction that he had and must proclaim the Gospel of God, present a combination of factors that could not fail to make of him one of the greatest preachers in all time, and a chosen instrument in the reinstatement of the function of Christian preaching to its rightful place in the Christian Church. He believed, and therefore he spoke out of the fulness of his experience and convictions, out of his sense of duty to God and his fellowmen, and out of love to both, and without the fear of man before his eyes.

The late Dr. Dale, the greatest theological preacher of his day in England—preaching for forty-five years in one pulpit, which he made famous—in his "Laws for Common Life" pays a great tribute to the Reformer as a teacher sent of God and qualified to lead the people back once more to a new estimate of the greatness and dignity of the Christian preacher's place and office. Of

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him Dr. Dale says: "He had a fiery and passionate hatred of falsehood and of sin; a dauntless courage in the assertion of the claims of truth and righteousness. He had a boundless faith and a boundless joy in God. His joy was of a masculine kind and made him stronger for his work. His faith was of a masculine kind and relieved him from worrying doubts and fears about his soul's affairs. He had his gloomy times, his conflicts with principalities and powers in dismal and solitary places; but he had no morbid dreams about the sanctity of misery, nor did he suppose that the ever-blessed God finds any satisfaction in the self-inflicted sufferings of his children. His massive face and robust form were the outward and visible signs of the vigor and massiveness of his moral and religious character. He was a man and did not try to be anything else. God made him a man; what was he that he should quarrel with God's work? He had flesh and blood; he could not help it. He ate heartily and enjoyed seeing his friends at dinner. He married a wife and loved her; and he loved God none the less. He liked music and songs as well as preaching and sermons. He could laugh as well as preach. He had a genial humor as well as deep devotedness. He was a brave man, strong and resolute, with abounding life of all kinds; a saint of a type with which for many evil centuries Christendom had been unfamiliar."

V

It has sometimes been affirmed, or at least assumed, that toleration and indifferentism are synonymous, or at least correlated, terms, by which it always seems to be meant that those whose faith is of the unambiguous and unhesitating order are sure to persecute dissentients from their views. If men of this order have the means at hand their attitude, it is assumed, will be that of intolerance toward such as maintain other views than those held by them, and that they will use repressive measures even to the extent of persecution. On the other hand, it has been assumed that doubt, especially in the sphere of religion, has been conducive to breadth, candor and toleration. This assumption is the one chief defect in Hartpole Lecky's otherwise valuable work on "Rationalism in Europe," and the same unhistorical assumption is not entirely absent from the writings of Mr. Froude. There are some modern writers who are such ardent and thor-

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ough-going advocates of toleration in general, that they have gone so far as to say that no "exclusive" religion, such, for example, as Roman Catholicism, ought to be tolerated, because in the name of consistency it is committed to the suppression of all dissent from its officially declared views whenever it has the power. The theory herein advocated is a fine example of the intolerance and inconsistency of liberalism; and evidence that skepticism in religion is always biased and interested, and that it springs out of a desire, conscious or unconscious, as the case may be, to overthrow that which the general mind of mankind has found to be true and upon which it rests with confidence as a basis of truth. It is a mistake to assume that the resort to persecuting methods has always been found to be based on religious principles, or that it is always true that the religions which are commonly regarded as the most dogmatic and exclusive have always been the most intolerant or the most persecuting in either principle or practice. Taking the word toleration, then, as not meaning indifference to truth, in no proper sense is there any ground, either of abstract reasoning or historical evidence, for alleging that it is incompatible with genuine religious beliefs unambiguously stated and uncompromisingly advocated. As a matter of fact, the chief forms of intolerance and persecution recorded in history have sprung much more from social and political than from distinctively religious motives. Instead of intolerance being a religious duty, as some of the Reformers and the Church of Rome taught, the principle of toleration comes to us commended by all the best and the earliest traditions of the Christian Church, as well as by unmistakable affirmations of Luther, in a period of almost universal intolerance.

One of the inestimable blessings of the Reformation was the demand for the liberty of every man to serve God according to the dictates of his own conscience. That movement, in one of its most important aspects, was a great act of emancipation from spiritual tyranny and a vindication of the sacred rights of conscience in matters of religious belief. That was one of the leading issues in the Diet of Worms in 1521, when Luther made his famous stand in what has been regarded as one of the sublimest contests in behalf of the right of every man to think for himself in the grave concerns of the human soul; the assertion of that liberty of conscience, which, as Froude has said, made "the ap-

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pearance of Luther before the Diet on this occasion one of the finest—perhaps it is the very finest—scenes in human history." That right was asserted by all of the reformers, but not practiced by all of them. But notwithstanding the inconsistency that sometimes marked the conduct of some of the very men who claimed and exercised the right of protest in the name of conscience and of revolt against the established ecclesiasticism of the day, the Reformation was a grand act of emancipation from spiritual tyranny, and an effectual vindication of the sacred rights of conscience in matters of religious belief. The early documents of that movement are full of brilliant declarations of the rights of conscience. It could hardly have been otherwise, for only by an appeal to such rights could the leaders of that movement justify their own attitude towards a religious system which, until the time came that they assailed it, had commanded the assent of the nations of Europe.

In this important contribution of the movement Luther occupied the foremost position among the reformers. He clearly foresaw the far-reaching effects that were involved in his protest against Rome, and during the stormy period of protest, discussion and defiance extending from 1517 to 1521, he was the fearless champion of the right of men to follow their own consciences and think for themselves in the great concerns of religion. He has furnished some of the noblest utterances against coercion in matters of conscience—declarations which affirm almost every essential feature of the modern theory on the subject. In 1529, in his "Sermon on Excommunication," distinguishing between inward and outward church communion, he declared that of the first none can be deprived "by any man, be he bishop or pope, yea, not by angels or by any creature, but only by God Himself." He draws a sharp line between the temporal power, which he declares to be confined to the body and worldly goods, and that spiritual government which belongs with God only. He defended the rights of conscience against kings and princes as strongly as against popes and other ecclesiastics. In 1523, writing in his book on "Temporal Authority and How Far Obedience Is Due to It," he says: "Worldly rule has laws which do not extend further than our body and goods, and what is external upon earth, for over souls God can and will suffer no one to rule, save Himself alone. Beloved, we are not baptized into the name of kings,

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princes or nobles, but into the name of Christ and God only; we are not called after kings and princes or mobs; we are called Christians. No one can or ought to command the soul, except him who can show it the way to heaven. But that can no man do, but God only. Therefore, in matters which concern the salvation of souls, nothing but God's Word ought to be taught or received." Again he says, "But the thoughts and mind of man can be opened to no one but God; wherefore, it is futile and impossible to command or by force to compel anyone to believe so or so." "There wants another grip for that; force avails nothing." * * * "It is at a man's own risk what he believes, and he must see for himself that he believes rightly. For just as little as another can go for me to heaven or hell, can he for me believe or disbelieve; and just as little as he can open or shut heaven or hell for me, can he drive me to belief or unbelief * * * for belief is a free work; thereto can no man be compelled."

In his book on "Secular Authority" he deals with the limitations of the civil values in respect to religious matters, denying to them any part in the suppression of heresy—a remarkable position to be taken when but very few men had escaped the ideas that had come down as a heritage from the preceding ages, and at a time when most men looked upon the state as the guardian of both tables of the law and expected it to punish religious as well as civil wrong-doing. There were times when the Reformer called upon the Government to use strong measures against men who were in revolt against the civil authorities; times also when he urged such authorities to crush out some of the troublesome sects that were subverting the laws of the land and disturbing their neighbors by their blasphemies and unbridled fanaticism. But even in such instances there went forth, also, a plea for mercy and exemption from great hardship. "Because," he said, "no one can be forced to believe by such means, since he is still able to believe exactly as he pleases. Only teaching and blasphemy should be forbidden, since by such methods he would rob God and Christians of Word and doctrine, turning to their own ill the protection and worldly advantage that their society affords him." In 1528 he wrote concerning the Anabaptists, whom he opposed with all the energy of his strong nature: "I do not approve it, and truly regret that such miserable people are being wretchedly murdered, burned and brutally destroyed. Each one

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should be allowed to believe what he will. If he holds a false belief he is sufficiently punished by the eternal fires of hell. Why should temporal torments be added so long as he only errs in faith, and does not also foment rebellion or otherwise withstand authorities? Dear God, how does it happen that one errs and falls into the snare of the devil? He should be restrained and opposed by the Scriptures and God's Word." Of Luther's attitude on this subject our American historian, Bancroft, has said: "Luther repelled the use of violence in religion; he protested against propagating reforms by persecution, and with a wise moderation he maintained the sublime doctrine of freedom of conscience." He knew that the most that force could do was to produce an external conformity. "For the miserable, blind people do not see what a quite futile and impossible thing they undertake. For however straitly they command, however stoutly they rage, they cannot bring people further than to follow them with mouth and hand; the heart they cannot compel, should they even tear at it. For true is the proverb, 'thoughts are toll-free.'" "I have little love for condemnations to death," he further says. "Look at the Jews and the papists. The Mosaic law commanded that false prophets should be slain, and they ended by killing almost none but blameless and holy prophets. Heresy is a spiritual thing, which cannot be hewn down with an axe, or burned with any fire, or drowned with any water. Over the souls of men God can and will have no one rule save Himself alone. We should overcome heretics with books, not with fire. If there were any skill in overcoming heretics with fire, the executioner would be the most learned doctor in the world." In the "Babylonian Captivity" of 1520, he writes: "I cry aloud in behalf of liberty of conscience," while again he implored his prince "not to imbrue his hands in the blood of those new prophets of Zwickau." In 1523 he protested against the cruel treatment of the Jews, as if they were dogs and not human beings, advising kindness and charity as the best means of converting them. One of the charges set forth against him in the bull of excommunication, which served to rend asunder western Christendom, was that he had taught that "to burn heretics is against the will of God." The Reformer's view on this subject, about which there has been much misunderstanding and the dissemination of much misrepresentation, could not be stated in more unmistakable language

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than this: "I will preach, I will talk in private, I will write, but I will not constrain anyone, for faith is a voluntary act. Let no heretic be restricted with force. We have a right to speak, but none whatever to compel. If I resort to force what do I gain? Cramped uniformity and hypocrisy. But there will be no hearty sincerity, no faith, no love."

But in spite of these and other lofty ideas of toleration advocated so unmistakably by Luther, and which, it will be observed, cover almost the whole theoretical ground of religious liberty and the rights of conscience, some of the most melancholy chapters in some periods of Protestant history have been written in contradiction of these ideas. In the long march of human progress nothing has been of slower growth than that tolerance contemplated in the views of Luther, even he himself in some instances, and in a moderate degree, feeling obliged to depart from them. In this, as in other matters, the position of the leader of the Reformation movement was in many respects difficult and painful. Not always was he able to confine Protestantism to its own protest. Much that has been claimed, especially in this country, by older historical writers in behalf of Puritanism has no basis in fact. In England in the seventeenth century all parties when persecuted advocated liberty of conscience, and all parties when in power exercised intolerance, but in different degrees. It mattered not who was in power, Independent, Presbyterian or Anglican, fire and-sword, fines, pillories, slitting noses, cropping of ears and cheek burnings, depositions and disabilities, made it very unpleasant for those who elected to dissent. Neither Cromwell, Cartwright or Laud were shining exponents of Luther's views. For a period of twenty years, from 1640 to 1660, Puritanism ruled England in an earnest and excited period of that country's history. It saved the rights of the people in a conflict against the oppression of tyrannical rulers, but it punished intolerance with intolerance, enforcing Puritan in place of Episcopal uniformity and with a measure of cruelty not surpassed by the hated Anglican. The Puritan colonies in this country, it is true, were democratic, but so far from recognizing liberty of conscience, they explicitly rejected it as implying a godless skepticism. Neither Anglicanism or Puritanism in the England of the seventeenth century had learned by suffering this principle, inherent in the very genius of Protestantism.

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The early Puritan and Episcopalian colonists in America had imbibed the views upon this subject that prevailed beyond the sea. Tenaciously they clung to their false ideals until by sheer force of circumstances they were compelled reluctantly to give them up. True, the Puritans sought and obtained freedom to worship God, but they never dreamed of extending the same liberty to others. What they wanted was a state in which their own peculiar religious views should be the law for all. They were in search of a land where they could be and do what the Anglican Church was and did in England. In churchmen the Puritan condemned the requirement that others should conform to Episcopal views. In themselves it seemed a just and holy desire to force on others Puritan views of life and duty, because—so they reasoned—they stood for truth, and the Church of England for error. The great truths of the right of private judgment, and that spiritual truth must not and cannot be enforced by physical power, never seemed to find lodgment in the Puritan mind. The fact that it never was supposed that toleration was to be extended to those who were not Puritans is one of the things that help to explain the glaring inconsistency between some of Cromwell's utterances and much of his conduct. But he had to work with a people whose co-operation was indispensable to him, and who thought that liberty of conscience was a heinous sin. One fanatic said that if the devil had his choice whether the hierarchy and liturgy should be established in the kingdom or toleration granted, the devil would choose toleration. Another said that to let men serve God according to their own consciences was to cast out one devil that seven more might enter.

The teaching of leading Puritans in Massachusetts on religious liberty are all in one line. Mr. Cobb, the author of "The Rise of Religious Liberty in America," quoting from "Force and Felt," writes: "To the early leaders of Massachusetts, especially the religious leaders, toleration of dissent from the established order of religious worship was as sedition in the state and sin against God."

John Cotton declared that "it was toleration that made the world anti-Christian." "Polipiety," or variety of sects, says Nathaniel Wood, "is the greatest impiety in the world," and he further declares: "He that is willing to tolerate an unsound opinion, that his own may be tolerated, will, for a need, hang God's Bible

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at the devil's girdle." So late as 1673, the President of Harvard College said in an election sermon: "I look upon unbounded toleration as the first-born of all abominations." In 1635 Roger Williams, pastor of the Salem Church, was banished because he had denounced the existing theocracy and the interference of magistrates with religious matters, while in 1659 the observance of Christmas was made a punishable offence.

It is due the Puritan and his memory, however, to say in this connection that the same spirit of intolerance was displayed in Virginia and New York by the Episcopalians and the Dutch.

To this question of Puritanism, as to many other questions, there were two sides, one of serious estimate and another of burlesque and travesty. And time tries both sides. The Puritan was narrow, and his narrowness can be easily explained. The weakness of the Puritan was the weakness of his age. In his essay on William Laud, Dean Hodges says that "sometimes the saints hated the saints. There were good men on both sides, as there are heroes on both sides in all wars. But it was hard for the good men who were on the one side to believe that the good men on the other side were good; they always seemed to them to be the enemies of right." In a time of which this could be affirmed the Puritan lived and wrought, in spite of his canting intolerance, for some fundamental principles that were deeply rooted in the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century. In this was his real contribution to free government.

But notwithstanding the recurrence of such contradictions even in Protestantism itself, there has been such a constant reversion to the real and underlying principles of the movement, that they have overmastered the deplorable contradictions, until the spirit of toleration is one of the worked-out results of the great movement of the sixteenth century in all lands dominated by its principles. In isolated instances the principle of toleration inherent in genuine Protestantism has, no doubt, been disallowed; but the principle has so triumphed that intolerance has disappeared from among the most enlightened people of the earth, and that never to be reinstated.

The primary fact that man is free before God, and should be untrammeled in his access to God, could not be so abstracted as to have no kind of application to a man's civil and social relations. When Luther projected the thought into modern civiliza-

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tion that the Bible, interpreted by private judgment and not by papal authority, should be the supreme standard of faith and practice among men; that the Church derived its authority from the Bible and not the Bible from the Church; then he uttered the thoughts which have given us our free institutions, free thinking, free press, free schools, free Bible, free Church, and freedom of scientific inquiry, and all the best expressions of the civilization in the benefits of which it is our privilege to live. By virtue of its being a return to the teachings of Christ the Reformation accomplished even more than it contemplated. Mr. Lecky has said that "toleration is created by skepticism, and belong to a skeptical age." Post-Reformation history disproves the assertion. Where religion is made a matter of conscience, and not of the magistrate, toleration is necessary, and, in harmony with this historical fact, whenever Protestantism has attempted to coerce conscience by punishing religious dissent with sword and fagot it has been illogical and inconsistent with its own genius and principles.

When Luther, on the threshold of the Reformation, declared that "it is against the Holy Ghost that heretics should be burned," and when later Leo X, following the teaching of both Augustine and Aquinas, denounced that position of Luther in the bull of excommunication, it was the spirit of medievalism clashing with the spirit of modern times in a struggle that was not to cease until the victory of the new principle had been fully assured in the tolerance of modern times.

VI

The Reformation under Luther, as we have seen, began with the discovery that salvation is a free gift of God to men through Jesus Christ, and that this gift is appropriated directly by faith, and not by means of the intervention of any human mediator. He placed the emphasis in theology on the atonement, and the churches which bear the impress of his teaching throughout the world to this day are monuments as notable as the ecumenical creeds to the invincible resistance of a child of God to any kind of sacerdotalism, which, in effect, stands between the sinful and yet trustful soul and the Saviour through Whom it is reconciled to God, and in consequence brought into a state of spiritual tranquillity. He revolted, as we have seen, against

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the imposition of penance and payments, or the interposition of any priestly caste or order with its accompaniments of ritual and sacrifice, and once more led men back to the great truth that the Christian soul could never find real and abiding spiritual rest until, in the urgency of its needs and the claims of its dignity, it could come at once with its own voice and its own plea into the Father's house. Luther, in a large sense, became the true successor of Paul and Augustine. The reform associated with his name and work was occupied primarily with the bestowment of the divine life; with the question, how can the blessed gift of the forgiveness of sin be transferred as a matter of fact and personal experience to the erring and evil souls of men? These were primary considerations, as we have observed, in the great revival of the sixteenth century. It wrought for the spiritual emancipation of men, making all equal before God. But in its further development it has wrought also for temporal emancipation, the making of all men equal with each other, the restoration to all of an equal share in the conduct of human affairs, the right of the individual to the enjoyment of life, liberty and happiness simply and solely as a human being on terms of equality with all other persons under the regulation of righteousness.

Never before has the genesis of democracy and the real meaning and significance of the word and its justification and possibilities been the subjects of as much interest as today. Much of the discussion called out by the quadri-centennial celebration of the Reformation, in this and other lands, was addressed to an examination of the sources of freedom in all of its aspects and applications. In such discussions there has been a striking agreement among qualified writers regarding the relation of the great religious awakening of the sixteenth century to the subject. As we have seen, the animating principle at the heart of that great movement was an honest desire for a reformation of the Church which had so sadly fallen away from the Gospel of the Lord and His apostles. To this end the efforts of all the reformers were primarily directed. But associated with these efforts at what was a distinctly religious reformation, there were certain social, political and economic results which were not directly sought, but which have, in the years that have succeeded, profoundly affected civilization in all of its aspects. In most re-

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spects the modern world dates from the posting of Luther's theses, which act was a real declaration of independence more than two centuries and a half before that made by our fathers at Philadelphia in 1776. The movement inaugurated by that act was the first of that series of progressive democratic revolutions which transformed the medieval into the modern world. The beating heart of that great movement was the assertion of the rights of the individual conscience against the usurpations and encroachments of a great organized expression of ecclestiastical tyranny. Its method then was an appeal to the people against the privileges and assumptions of a hierarchy aspiring to world dominion in matters both secular and religious. It brought about the emancipation of the intellect, and that led inevitably to liberty of conscience. Freedom of religious belief, it very soon became manifest, involved to a large degree political independence and the just claim of the people to a larger share in the exercise of their civil rights. The Lutheran revolt very soon changed the aspect of affairs and the attitude of the Church of Rome. Before 1517 independence of thought and speech could be condoned as a matter of but small consequence, very much like the license which an absolute sovereign can allow a contented people in a time of peace. But after the outbreak in Germany had gathered headway, the Church perceived that it was facing a new enemy. It was virtually obliged to declare a state of siege and invoke martial law for the suppression of mental insubordination. Luther was pre-eminently a religious character, and his great fundamental work was accomplished in the sphere of religion, but his influence reached far beyond the frontiers of that which was distinctly religious in both teaching and action. The world today is a freer world to live in and to work in, a world of larger opportunity and more confident hope, in consequence of Luther's following his own conscience and his insistence upon the right of other men to do the same thing. He was the unconscious herald of the democracy of today. It is for this reason that not only the theologian, but also the political and literary historian, interpret the Reformation as one of the greatest blessings ever bestowed upon mankind.

On the 31st of October, 1517, Luther nailed his theses on the church door at Wittenberg, thereby challenging the clergy, the university and the pope to say why Christian people should not

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reassert their scriptural freedom. That was the opening of a movement that emancipated the more virile races of Europe from subjection to what had come to be an intolerable ecclesiastical bondage. That was the first line of the great battle of the sixteenth century, and civil freedom soon followed in the wake of the newly-proclaimed soul freedom. Absolution in the Church was the outer line of defence, behind which absolution in the state felt itself safe. Ecclesiastical autocracy was the chief adjunct of civil autocracy. That line of defence once broken down, popular expressions of government in Church and state were certain to ensue. On either side of royalty in Europe at that time stood the bishop, with his prelatical pretensions, and nearer to the crown than either castle, knight or peasant.

In arranging, on one occasion, for a great Luther pageant a German agnostic of distinction in his country was asked how he came to take so much interest in honoring a man who had translated the Bible into the language of his people. To the inquiry the agnostic replied: "I do not care a fig for Luther's religion. It is the political revolution that he inaugurated that we liberals celebrate." He thereby expressed a totally inadequate view of the great Reformation movement. Luther was primarily the champion of that freedom which the Gospel asserts to be the right of every child of God, and which, in the final analysis, is the only foundation of all expressions of civil freedom.

VII

It would be unhistorical to affirm that there were no expressions of the democratic spirit prior to the Lutheran Reformation. The seeds of democracy are manifest in certain facts and teachings that are discoverable in the Middle Ages. But these expressions of what we regard as one of the permanent factors in civilization were largely individual, isolated and uninfluential. Accordingly, if we are searching for the genesis of democracy, for the fundamental principles which have made it possible, we must get back further than some interpreters of the subject are wont to go. We must get back of the conflict at Runnymede between the barons of England and King John; back of the great charter of rights, and of the long parliament; back of Hampden, Pym and Milton; back of the Puritan conflict and the English common-

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wealth; back of the migration of Pilgrim and Puritan to America; back of the Lutheran Reformation in the sixteenth century. We must get back in that search for origins even to the vitalizing teachings of the New Testament. John Stuart Mill once said to the husband of George Eliot: "A great crisis in the history of liberty seems to me to have come at the cross of Jesus of Nazareth." This brilliant writer on liberty, who knew so much about so many subjects, Christianity excepted, seemed to discern in this grand fact in human history the meeting place of the great forces of the past and the greater forces of the future. Democracy received its inspiration out of the teachings and death of our Lord. It was born out of the thought that before God, and as the subject of a divinely provided and gracious redemption, all men were absolutely equal. Because in that period there were men who believed in the Lord and were striving at least to apprehend the significance of his teachings, are we able to discern in the Middle Ages some expressions of the now widely dominant principle of democracy.

The course of events in the Roman Empire had been toward the continual aggrandizement of the imperial class and power. The representative despotism of Augustus was at last succeeded by the oriental despotism of Diocletian. The senate sank more and more into a powerless assembly of imperial nominees, and the spirit of Roman freedom wholly passed away with stoicism. Christianity early in its history assumed the character of a strong, disciplinary institution, which proved itself to be a good training school for the nations in their infancy and youth, when the magisterial factor was needed. Hence we have the legalistic, monarchical development growing out of the unscriptural claims of the medieval hierarchy, which for a thousand years affected for good or evil both the Church and the world. It ruled the spirits of men as absolutely as the old Rome ruled their temporal fortunes. From the fifth century until the Reformation the history of the Church is the history of the power of the papacy, of the decline of that power, and of numerous indications of popular revolt against its supreme sway. But notwithstanding the unscriptural claims in Church organization and the monarchical absolutism of the papacy, in proportion as the nations were trained in the school of the Church they came more and more to assert their independence of the hierarchy, and to develop a national spirit and a

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literature in their own language. Starting with the assertion of man's moral liberty and responsibility, the very postulates of many of her doctrines, the Church poured into the nations, crushed and degraded by imperialism, a new vitality, while by her self-made constitution, her elected rulers, her deliberative councils, she did much, although at times without so intending, to keep alive the free democratic traditions of an earlier time which Cæsarism had almost strangled, and did much to train the barbarian tribes which entered her fold in the principles and exercise of that liberty that subsequently led to revolt and reformation. It proclaimed loudly the doctrine of a career for talent in distinction from the entailed career of feudalism without talent, and the Church was the only institution in which a poor boy had a free chance. Her religious houses, too, were so many little republics scattered up and down Europe, while her councils were the only deliberative assemblies of the time.

Pope Gregory VII was certainly one of the most autocratic of the papal chieftains, as he was unquestionably the ablest and one of the most constructive, but his election was something of a forecast of popular government. The funeral rites of Alexander II, his predecessor, who had died only a day before, were being conducted in the Church of St. John Lateran, where Hildebrand, as archdeacon, was taking his appointed post in the solemn rites, when suddenly there was a great multitude of the Roman clergy and people in the church and without who cried, "Hildebrand shall be our pope." That strong-willed leader and dictator, in a large sense, of the papacy shrank from the immense responsibility of the task to which he was being called by the people. In vain did he rush to the pulpit and endeavor to calm the tumult. The members of the sacred college hastily consulted together, and with one accord confirmed the popular choice. This once poor boy, the son of a carpenter, who in his pontificate achieved the enfranchisement of the papacy from imperial control, was in sympathy with the people, and maintained the cause of the poor against the violence of a military aristocracy. Pope after pope and council after council had fulminated against simony and incontinence; but what was peculiar and of significance in the conduct of Gregory was his appeal to the faithful at large, his making the people executors of his reformatory papal decrees. His appeal involved severity and hardship. By

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his mandate married priests were required instantly to renounce their wives or to renounce the priesthood, while married bishops who disobeyed were to be degraded from office. But in all of his inexorable demands Gregory's appeal was made to the popular mind. Many of the great ecclesiastics of the time had come from the ranks of the people, and men for the most part true to their democratic instincts were often found to be the inflexible supporters of right against might, and by their attitude in the affairs of the Church had shown how that a representative system might be introduced into the state.

The significance of the famous controversy between Philip the Fair of France and Pope Boniface VIII, consists in this, that it was the first of a series of national protests which never ceased until the nations of western Europe had accomplished their emancipation from external influence, whether ecclesiastical or imperial, and the modern world was born, in which the nations stand in their freedom and independence before God, answerable only to Him and the people.

There were also many utterances of the time ominously democratic in tone. Foremost among the threatening and somewhat revolutionary productions of the first half of the fourteenth century, for example, was a book entitled "Defensor Pacis." It had for its author a physician of Padua known as Marsilio. No later hand has traced back with finer historic tact the mundane conditions which first made possible and then favored the growth of hierarchical ideas and monarchical assumptions, and none has searched out with a more pitiless logic the weak places in the armor of both. Marsilio's book was a philosophical examination of the principles of government and of the nature and limits of sacerdotal power. Its democratic tendency was evident in its demonstration that the exposition of the law of Christianity rests not with the pope nor any other priest, but with a general and representative council. It rejected the papal political pretensions, and asserted that the pope, even, had no right to attempt to coerce human thinking. In its view of Church government it advocated rule by representation, subjecting to a criticism often most acute and damaging much that had hitherto been assumed as historically certain. Neander called this work of Marsilio "an epoch-making" book. It was certainly far in advance of the age. It was, indeed, an anticipation of popular government, and in

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some considerable degree of the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution. Even in the darkest time of the old medieval Cæsarism the idea of the supremacy of law as the guarantee of popular and personal freedom was frequently asserting itself.

Let us remember that it was June, 1215, three hundred and two years before Luther's theses, that the barons of England, at Runnymede, too feeble to resist individually, finally formed an association to resist in common, thereby forcing John Lackland, beaten by the King of France, to swear a solemn oath that in the future he would respect all the rights of the freemen in his kingdom, thereby granting to them significant and far-reaching concessions.

These assertions of the democratic principle were not triumphant in that age, but they were there, an anticipation of the Protestant revolt under Luther, of the thirty years' war, of the English revolution, the settlement of the American continent, for the most part by Protestant peoples, and the establishment here of the world's largest example of popular government.

VIII

But after all that may be said about such isolated and unorganized assertions and manifestations of the spirit of democracy, it was reserved for the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century to assert and co-ordinate those principles which have made the expression of that spirit effective in organized religious and civic life. The religious revolt in which Protestantism was born has for the first time in the history of mankind made democracy a dominating world force. Involving as it does in the most momentous of all concerns the assertion of the rights of the individual, we should expect that Protestantism would be favorable to liberty. During its long history it has fostered a habit of mind which is incompatible with a patient endurance of tyranny at the hands of any civil power, or of unquestioning docility and obedience to any officialism in the form of ecclesiastical superiors. Any expression of that form of Christian faith which constantly inspires a lively sense of personal rights can hardly fail to bring with it, eventually at least, a corresponding respect for the rights of others and a disposition to secure those rights in the forms of government and legislation.

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The splendid achievement in the religious sphere of winning back for men their freedom in Christ at once involved the demand for liberty in the political sphere. Prior to the days of the Reformation there was but little discussion in Europe regarding theories of government. The strong men usually made the laws and the weak ones acquiesced. We have noted how that, in the social, scientific and literary spheres, the way had been prepared for the economic, religious and political revolutions of the sixteenth and later centuries. But when these various forces had been liberated and set to working in proper alliance, the dominion of that traditionalism which had engrafted itself upon the medieval Church, with its restrictive and always reactionary influences, was thrown off, and a new age was at hand, marked not only by religious reform, but by the formation of independent national states. One thing had been made certain, viz., that the era of universal temporal and spiritual sovereignty was outgrown, that the centripetal forces were no longer capable of holding those of the centrifugal order in check. The old centralization of the medieval period, largely as a consequence of the restoration of the democracy of the saints, had given way to the decentralization of the new era now at hand.

To the religious reformation that had come about in the Church was due the assertion and spread of those principles which lie at the foundation of a true doctrine of human rights, a true conception of liberty, and of a true definition of the scope and limits of civil authority. Human rights, according to the principles enunciated by Luther, are not to be regarded as the mere products of the naturalistic evolution of the instincts of self-preservation and self-protection, nor as the results of some imaginary social contract, nor as the arbitrary bestowment of the divine will. They are more deeply rooted in principles that are religious, essential and everlasting—principles that, if they were necessary in the past for the attainment of civil liberty, are now necessary to its preservation.

The elements of democracy are discernible in the assertion of the autonomy of the Church, the right of Christian people to govern themselves, under the sole headship of Christ, and also in the proclamation of the parity of the clergy against the distinctions of the prelatical hierarchy and the participation of the laity in the government and discipline of the Church.

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Luther struck a powerful blow for democracy, little as he himself at the time realized its full consequences, when, in his address to the nobility in 1520, he broke down a wall that separated clergy and laity, the spiritual and the temporal estates, and declared that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and that there is no difference among them save of office only. In that famous "primary work" he demolished the wall behind which arrogant and presuming ecclesiastics had taken shelter, and which no one hitherto had dared to storm. The nobles were told that they were equally priests with popes and bishops, and equally responsible as Christians for the welfare and direction of the Church. This, in some degree, explains how it could happen that, when Luther came before the imperial diet in April, 1521, the German princes refused simply to execute the papal judgment, as they were required to do by the canon law, insisting upon looking into the matter for themselves; and further, why that when the imperial ban had been added to that of his holiness, the pope, it was not and could not be enforced in many of the German states. The spirit of popular revolt was rising to assert itself, and the princes were becoming aware of their own independent strength and capacity for asserting their own rights. Through all the writings of Luther there runs a steady current of thought, which becomes more and more defined as we approach the decisive year of 1526, and on to 1529, when at Speyer the elector of Saxony and other princes, together with fourteen cities, made their memorable protest to the effect that the doctrine of the priesthood of believers should find expression in the outward organization of the Church; that all true Christians have inalienable and indefeasible rights and duties which they share equally, and that in the body of Christian people is to be found the source of all authority and organization.

When men came to judge for themselves, and act independently in Church affairs, they were no longer likely to manifest a slavish spirit in the political sphere. That religious liberty, which is fundamentally the right of the individual Christian to his own interpretation of what the Holy Scriptures teach as to faith and duty, was a great factor from the hour of its reinstatement in not only religious, but civil liberty also.

Thus the Reformation heritage is a heritage of freedom, perhaps its most easily and most commonly observed feature. On

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its very forefront is written the right of private judgment—the right to think for one's self in religion, and to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience. The rights of men in civil government, it very soon became clear in the sixteenth century, were inherent in the great movement headed by Luther, and have been developed since that time. At the problem of how to make men free religiously, politically and industrially we are still working; and liberty to think in religion now, as in earlier times, leads the way to liberty to think in all other matters. Prof. Lavelaye, of the University at Liege, has declared, after long special study given to his theme: "The principle of political and religious freedom, and that of the sovereignty of the people, issue logically from the Reformation. It has everywhere been its natural fruit. The Reformation everywhere incited to energetic demands for natural rights—freedom, toleration, equality and popular sovereignty."

Guizot offers as an adequate characterization of the Reformation this statement: "It was an insurrection of the human mind against absolute power in the spiritual order." His subsequent analysis makes important distinctions, which vindicate its aims and results in the main, but which fail to single out the fulcrum of its whole spiritual leverage on society. That fulcrum is discovered in the statement of the great Scotch scholar and apologist, the late Dr. James Orr, a thinker of deeper penetration into the underlying causes of modern progress than Guizot. Dr. Orr says: "The sinner, penitent for his sins, has the right of free access to God without intervention of priest, Church, sacrament or anything else to stand between him and his Maker, and God freely forgives and accepts everyone laying hold on His promise in the Gospel, without works, satisfaction or merits of his own, but solely on the ground of Christ's atoning death and perfect righteousness, to which faith cleaves as the only ground of its confidence."

Thus it has come to pass that a reinstatement among the peoples of Europe of the evangelical conception of the doctrine of salvation—that which was primarily religious in its character—has had important bearings, not only on religious life and doctrines, but also on the constitutional history of great peoples. Religious convictions in the sixteenth century have worked out vast civic results among the best peoples of the earth. Borgeand

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has shown that modern democracy is the child of the Reformation, that the two hammers used to break the authority of the medieval Church were freedom of inquiry and the priesthood of all believers; that these two principles contained in them the germs of the political revolution which in our time has come to pass. These truths made the community the visible center of the Church, and the people the principal factor in social life.

Matters had moved forward with great rapidity from the days when Huss and Wiclif had been the exponents of the rising spirit of revolt. In the last half of the fourteenth century Wiclif had held that the Church had no right to interfere in secular matters, but only in such matters as involved morals and the dogmas of the Church. He advanced, step by step, until he was prepared to repudiate transubstantiation, to the declaration that papal indulgences were futile, and to the affirmation that the Bible was all-sufficient as a rule of faith and practice.

The pope, too, encountered difficulties of various kinds with his own children. In 1521, as an example of his troubles, he named Henry VIII, of England, the "Defender of the Faith," and soon after this much-married and honored son of the Church proceeded to divorce one wife in defiance of the "Holy Father" of Christendom, because he was stubbornly set upon wedding a younger and more attractive woman. Francis I, another son of the Church, declared to be "the most Christian king," makes an alliance with the detested and troublesome Turk, while yet another, Charles V, said to be "the most Catholic of monarchs," sacks Rome and imprisons the pope. And when, in 1521, Luther stood before the "Holy Roman Empire" at the Diet of Worms, that historic scene which was one of the most impressive in the annals of mankind, great contrasts were presented—that, for example, between solidarity and individualism, that between authority and liberty, and that between an arrogant ecclesiasticism and the true religion taught by our Lord and His apostles.

Some changes had been brought about since, in humble submission to Rome's claim to temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty, Henry II, one of the greatest of English monarchs, did penance at the tomb of Becket, and there submitted meekly to a flogging administered by monks; and from the day when we read of a German emperor humbly holding the stirrup for Pope Gregory VII to mount his horse, while the same renowned and self-willed

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successor of Peter and proclaimed "vicar of Christ" compelled Henry IV, of Germany, to wait for three days, while standing in the Alpine snows and clad only in the scant garments of a penitent, before being admitted to the castle of Canossa to ask for absolution. The struggle for freedom was long and eventful from the day that the theses were posted on the Wittenberg church door, and attended with receding tides of victory and defeat. But with the peace of Westphalia in 1648 Protestantism and its inherent principles of progress at last had triumphed over ultramontanism, stagnation and repression. In consequence of the long and memorable war of thirty years, the conflicting claims and legal rights of Catholic royalists and Protestant principles were at last adjusted. Religious liberty, with all that it involved for the future freedom of mankind, had at last gained legal recognition and was placed upon impregnable foundations. It drew a final line of demarcation between the two views of the Christian religion which divided Europe. Germany had been decimated, the losses of the civic population being almost incredible. The moral decadence was appalling. Physically, the land could have suffered no more. But one inestimable advantage had been achieved, whatever else had been lost—Protestantism, with all that ensued for Germany from the fact, had been saved. The peace of Westphalia, which marked the close of the first great era in the history of Protestantism, had the force of a definite proclamation that the religious reformation and revolution of the sixteenth century was to hold its ground. Europe, at the end of that disastrous struggle to maintain the right of the new views to live, had subscribed to a justification of Protestantism.

IX

But the principles and expressions of freedom noted above made their progress in the face of the principles and the hostile attitude of the papacy. The habit of mind which the Roman Catholic training tends to produce leads to servility on the part of the subject toward the ruler, and, especially where an alliance is maintained between the Church and the state, between the sovereign and the priest. The papal theory is based upon the false assumption that men's minds are to be subject to clerical supremacy, and the clerical power of the medieval Church was

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never the sincere advocate of liberty of conscience. What the great popes of the Middle Ages aimed at was not liberty of conscience for the people, but a vast imperial dominion for themselves and the clergy, a dominion having very little that was religious in it, but always using religion as the instrument of its power. The medieval theory of the Church and the empire was based upon the supposition that the emperor and all his subjects were Christians and members of the one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. The theory of the relation of the one to the other may be stated after the interpretation given by James Bryce, the author of the valuable historical monograph called "The Holy Roman Empire." "Christendom forms one great whole, in which there are two chief functionaries, the pope and the emperor, each in his own way its head. Both of these powers are instituted by God, the one being ordained to rule over men's bodily and the other over their spiritual interests. Both spring from the old Roman Empire, which, having become Christian, was at once an empire and a church. In one sense the Church enfolds the empire; in another, the empire enfolds the Church. The two forms must support each other, the one being necessary to the other. The emperor is to sanction the pope's election, and the pope crowns the emperor. The emperor is to protect the pope and the clergy and the courts of the Church, and these are all to support the authority of the emperor over his subjects." This was the theory, which, while it did not wholly correspond to the fact, had much in it, considered as an ideal, that was sound.

But the Church early began to encroach upon the sphere of the secular power and soon altogether ceased to be a spiritual power. It became an earthly kingdom upholding itself by spirtual sanctions. In this secularizing program it came to be further held that all temporal jurisprudence was bound to frame its decrees with deference to the superior ecclesiastical power. Thus a vast ecclesiastical jurisdiction arose, the rival and often the master of the imperial and national jurisdictions, and by and by claiming to have supreme and autocratic authority over all things. Instead of the idealism of the "Holy Roman Empire," we have two rival temporal powers, each aspiring, though on different grounds, to universal dominion. In his controversy with Frederick II, Pope Innocent IV says that Christ has given to the pope not only the pontifical, but also the regal power, having committed to St.

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Peter and his successors the reins both of the earthly and the heavenly empire, as is sufficiently shown by the plurality of the keys; while at the jubilee of the year 1300 Boniface VIII, clad in imperial robes, seated on a throne, and crowned with the diadem, laying his hand on his half-drawn sword, said to the pilgrims: "Ego, Ego Sum Imperator." Thus at last the vicar of Christ, the successor of the fisherman Peter, had come to be the ruler of the world. The Church became more and more hierarchical in its organization. It recognized and jealously guarded a "spiritual order" of popes, cardinals and priests, in distinction from the "secular order" of kings, princes and peasants. All of the authority came down from above, and the laity had neither voice nor hand in the affairs of the Church. It was strictly a government by the priestly classes and one that was highly despotic in spirit. In Luther's day, in the period of this ecclesiastical imperialism, the citizen of the state had no kind of liberty in his religious faith and convictions. He was expected to believe as the state, under the superior direction of the pope, required him to believe. Thus only could he believe and not otherwise. In harmony with such unwarranted and unhallowed claims and assumptions, the Church of Rome always has been the natural ally and supporter of arbitrary principles of government. The prevailing sentiment, the instinctive feeling, in that Church, is that the body of the people are incapable of thinking for themselves in the great concerns of religion, and that to entrust them with such prerogatives as private judgment, freedom of conscience, freedom of faith, would at once imperil the stability of ecclesiastical control. In all such matters, the whole medieval history, even down to the time of the Reformation, is the history of the growth of despotic authority and of the centralization of power, always expressing itself in that worst form of bondage in the world—that which suppresses freedom of intellect, conscience and faith.

It is true that the Church of Rome has shown a remarkable capacity to accommodate itself to any of the various types of political society. Her doctors have at times preached an extreme theory of popular rights and sovereignty of the people. While the state is subordinate to the Church any form of government may be tolerated. That religious persecution has sometimes darkened the history of some forms of Protestantism, and that some of the leaders in the period of the Reformation failed

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sometimes to recognize distinctly the principle of liberty of conscience, must be admitted. That occasionally Protestants have favored despotism and that Roman Catholics sometimes have been known to advocate the sovereignty of the people, does not change the innermost nature and tendency of the two systems of Romanism and Protestantism. History abundantly verifies the proposition that Protestantism is favorable to civil and religious freedom, and thus promotes the attainment of the multiplied advantages which freedom brings in its train. Protestantism from its beginning has held to liberty as its center of gravity, while in Romanism that center has always been authority. The great spirits of Protestantism have never been content simply to protest without going on to affirm and confess. They have not only claimed the freedom to think for themselves, but the right to believe, to contend for and to formulate their beliefs in unambiguous confessions of faith. It is a simple fact of history that wherever the principles of the Reformation have been allowed to work themselves out to their logical conclusions, there has come freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of worship and of conscience. In lands that have been dominated by Rome it has not been so as long as the Church was permitted to dominate and maintain her influence and carry out her principles. In this day wherever statesmen of the Catholic faith in Catholic countries have favored free government they have been opposed by the Roman hierarchy, and wherever they have succeeded in establishing free institutions it has been in the face of the opposition of their ecclesiastical superiors. That is the natural outcome of the autocratic conception of the power of the papacy. History furnishes its own long commentary on how thoroughly the old hierarchy, which reaches from Leo the Great to Benedict XV, has made effective its repressive and autocratic principles.

The long and heroic endurance of the German people in the fearful struggle of the thirty years' war, the long and successful struggle for independence in the Netherlands, the conflict which established English liberty against the despotic influence of the House of Stuart, the establishment of the American republic, are events so intimately connected with Protestantism, and so dependent upon it, that they are not only indications of the true spirit and genius of the principles of the Reformation, but also show what fearful struggles were required to break the power of

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papal dominion and enable men to walk in that liberty which is the inalienable right of mankind—that liberty of conscience and worship which so late as the time of Pius IX, in an address to all bishops, has been branded as an error to be abhorred and shunned as the contagion of a pestilence.

Speaking of the contrasts between Catholicism and Protestantism, Luthardt declares that "the difference consists in opposite mental tendencies; and these again have their roots in opposite views of religion." "The opposite mental tendencies are often designated as authority and liberty. The former advocates legitimacy; the latter the rights of historical progress." There can be no religion without a Church. There can be no Church without a government. There can be no government without a sovereign power, which definitely and without appeal sets the limits to all controversy and debate, which defines the frontier beyond which liberty of opinion and the rights of the individual conscience may not pass. This is the mental attitude of the papal system. Popes may come and popes may go, but this attitude remains the same. The weapons of excommunication and interdict, once all powerful, are now largely rendered ineffective. The Roman thunderbolt, used with such autocratic brutality by Gregory VII, is now silenced, and never again shall any sovereign travel in humiliation to Canossa. In every modern nation the Roman Catholic Church is confronted with civil and political institutions and laws which she is powerless to assail and which she cannot sincerely accept. But her mental attitude goes on unchanged, the logical outcome of which always must be an absolute government, a hierarchy which oppresses the conscience, which is the hard and fast enemy of all free and spontaneous inspiration, the promulgator of outworn dogmas and unscriptural claims, and having for its official head a man who arrogates to himself the sovereign right to command the conscience, and in the doing of which he is assumed to be unerring. It is, accordingly, no matter of surprise to find a man such as Hartpole Lecky—a man far removed from Luthardt in his theological views—as he contemplates this unchanged mental attitude of the papacy, declaring that the Catholic Church cannot possibly harmonize with the new views of freedom, begotten by the spirit and teachings of the Reformation. "It is," says he, "contrary to her genius, to her traditions and to her teaching; resting upon the principle of authority, she instinctively

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assimilates with those forms of government that must foster habits of mind she inculcates. Intensely dogmatic in her teaching, she naturally endeavors to arrest by the hand of power the circulation of what she believes to be error, and she, therefore, allies herself with the political system under which alone such suppression is possible. Asserting as the very basis of her teaching the binding authority of the past, she cannot assent to political doctrines which are in fact a direct negation of the uniform teaching of the ancient Church."

This interpretation of such a qualified historian as Lecky is based upon a thorough knowledge of papal principles and their application in the affairs of the state. The doctrine that the theological system of the Church is to be received in the bulk and solely on the authority of the Church has never been conducive to popular aspirations of any kind among the people. Romanism has always sought, in harmony with its age-long principles, to shut out the modern world of thought from the spiritual life of the nations, and to bring back the pre-Reformation circle of ideas. The rigid unchangeableness of its principles and its stern adherance to them through all the stormy years of its history has at least this merit, that it has been imposing to both unbelievers and Protestants. It has always shown a remarkable flexibility of method, but at all times and in all places it acts according to the same unalterable maxims and magisterial principles.

Protestantism, however, on the other hand, in all of its true expressions has shown a natural bias toward liberty and democracy. Special circumstances have occasionally modified, but seldom or never altogether reversed, the tendencies of the fundamental principles of both Romanism and Protestantism. The principles embodied in the two systems have been the masterful influences in the production of types of civilization. In consequence of these benefits of the Reformation, the contrast between Catholic and Protestant civilization has been so evident that it has been the subject of frequent reflection. Where Rome has held undisputed sway most true are Macaulay's well-known and striking words, when in his History of England he draws his famous historic comparison, a verification of the memorable words of Albert I, upon his accession to the throne of England: "Entirely to the intellectual and moral forces does a nation owe the fruitfulness of its prosperity." Macaulay said: "The love-

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liest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor, while Protestant countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what, four hundred years ago they actually were, shall now compare the country around Rome with the country around Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment as to the tendency of papal domination. The descent of Spain, once the first among the monarchies, to the lowest depths of degradation; the elevation of Holland, in spite of many natural disadvantages, to a position such as no commonwealth so small has ever reached, teach the same lesson. Whoever passes in Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant principality, in Switzerland from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant canton, in Ireland from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant county, finds that he has passed from a lower to a higher grade of civilization. On the other side of the Atlantic the same law prevails. The Protestants of the United States have left far behind them the Roman Catholics of Mexico, Peru and Brazil. The Roman Catholics of lower Canada remain inert, while the whole continent around them is in a ferment with Protestant activity and enterprise. The French have doubtless shown an energy and intelligence which, even when misdirected, have justly entitled them to be called a great people. But this apparent exception, when examined, will be found to confirm the rule; for in no country that is called Roman Catholic has the Roman Catholic Church, during several generations, possessed so little authority as in France." In their habits, principles, hopes and the character of their peoples India and China are what they are as the result of paganism. Ireland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, the Central and South American states have become what they are largely because of the dominance of Romanism. It is hardly possible to conceive of England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and the states of North America dissociated from their Protestantism, which has made of these peoples the most progressive on the earth, the leaders among the nations in the promotion of the highest and noblest factors in civilization. The Reformation somehow did succeed in restoring

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a spirit that for centuries had been lost to the Church, and in consequence of that restoration gave a new tone and direction to civilization.

In his interesting work on the Reformation, in which he emphasizes as the greatest of all gifts the liberating spirit which that movement poured out over the world, Prof. Henry C. Vedder says: "The Reformation is important for us today, not so much for what is immediately accomplished, as for what it made possible. The new ideals which it offered have ever since ruled the world."

Interpretations might be multiplied almost indefinitely, and all in the same line, evidencing that throughout Christendom whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom and in the arts of life has been made in spite of the principles of the papacy, and as the direct results of the new principles of the freedom of conscience, liberty of private judgment, the sole authority of the Scriptures and the priesthood of all believers, contended for by Luther and containing logical implications which have led to far-reaching results not even anticipated by the greatest of the reformers. In the political as in the spiritual emancipation of Europe in the sixteenth century, Luther was the pioneer. He came teaching that "God has ordained two governments among the children of Adam—the reign of God under Christ, and the reign of the world under the civil magistrate, each with its own laws and rights. Over the soul God can and will allow no one to rule but Himself. Civil government is confined to external and civil affairs."

It is of this great declaration of emancipation that Dr. Philip Schaff says that, "It sounds almost like a prophetic anticipation of the American separation of Church and state," while the distinguished English preacher, Dr. W. J. Dawson, has affirmed that "The awakening of the democratic instinct in the religion of Europe came through Luther."

Thus has it come to pass that the mightiest force which makes for freedom is the soul in direct relationship with God. The Reformation found the Roman hierarchy between the soul and God, and hence its vast and complete domination of the world. From ruler to peasant, the subjection was well-nigh absolute. That great movement restored the rights of the soul to answer directly to God, and the independence of man from despotic power

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is found in that fact. Luther broke the fetters of that ecclesiasticism which had usurped all authority—social, religious and civil—and the era of modern freedom in its manifold aspects was inaugurated. How great a force the soul and its concerns were in this movement is set forth in a striking passage in Green's "History of the English People:" "The mighty strife of good and evil within the soul, which had overawed the imagination of dramatist and poet, became the one spiritual conception in the mind of the Puritan. To him religion, in its deepest and innermost sense, had to do, not with churches, but with the individual soul. It was each Christian man who held in his power the issues of life and death. It was in each individual conscience that the strife was waged between heaven and hell. And it was in the creation of such a temper as this that Puritanism gave its noblest gift to English politics, and a gift hardly less noble to society at large in its conception of equality. Their common calling, their common brotherhood in Christ, annihilated in the minds of the Puritans that overpowering sense of social distinctions which characterized the age of Elizabeth."

Thus out of the deepest springs of the soul in its personal and direct fellowship with, and accountability to God, have sprung those great conceptions of equality, brotherhood and liberty which constitute the very trinity of human freedom. Liberating men from spiritual bondage to Rome, and restoring them to the authority of the Scriptures, started forces to work that were fraught with vast consequences for all times and places.

X

The good fight waged for these victorious principles in the era of the Reformation is never to be dissociated from the genius of a particular people. Racial features of strength and assertiveness had much to do with the reception of those principles and their propagation and co-ordination. They made their way even in the face of strong and fanatical opposition with a group of nations, including the Germans, the Dutch, the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons, while their appeal to Latin and Slavonic peoples, for the most part, fell upon deaf ears. It is a fact of wide significance that the fundamental principles of the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century, and some implied features of

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the movement, at once showed strong natural affinities with the veracious Teutonic mind of that day, which very soon began to show its impatience with the lies and frauds so widely dominant when Luther was born in an humble Germanic home. The Teuton was industrious, honest and liberty-loving, and was possessed of a keen sense of justice and humanity that rendered him not well adapted to persuasion by physical force. Of this stock, it has been said by a leading Scotch thinker and theologian, that it is "naturally Protestant." "Partly by the very discipline of the Church," says a distinguished English writer, "the Germanic races arrived at moral independence and national consciousness, and so outgrew the kind of authority by which they had been trained." "With the growth of the sense of individual responsibility, a development of national individuality kept pace. Thence grew the conviction that no corporation could represent the whole of Christianity, with the result that before ever Protestantism came into existence, its problem was already set. It was the problem of finding room in religion for the autonomy of the individual and the autonomy of the state."

The Saxon blood was not friendly to foreign dictation. "The Latin races," says the late Dean Hulbert, of the University of Chicago, "seem to like to be tyrannized over, and to be trodden under foot, but the Teutonic peoples are made of better stuff." Such a mental attitude produced a growing respect for the rights of the individual, and the ampler room afforded for the unfolding of his powers and for realizing his aspirations. It gave rise to such ideals and achievements in the field of civil organization as would have been impossible under the dominance of any other attitude than that of the assertion of personal rights with respect to religion, the highest concern of man. The new views set forth by Luther at once fostered a habit of mind among the German people that was incompatible with a patient endurance of tyranny at the hands of the civil powers.

It was this mental attitude in the character of that people in Luther's day, let it be noted, which especially qualified them for taking the lead in the great work of the Reformation. Indeed, that movement could not have been made successful among any others of the contemporary peoples of Europe. The primary character of Luther's views entered the Teutonic man and made his thought anew. A serious and thinking people, who reasoned

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slowly, they loved freedom, and were not content to be longer cajoled with trifles, cheated by impositions, or subjected to oppression. It was from such a people as this that Luther sprang, and among which he set forth his evangelical principles and fought his great battles. The influences of the new movement very soon began to manifest themselves among the German people. There was a marked contrast between pre-Lutheran Germany and post-Lutheran Germany. In the former the rights and voice of the people were very limited in scope. With the beginning of the new religious movement a change set in. The people had sprung suddenly into an atmosphere of independence There will be temporary evil, as has been said, when a house is torn down, before the constructive work can be done upon the house that is to take its place. As we have shown at another place, the violations of law and order when the new liberty, among a liberty-loving people, was made an "occasion of the flesh," in outbreaks of both social and religious fanaticism, were no proper part of the reformatory movement. The turbulence of the agitator is a usual, if deplorable, adjunct of the breaking up of an old order and the attempt to introduce and maintain a new one. It was a departure from the real principle of the Reformation that produced Zwickau "prophets," Munzerites, and other disturbing factors among fanatics who were anxious to throw off the restraints of law, both human and divine.

But in the face of all such temporary excesses the great truth remains, that, as one consequence of men being invested with the privilege of thinking for themselves, the new movement, with all of its implied results, was invested with a momentum that was resistless. Post-Lutheran Germany had ascended to a higher plane, from which it was not to be dislodged by imperial mandates or papal excommunications.

The necessity for a change was urgent. The Germany in which the young son of old John Luther grew to manhood presented melancholy aspects, even though it was about to assume the leadership in a movement that was to divide the ages and cause history to move in new channels. But notwithstanding the importance of the movement that country was to foster and lead, the Germany in which the young Luther pursued his studies in the latter years of the fifteenth century was a pitiable land. From the middle of that century on it was moving forward to a

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crisis that, in its importance, can only be compared to the crusades and the French Revolution. The "Holy Roman Empire," which Voltaire had described as being neither "holy," nor "Roman," nor an "empire," had come to be scarcely more than a "barren ideality." It embraced but little territory beyond the confines of Germany, which was only a huge farm, from which the rulers, who might happen to be Englishmen or Spaniards, might reap revenues for settling their personal quarrels and fighting their little dynastic wars. The rulers of Germany were not the actual, national sovereigns of a united country such as were the rulers of France or England at that time, but were what have been called "the fictitious heads of a fictitious state." At that period the social condition of the land was even more chaotic than the political situation. If the political organization of the empire was weak, the internal administration was weaker still.

In addition to all this, it is impossible to exaggerate the deep and widespread discontent with the condition of the Church, which is so manifest in the writings of the early years of the sixteenth century. The whole of the people, from the rulers down to the humblest peasant, felt themselves unjustly used, and the subjects of base impostures. The clergy were denounced as both immoral and inefficient. The estimate in which this degenerate class was held is expressed by one devout writer, who declared that young men are considered good enough for priests to whom one would not entrust the care of a cow held in any kind of esteem for her worth. The grudge of the land against the papal court, as an example, found eloquent and significant expression in the verses of its great minnesinger, Walther Von der Vogelweide. Three hundred years before Luther's day he had declared the pope to be making merry over the stupid Germans, whom his holiness was systematically looting. "All their goods," the vicar of Christ is represented as saying, "will be mine; their silver is flowing into my far-away chest; their priests are living on poultry and wine, and leaving the silly laymen to fast." Similar sentiments may be found in German writers for many of the following generations. Then, too, there was widespread discontent with the financial administration of the Church. What affected the people more, even, than the personal character of the popes, or even the degeneracy of their own clergy nearer home, was the fact that the burden of taxation was appalling, and that

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the amounts required were becoming distressing impositions. Bishops had to pay thousands of guldens when they were confirmed in their positions, and some thousands more for the narrow neck-band that was the badge of their office. The annates to be paid by the lower clergy amounted regularly to half the income of the first year. To these were to be added the extra payments for special occasions, gifts that had to be distributed right and left, and continual levies for crusades that never did any crusading, except on the resources of a plain people. The pope, too, enjoyed the privilege of filling all the important benefices in Germany, and frequently appointed Italians, who drew the revenues without ever performing any of the duties of the office. Frequently a single person held several church offices. Early in the sixteenth century, as an example, the archbishop of Mayence was at the same time the archbishop of Magdeburg and the bishop of Halberstadt. But by and by the unlettered Germany of those days which preceded the revolt near at hand grew tired of all this. She came to realize that Rome, which for ages had held the conscience strings of her devout people, was holding, also, the purse strings; that the resources of her own contributors were growing thin that the land of Italy, beyond the Alps, might be crowned with the arts and sciences and filled with palaces crowded with creations of grace and color.

In Germany, accordingly, the land where, more than in any other, there was widespread discontent combined with a yearning for betterment, the conditions were such that Luther's appearance was hailed with delight among a prepared people, and whose influence throughout the nation left no class unaffected. The land was waiting for its redemption, anxiously looking for the man who was big enough and good enough to lead the people out from their papal bondage and inaugurate a new epoch in the history of mankind, by means of a reform in religion and a revolt against the gigantic despotism that had fastened itself on the Church and the state. The reformers, exuberant in the possession of unexpected liberty, and confident in the belief that the whole sacerdotal system would be speedily overthrown, were not content to carry on a merely defensive warfare at home, but were seeking allies everywhere, and were attacking the enemy in his strongholds. German patriotism rallied to the support of German piety in this good fight for deliverance from the yoke of the

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oppressor. The land that for centuries had stood at the right hand of the chair of St. Peter, ready to assail the unfaithful or to defend against the unbeliever, was waiting for the man who was qualified to place himself at the head of the larger and freer thinking of his time, and direct it into channels that would at once abandon and conserve—the man who could make his appeal not only in the name of religion, but also in that of public order and national independence and prosperity.

XI

In the progress of this attempt at interpreting the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century, much has been said about the personality of Luther and the primacy of his place and influence. Much, of course, in the nature of the case, would be expected in such a discussion about the place and commanding influence of one of the most masterful men in human history, to whom, under God, the world in our day owes so many of its blessings. So much of the whole social and political fabric of our time is, in large measure, the fruit of his life and work, and so much of our political liberty, and to a great extent the free institutions which we enjoy, are traceable to his work and teaching, that it is not surprising that men of widely divergent religious views and even contradictory principles should have so uniformly agreed in their interpretations of the place and influence of Luther. It will serve our purpose to fortify all that we have said by adducing here the testimony of some of the great interpreters of the men, the forces and the measures which have so largely entered into the advance of both Christianity and civilization. To advance and reform religion was the dominating motive of the reformer and leader of the great movement associated forever with his name. But great and good men have been glad in turn to rise in their places to recognize the vastness of his influence, not only in the sphere of religion, but in that of freedom and all other spheres of wholesome activity. These estimates of the Reformer all serve to confirm what Prof. Walker has said in his recent "History of the Christian Church." "He is one of the few men of whom it may be said that the history of the world was profoundly altered by his work."

"I beg," says John Calvin, the great systematizer in the field

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of reformed theology, "I beg that you may consider what a great man Luther is; with what gifts he has been endowed; with what power, with what steadfastness, with what learning, he has been fighting against the kingdom of anti-Christ, and for the propagation of the true doctrine of our salvation."

D'Aubigne, the distinguished reformed historian, pays him this tribute: "Luther was the first to proclaim the great principles of humanity and religious liberty. He was far beyond his own age, and even beyond many of the reformers, in toleration."

In his delightful volume entitled "The Continental Reformation," the distinguished Anglican scholar and historian, Dr. Alfred Plummer, declares that "Luther's influence on religious and political ideas, on literature, on social life, and on the map of Europe, has been enormous, and this influence has been won—largely without effort on his part—through his massive character; through his sincerity, earnestness, unselfishness; and, above all these, through his splendid courage. We may differ widely from some of his opinions, but we live in a world which is a wiser and better world because of Luther's work."

An American scholar, one of Luther's most interesting and sympathetic interpreters and biographers, Prof. Preserved Smith, says: "His career marks the beginning of the present epoch, for it is safe to say that every man in western Europe and in America is leading a different life today from what he would have led, and is another person altogether from what he would have been, had Martin Luther not lived. For the most important fact in modern history is undoubtedly the great schism of which he was the author, the consequences of which are still unfolding and will continue to unfold for many a century to come."

Such interpretations of the place and work of Luther have not been confined to such as have shared in, or even measurably shared in, his own robust theological views, for it is James Freeman Clarke, leader among the Unitarian forces of this country, who affirms that Luther "was the real author of liberty of thought, the giant founder of modern civilization, the restorer to our times of pure Christianity; a hero, growing more and more the mark of reverence through the succeeding generations."

Even the Roman Catholic historian Michelet says: "Luther has been the restorer of liberty, and if we exercise in all its plenitude at this day this highest privilege of human intelligence, it

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is to Luther we are indebted for it; to whom do I owe the power of publishing what I am even now writing, except to this liberator of modern thought?"

James Anthony Froude, the great historian, was an Englishman who knew much of the factors that have entered into the making of modern history. He has had much to say about Luther and his influence, expressing the comprehensive judgment that, but for the influence of his commanding personality, the whole world would be thinking differently now. "Luther," said Mr. Froude, "was one of the grandest men that ever lived on earth. Never was anyone more loyal to the light that was in him, braver, truer or wider-minded in the noblest sense of the word. The share of the work which fell to him Luther accomplished most perfectly." "The reformers were men of note and distinction, who played a great part for good or evil on the stage of the world. If we except the Apostles, no body of human beings ever printed so deep a mark into the organization of society, and if there be any value or meaning in history at all, the lives, the actions, the character of such men as these can be matters of indifference to none of us. No man is what he would have been if Martin Luther had not been born."

In all that he had to say of the Reformer and his work Froude was always in sympathy with the interpretation of Frederick the Great: "Had Luther done nothing else than liberate the princes and the people from the servile bondage under which the dominion of the Roman papacy held them, he would deserve to have a monument erected as the liberator of his country."

Writing in the *Nineteenth Century* for April, 1884, Principal John Tullock, who has been among the ablest interpreters of the whole group of sixteenth century reformers, says: "All modern Christian liberty may be said to be the outcome of the protest taken at Spires and Augsburg by the evangelical members of the German empire. That attitude of these Christian princes and others was again only possible in the light of the great struggle which had been maintained during the twelve previous years by one man. The Diet of Worms and Luther's memorable words there alone explain the subsequent diets at Spires and Augsburg. The courage of a single man as he faced, on that great occasion, the mailed chivalry of Germany—a pale and slight figure as yet without any of the brave rotundity of his later years—gave the

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courage which inspired the famous protest, and laid the foundation of all Christian and ecclesiastical liberties. The voice of God uttered itself in Luther, that the mass of lies which had become identified with medieval Christendom should no longer continue. The voice was heard in many lands, and there were many who arose to help the German monk, and carry forward the great work, but that Reformation became possible in England and Scotland as well as Germany, and that Protestantism after many struggles was able to receive a footing in Europe, was, owing in large part, as it has been said, 'to the intense personal conviction and contagious faith of one man—Martin Luther.' "

In the later years of its history England has had but few statesmen and historians the equal of James Bryce, viscount and former ambassador of his country at Washington. "The Reformation," says he, "erected the standard of civil as well as religious liberty. It was in its essence the assertion of the principle of individuality, that is to say, of true spiritual freedom. Hitherto the personal consciousness had been a faint and broken reflection of the universal; obedience had been held the first of religious duties, truth had been conceived as something external and positive, which the priesthood, who were its stewards, were to communicate to the passive laymen, and whose saving virtue lay not in being felt and known by him to be the truth, but in a purely formal and unreasoning acceptance."

In an address made in 1883 in the Academy of Music in New York, at the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Luther, another, and an American statesman, the Hon. John Jay, said: "No country has more reason than this republic to recall with joy the blessings Luther assisted to secure for the world, in emancipating thought and conscience, and impressing the stamp of Christianity upon modern civilization. Although America had not been discovered by Columbus when Luther was born, Luther's far-reaching influence, which today is felt from the Atlantic to the Pacific, helped to people our northern continent with the colonists who laid the foundation of its future liberties on the truths of the Bible."

In an address before the Massachusetts Historical Society, delivered on the four hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth, the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop said: "We come today to recognize Martin Luther as, beyond all other men, the instrument of God

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in giving the impulse by thought, word and act, to that world-wide movement which resulted not merely in the reformation of Europe, but in all that we Americans now enjoy, and all that we rejoice in being. Pilgrim and Puritan, Cavalier and Roundhead, Huguenot and Quaker, yes, and Roman Catholic also, consciously or unconsciously, all alike felt that impulse."

In his now famous patriotic address at Bunker Hill, June 17, 1843, Daniel Webster, great among the statesmen and orators of all lands, said: "The Reformation of Luther broke out, kindling up minds of men afresh, leading to new habits of thought, and awakening in individuals energies before unknown even to themselves. The religious controversies of this period changed society as well as religion; indeed, it would be easy to prove, if this occasion were proper for it, that they changed society to a considerable extent where they did not change the religion of the state. They changed man himself, in his modes of thought, consciousness of his own powers, and his desire of intellectual attainment. * * * This love of religious liberty drawing after it, or bringing along with it, as it always does, an ardent devotion to the principle of civil liberty also, was the powerful influence under which character was formed and men trained."

In full harmony with all that has been adduced, and much more that might be, from other than Lutherans, what has been said by later writers might be added almost without limit. It is all, we may say, in entire harmony with what has been affirmed (and very recently) by one of our distinguished university presidents, who, with his eye upon present needs as well as past achievements, said:

"America is peculiarly indebted to the Reformation, for that was the great crisis in the emancipation of the human spirit from the control of human authority. America needs today a fresh infusion of the temper of the Reformation, for that enfranchisement of the human spirit was accomplished through a clear and controlling recognition of God's presence and of His authority speaking through the conscience."

"It is often forgotten," says the late Prof. Thomas Lindsay, Scotch theologian and historian, who has written so much of Luther and the German Reformation, "that the sixteenth century, in which Luther was the most outstanding figure, saw the beginnings of our present social life in almost everything, from

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our way of looking at politics and our modes of trade to our underclothing."

The late Dr. Charles Briggs, conspicuous in his day as a somewhat negative theologian, but who, happily, in his later years returned more and more to conservative views, especially on the great and fundamental doctrine of the incarnation, used these discriminating words in speaking of the Reformation:

"Luther wielded the sword of the Spirit. He grasped the truth with all his strength and made it a part of his own being. The truth of God swayed him with irresistible power. Essential and vital truths and great unities made him their spokesman. He impressed these so deeply upon the Germanic world that they characterize the modern age, and will never be effaced."

In the long history of the American pulpit, two of the most conspicuous and deservedly venerated names are those of the late Dr. William Taylor and Phillips Brooks, the one a famous expositor in the pulpit, the other a splendid Christian idealist. The former has said that "it was the merit of Luther that he set free the Word of God; and because that is a divine agent and touches the mainsprings of individual, social and national life, his influence has gone farther and struck deeper than that of any other man in modern history." And the latter: "It was the sense of the divine commission and the profoundness of the struggle that created Luther, who shook the throne of the Cæsars and made Europe anew. He is the prophet and priest of human nature at once. To take Luther out of the Reformation is to take the sun out of the sunshine."

Among the living, one of the brightest and sanest among present day preachers is Dr. Charles Jefferson, who, in speaking of a Reformation lesson for the twentieth century, said this: "With men's faces turned toward the future, the question immediately arose: Can a man accept the new facts which he finds? Can he embrace the new truths which he arrives at? Can he confess the new principles which have been revealed to him by the experience of his soul? The question was settled at the Diet of Worms. It was settled by Martin Luther. He had found out some things which he believed to be true, and believing them to be true he published them; having published them, he was ready to defend them. But they contradicted what had been declared by the past. In past councils the Church had spoken, and its decrees could not

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be changed. The advocate of liberty met the assembled hosts of authority. The electors and the princes and the great emperor himself were all present. Over their heads there rose rank above rank, representatives of the most august and mighty hierarchy known to history. Bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, cardinals—the whole culminating in the baptized Cæsar, the bishop of Rome. The hierarchy says to the young man, 'Recant,' and his answer is, 'I will not recant unless I am convinced by clear argument.' All human history has been different since the Diet at Worms. Ever since then the mind has been free."

In a quadri-centennial address, pointing to our national flag standing nearby, Dr. E. H. Mullins, easily the first Baptist theologian now living in this country, said: "In its essence the contest made by Luther was for the fundamental things for which that flag stands. Luther," says he further, "must be placed beside those who are fighting for religious and political democracy in these days. God's justifying grace alone explains the man. In the providence of God, he was the first successful champion of the right of every man to direct access to the Saviour without any intermediary. Every great war waged in the world since Luther initiated the Reformation of the sixteenth century, merely has been a repetition of the conflict that Luther had in his day, the conflict of democracy against autocracy."

Judging from all that we have seen and heard, the most influential American Methodist of our day is Dr. James M. Buckley, the distinguished editor for many years of the *Christian Advocate,* now living in the retirement of his old age. Of Luther and his relation to our country he has said: "Luther fought the battle of civil and religious liberty for us and all men. There are strong grounds for our American respect for the great name of Luther. * * * No better qualities were ever transferred to this country than came over with the families, who, either willingly or by force, had derived their theology and religious experience from Luther. * * * The Lutheran theology's general influence has been pure and helpful to our general religious development. As a nation, then, we have ample reason to revere the memory of Luther. * * * He has been our heroic Protestant as fully as if he had been born on our shores, for his children came hither, and have helped us to fight all our battles and rear this new western civilization."

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Another of the strong writers and thinkers of the same Church, the Rev. Dr. Leech, says in one of his fine essays:

"By this man, more than by any other man for eighteen centuries, our own century drinks the living waters of Christianity at its fountain source. To Luther, more than to any other man since St. Paul, the Church of Christ is indebted for its grasp of two essential principles: The first is the fact of justification, or forgiveness of sin, by faith and not of works. The second is that the Divine Word is supreme in all faith and practice, and in all organizations of the Church. More today, than to any other man of eighteen hundred years, men owe to Luther freedom of thought, of speech, of conscience, of action; the right to worship God according to what conscience dictates."

Widely recognized as one of the leading figures in English Christianity today, and one of its most stimulating thinkers, is Dr. Peter Forsyth. Speaking of the Reformation in his book entitled, "Rome, Reform and Reaction," Dr. Forsyth says: "Freedom took a new meaning for the world and for nations as men were set free by faith and started on a new moral career. * * * When the kingdom of God and his righteousness were sought by faith in Christ, all else seemed added. Luther taught men and convinced men anew what true religion, true Christianity was, and in its wake came science, and the modern state with its civic and municipal life and social rights. * * * Luther, I reiterate, rediscovered Paul and the New Testament. He gave back to Christianity the Gospel, and he restored Christianity to religion. But in giving us back the old he brought to pass the new age. He magnified the individual to himself, and so he opened a new world to the world. * * * The ideal (of Catholicism) is an outgrown paganism, which the Reformation first broke. * * * The old pagan idea did not really receive its death-blow till the Reformation. The new age, the new human career, then first broke out of the old faith when Luther brought that faith to light. Assisi was well, but it did not do what had to be done, and what was done at Wittenberg, Worms and Wartburg."

Such expressions of judgment given by great and good men, such estimates of the place, work and permanent influence of one of the best of men, and given with such uniformity, could be given at greater length. Even when accorded to a man as great

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as Luther, they afford a rare exhibition of appreciation of one who had been mighty enough in his day to have been more powerful than emperor and pope combined. "By his word and his pen alone," says Prof. Hausrath, "he had wrung Germany from the mighty emperor on whose empire the sun never set. The professor, whose salary was never more than four hundred florins a year, had bought out the owner of the whole treasure of all the indulgences; victor over emperor and pope, he died."

XII

In estimating the rock whence we have been hewn and the hole of the pit whence we have been digged, as a free and independent people, we are liable to stop short and fail to come to the real source of that which we prize as among our inestimable blessings. Jesus Christ, after all that may be said by philosophers, historians and statesmen, is the author of liberty in a far profounder and more significant sense than even most good men realize. A great and comprehensive emancipation is indicated in the words, "If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Christ, it is true, did not come into the world primarily to promote civil and political liberty. His mission is first of all a mission of redemption. He came to set men free from the bondage of sin, and unless He has become the author of liberty to us in this sense, we occupy the position and play the part of slaves, even though we live in America and enjoy all the rights and privileges of American citizens. The Gospel not only brings to men the glad news that emancipation from sin is possible, but also points to One who actually achieves that emancipation. Herein lies Christ's chief significance as the author of liberty, while the liberty we have been contemplating is an unquestionable by-product of His career among men and His wonderful teaching. Accordingly, if we want to read the chapter of growing religious liberty, of popular intelligence, of civil freedom, of developing commerce and invention, we must go back to the lands which, in the struggles of the sixteenth century, stopped to listen to the messages of Luther and Calvin, Zwingli and Beza, Latimer and Knox, the reverberations of which were later heard in this land, at that time but newly discovered and opened up to the coming of new peoples dominated by Reformation principles. In the old

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lands beyond the sea there was not room enough for that old conflict which had arisen in the eleventh century between the pope and the emperor as to who should really be in the ascendant in the new European edifice, the lay or the ecclesiastical suzerain, and which was to be fought out to its final issue in the sovereignty of a free and independent people.

As we turn the pages of the early history of this country we see that men had contemplated it simply as a fine territory for exploitation and commercial aggrandizement. The trader sought to pre-empt it for his own. The hunter for gold traversed its vast stretches, ascended its rivers, crossed mountain ranges; and while the land contained treasures of surpassing magnitude, it kept back its secret until the new principles set forth by Luther in old lands in central Europe should contest their right to be affirmed and live alongside of that powerful ecclesiastical machine that had met in successful encounter so many forms of opposition, and which was so venerable that it reached back to the times of Leo the Great and Gregory, one of his successors, also called the Great.

On this new continent, as its Anglo-Saxon history developed, the papal Spaniard crept up from the south and the Bourbon of the same faith crept down from the north, the one co-operating with the other to hem in the feeble Protestant colonies which had been planted between the Alleghenies and the Atlantic, and staking down their claims with a line of forts extending from Canada to Mexico. But the two most powerful nations of the then known world failed in their combination against the pioneers of popular government and the friends of an open Bible, who had drawn their inspiration from Luther's theses of 1517, his memorable stand at Worms in 1521, and the protesting princes at Speyer in 1529.

In his recent book, entitled "The Foundations of Religion in America," Dr. Charles L. Thompson says that "a straight line reaches from Cape Cod to Wittenberg and Geneva," and affirms that Luther and Calvin let loose the two great principles—man's true relation to God, and men's relation to each other—which were destined to reform the world after the pattern of Christian democracy."

Thus the principles of the Reformation contended for by Luther have worked out the finest and most complete results for

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civil liberty and organized democracy on the American continent. The essential principles of that movement underlie the civil as well as the religious life of this great republic, in which they were destined to have their highest development. In our day it seems almost incredible that a little more than four hundred years ago civilized man was ignorant of the existence of this vast continent, on which, as we are wont to believe, problems of human history are yet to be, and we fondly hope, successfully, dealt with. It is undoubtedly true that this continent was originally discovered by hardy, sea-faring Northmen about the year 1000 of our era. But the fact of that discovery was somehow wrested back from the knowledge of mankind, because, as it seemed, the "fulness of time" had not yet come for its settlement and development, so that 1492 A. D., marks the real date of the continent's disclosure, when Christopher Columbus found the new world. His explorations permanently opened up the land to the incoming thousands, and to the enterprise and enlargement that have come with our expanding civilization. On that October morning of 1492, when Columbus sighted the shores of this new world, when this country was about to be brought out of the oblivion of ages, a little boy less than ten years of age was attending a village school in an inconspicuous place known as Mansfeld, in Saxony, and who, twenty-five years later was to start the world along the pathway which led men into the new era and the new world of the modern period of history; who also in the course of his great work was finally to reaffirm those principles which inspired our fathers, and which found expression in the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution.

Unquestionably the finest and best results for civil liberty, resulting from the principles contended for in the period of the Reformation, have been attained on the American continent. It is worth while to recall here the words of Dr. John William Draper, the author of "The Intellectual Development of Europe," who says that "the Reformation broke down unity; it gave liberty to masses of men grouped together in sufficient numbers to insure their position; it is now, invisibly but irresistibly, making steps never to be stayed until there is an absolute emancipation for man. Great revolutions are not often accomplished without much suffering and many crimes. It might have been supposed before the event, perhaps it is supposed by many who are not to

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live among the last results, that this decomposition of religious faith must be to the detriment of personal and practical piety. Yet America, in which, of all countries, the Reformation at the present moment is farthest advanced, should offer to thoughtful men much encouragement. Its cities are filled with churches built by voluntary gifts; its clergy are voluntarily sustained, and are in all directions engaged in enterprises of piety, education and mercy. What a difference between their private life and that of ecclesiastics before the Reformation! Not as in the old times does the layman look upon them as the cormorants and curse of society; they are his faithful advisers; his honored friends, under whose suggestion and supervision are instituted educational establishments, colleges, hospitals, whatever can be of benefit to men in this life, or secure for them happiness in the life to come."

The discovery of this country was not the result of an accident. It was not the outcome of a combination of fortuitous circumstances, as some discoveries seem to have been. It came about, manifestly and unmistakably, under the superintending providence of the God of our fathers, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that great and significant fact we discover not only the evidence of God's works, but also of God's purposes, towards which all His works are slowly tending, a luminous testimony to the truth of what the Bible so repeatedly affirms about the Divine Will as a controlling force in the movements of human history. The case of Benjamin Franklin is not that of an isolated observer, when he declared that what he had seen in our war for independence had satisfied him of the active participation of God in human history, and had shattered his deism forever into pieces. Columbus had died in ignorance of the real grandeur and significance of his discovery of 1492, believing that he had only been the agent in opening up a new pathway to the lands of opulence in the Far East; but that great event filled the world with wonder and delight. To the mind of the intelligent inquirer it opened up a field of new and boundless investigation; to mere adventurers it offered hitherto unknown opportunities, while to commercial enterprise it was an invitation to enter new and promising fields for enlargement and wealth. The peoples of the old lands beyond the Atlantic awaited with intense eagerness further developments. That discovery had come at a time when great changes in the aspects of spiritual life, the

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revival of nationalism and the assertion of the spirit of independence, were in progress, and when greater changes in the hopes and aspirations of men and nations were anticipated. New forms of government, civil and ecclesiastical, were being proposed and devised, while the seeds of free institutions, so prominent now among the most advanced peoples of the earth, were being scattered broadcast, were germinating in generous soil and bearing fruit, of which our own republic is the best and fairest example on the earth. The chief significance attaching to the discovery of Columbus was that he had, under God, come upon a land which was destined to afford a new opportunity for liberty—an opportunity to be embraced by peoples who were to bring with them those fruitful and emancipating principles reaffirmed by Luther in his contest with the papacy and the empire in the sixteenth century.

In much of the discussion of the genesis of our civil institutions in this country, there has been a stopping short of the real causes that have contributed to their true origin and source. Those causes contributing to the establishment of our free institutions antedate the settlement made by English gentlemen at Jamestown in 1607, or that of the "Pilgrim Fathers" at Plymouth in 1620, or that made by the Puritan at Salem in 1628, and who in the past has frequently been accorded more than was due him in estimating the sources of our freedom. Those sources reach back to great religious truths we have already considered—truths revived and reaffirmed by the reformers; principles which caused men to be abased only before God, and which led them to burst shackles imposed by an arrogant hierarchy and a tryannical absolutism. The nailing of the theses to the church door in Wittenberg was the first impulse given to those sentiments of true freedom which have culminated in those cherished institutions which, in this land, are our birthright and inheritance. It was on this continent, in this new world, and by reason of the antecedents, character and objects contemplated by the first real settlers, that these great religious, social and political principles of the Reformation found a wider and more favorable sphere—in a word, their true and proper home. Our history, more than that of any other people, presents their development and realization, and has given us that individualism and self-reliance, that enterprise and energy, which in religion, civil affairs and com-

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merce have been characteristic of us as a people. The men and women who, fleeing from persecution, that, unmolested, they might enjoy liberty of conscience and political freedom, laid the foundations of our government, were true Protestants, disciplined in the struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "They brought with them into the new world," says De Tocqueville, "a form of Christianity which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion. They contributed powerfully to the establishment of a democracy and a republic; and from the earliest settlement of the emigrants, politics and religion contracted an alliance that has never been dissolved."

"Who can foretell," says Villers, another Frenchman, writing when our republic was yet in its infancy, "who can tell us all that may result in the two worlds from the example of the American? What new position would the world assume if this example were followed? And without doubt it will be to the end. Thus a Saxon monk will have changed the face of the whole world." "The Reformation," the same writer further says, "introduced a new order of things. Powerful republics were founded. Their principles, still more powerful than their aims, were introduced into all nations, and hence arose great revolutions."

The God of the nations somehow hid this continent from the knowledge of the world until He could open up all its scope to the freedom and faith of gathered peoples from lands dominated by Protestant principles, to be a nation to His honor and praise. Those principles were brought to this land by men who had believed in and contended for them beyond the sea, and who embodied them in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States. It is, accordingly, not surprising that so many competent historians, statesmen and scholars have been fond of tracing the priceless blessings of liberty and the rights of conscience and worship which the American people enjoy to the direct and indirect influences of the truths and principles proclaimed by Luther four hundred years ago. A government such as ours could not have originated under those papal principles and powers which had their chief center in the south of Europe. The Reformation came from the rugged thinking of the more democratic nations of northern Europe. The uniform-

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ity of informed opinion on this subject is something noteworthy. Writing of the Reformation, Robertson, the biographer of Charles V, says: "It was one of the greatest and most interesting revolutions recorded in history—a revolution in the sentiments of mankind the greatest as well as the most beneficial that has happened since the publication of Christianity. It rescued one part of Europe from the papal yoke and mitigated its rigor in the other." "Had there been no Luther," says Froude, "the English, the German and the American people would be thinking differently, acting differently—would be altogether different men and women from what they are." And George Bancroft, our own historian, says that "Our national organization counts Christianity among its sources; it was essentially imbued with the spirit of the Reformation which rose in Germany with Luther."

The intense and passionate sense of sin, and the greatness of that redemption which has been provided by the gratuitous mercy of God, are not more marked as features of Luther's own personal experience than is the striking consensus of informed judgment that the traces of that one commanding mind of the sixteenth century are to be discovered to this day in the movements and finest influences of the modern world, and particularly in the founding and progress of this great nation. Like the heathen prophet, when from the height of Pisgah he looked down on the fair and ordered camp of Israel, men have been impelled to say of this great people: "Surely the Lord their God is with them, and the shout of a king is among them."

One of the great Reformer's best biographers has said: "That the principles of Martin Luther are the fundamental principles of our American republic, there can be no question."[1] "Who can doubt," says Prof. George P. Fisher, "that the United States of America are, not indeed wholly, but in great part, indebted for their position, as contrasted with that of Mexico and the political communities of South America, to this expansion of the power of the individual, which is the uniform and legitimate fruit of Protestant principles?" Lossing has said: "Out of the principles of Luther have been evolved the representative government, the free institutions, and the liberty, equality and fraternity which are the birthright of every American citizen." And in the same line Dr. Dorchester has declared: "In the Lutheran Reformation a new people was begotten, with new ideas, invested with

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loftier prerogatives and aims, and intended by Providence to found in the new world a great Christian republic, one of the mightiest agencies in human progress."

England, the land of the great Charter of Rights contended for successfully in 1215 at Runnymede, the land of the Puritan, of Oliver Cromwell, the long Parliament and the Commonwealth; the land of Pym, Hampden and John Milton—England did not originate, but was only instrumental in transplanting those principles of liberty which have brought forth so abundantly in this new land. In his famous speech, made at Bunker Hill, in 1843, from which we have already quoted, Daniel Webster said: "The spirit of commercial and foreign adventure on the one hand, and on the other, the assertion and maintenance of religious liberty, having their source in the Reformation, and this love of religious liberty drawing after it or bringing along with it, as it always does, an ardent devotion to the principle of civil liberty also, were the powerful influences under which character was formed and men trained for the great work of introducing English civilization, English law, and, what is more than all, Anglo-Saxon blood, into the wilderness of North America."

In an able essay on the "Foundation of the American Colonies," in which the view is maintained that the success of the war for the independence of the American colonies was perhaps in itself a gain to Great Britain as well as to this country, Professor Goldwin Smith says: "The American colonies are the offspring of humanity at a more advanced stage and in a nobler mood. They arose from discontent, not with exhausted pastures, but with institutions that were waxing old and a faith that was ceasing to be divine. They are monuments of that vast and various movement of humanity, the significance of which is but half expressed by the name of the Reformation."

It was no less of a preacher and patriot than Henry Ward Beecher who affirmed that "our civil liberty is the result of the open Bible which Luther gave us."

In 1883, in a memorable address by a distinguished English bishop on the occasion of the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Luther, it was said: "The free millions of the United States may well rise up and do Luther honor by cherishing his example, pondering his history, and maintaining his creed"; while a noted Unitarian scholar, who was a graduate

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of Harvard, said that "To Martin Luther above all men we Anglo-Americans are indebted for national independence and mental freedom!" Charles Dudley Warner is quoted by Dr. Preserved Smith as having said that "Every man in western Europe and in America is leading a different life today from what he would have led had Martin Luther not lived," while a great Frenchman has declared that "The republic of America is a corollary of the Reformation."

These expressions of opinion regarding the genesis of American institutions are not in harmony with the theory that has sometimes been advocated, that those institutions find their origin in a period following Luther. The birth of the Lutheran movement in Europe marked also the birth of our liberties. They arose as the harvest of that sowing when, as Calvin said, "The pure Gospel was restored" by the "Apostle at Wittenberg."

In his recent book, entitled "The Religious Foundations of America," Dr. Charles L. Thompson, with a true insight into the genius of American history, says that "the Reformation of religion in the sixteenth century determined the subsequent history of Europe and shaped the American republic. The stroke of Luther's hammer on the Wittenberg door was Thor's hammer to shatter the ecclesiasticism of the Dark Ages and break open a path of religious life and hope which brought on the new day of all following centuries. It broke the shackles which held men to a dead formalism and released the spirit of inquiry by which the world came to its charter of religious liberty." Of the chief of the reformers and the relation to his work to liberty, he further says: "At whatever stage of his career we regard him he is easily one of the most interesting—as always one of the most commanding—figures of history. Whether a seeking soul and climbing the stairway in Rome, or with leonine daring confronting the powers of an empire at Worms, or trumpet-tongued proclaiming to great universities or to the common people the new gospel of spiritual and intellectual liberty, he was—under God—the maker of a new Europe, and through Europe the foundation builder of civil and religious freedom in America."

Another of our recent historians is Professor Carl Becker. In his book entitled "Beginnings of the American People," he says: "The origin of New England is inseparably connected with the Protestant Reformation, that many-sided movement of which no

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formula is adequate to convey the full meaning." "The Reformation," he goes on, "was far more than resistance to Rome. It did not cease when the king triumphed over the pope. The dissidence of dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion was as incompatible with the royal as with priestly authority. It was generally true that Protestantism was the result of a middle class revolt against the existing régime, a denial of established standards in politics and morality, the determined attempt to effect a transvaluation of all customary values."

XIII

There are no blind forces even in nature and its processes. There are discoverable, always, in that sphere of investigation the evidences of design and wonderful adjustment. And so in history the observant student, as he contemplates the manifest displays of wise design, may well say in the words of the Scriptures: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." Schlegel, one of the leading writers on the philosophy of history, has said that no such philosophy can be constructed, save by the recognition of a providential purpose which pervades all events and links them together in unity.

In the revelations of providential dealings in the Bible the designs of Providence are not left to be judged of by our fallible human sagacity, but are often so clearly revealed as to show us the meaning of things obscure and the real working of things sometimes apparently antagonistic. Not only athesim, which is the denial of God, and Deism, which eliminates God from the management of God's world, but the much exploited agnostic scheme of our day—which ignores God or treats Him as the eternal why, to which no man has replied; the infinite enigma, which no sphinx has solved—deal deadly blows not only at revealed religion, but likewise at human liberty and civilization. Dissociated from the divine oversight and direction of the God of nature, not only, but the God of history as well, the story of men and their movements leads us only into a maze in which we blindly grope about without design or plan or end in view. To thoughtful minds there are always manifest the marks of an infinitely wise design in the timeliness of the great events in history, in the fact that such great and important events have occurred

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opportunely at the fulness of time, that they came at the long-prepared moment before which or after which they would have failed of their purposed result. The arguments in behalf of the theory of wise design in creation to be found in the pages of Paley's evidences, and of the Bridgewater treatises of a past period in the history of apologetics, are hardly more impressive and conclusive than the fact of the divine opportuneness of the discovery of this land and its settlement by European peoples, as well as other great events in our history.

The discovery and settlement of this country have an importance far beyond that which belongs to them as incidents in the records of Anglo-Saxon peoples. The chief significance attaching to those events is found in the transference to this new world of all that was best in the ideas and traditions of liberty which had been handed down from the matured civilizations of the past. There was a manifest fitness of time in the discovery of America in the fact that this mystery, hidden from the ancient world, and dreamed of only in the visions of poets and philosophers, should not have been disclosed until the dawn before the sunrise of the sixteenth century. Discovered one hundred years earlier, the new world could hardly have been a new world, but only a reproduction on this new continent of the old world with its effete institutions, customs, oppressive ecclesiasticism and tyrannical statecraft. But Providence seems to have kept the most valuable thing in the new world from notice until a fit and qualified people should be prepared to occupy it. God, in His wise plans and designs, seems to have kept back the whole continent from discovery until the peoples of Europe had contended for the principles embodied in Protestantism and had reached that stage of social development at which they were competent to become successful emigrants and the founders of new states.

The discoverers of this country were Roman Catholics, and in consequence papal governments promptly claimed the results of the discoveries. The new land was taken possession of in the name of their faith and their sovereigns. They had come, as we have seen, largely impelled by a secular impulse. The horizon of enterprise had been greatly widened, and the spirit of maritime adventure had been aroused. The Italians held the highway of the Mediterranean to commerce with India through Asia Minor, the Red Sea, the Caucasus and Persia, and new ocean pathways

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to the Far East were eagerly sought. Seeking thus an aqueous highway to the opulent lands of the East, these papal mariners found a new world in the West and claimed it as their own. But twenty-five years after the discovery of this land by Columbus, which he regarded to his dying day as the other side of India, Luther, passing the dragon-guarded portals of that vast hierarchy which had been consolidating for a thousand years, and which, through all its vicissitudes, had endured from the days of Leo I to Leo X, had roused the world of his day with the cries of reformation and revolution. There was not room enough on the old continent for the antagonistic principles that had been quickened into new life and energy to fight out the great contests that were enkindled, and singularly enough there followed the emigration of the peoples of separate religions to this land. They came, both Romanist and Protestant.

In the discovery and early settlement of the North American continent, the discerning man would at once have said, this land will be a Spanish colony, and its religion will be dictated from Rome. Nothing could have withstood, he would have said, the devotion of religious leaders who were ready to crown their ambitions with martyrdom. As late as the middle of the sixteenth century the historical prophet would have declared that this country was assuredly destined to be dominated by a Spanish civilization, that it would become what Mexico and South America are to this day. The greatest of modern geographers has said that "the best book on natural theology is a physical geography," meaning thereby that national history has been shaped in no small degree by the conformation of continents and the disposition of islands. On this the geographer only echoes the words of Moses, who said: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel." The Almighty, in the far-reaching counsels of the divine wisdom, had His plans for the American continent even before there was an American people.

If ever the hand of God was evident in national history it was in the time of the real colonization of this country, the character of the colonists, the inspiring purposes which brought them here and the religious principles that dominated them. The doctrines that had remade the intellectual and moral life of Europe, which

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had been stated and formulated in the north and not the south of that continent, were back of the migration of strong peoples who came hither. They came not from the shores of the southern Mediterranean, but from the more rugged regions of England, the Rhine and the North Sea. For a long period it seemed that this country was to belong to Rome, and that it was destined to be dominated by medieval papal conceptions. The most powerful nation of Europe then was not England or Germany, but France. In the year 1611, the king of that country, Louis XIII, gave to the Jesuits all the territory stretching from the St. Lawrence to Florida. There ensued a struggle between despotism and freedom for the possession of a continent. The sublime scheme of conquest matured in the minds of French statesmen and ecclesiastics contemplated a long line of military posts and mission stations, stretching along the course of great rivers and reaching from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to that of the Mississippi. Explorers, traders and priests pressed their way up great rivers, into and across the regions of our great inland lakes, and thence on into the vast and resourceful interior valley, setting up the banners and the cross of the papal dominion and claiming the whole vast and promising region in the name of their king and the pope. Under the intrepid leadership of explorers like La Salle and Joliet, the Jesuit missionary priests, like Father Marquette, a plan of temporal and spiritual empire had been magnificently conceived, sagaciously planned and was being heroically pursued. The hardy courage of the French explorers, the devoted lives and martyr deaths of those French Jesuit missionaries, the account of which is told in the charming pages of Francis Parkman, are not surpassed in the history of Christian conquest. Backed by a powerful nation and the papal hierarchy, directed by a statesman like Richelieu and a pope like Gregory XV, the valley of the Mississippi was explored and every foot of it claimed for France and Rome. From Niagara to Fort Duquesne, and from the Straits of Mackinaw to the mouth of the great river, garrisons were stationed, and the priest was in control. In marked contrast with this gigantic scheme were the feeble plantations of the English colonists along the Atlantic seaboard, without common organization or mutual sympathy, and of diverse creeds and aims.

Thus it seemed that three great nations were in a state of rivalry regarding the possession of the new world. Spain had

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extended her dominions along the southern borders of the continent and far up into the interior and along the shores of the western Pacific. France had established her outpost from Quebec to the Mississippi. The Pilgrim, the Puritan, the Dutch, the Swede, the Quaker and the German had not yet come. Only a little company of English gentlemen were settled on the James River and a few Dutch sailors were building huts on Manhattan Island. To one who should have regarded events with the eye that sees only the things that are visible and tangible, the cause of Protestantism in the new world would have appeared hopeless. It seemed probable that Spanish priests and soldiers would hold the southern half of North America and equally probable that the lilies of France would control the northern half. It seemed inevitable, if the forces of Romanism in Spain and France should combine, that the Protestant settlements on the James, on Manhattan Island, and in New England should be ground to dust between upper and nether millstones.

But these magnificent schemes of territorial expansion and religious propagandism failed. God's plans are not man's plans, and the divine Omniscience scanned the future of this land with an unerring wisdom. In the divine counsels this continent was to be reserved for the open Bible and republican institutions. It was to be dominated at the beginnings by principles that came from Wittenberg and Geneva, rather than by those which bore the stamp of Rome. The white lilies of France and the castles of Spain faded from the banners and were replaced by better emblems. The two most powerful nations of the then known world lost out in their fight to subdue the pioneers of popular government and the friends of a free and open Bible. Not even the historical pages of the Old Testament disclose more clearly a divine purpose and leadership than does American history in the early years of the seventeenth century, when the French colonies languished and Canada fell under British rule, and when later, in the vicissitudes of war, the Mississippi Valley was transferred to the American republic by the Louisiana purchase.

The strange and romantic fact about the conflicts from 1609, as has been pointed out, is that even the American Indian seems to have been a providential factor; that these primitive people, whom all the parties regarded with suspicion and hatred, should have had a place in determining that not France but England and

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Holland should control American destiny. In the critical times of those early conflicts, the powerful Iroquois nation, the deadly enemy of France, became the ally of the Dutch, so that thus indirectly the little Protestant company on Manhattan Island had some share in the fall of Quebec, and the destruction of French claims in the new world. John Fiske says: "Had the Iroquois been the allies of the French it would in all probability have been Louis XIV and not Charles II who would have taken New Amsterdam from the Dutch. Had the Iroquois not been the deadly enemy of the French, Louis XIV could almost certainly have taken New York from the English." So strangely did God protect His great purpose for this continent that with all its resources it was held in reserve for ages, that within its ample borders a new order in the political life of man might here be inaugurated. That which in the first instance was only an exploring expedition, undertaken for finding a new passage to the Orient, became the determining event which should shape the world's greatest adventure in behalf of free government and free religion.

It was out of Europe, rent asunder by disputes about the greatest and most interesting questions, that the serious-minded settlers of this country came. For the most part they came from the communities and the classes which had passed through the fires kindled by Luther's theses in 1517, and his memorable stand at Worms in 1521. In 1555, at the end of his long and troublous reign, and dejected over the failure of his cherished plans, Charles V abdicated the throne of Spain in behalf of his son, Philip II. Soon after his accession Philip undertook to crush our Protestantism in Holland. Bigoted, narrow, unscrupulous and remorseless in purpose, he determined to signalize his reign by restoring both papal and imperial authority in the Netherlands, placing the execution of the task in the hands of the brutal and merciless Duke of Alva. The story of the struggle of that heroic people for life, liberty and their homes, conducted under the leadership and inspiration of William of Orange, is one of the most thrilling in the annals of the human race. In the face of their burning homes and ruined cities, the horrors of the stake, the dungeon, famine and starvation, the stout-hearted burghers and peasantry of the low countries stood for conscience and freedom until at last they won their national independence and the blessings of religious liberty.

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Scarcely had that struggle died away when the famous Thirty Years' War burst upon Protestant Germany. It was during this struggle for the principles of the Reformation, that Gustavus Adolphus, the "Lion of the North," came down from Sweden with his brave countrymen, at a time when Germany was crushed and bleeding under the tread of the imperial armies led by the papal generals, Wallenstein and Tilly. The brave Swede succeeded in reviving the crushed and bleeding hopes of Protestantism, even though his valuable life went out amid the smoke and carnage of the field of Lutzen, November 6, 1632.

While the Reformation movement was thus fighting for its life on the continent of Europe, it had crossed the channel and was steadily making its impress upon England. Then ensued the struggles leading up to the execution of Charles the Stuart and the establishment of the Commonwealth.

It was only after the successful issue of these far-reaching struggles in behalf of Protestant principles set forth and formulated in the century preceding, that the real colonization of this country began in earnest. It is possible that had all North America been settled before the time of Cromwell, the feebleness of the early reformed faith and life of the Church could not have withstood the old faith, and successfully resisted its prestige and power. This, however, is certain, that the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution never would have been written had not Luther nailed his theses upon the church door and made his valorous stand at Worms for principles which were back of, and under, and in, the conflicts of Holland, Germany and England in the next century. God in His far-reaching providence put Christianity on a new trial here along with the persecuted seekers after liberty, and the result was the establishment of a democratic republic upon a large scale. The first thing Protestantism did on this continent was the republic itself. Our civil heritage from the Reformation is the republic inspired by Protestant ideas of liberty and shaped after patterns of government found in the Protestant churches. The Reformation did not contend for liberty in the first instance, but for evangelical truth, but wherever that form of truth triumphed, liberty triumphed also. It is of vast historical significance that the first men to die on this continent for the sake of conscience and religious liberty were those who laid down their lives in behalf of

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those Protestant principles which made the republic possible. Bancroft tells us that outside of Mexico the very first colony in North America was the Protestant colony planted by that great Frenchman of indomitable patience and steadfastness, Admiral Coligny, and that Jesuit priests stained the soil of the new world with the blood of these colonists solely for the reason that they were adherents of the principles and doctrines of the Lutheran Reformation. In France the new movement had encountered enemies in the court, the church and the majority of the people, and those who became adherents of the new faith were compelled to face peculiarly difficult problems. The faith they confessed was intolerable to the ruler of the land, while the duty their consciences demanded of them the state declared to be a duty that could not be permitted. Distressed over the condition of his countrymen of the same faith, Coligny resolved, if possible, to find an asylum for his people in the new world, where they might enjoy religious liberty. He accordingly sought an interview with Catherine, the regent of the young King Charles IX. The audience being granted, before her he laid the desires of his suffering countrymen. His appeal was granted in the name of the young king and a charter given under the conditions of which Coligny was authorized to establish a colony in that part of the new world we now know as the state of Florida. Three vessels were speedily fitted out, and on the 18th of February, 1562, loaded with French Protestants, they set sail for the West. Taking possession of the land in the name of their young king, they established a colony on the St. John's River.

Only a few days after the arrival of these colonists they saw five ships coming in from the sea. Being anchored within speaking distance of the Protestant ships, among other questions asked by the members of the invading squadron was this one: "Are you Catholics or Lutherans?" To this inquiry this answer was returned: "We are Lutherans of the new religion." Upon the inquiry being made as to who the invaders were, the ominous answer was returned: "I am Pedro Menendez, commander of this armament, which belongs to Philip II, King of Spain. I have come hither to destroy and hang all the Lutherans I can find, either on land or sea, according to my orders received from the king, which are so precise as to deprive me of the power of saving anyone whatsoever; and these orders I shall execute to the letter.

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but if I shall meet with any Catholic on board your vessels, he shall be treated with good treatment; as for the heretics they shall die." Menendez and his merciless Spaniards fell upon those French Protestants, who had come to this land more than half a century before the landing of the Pilgrims or the Salem settlement of the Puritans, and no one was spared upon whom they could lay their hands. Men, women and children were cruelly murdered, and over the bodies of some of the men who had been hanged from some of the trees, was placed this inscription, *"Hung, not as Frenchmen, but as Lutherans."* This was the first shedding of blood for conscience and freedom in religion on the American continent.

When we contemplate, scrutinize and compare all the signal events of the history of the peoples who have come hither to this goodly land and their subsequent development, we find that we are face to face with the manifest leadership of the Lord of Hosts, and we are again, if we are devout and discerning, ready to exclaim with the heathen prophet when he looked down from Pisgah on the ordered tents of Israel: "Surely the Lord their God is with them, and the shout of a king is among them!" When the secrets of the history of this great people are laid bare, and we discover that God was in the conditions and antecedents of it, that one by one He raised up the great men of it, that He controlled the critical events of it, brought out the high result of it, and wrought it in with the great purpose toward which He was leading on the whole world, then we are able to discern that "key of knowledge" that unlocks the secrets of all history, and which especially in this our study of the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century has made plain to us the hand of God in American history. There is something more discoverable in our history than that gross materialism that declares our destiny to have been controlled solely by conditions of soil and climate and the habitual food of the people. The comprehensive truth, which includes all these and more, is that which is set forth through all the pages of the Old Testament, that "the earth is the Lord's, and He is governor among the nations."

Mr. Mallock somewhere says: "In the infinite hush of space there is that one sound—the tides of human history, like the moaning of the homeless sea." But any survey of the providential factor in the settlement and ordering of this continent

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shows plainly that the history of this great people has been neither chartless nor homeless. Perhaps the most significant event in the modern era has been the peopling of the new world and the maturing of the spirit of nationality within all the borders of this northern continent. Here not only religion, but likewise our democracy and our civic institutions, owe much to Luther. As Prof. Preserved Smith has said in an article in the January, 1918, number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra:* "There never was a more essentially democratic message than that of the excellence of the humblest Christian and the perfect equality of all before God"—truths restated and successfully reaffirmed by Luther. "No special pleading by partisans of Rome can ever shut out from candid inquirers the fact that the principles dating from the apostolic era of Christianity and reaffirmed by Luther in the sixteenth century started this great and powerful republic on its way among the greatest peoples of the earth."

When we congratulate ourselves because of the liberties we enjoy, we are at least liable to forget their relation to antecedent movements—that, which is never denied by competent historians, democracy as we know it is not only rooted and grounded in Christianity, but that it was started on its triumphant way in modern times by the reaffirmation in the Lutheran movement of the sixteenth century of the principles we have considered. We are accustomed to rehearse with a warranted pride certain great and outstanding historical facts in our nation's history, but we sometimes are unmindful of the fact that some of the most conspicuous of them never would have occurred had it not been for the successful issue of conflicts of an earlier time.

Three of the greatest documentary possessions of the English speaking people are, first, the Great Charter of Rights extorted from the unwilling hands of King John by the barons of England at Runnymede, July 19, 1215. The Great Charter guaranteed to Englishmen rights of which they had long been deprived. It laid the foundations of the freedom of the common people, for it compelled the crown to promise that right or justice be not sold, or refused, or delayed; that no freeman be imprisoned or outlawed, or deprived of his goods, or otherwise punished, except by the judgment of his peers, according to the known laws and other rights which date back almost eight hundred years, to Simon De Montfort and his brave companions, who so bravely resisted

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a dangerous despot and won those liberties which English freemen have carried wherever they have settled. In their claim, frequently made, that this was a victory of Rome in behalf of human rights, it is always forgotten by papal historians that the reigning pope of the time, the powerful Innocent III, championed the cause of the king, who was his vassal, against the cause of the barons; that he called a council, annulled the Magna Charta, issued a manifesto against the barons, and ordered the bishops to excommunicate them.

The second of these great documents, and one in which we have special pride, is the Declaration of Independence, signed at Philadelphia by representatives of the thirteen American colonies, then in revolt against the tyranny of the British crown, July 4, 1776. It was because of the fact that certain rights contended for by the barons and embodied in the Great Charter were denied to the American colonists that those men in 1776 resolved to sever the bonds that bound them to England, and to declare that henceforth a few feeble colonies along the Atlantic seaboard ought of right to be free and independent states. It was not the first time that a rebellious people had set up for themselves, and that men tired of an oppressive monarchy had launched a new republic. But it was the time when it was done with unparalleled success. Those revolutionary fathers preferred success to hanging, and they pushed their preference with marvelous wisdom and tremendous determination. They were given one of the greatest opportunities of the ages and were thoroughly equal to it, doing courageously, wisely and permanently the right thing at the right time. In the stately rhetoric of Thomas Jefferson, in the famous declaration, we observe the spirit of the barons of Runnymede.

Nearly ninety years later than the declaration made at Philadelphia, and nearly seven hundred years after the Great Charter, standing amid the graves of fallen heroes on a famous Pennsylvania battlefield, in a few marvelous sentences, Abraham Lincoln stated the principles which lay at the root of our great Civil War—that government of the people, by the people and for the people might not perish from the earth. If competent historians and interpreters are correct, that declaration never would have been made, and that famous speech of the nation's most loved President would have been unsaid, had it not been for the

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successful conflict waged for the popular principles of the universal priesthood of all believers and the right of private judgment two hundred and fifty and three hundred and fifty years earlier in the stirring days of the Lutheran Reformation.

Our people recite with pride the lines which tell of the resistance of our fathers and their contention for their rights:

> "By the rude bridge that spanned the flood
> They flung their flag to April's breeze;
> Here once the embattled farmer stood
> And fired the shot heard round the world."

They are moved by the inscription of the famous words of Captain Parker at Lexington, words which memorialize those loyal "minute men" who had been sleeping at nights with guns in the corners of their rooms:

> "Stand your ground;
> Don't fire unless fired upon,
> But if they mean to have war
> Let it begin here."

They are fond of reciting the story of the famous ride of Paul Revere, the man who deserves his honor and his fame, and of the far less-known patriot, Newman, the man who hung out the signal lantern in the belfry of the old North Church, when the patriot who had

> "Watched with eager search,
> The belfry tower of that old
> North Church"

knew that it was time for him to ride.

> "He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns;
> The fate of a nation was riding that night,
> And the spark struck out by that steed in his flight
> Kindled the land into flame with its heat."

But if men have interpreted events correctly, if such historians as Carlyle and Froude and others are right, the words of Captain Parker never would have been said. The shot "heard round the world" would never have been fired, and the famous ride of Paul Revere never have been made or thought of as a signal to call alert and prepared patriots to arms, had it not been for earlier conflicts

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in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Germany, Holland, France and England.

These incidents in our national history, which so warm our hearts and stimulate our devotion, at the last hark back to one heroic man, who, in the sixteenth century, made the break with Rome, flung down the first gage of battle, took the brunt of the deadliest storm ever encountered by any single man; who, whether studied as reformer, theologian, preacher or organizer, stands in a place that is unique and solitary; who has left the stamp of his great personality clearly marked on all that is best in modern history, and who, in the fundamental principles for which he contended, has issued the greatest of all proclamations of emancipation from bigotry, superstition and bondage.

XIV

Our study of the great movement of the sixteenth century has led us to view it as many-sided in its aspects and as fraught with consequences of vast importance for the years which have followed. The leaders in that movement had indeed to face the task of combating the errors and abuses of the papacy. In their time the classes and orders in the Church which should have wrought for righteousness were largely and deeply touched with evil. But even then in the face of the manifold evils of the day there were examples of sterling and devout piety. Those reformers wrought in a period marked by love of ostentation and of worldly pomp which led to ruinous extravagance. There were vast accretions of puerility, tradition and superstition to be encountered. Friars, monks, priests, prelates and even popes, the so-called vicars of Christ and alleged vicegerents of God, were debased in idleness, dissoluteness, covetousness, hypocrisy, hardness of heart, extravagance and unwarranted and unscriptural assumptions. The popes in succession were accustomed to fill high places of dignity and ecclesiastical benefices with men whose chief qualification was a supposed willingness to do obedience to their superiors. These reformers, too, did their work in a time of gross ignorance, in a period when we read of clergy who did not know either Scripture, liturgy, creed or the Lord's Prayer, many of whom could not even read, and whose chief accomplish-

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ments seem to have been excess in drinking, gluttony in eating, and driving geese to pasture.

They led in a revolt against abuses and a reformation of morals among debased peoples. But this was only a part, and by no means the most important part, of the work allotted them by the real Head of the Church, their divine Lord and Saviour. The chief responsibility laid upon them, and which lay behind and beneath all controversies, was in the appropriation of the saving truths of the Scriptures. In the work of refuting error they would never have been permanently successful, much less would they have been sustained in the performance of it, had they not entered into the possession and confession of positive truth drawn from the Word of God. Their chief work, as we have seen at every step in the progress of this study, is to be found in the fact that that work was a reaffirmation, in forms called forth by the errors of the Romish Church, of all those great evangelical principles set forth in the early age of the Church by Christ and His apostles. In emphasizing the dominant idea that the relation between the invisible spirit of man and the invisible God was immediate rather than mediate they made a vast contribution, not only to religion, but to the liberation of the human mind from priestly bondage, and did much for its elevation and ennoblement in every sphere of its activity. In restoring the truths and rights of an evangelical type of Christianity, Luther not only brought about a great religious revival, but also wrought many incidental results of vast and wholesome influence. He not only dealt a gigantic blow against Rome, but even rescued that ancient Church from disasters which were inevitable. The burden of that movement was man's justification and restoration to rightful relations to God. It was a reassertion of the power of apostolical Christianity, and on that basis the movement at once assumed an attitude of conservative progress. It at once emphasized the difference between two apprehensions of the Gospel, showing the pronounced difference between the two churches, differences consisting not simply in certain specific doctrines, but in a more fundamental difference in their whole conception of Christianity. It created once more freedom of access to God's Holy Word, the one incorrupted fountain of religious truth, the only infallible standard of faith and practice. It liberated men from a multitude of doctrinal and practical corruptions, which had for cen-

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turies been engrafting themselves upon the Church. It maintained that all men should not only have freedom of access to God, but freedom of person and conscience. It inaugurated political freedom from papal tyranny and gave an impulse to civil liberty, which at once made itself felt in all the countries of Europe, and which in due time became the corner-stone of the great American Republic. It sought to break the control of the Church over the state, and to make all citizens equal before the law. Its proclamation of the emancipation of the soul inaugurated what was a new era in the history of mankind. Under its influence man once more stood forth before God in his religious rights, and from the heart of what were distinctively his rights of this order there soon emerged his civil rights. Of Luther's nailing the theses on the church door at Wittenberg on that famous eve of All Saints' Day, in 1517, it has been said that it was the beginning of the movement which changed the political map of Europe. Certain it is that that one act started new trains of religious thinking, and developed new methods in education, which have given character to the world's best and most enlightened type of religion of the last four hundred years, and which laid the foundations of all the present freedom of thought, freedom of speech and breadth of education.

These great changes were made by men who were not perfect. They were inaugurated by men who were very human. The world today venerates Luther, while it does not deify him. The Reformer's most ardent and sympathetic friends do not deny that he had faults and made mistakes. Of him the late Dr. Krauth has said: "The world knows his faults. He could not hide what he was. His transparent candor gave his enemies the material of their misrepresentation, but they cannot blame his infirmities without bearing witness to the nobleness which made him careless of appearance in a world of defamers. For himself, he had as little of the virtue of caution as he had, towards others, of the vice of dissimulation. Living under thousands of jealous and hating eyes, in the broadest light of day, the testimony of enemies but fixes the result: that his faults were those of a nature of the most consummate grandeur and fulness, more precious than the virtues of the common great." But in estimating the faults even of such epoch-making men, we are to judge them by the age in which they lived and wrought. Mr. Lecky lays down a maxim

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which we would do well to remember: "The men of each age must be judged by the ideal of their own age and country, and not by the ideal of ours."

But whatever, in the way of calumny and reproach, may be alleged against the men who were the leaders in effecting the great change in Europe in the sixteenth century, this must always be set down to their credit: they were by no means strangers to the old medieval system against which their forerunners in the good work of reformation had lifted up their voices. They were sons of the Church, trained and cherished in her own bosom, and until they spoke their message of reform honored and admired her. That age contains in the list of its great ones no greater names in the field of scholarship and capacity for popular leadership, nor any that have left upon their times a more lasting impression, nor any who have affected more permanently and profitably subsequent times. They were the products of the best university training available in Europe, combined with the best expression of monastic piety. They wrote, preached and published, and in it all contended for the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints," making their generation notable for its heroism, and abiding in its influence and power. If they went out from a great ecclesiastical organism it was because, in consequence of its apostasies and its abuses, its intolerance and its short-sightedness, it forced them from its portals. They had the limitations imposed upon men always by their times; they differed from each other, and those differences were accentuated by the spirit of the day in which they lived, but when all that can be said is said—and much that is adverse and unwarranted has been said—those men are among the best accredited among the leaders of mankind, and, in the judgment of the best and wisest of men, are accorded a place among the primates of the great and good of the earth. They were necessary in their protests and affirmations, if the fruitful work of Christianity in the upbuilding of its supreme future was to be conserved. Their spirit was that of John Tauler, who, in one of his Advent sermons, quotes a text which, it is said, nobody since has even been able to find, but which, to the great mystic, was manifestly precious: "God leadeth the righteous by a narrow path, into a broad highway, until they come to a wide open place."

The recognized chieftain among them spoke words that were

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at once tender and powerful, and which wrought great changes in the Christendom of his day and since, and which, because he did not speak them with the same courage and consistency, made his distinguished contemporary, the gifted Erasmus, to lag behind and become a negligible factor in the conflict he had done so much to promote in its opening stages. And it is inspiring to remember, even at this day and among the worked-out results, that the principles for which these men contended in the day of battle have been the principles which have inspired the most advanced peoples of the earth in the times of stress that tried men's souls. They were the impelling influence with the brave men who followed Gustavus Adolphus, the devout king of the Swedes, the "Lion of the North," and the dispirited Protestants of Germany on that fatal 6th of November, 1632, when the brave leader fell wounded unto death on the critical field of Lutzen. Those principles, too, put inspiration into the hearts and arms of the gallant and long-suffering peoples in the low countries in their, at last, successful conflict with the cruel and rapacious Duke of Alva, the military representative of brutal Spain. The same principles, in turn, also fired the Huguenots of France when hunted to their fastnesses in the Cevennes, or when chased to death by the fierce imperial dragonnades, and also impelled those persecuted saints who dwelt in the valleys of the Vaudois and the Austrian Tyrol. They were also found in the migration of Pilgrims and Puritans, who came to these shores with the robust conviction that kingdom after kingdom might perish, that powerful dynasties might pass and the most venerable institutions of the earth might be subverted, but that the Word of the Lord should endure forever, and that the foundations of righteousness were among the things that could not be shaken.

Those principles have been so vital that they justify words used by a famous English preacher in a sermon preached in 1844, in St. Paul's, London, that the Lutheran Reformation was "the third great birth of time." When Mendelssohn, a century ago, wrote his wonderful symphony of the Reformation he made the famous "Ein Feste Burg" his theme and its well-known tune the motif of his entire production. The instruments crash and shriek and moan around the central theme, which, like a scarlet thread, runs through the web and woof of the composition. As the end approaches it grows louder and more obvious, and when it is

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finally reached all the hundreds of instruments together break forth in the triumphant rendering of the great Reformer's wonderful and famous choral, "the Marseillaise of the Reformation."

It is even so with that great movement. It runs like a scarlet thread through all the history of these modern times, great in their manifold achievements. And as the ages approach the final consummation of all things, it will more and more be seen that God was in and over and with him, when, four hundred years ago, he moved an unknown monk to nail ninety-five theses upon the door of the Castle Church in the old town of Wittenberg, Germany.

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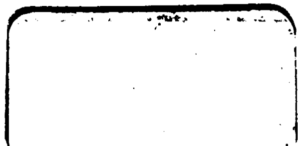

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