

## WHAT DID "THE REFORMATION" REFORM?

THE so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century started out with the professed object of removing evils which, it was claimed, had crept into the Church. The claim, in some respects, was entirely true. On this point there is no room for controversy, and about it there never was a controversy between the "Reformers" and those who opposed them. The real questions in dispute were, what the actual evils were, and how and by what means they should be removed? Both parties at first agreed that the existing evils, whatever they might be, were not inherent in the Church, and did not originate in her essential constitution, nor grow out of it.

But very soon the "Reformers," hopeless of bringing the Church and its hierarchy over to their ideas, took other ground, and maintained that the Church was corrupt in its very constitution; that from the temple of God it had become a synagogue of Satan; that its visible Head, the Pope, was Antichrist; that the Papacy must be destroyed; that new doctrines, different from and opposed to those which were taught, and had been taught, must be introduced, and, in fact, a new Church created. The Bible, it was alleged, furnished the necessary instruction and authority for such an undertaking.

But the followers of the "Reformers" soon found that such an attempted justification of their movement must be qualified, so as to conceal, and, if possible, explain away its direct contradiction of our Blessed Redeemer's declarations respecting the perpetuity and indefectibility of His Church. Accordingly, in their various, divergent, and contradictory creeds and confessions, they resorted to various rhetorical subterfuges to keep out of view the real thought which underlay all those creeds and confessions, and the realization of which was the real object of their movements.

They set up the figment of an *invisible* Church of Christ, to be created and re-created at the will and pleasure of its members, though all history testified that, from the day of the Church's first establishment, it had been a visible, divine constitution, in the world yet not of it, endowed with divine authority and powers, which it was perpetually to possess, and with a divinely constituted hierarchy to exercise that authority and those powers. They tried, in some instances, too, to trace up a succession from the Apostles, through various despicable, heretical sects and schisms, the

Hussites, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Lollards and the Cathari, and their Manichean predecessors. But the claim was too preposterous to be generally and vigorously made. Conceding that they were the legitimate successors of those sects, it simply proved that they were bad descendants of bad ancestors. For those sects had advocated principles and practices plainly incompatible with pure morality, and utterly irreconcilable with social and civil order. But even this miserable claim could not be made good. Many of the ideas of previous heretical sects, it is true, were adopted by the "Reformers;" but there was no connection between those sects and the so-called Reformation showing any real historical continuity. Luther, Melancthon, Carlstadt, Osiander, Munzer, Zwingli, Beza, Bucer, and Calvin, on the Continent of Europe, and Henry VIII., Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Elizabeth, of England, were not, in any historical sense, children of previous sects or schisms, but went out incontestably from the communion of the Catholic Church. They could not, therefore, with any consistency or truth set up even the miserable plea of sectarian continuity for their rebellion. Their movements were movements instituted *de novo*; and the only plea that can be made in defence of the Reformation, consistent with either history or logic, rests on the assumption that the Catholic Church, the only then existing religious organization that even claimed to be the Church of Christ, had become an apostasy, and that *they* (the "Reformers") had the right to re-create it from the Bible. This assumption, beyond all question, was the basis on which Luther himself placed his movement from the day he openly threw off the authority of the Catholic Church to that of his death; and back to it all the various creeds of Protestantism are driven by an invincible logical necessity.

The agreement on this point of the vast majority of members of Protestant sects, however opposed to each other in doctrine and practice, is conclusive proof. Whatever their controversialists may say, and however subtly they may endeavor to explain away and qualify the fact, Protestants generally, as a final resort, discard all testimonies of history to the continuity of the Catholic Church from the days of the Apostles as impertinent to the question, and fall back upon the Bible—that is, their own interpretation of the Bible—in defence of the origin of their respective sects.

The movement, miscalled "The Reformation," was, therefore, in its objects and purposes, as regards the then existing Christian Church, not a *reformation* in any sense. It was, essentially and in its fundamental idea, a rebellion against the Church,—an effort to destroy it, and to construct a religion for Christian Europe, *de novo*, from the Bible—that is, from such parts of the Bible as the "Re-

formers" acknowledged to be inspired, and which they claimed to have the right of interpreting and expounding according to their own individual notions. As regards the then existing Christian Church the lines written by Luther with a piece of chalk on a wall of his chamber, during his last sickness, were the keynote of the whole movement:

"Pestis eram vivus, moriens mors tua ero, Papa."

("Living, I was your pest; dying, O Pope, I shall be your death.")

The question, then, fairly confronts us, was the movement (intended avowedly and obviously to destroy the existing Christian Catholic Church), so far as it succeeded in introducing another religious belief and practice, a real reform of religion?

I. Did the so-called Reformation introduce or promote purer doctrine? There are two ways of arriving at a correct answer to this question. One is by examining the fundamental doctrinal ideas of the "Reformers," and developing their logical consequences. The other is by examining the results as shown in history and the light of actually existing facts to-day. We shall employ both methods.

1. The Reformers, rapidly driven on by the irresistible logic of their movement, broadly disclaimed the testimony of the Church Fathers as to what was true doctrine, and the authority alike of Pope and Councils. They appealed, or at least Luther did, at first to the Pope, but almost immediately defied him. They appealed from him to a Council, but never could be gotten to pledge themselves to submit to its decision. Their final resort was invariably an appeal to the Sacred Scriptures as *they* interpreted them and to those parts of them only which *they* acknowledged to be inspired. And this principle of the "Reformers" is interwoven with the warp and woof of all Protestant "Confessions." Tear it out, and the entire fabric of each and all of them falls asunder. It is embodied in the false popular tradition that "Luther unchained the Bible."

But, in thus setting up "the Bible" as "the rule of faith," the Reformers broke loose from all Christian antiquity. If the doctrine of the Reformers on this point is the pure one, the true one, then the Christian religion was impure and Christian doctrine untrue, from its very start. Protestants for a time professed to make great account of the early ages of Christianity, and asserted they could find in them proofs that would vindicate their assumed "rule of faith." Latterly, with more prudence or less recklessness, they say very little about the ages of "primitive Christianity." Yet, going back to whichever of the earlier ages of the Christian Church they choose, they fail to find any such rule of faith. It did not exist in the age of St. Gregory the Great. Nor in that

of St. Leo the Great, Sts. Celestine, Hilary, Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, Vincent of Lerins. Nor yet in that of Sts. Athanasius, Basil, Ephrem, Damasus, Cyril of Jerusalem, and the Gregories of Nanzianzen and Nyssa, the age of the Council of Nice.

Going back before that Council (which Protestants profess to acknowledge as an Ecumenical Council of the "undivided," "pure" Church), we hear Tertullian appealing, not to the Sacred Scriptures in his treatise on "*Prescription*," but to the tradition of the Church; and insisting that heretics have no right to appeal to the Scriptures; that they are the exclusive property of the Church; that the Church may rightly say to heretics, in reply to any such appeal:

"Who are *you*? Whence do you come? What business have you, strangers, with my property? By what right are you, Marcion, felling *my* trees? By what authority are you, Valentine, turning the course of *my* streams? Under what pretence are you, Apelles, *removing my* landmarks? The estate is *MINE*; why do you, other persons, presume to work it and use it at your pleasure? The estate is *mine*; *I* have the *ancient, prior possession of it*; have the title-deeds from the original owners. *I* am the *heir of the Apostles*; they made their will with all proper solemnities in *my* favor, while they *disinherited* and cast *you* off, as *strangers and enemies*.

Thus wrote Tertullian to those who in his time appealed to the Sacred Scriptures against the Church.

If we consult St. Cyprian we hear him warning the Christians of Carthage who were inclined to follow promulgators of new opinions in the following pregnant words:

"I counsel and warn you, trust not rashly pernicious words, assent not lightly to declarations which are false, take not darkness for light, night for day, famine for food, thirst for drink, poison for medicine, death for salvation."

Then he lays down "*the rule*" by which false doctrine is to be distinguished from true:

"God is one, and Christ is one, and there is one Church, and one Cathedra founded on the Rock by the Lord's voice. No other altar can be set up, there can be no new altar, by reason of the one altar and the one priesthood. He who gathers elsewhere, scatters. Adulterous, impious, sacrilegious is whatsoever human passion may institute, in violation of the Divine arrangement. Keep far away from the contagion of such men, and avoid their word as you would flee from a cancer or a plague, mindful of the Lord's warning: 'They be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.'"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Epistle 43. It might almost seem as though the above brief quotation and other parts of this letter, written by St. Cyprian upwards of sixteen hundred years ago, had been intended, not only for the immediate instruction of the Christians of Carthage, but, by prophetic inspiration, as a warning to modern Ritualists and other would-be Protestant-Catholics who discard the so-called "right" of private judgment and claim to be Catholic though remaining outside the communion of the Church.

And then, to settle the whole question as to the rule by which error was to be determined from truth, heresy from the orthodox doctrine, schismatic movements from the normal action of Christianity, when Novatian set up pretensions to being Bishop of Rome and sought to secure the support and obedience (due to the Primacy) of the African Bishops, St. Cyprian wrote a number of letters showing that Cornelius (then Pope) was the true Bishop of Rome, and Novatian a pretender and schismatic. In one of these letters he refers to Novatian personally and to his claims to teaching "pure" doctrine.

"Be he who he may, and how much soever he may arrogate to himself, he is profane, he is foreign, he is without. And since after the *first* (Cornelius, then the true Bishop of Rome) there *can be no second*, whoever is made after one who ought to be alone, he (Novatian) is not second now, but none. . . . It is not *necessary to ask* WHAT *he teaches*, since he *teaches without*. Whoever and whatever he may be, he is no Christian who is not in Christ's Church. Boast as he may of his philosophy, or make vain parade of his eloquence, the man who has not kept fraternal charity and ecclesiastical unity has lost even all that he had before. . . . And whereas there is from Christ one Church divided throughout the world into many members, likewise one Episcopate spread abroad by a *concordant* multitude of many Bishops, *he*, after this order has been handed down by God, after this compact full unity of the Catholic Church has been everywhere settled, now undertakes to *create a human* Church, and sends forth his *new* apostles into many cities to plant this *recent* institution."

Then, again, because of this and other schisms and heresies likely to mislead the faithful, St. Cyprian wrote his renowned treatise, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, in which he lays down this *rule*:

"A summary *test of truth* is immediately at hand for *faith*. The Lord addresses Peter: I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall also be loosed in heaven. Again He says to the same, after His resurrection: 'Feed my sheep.' On that one He builds His Church and to him commits His sheep to be fed. And although after His resurrection He gives like power to all the Apostles, and says, 'As my Father hath sent Me, even so I send you; receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,' yet still, to make the unity clear, he provided by His authority that the origin of this same unity should start from one. The other Apostles were also indeed what Peter was, endowed with like partnership both of honor and power, but the beginning proceeds from unity, and the Primacy is given to Peter that there may be shown to be one Church of Christ and one Cathedra; . . . that the Church of Christ may be demonstrated one. . . . Will he who withstands and resists the Church, presume still that he is in the Church, when the blessed Apostle Paul also sets forth the *sacrament of unity* in like style where he says: 'There is one body and one spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God?' . . . Tear a sunbeam from its place; the unity of the light suffers no division. Break off a bough from a tree; it has no further power of growth. Cut off a stream from its fountain; it must soon become dry. So the Church of the Lord. . . . She sends forth her abundant streams abroad, far and wide in every direction; yet is there but one head, one origin, one mother of continually prolific grace. Of her womb we are born; by her milk we are nourished; with her

spirit we are animated. . . . Whoever is out of her is a stranger ; he is profane, he is an enemy. No one can have God for his father, who has not the Church for his mother. If one might escape who was out of Noah's ark, then may he also escape who is out of the Church."

Going back a few years farther, we come to St. Irenæus, born only about twenty years after St. John was called to rest from his labors, and a pupil of St. Polycarp who was a pupil of St. John. St. Irenæus lays down "the rule of faith" for Christians, the rule by which they may distinguish truth from error, as follows :

"It is necessary to hearken to the Presbyters of the Church, who have the succession from the Apostles, and along with the succession of the Episcopate have received the certain gift of truth according to the good pleasure of the Father. . . . The true knowledge is the doctrine of the Apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church in the whole world, and the character of the body of Christ according to the succession of the Bishops, to whom the Apostles have committed the Church in every place."

Then, showing that the ways of heresy are many and various and that the doctrine of the Church is one and unchanging, he says :

"She (the Church), though spread throughout the world, with the greatest care, and as occupying but one house, preserves the faith that has been handed down, and believes it, having but one soul and one heart; and proclaims it, teaches it, hands it down, with marvellous agreement, as if she had but one mouth. The languages indeed are different, but the matter of the tradition is still one and the same. . . . If the Apostles had left us no writings, ought we not still to follow the rule of that tradition which they handed over to those to whom they committed the churches? To this rule many nations of barbarians do hold in fact, which believe in Christ and have His salvation inscribed by the Holy Ghost, carefully following the tradition. . . . which we have received and hold from our Church, and which the Spirit of God continually renovates, like a precious jewel in a gold casket, imparting to it the quality of His own perpetual youth."

Then, as if to clinch the matter, St. Irenæus shows that this tradition handed down from the Apostles is not left to the Bishops, singly and independently, but united in a general corporation, the several parts of which are held together in unity, the centre of which is the Church at Rome.

"As it would be tedious," he says, "to enumerate the succession of all the churches, we confound all those who in any improper manner gather together . . . by pointing to the tradition of the greatest and most ancient church, known to all, founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles Peter and Paul, and to her faith announced to men, which comes down to us by the succession of Bishops. For with this church, on account of her more powerful principality it is necessary that every church, that is the faithful who are on all sides, should agree, in which the Apostolic tradition has been always preserved," etc.

This brings us to the very verge of the age of the Apostles, and going back to it we find St. Ignatius, the personal pupil of St. John, and St. Clement, whose name St. Paul declares is "in the book of

life." On his way to Rome to be devoured by wild beasts by the order of Trajan, St. Ignatius wrote seven letters; four from Smyrna and three from Troas. In these letters, full of earnest practical instruction, he dwells constantly on the necessity of concord and unity, and constantly lays down the *rule* by which in the several churches it is to be secured—*obedience to the Bishop*:

"Do nothing without your Bishop." "For where there is division and wrath God dwelleth not." . . . "It is therefore fitting that you should by all means glorify Jesus Christ, who hath glorified you, that by a uniform obedience ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and may all speak the same things concerning everything, and that being subject to your Bishop and Presbyters, ye may be wholly and thoroughly sanctified."

"Wherefore it will become you to run together, according to the will of your Bishop, as also ye do. . . . Let us take heed, therefore, that we do not set up ourselves against the Bishop, that we may be subject to God."

"Be ye united to your Bishop, and those who pre-side over you, to be your pattern and director in the way to immortality. As, therefore, the Lord did nothing, neither by Himself nor yet by His Apostles, without the Father, so neither do ye anything without your Bishop and Presbyters. . . . Have one common prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in charity and in joy undefiled. There is one Lord Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is better."

". . . . Use none but Christian nourishment, abstaining from pasture which is of another kind, I mean heresy. For they that are heretics confound together the doctrine of Jesus Christ with their own poison. . . . Wherefore guard yourselves against such persons; and that you will do if you are not puffed up; but continue inseparable from Jesus Christ, our God, and from your Bishop, and from the commands of the Apostles. He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that is, that does anything without the Bishop, and Presbyters, and Deacons, is not pure in his conscience."<sup>3</sup>

". . . . Flee divisions and false doctrines. . . . Where your Shepherd is there do ye follow after. . . . For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are with their Bishop. And as many as shall with penitence return into the unity of the Church, even these shall also be the servants of God. Be not deceived, brethren; if any one follows him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God; if any one walks after any other opinion he agrees not with the passion of Christ."<sup>4</sup>

Thus we might go on adding quotations from other letters which St. Ignatius wrote to other churches on his way to Rome, but we abstain. Not being able to write to several other churches, he requested St. Polycarp, in the last of his seven letters, to do it for him; and, in his letter to that Saint, writes as follows, indicating what he wished St. Polycarp to write:

"Hearken unto the Bishop, that God also may hearken unto you. My soul be security for them that submit to their Bishop, with their Presbyters and Deacons. And may my portion be together with theirs in God. . . . Let none of you be found a deserter; but let your baptism remain as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your charity as your spear; your patience as your whole armor."

We have reserved for last reference, among the epistles of St. Ignatius, his letter to the church at Rome, the fourth in the order

<sup>1</sup> Epistle to the Ephesians.

<sup>3</sup> Epistle to the Trallians.

<sup>2</sup> Epistle to the Magnesians.

<sup>4</sup> Epistle to the Philadelphians.

of his letters from Smyrna. In this letter he chiefly entreats the Roman Christians, in their charity and prayers, not to obtain from God that he should be spared by the wild beasts, to which he was to be exposed, and thus be prevented from receiving the crown of martyrdom, which he so ardently desired. "I beseech you," he writes, "to show not an unreasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to be the food of wild beasts, whereby I may attain unto God." He seems to exhaust his powers of language in heaping upon the Church of Rome epithets of reverential admiration, designating it as

"the Church that has obtained mercy through the magnanimity of the Most High Father, and of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son; the Church *beloved* and ENLIGHTENED through His will, Who wills all things that are according to the charity of Jesus Christ, our God, which PRESIDES in the place of the Roman region, being worthy of God, most comely, deservedly BLESSED, most *celebrated*, properly\**organized*, most chaste and PRESIDING in charity, HAVING THE LAW OF CHRIST, bearing the name of the Father."

We come now immediately to the age of the Apostles. While St. John was still living at Ephesus, dissensions arose among the Christians at Corinth. These dissensions primarily had reference to Priests with whom some of the Corinthians were dissatisfied, and whom they undertook to depose. They involved also disputes respecting doctrine (particularly that of the resurrection of the body), and respecting subjects of practical Christian duty, as is evident from the topics embraced in St. Clement's letter. For authoritative settlement of the whole trouble the Corinthian Christians passed by the Apostle John (still living at Ephesus), St. Ignatius, then Bishop of Smyrna, St. Polycarp, then Bishop of Antioch, and other Bishops to whom they stood in close relation, either by local nearness or by nationality and sameness of language, and invoked the intervention of St. Clement, then Bishop of Rome. He complied with their request by sending to them (along with certain messengers or delegates) a letter of instruction, exhortation, rebuke, and warning, which is still extant.

It is only necessary to glance at this letter to be convinced that both St. Clement, its writer, and those for whose benefit it was intended, moved in an order of thought utterly irreconcilable with that which gathers around the assumption that the Bible is the rule of faith. It dwells on the sin of disturbing the divinely-established unity and order of the Church. It proves with a wealth of arguments and illustrations, drawn from the operations of the natural world, the constitution of civil society, the dealings of God with the Jews through the whole course of their history, and the manner in which the Apostles had not only chosen successors to themselves but had instructed those who should succeed them to keep up the



succession, by appointing others who were to follow them in office, when they themselves fell asleep, that unity, and order, and authority in the Church are based both on natural necessity and on express divine appointment; and that to maintain order, and unity, and authority requires the subordination of the several parts to the whole, and of the inferior to the superior. Speaking of the Jews under the Old Testament dispensation, he says:

"The High Priest has his proper functions; to the Priests their proper place is appointed; to the Levites appertain their proper services; and the Layman is confined within the limits prescribed to Laymen."

Referring to the organization of an army as a further example, he says:

"All are not prefects nor rulers of thousands, nor rulers of fifties, etc. But each man in his own rank executes the orders given by the king and governors."

Like St. Paul he illustrates the doctrine he is enforcing by reference to the human body, pointing out that

"even the smallest limbs of our body are necessary and useful for the whole body, but all the members must conspire<sup>1</sup> and unite *in subjection*, that the whole body may be preserved."

Then, coming still closer to his point, he repeats what he had before referred to, and says:

"The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having, therefore, received a charge . . . they appointed their first fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be Bishops and Deacons unto them that should believe. . . . And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the Bishop's office. For this cause, therefore, they provided for a continuance that, if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their administration. . . . Wherefore, then, are there strifes, and wraths, and factions, and divisions, and wars amongst you? Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace that was shed upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ?" . . .

Then, evidently referring to his supreme Pontifical authority in the Church, as Bishop of Rome and successor to St. Peter (a fact which, being well known to the Corinthians, it was unnecessary for him explicitly to assert), St. Clement significantly adds:

"Ye, therefore, that laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves unto the Priests, bending the knees of your hearts. Learn to submit yourselves . . . laying aside the arrogant and proud stubbornness of your tongue. . . . But if certain persons should be disobedient to the words spoken by Him [Jesus Christ] through us, they will entangle themselves in no slight transgression and danger."

". . . Yet ye will give us great joy and gladness if ye render obedience to the things written by us through the Holy Spirit, and root out the anger of your unholy jealousy, according to the entreaty which we have made for peace and concord in this letter."

<sup>1</sup> "Conspire;" breathe together; have the same spirit.

Then, St. Clement informs the Corinthians that, along with his letter, he has sent to them persons who in our day would be styled Papal Legates :

"And we have also sent," he writes, "faithful and prudent men that have walked among us from youth unto old age unblameably, *who shall also be witnesses between you and us. And this we have done that ye might know that we have had, and still have, every solicitude that ye might be at peace. . . . Now send ye back speedily unto us our messengers [naming them] in peace and with joy that they may the more quickly report to us the peace and concord which is prayed for and earnestly desired by us, that we also may the more speedily rejoice over your good order.*"

The quotations we have given from this ancient and precious relic of Christian antiquity, pointed as they are even in the detached form in which we have had to quote them, are less forcible and significant than when read along with their context in the letter itself. It was written before the last of the Apostles had fallen asleep, by one who had learned his doctrine from their lips, whose name St. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, declares is in the "Book of Life," and who sat in Peter's chair at Rome, the third in the order of succession from that great and glorious Apostle. No wonder it was reverentially read on frequent stated occasions in the Church at Corinth for many years after its reception. Till the settlement by the Church of the canon of the Sacred Scriptures, centuries after, it was bound up in the same volume with one or another of the Gospels or Apostolic Epistles, and was regarded by many Christians as of equal, or almost equal authority with the divinely-inspired Scriptures. Apart from its plain ear-marks of its antiquity, and its allusions to then present circumstances, it might easily be accepted as a Pontifical brief or letter from the present Sovereign Pontiff of the Church, admonishing and encouraging the faithful, and warning and rebuking the seditious and rebellious.

And all the quotations we have given, pointed and direct as many of them are, are even less forcible in the evidence they furnish in separate form than no such "rule of faith" as Luther set up was acknowledged by the Christians who learned Christian doctrine directly from the lips of the Apostles, or from those who immediately succeeded the Apostles, than are those quotations in their combined, circumstantial, and overwhelming proof of this fact.

They show that the whole order of thought and belief, up to the time of the Apostles, was different from, and irreconcilable with, that of the so-called "Reformers." If any one proposed to appeal to the Sacred Scriptures in support of a refusal to accept the teaching of the Church, the very proposal was treated as preposterous. "What business have *you* with the Sacred Oracles of God?" was the challenge that at once put an end to his pretensions.

"They are *my* property, given to *me* by Christ, who appointed *me*, to preserve, defend them, expound, teach His Gospel. *You* are intruders, invaders, devastators. What business have *you* on *my* estate? What right have *you* to cut down *my* trees, remove *my* landmarks, divert the course of *my* streams?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gieseler, a Protestant, furnishes, in his notes and references, countless proofs of it.

Mosheim, the classic Lutheran historian, says: "Cyprian and the rest cannot have known the corollaries which follow from their precepts about the Church. For no one is so dull as not to see that, between a certain unity of the universal Church, terminating in the Roman Pontiff, and such a community as we have described out of Irenæus and Cyprian, there is scarcely so much room as between hall and chamber, or between hand and fingers."

Neander, the classic rationalistic Protestant German church historian, commenting on phrases used by St. Cyprian (the genuineness of which some persons dispute), says that those disputed clauses contain nothing that is not elsewhere affirmed by St. Cyprian.

His Eminence, Cardinal Newman, while still a Protestant, and striving to actualize his "fond dream" of a *Via Media*, by which Anglicanism might be reconciled with Catholicity, wrote:

"Did St. Athanasius or St. Ambrose come suddenly to life it cannot be doubted what communion they would mistake [not *mistake*, but *intelligently take*.—G. D. W.] for their own. All surely will agree that these Fathers, with whatever difference of opinion, whatever protests, if we will, would find themselves more at home with such men as St. Bernard or St. Ignatius Loyola, or with the lonely priest in his lodgings, or the holy Sisterhood of Mercy, or the unlettered crowd before the altar, than with the rulers or the members of any other religious community."

Dr. John Williamson Nevin's learning and intellectual acuteness and vigor are unquestionable. He is frequently quoted as correct in his historical statements, even while striving to find a basis for Protestantism, by Archbishop Kenrick, in his treatise on the Primacy of the Apostolic See. After an exhaustive examination of ancient Christian writings, he was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that all attempts to vindicate Protestantism, or the "Reformers," on the ground that the so-called "Reformation" was a return to "primitive Christianity," or, to use his own favorite expression, "a re-pristination" of it, were worse than useless, involving a direct contradiction of the plain facts of history. He subtly evaded the evident conclusion that the Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church is the one true Church of Christ, and that Protestantism is a heresy and a schism, by setting up the theory that Protestantism is an evolution in the onward course of history; and that the *Church of the future*, yet to be evolved, would unite such elements of truth as were to be found in Protestantism with all its manifest contradictions and tergiversations, with those which the Catholic Church has preserved and taught. He says, referring to the assumed agreement of Protestantism with "primitive Christianity," "that Protestantism . . . is still farther away from this older faith than the system by which it is supposed to have been supplanted in the Middle Ages. No defence of Protestantism can well be more insufficient and unsound than that by which it is set forth as a pure *re-pristination* of what Christianity was at the beginning of either the fourth century, or the third, or the second. It will always be found, on examination, to have no such character in fact; and every attempt to force upon the world any imagination of the sort in favor of either Episcopalianism or Presbyterianism, or Independency, in favor of all or of any one of the threescore and ten sects which at this time 'follow the Bible as their sole rule of faith,' must only serve in the end, by its palpable falsehood, to bring suspicion and doubt on the whole cause which is thus badly upheld." (Mercersburg Review, vol. iii., p. 481.)

"We owe it to ourselves here to see and own the full truth. The religion of these Fathers was not of the shape and type now usually known as Evangelical, and paraded commonly as the best style of Protestantism. They knew nothing of the view which

Protestant historians—we mean those who have really examined the still existing remains of ancient Christian literature—admit this, and it is to-day practically accepted as true by the whole Protestant public, who, without regard to sporadic attempts of Protestant ministers, here and there, to escape the monstrous conclusion to which it irresistibly leads, summarily and contemptuously set aside the testimony of Christian antiquity as of no account, and claim the right unqualifiedly of taking “the Bible as their guide,” that is, such parts of the Sacred Scriptures as they acknowledge to be inspired, and, so far as they really acknowledge their inspiration, constructing a “pure Christianity” from their own ideas.

Our point here is not the right or the wrong on the part of the “Reformers” in thus breaking loose from all Christian antiquity, and setting up a new rule of faith. What we are here concerned in is the *fact* that they *did* it.

If the Protestant rule of faith be the right and true one, then the Christian Church at once fell into apostasy and our Blessed Redeemer’s promise to His Apostles when He commissioned them to go forth and teach all nations was falsified the moment the Apostles proceeded upon their mission. For there is not the slightest sign in secular or ecclesiastical history that the Fathers of the Church in the ages even of Saints Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, and Cyprian departed in any way from the instructions given them by the Apostles, and constructed a new and different rule of faith from that of the Apostles. They *could not* have done it without the knowledge of *other* Christians who had received *their* faith and learned *their* doctrine from the Apostles. The faith had been disseminated, and churches had been thickly planted by the immediate hands of the Apostles or of their collaborators, Saints Mark, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus and others, in Syria, Lesser Asia, Greece, Italy, and Egypt, before Saints Peter and Paul had received their crowns of martyrdom. And these churches and the countries in which they existed were in constant communication. Yet we must suppose, to make the hypothesis on which the so-called Reformation can alone be vindicated, that not in one but in all of these countries the faith was suddenly and quietly changed, corrupted; and that, too, not simply as regards particular doctrines but as regards the *rule of faith* itself; as regards the very standard and test by which truth was to be known and separated from error, without any protest or opposition on the part of the members of those churches, without indeed a word or sign that has come down in

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makes the Bible and Private Judgment the principle of Christianity, or the only rule of faith. They took Christianity to be a supernatural system, propounded by the Saviour to His Apostles, and handed down from them as a living tradition (including the Bible) by the Church.” (Mercersburg Review, vol. iii., p. 487.)

history that they were aware that any change *had* been made. They went to sleep at night with "the Bible as their rule of faith," and woke up in the morning, finding without astonishment or surprise that that rule of faith had been discarded, and a new one based on "hierarchical pretensions,"—on the divine authority of the Church to teach—had been quietly foisted upon them.

It is incredible; it is false. It would be far easier to suppose that Calvinism in New England has largely given place to Unitarianism, and that, in turn, to the recent forms of Rationalism, without any sign or indication of the changes that have occurred; that there was no controversy, no conflict, no struggle between the outgoing and the incoming systems.

Thus, on every side we are shut up to the conclusion that the order of Christian thought and doctrine (as well as the doctrine itself), and the rule of faith for distinguishing and separating true doctrine from false, were the same in the post-Apostolic age as in that of the Apostles. And what the rule of faith laid down by the Apostles was, is clear to any one who will take up their Epistles and read them with a mind free from the mist and prejudices of Protestant tradition.

The Church is exhibited in those Epistles as a divine constitution, a veritable kingdom of heaven upon earth, in the world yet not of the world, endowed forever with heavenly powers, destined to withstand "the gates of hell," to endure through all time; commissioned and constituted to teach the everlasting Gospel of Christ; to exercise His authority, to dispense His grace; to be the House of God, the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. As such a real, actual divine constitution the Church comes before us in the New Testament, with rules, laws, and officers to enforce them; all the members (officers included) not acting independently but bound together into one body, obedient to one law, submitting to one rule, having one faith, one doctrine; to separate from which body was schism, and to accept or profess another doctrine was heresy, to be guilty of which not only damned the souls of those who wilfully were guilty, but stamped them so unmistakably with the mark of Satan that they were to be avoided and shunned by faithful Christians. To set up a new doctrine on any pretence, or exercise private judgment against the doctrine of the Church, or refuse obedience to its authority, was at once to fall into condemnation. The test of true doctrine was the living tradition of the Church handed down by Christ to His Apostles and by the Apostles to their spiritual children. To *believe* was not merely to accept intellectually a doctrine, but to submit, to obey. "O senseless Galatians," exclaims St. Paul, "who hath bewitched you that you should not *obey* the truth?" To believe or teach any

different doctrine from that which *was* taught and had been "received" (though the teacher were even one of the Apostles or an angel from heaven) was to be "*anathema*" (Gal. 1 : 8, 9).

This is the constitution of the Church and the rule of faith that confront us in the days of the Apostles. And in the very nature of things it must have been so. The Apostolic Church *could* not have stultified herself (appointed as she was to be the pillar and ground of the truth), so far as to make certain records, as understood and expounded by individual judgment, of what it was her divine mission and work to teach, to be her guide and the rule of her faith and that of her members. She *could* not, we say, unless the Church and the Apostles with her had proved false to the COMMISSION received from the lips of our Divine Lord. Immediately connected with which, too, was a declaration of the plenitude of power He possessed in heaven and on earth, and a declaration of His abiding presence in the Church throughout all time till "the consummation of the world." "Go, TEACH." "He that heareth *you*, heareth ME."

The so-called Reformation, therefore, was a breaking away from the existing order of things (and a rebellion against it), not only in the Church of the Middle Ages, in that of the times of Saints Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, the Gregories, Basil, and Athanasius; in the days of the Saints and Fathers before the Nicene Council and up to the Apostolic age; but in the very age of the Apostles. The conclusion, then, is irresistible that whatever else the so-called Reformation was, or was not with respect to other interests of society, as regards the Christian religion and the Church, as they actually existed in the world from the days of the Apostles down through all ages, it was not a reformation or improvement of what went before it, but a reconstruction, *de novo*,—an attempted re-creation of Christianity and of the Church by the so-called "Reformers" on the basis of *their* ideas of the meaning of the Sacred Scriptures, or of those Scriptures which the "Reformers" received. If the "Reformers" were right, then the Church, from their time up to Apostolic times and even in the Apostolic age was apostate; and the teacher, defender, pillar, and ground of error instead of truth. And then the promise and declaration of our Divine Lord failed almost at the moment of His uttering them. From this impious conclusion, according to the "rule" set up by the "Reformers," there is no escape.

How this conclusion, too, stultifies all history and common sense, we need not say. That a Church and a religion, as actually and authoritatively taught in and by that Church, and as enjoined upon its members and practised by them, became at its very outset so hopelessly in error, so corrupt and apostate, as to falsify the true

rule of faith, the test by which truth may be known and may be distinguished from error, should yet have destroyed the delusions, and exposed and refuted the falsehoods of ancient heathendom; should have raised human society immeasurably above all that it had ever been before; should have emancipated woman from her slavery to the lusts and passions of men, and taught to her and taught to men her dignity and her true relation to the family and to society; should have broken the bonds of slaves and freed captives from their cruel thralldom, teaching the universal brotherhood of men as resulting from the universal fatherhood of God, their Creator, and from the redemption purchased for them by the passion and death of His only Begotten Son; should have taught those who believed in this Church and its doctrine to practice honesty, humility, gentleness, purity and chastity; to crucify all selfishness; to habitually cultivate self-denial; and to live, and if necessary die, for others; to esteem charity above all things else; should have carefully and reverentially preserved and perpetuated the Sacred Scriptures (the very writings which Protestantism asserts are a witness against it); and when barbarian invasions, like successive waves of a destroying deluge, buried under the ruins they created all the classic writings of heathen antiquity, should have searched for, discovered, restored them, and lit anew the torch of intellectual knowledge even while the storms of constant wars were striving to extinguish it; should have taught the arts of peace to those rude and barbarous peoples; should have softened their savage cruelty, and eventually led them out of it; should have opposed a gentle, constant, yet firm and determined resistance to the stern tyranny of the feudal system; should have in like manner constantly stood as a mediator and intercessor between arbitrary kings and rulers, and rebellious peoples; teaching them their respective rights and duties, prescribing the proper bounds and limits to their respective claims; should have multiplied schools and established universities and promoted learning, civil order, liberty, and peace throughout all Europe; should have, in short, been a beacon whose rays of light shone through all the darkness of the Middle Ages, and guided all the nations with respect to every interest and concern of society; should have rendered the splendid services to human civilization which Protestant and infidel writers, as well as Catholic historians testify this Church has done;—to imagine that such a Church, so apostate, blinded, corrupt and tyrannical, would or could have done all this passes, we say, the bounds of common sense, and stultifies all history.

But we pursue this point further. We affirm (and the affirmation, to our mind, carries with it its own proof), that the so-called Reformation, in setting up "Private Judgment" as its "rule of

faith," its test of truth and error, the ultimate tribunal by which each was to be tried, acquitted or condemned, has introduced a rule that is essentially revolutionary and destructive; impracticable of application to any human interests, concerns or societies, secular or religious; and if it could be or were applied to them, would inevitably dissolve them into a collection of jarring, warring, independent, repellant atoms, incapable of being brought into even an approximate union. No savage tribe, however faint and weak may be the sense of union, authority, and law that rules it, allows or can allow the so-called right of private judgment. No voluntary association, not even a foot-ball, rowing, or base-ball club, allows the meaning and intention of its rules and by-laws to be interpreted by the "private judgment" of its individual members. Not even a band of robbers permits its rules to be so interpreted. And the higher you advance towards a more perfect society, the less the exercise of this so-called right is allowed with regard to society's authority and laws.

No government or people in the world, we repeat, barbarous, semi-civilized, or civilized, will allow "private judgment" to assert itself, either against its laws or in the interpretation of them. Private judgment, exercised in this illegitimate way and outside of its proper scope and limits, would not be tolerated for a moment. And rightfully so. What would the common law or the enactments of the legislature of any people amount to, if left, as regards the interpretation of their meaning and their application to the varying circumstances of men, to the private judgment of each individual? It is the unwritten, traditionary law, the "*common*" law, of every nation, which forms in greatest part its "*corpus juris*"; and the statute law finds its firmest support in the *common* or unwritten law. Both the statute and the common law, too, are vigorous and practically effective in proportion to their correspondence with, and their truthful expression of, the actual, living, traditional consciousness of the people for whom they are the law. No advocate or lawyer, in any tribunal of justice in any country on earth, civilized or uncivilized, could obtain even a moment's hearing who would undertake to set up his private judgment against the recorded decisions or the unwritten traditions of that tribunal. And the citizen who would attempt it would be regarded as an incorrigible, defiant rebel and outlaw, or else as an idiot or a madman.

It is needless to add, that were it possible to carry out the assumed right of private judgment—on which the "Reformers" planted themselves over against the Church—to its legitimate consequences, it would destroy every existing government, would dissolve human society, and, in fact, make it impossible for society



to exist. Mankind would be sundered into as many units as there are persons, each one entirely independent of all others, and an absolute law to himself.

And, so far as this assumed right of private judgment could be, and was, carried into practical effect, it did produce just such consequences. The "war of the peasants," and the outrageous violations of common decency and morality of various Protestant teachers and leaders, their "free-love" doctrines and practices, etc., were the logical outcome of this assumption. For if Luther and Zwingli, and others, had the right to interpret, and not only interpret but interpolate the Sacred Scriptures, to suit their private judgment, why had not Carlstadt and Munzer and their followers? And the almost constant conflicts of peoples with rulers, and factions with factions, as well as of nations with nations, which convulsed and desolated Europe immediately after the so-called "Reformation" became a power, and for generations afterwards were the legitimate consequences of the same false assumption.

We have been stating only actual self-evident facts with regard to the secular concerns of human society. And if what we have said is true with regard to them, how much more true must it not be with respect to the interests which are embraced in man's redemption from sin, his reconciliation with God, and the attainment of his eternal destiny?

For Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. He has declared that not one jot or tittle of the divine law shall pass away till all be fulfilled. If, then, human law, so far as it *is* law, be "the perfection of human reason," and the reflection and expression of the divine law in its application of the principles of justice to the temporal affairs of men, it follows, of necessity, that in the constitution which Christ gave to His Church—through his Apostles, whom he personally instructed, and to whose remembrance the Holy Spirit brought all things He had commanded—He could not (nor could his Apostles and their successors in all ages) contradict in His "rule of faith,"—the test for distinguishing truth from error,—a universal principle by which the action of every society on earth is governed.

The so-called Reformation, therefore, in setting up its new "rule of faith," not only broke loose from the authority of the Church, and its perpetually-living traditions, but, in the exaltation of private judgment into the ultimate tribunal before which all questions between truth and error were to be decided, it placed the individual above all law, human and divine, except that which his own judgment would accept and approve.

II. We now turn directly to the question whether the so-called

Reformation produced any real reformation as respects morality by the influence its doctrines exerted.

The doctrine of "justification by faith alone," which precedes, in order of time, the express formulation by the "Reformers" of their assumed right of private judgment, was in reality a corollary of that assumption. As private judgment, if allowed, practically abolishes all law, human and divine, by denying that there is any authority to interpret and apply the law higher than the individual himself, it at once became necessary for Luther and the other "Reformers" (unless they squarely and openly denied all the truths of divine revelation) to find some other way than that which had always been taught by the Church for man's justification with God and his deliverance from Divine vengeance. This they professed to find in their doctrine of "justification by faith alone." According to this idea the sinner, filled with terror, and brought to the brink of despair, grasps at the merits of our Blessed Redeemer through faith which alone justifies him. Even in exercising this faith the individual has and acquires no merit himself. He is entirely passive, and the faith which he exercises is purely and entirely the gift of God. Nor does justification make him actually just "who is justified by faith." It is simply a forensic act of God, declaring him to be justified on account of Christ's merits, though not just in fact. Good works are the *necessary* fruits of faith; and as faith alone produces them, and as that is purely the gift of God, in the reception of which the individual (being totally depraved) exercises no volition and does nothing, good works confer no merits. With regard to sanctification, also, man is wholly passive, and the Holy Ghost entirely active. As the "Reformers" held that man, in consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve, having entirely lost the image of God, in which he was created, and having become totally corrupt and depraved, both in his intellect and his will, man was consequently incapable, till regenerated, of thinking, willing, or doing any good thing. All his actions, therefore, even those which were most strictly accordant with the precepts of the natural and divine law, were "evil and only evil, and that continually." "Conceived in sorrow and corruption, the child sins even in his mother's womb; when, as yet, a mere fœtus, an impure mass of matter, before it becomes a human creature, it commits iniquity and incurs damnation."<sup>1</sup> As he grows the innate element of corruption develops. Man has said to sin, "Thou art

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<sup>1</sup> Lutum illud ex quo vasculum hoc fingi cœpit, damnabile est. Fœtus in utero ante quam nascimur et homines incipimus peccatum est. Luther on Psalm, 4.

Ex corrupta hominis nativa, nihil nisi dannabile. Calvin's Institutes, book 2, chapter 3.

my father," and every act he performs is an offence against God; and to the worms, "You are my brothers;" and he crawls like them in mire and corruption. He is a bad tree, and *cannot* produce good fruit; a dung-hill, and can only exhale foul odors. These were favorite figures of Luther.

Thus every action of an unregenerate man, however just, generous or noble, was displeasing to God, as performed by one whose nature was utterly perverse and corrupt. On the other hand, no action that was bad would bring the regenerate man under condemnation, because he was *justified* by faith; nor were his good actions, in even the slightest degree, meritorious, because they were done entirely through grace given him by the Holy Spirit.

It is self-evident that these ideas, held by all the leading Reformers, with unimportant variations, deprived human actions of all moral character and mankind of all moral responsibility. Protestants try to deny this and explain it away, but their denials and evasions are in defiance of all sound logic. Moreover, Luther accepted this conclusion. He several times speaks of having defied the devil and enraged him beyond measure, by sinning boldly when the devil taunted him with having disobeyed the law of God. So, too, Luther concisely expresses the same detestable doctrine in his well-known declaration: "Sin, and sin boldly, only believe more boldly, and you shall be saved."

It is easy to see how naturally, in order to give logical coherence to a system of religion based on the ideas just stated, Luther was led to deny the freedom of the human will. He asserted that it was totally enslaved, and possessed no self-determining power. His favorite illustration was that of a horse compelled to move in whatever direction the rider required. If God be seated in the saddle, he said, man *must* act as God wills; but if the devil be the rider, then man *must* do what the devil wills. Nor did Luther shrink from carrying out this doctrine to its logical consequence of making God the author of sin and unjustly condemning sinners. He declared that God damns some who do not deserve it;<sup>1</sup> that He damns some before they are born;<sup>2</sup> and that God excites us to sin, and produces sin in us.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dass Gott etliche menschen verdammt, die es nicht verdient haben.

<sup>2</sup> Dass Gott etliche zur verdammnis verordnet habe, ehe sie geboren worden.

<sup>3</sup> Dass Gott die menschen zur Sünde antreibe, und Laster in ihnen wurcke.

So, too, in a letter to Melancthon from Wartburg Castle, dated August 1st, 1521, Luther writes: "Sin cannot destroy in us the reign of the Lamb, though we were to commit fornication and to kill a thousand times a day."

Again, in commenting on Genesis xix, 26, Luther says, that with regard to all things which pertain to the salvation of the soul, "man is like the statue of salt into which

Calvin's doctrine of Predestination was simply the logical capstone of Luther's impious declarations. According to Calvin, God by an unchangeable decree selected from all eternity certain persons to be saved, and certain persons to be damned. This selection was not based upon the foreseen belief, or any good disposition, or quality, or actions of those who were selected for salvation, nor on the foreseen unbelief, or bad disposition, or actions of those who were selected to be damned, but solely and entirely on the "good pleasure" of God. Those who are selected can never be cast away or lost; all others, whatever be their dispositions or their actions, are left by the eternal unchangeable decree of God in a state of "reprobation," and neither will be nor can be saved, whatever they may desire or do.<sup>1</sup>

Luther and Calvin were not the originators of these impious doctrines. They simply revived and reproduced in somewhat new forms ancient Gnostic and Manichean errors. The idea of man being the merely passive subject of a contest between God and the devil is only a variation of the doctrine of Manes. It is the old Persian idea of two eternal principles of good and evil, contending continually for the possession of man. We may add, too, that Luther's doctrine of the "slave-will" (this is the title Luther himself gave it) is substantially that which is now put forth by modern materialists, who contend that the human will is as devoid of self-directing and self-determining power, as is a feather subject to the action of different currents of air.

This brings us to the question: Did the "Reformation" cause a reformation of morals? That the doctrines we have just mentioned are destructive of all moral responsibility, is obvious. That they did not produce in all who accepted them a total open abnegation of all obligations of religion, natural and revealed, is easily accounted for.

However far astray men may go in their intellectual aberrations

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the wife of Lot was changed; to the trunk of a tree or a stone, like to a statue, lifeless, and having no use of either eyes, mouth, or other senses, or of a heart."

Melanchthon, like Luther, made God the author of all the evil and good that is done, of the adultery of David, the calling of St. Paul, the apostasy of Judas; and this not *permissively*, but actively and efficaciously.

<sup>1</sup> We are well aware that Luther and Calvin disagreed on many points, and even in their explanations of those we have brought forward. So, also, did others of the Reformers. Subsequently, too, an organized opposition to them was made by the "Remonstrants" or "Arminians." But we are not concerned here with the minor points of doctrine and side issues of the "Reformation." We are following down its main current. Luther and Calvin were the great coryphees of the "Reformation." All the other "Reformers" had subordinate parts. The Augsburg Confession, too, kept Luther's ideas in the background, though Luther signed it. Not, however, without quarrelling with Melanchthon, who drew it up. But the Augsburg Confession was an *Apology*; designedly framed for the purpose of conciliating the secular authorities of Germany by presenting Lutheranism in as inoffensive a form as was possible.

or their moral delinquencies, they still possess reason, conscience, and free-will. These exert a restraining power even over those who defy them and deny their existence. The image of God is so indelibly stamped upon humanity that men cannot, without becoming maniacs or demoniacs, totally abnegate reason and conscience.

Yet still, and notwithstanding this, the influence exerted by the doctrines of the Reformers immediately produced a great and widespread deterioration of morals, both public and private. Of this the writings of Luther's age and of that immediately following furnish incontestable proof. The correspondence, sermons, and other writings of the "Reformers," and those of the Humanists who, like Erasmus, sided decidedly neither with the Reformers nor with the Church, refer to this general deterioration of morals as a notorious fact. So, too, do Hume, Robertson, Macaulay, and Lecky, even while they, each in his own way, endeavor to disparage the Catholic religion.

Immediately on the "Reformation" movement acquiring volume and momentum crimes increased in number and enormity. Men quickly learned the lessons taught them both by the precepts and example of the Reformers. Setting up their own "private judgments" as their rule and guide, they scoffed at and defied authority, secular and spiritual. In the name of religion they perpetrated the foulest crimes.<sup>1</sup> A rigid Pharisaical severity on cer-

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<sup>1</sup> In "marrying" Catherine Bora, Luther not only broke the solemn vows he had voluntarily taken, but had a child by her only a few weeks after his "marriage" with her. He was not only intolerably obscene, but in his sermon on marriage he excused and defended fornication and adultery on the ground that they were acts which all persons were irresistibly impelled to perform by an inherent necessity of human nature; and that it was impossible to find in any city youths of twenty years of age who had abstained from those acts.

He wrote to the Knights of the Teutonic Order, in 1532, as follows: "The precept of multiplying is older than that of continence enjoined by the councils; it dates from Adam. It would be better to live in concubinage than chastity. Chastity is an unpardonable sin, whereas concubinage, with God's assistance, would not involve the loss of my salvation."

In his "Table-talk" he says: "While a Catholic he passed his life in vigils, fasts, and prayers, in poverty, chastity and obedience; but that after he was "reformed" he became another man. "I burn," he says, "with a thousand flames in my unsubdued flesh . . . and I, who ought to be fervent in spirit, am fervent only in impurity."

Calvin was branded because of having committed a crime of such shameful character that it cannot be named.

Cranmer was a sycophant, a trimmer; he perjured himself four times as executor of the will of Henry VIII., and a number of other times on other occasions. He excused and defended perjury, provided the oath were taken with a secret mental reservation. He took a "wife" while still professing to be bound by his vow of celibacy.

John Knox was foul-mouthed and of flagitious life. He excused and defended murder and assassination, when necessary to accomplish what he regarded as a good purpose.

Zwingli was guilty of fornication, and says of himself: "I cannot conceal the fire

tain points was united with utter license as regards many of the plainest obligations of religion and morality. The statute-books of the several principalities of which Germany was then composed, of Belgium and the Netherlands, of France and Switzerland, and of England, the severe measures resorted to by the magistrates to repress general lawlessness, of which they complain in their official reports and declare themselves unable to check, furnish indisputable evidence, directly to the point. But it is needless to multiply proofs. We call Luther himself as witness and give his own declaration as to the effects produced upon morality and religion by the new gospel of the "Reformation."

"I would not be astonished," he says, "if God should open the gates and windows of hell, and snow or rain down devils, or rain down on our heads fire and brimstone, or bury us in a fiery abyss as he did Sodom and Gomorrha. Had Sodom and Gomorrha received the gifts that have been granted to us, had they seen our visions and received our instructions, they would yet be standing. They were a thousand times less culpable than Germany, for they had not received the word of God from their preachers. . . . If Germany will act thus, I am ashamed to be one of her children or speak her language; and if I were permitted to impose silence on my own conscience, I would call in the Pope and assist him and his minions to forge new chains for us. Formerly, when we were the slaves of Satan, when we profaned the name of God, . . . money could be procured for endowing churches, for raising seminaries, for maintaining superstition. Now that we know the divine word, that we have learned to honor the blood of our Martyr-God, no one wishes to give anything. The children are neglected, and no one teaches them to serve God."

"Since the downfall of popery, and the cessation of excommunications and spiritual penalties, the people have learned to despise the word of God. They care no longer for the churches; they have ceased to fear and honor God. . . . I would wish if it were possible to leave these men without preacher or pastor, and let them live like swine. There is no longer any fear or love of God among them. After throwing off the yoke of the Pope every one wishes to live as he pleases."

This surely is to the point, and testimonies from almost every writer of eminence who touches upon the state of society as re-

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that burns me and drives me on to incontinence, since it is true that its effects have drawn upon me too many infamous reproaches among the churches."

Of Beza, Hesshuss writes: "Who will not be astonished at the incredible impudence of this monster, whose scandalous life is known throughout France?"

(Ecolampadius, Luther declared, "the devil, whom Ecolampadius employed, strangled him during the night in his bed.")

It is frequently urged in excuse of the virulence and coarseness and obscenity of the Reformers that they simply represented the spirit of the age. But this is untrue. They were shameful exceptions to, rather than representatives in this respect of, what the age was outside of themselves and their followers. It was in many respects an age of refinement rather than of coarseness.

Moreover, were the assertion true, it would form no excuse. Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Knox, and their co-workers claimed to be "*reformers*," and should have set the example of reformation in themselves.

<sup>1</sup> So notorious was the debauchery of the followers of Luther that it became a common saying when persons proposed to engage in drunkenness and revelry: "We will spend the day like *Lutherans*."

gards religion and morals in every country where Protestantism had a foothold in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries might be adduced in confirmation of it.

But it is not necessary to go back to past ages of the so-called Reformation to decide whether it has produced a real reformation as regards morality. It is only necessary to look upon facts existing all around us to-day. Protestantism has existed now for three hundred years, and has had ample time to show what improvement it can effect or has effected as regards morality. Yet, notwithstanding all the efforts still made, here and there, to perpetuate the old traditional falsehood of the superiority of Protestantism over the Catholic religion in promoting morality, the most thoughtful and candid even of Protestants award the palm to Catholicity; and the general verdict of public opinion is fast confirming this decision. It is not necessary to refer to official statistics of crime and social immorality, which have been published and republished, analyzed, and exhaustively discussed, to prove that Protestant countries are not in advance of those where Catholicity predominates as respects morality.<sup>1</sup>

It is acknowledged by almost all who have any real knowledge of the subject that in point of purity of morals Catholic Spain and the really Catholic part of the people of France and Italy are immeasurably above the people of Protestant Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway; and that judged by every test applicable to morality,—female chastity, integrity, and sobriety—Catholic Ireland is far in advance of Protestant Scotland. The inhabitants of Tyrol—during past centuries and to-day the most staunch and exclusive Catholic population in Europe—beyond all denial, stand above the people of Protestant Switzerland with regard to morality. The lazzaroni of Naples, for years the standing gibe and jest of Protestant travellers, are immeasurably less debased as regards morality than persons on the same social plane in England. Coming nearer home—for every act of brigandage, murder, or robbery in Italy and Spain, there might be truthfully recounted ten in the United States.

This brings us still closer to our point. Compare the virtue and integrity here, in our country, and in England, of the persons who are under the respective influences of the Catholic religion and of Protestantism, and the general public voice ascribes superiority to the former. Where is the boasted morality of New England, the cradle and home of American Puritanism? How stand, as regards social morals or honesty, the descendants of the "Pilgrim

<sup>1</sup> We might refer here to Laing, Mayhew, Wolsey, Bayard Taylor, Dr. Bellows, the distinguished Unitarian minister of New York city, and many other non-Catholic writers, but it is needless.

Fathers?" And what are the moral consequences of their principles as they have permeated the public mind outside of persons who believe in and practice the Catholic religion? Witness the countless prosecutions for bigamy, for violation of the obligations of the marriage relation, for adultery and seduction; the applications for divorces, and the scandals, frauds, etc., which crowd the records of our courts and the reportorial columns of our newspapers.

It seems that God, in his justice, had determined summarily and at once to dispel the traditional delusion of the superiority of Protestantism over the Catholic religion in point of morals, and to refute once and forever the false charge, so long and persistently brought against the latter, by compelling people to open their eyes and look at the facts daily staring them in the face.

Thus we answer the question: Was the "Reformation" a reformation of morals?

III. Has the Reformation promoted intellectual progress?

It is commonly asserted that the Roman Catholic Church had held the human mind in thralldom from the time of Constantine on to the sixteenth century, and that the Reformation released it from its bondage, and gave a new impulse to intellectual progress. We deny this *in toto*. God alone is the absolute reason. Human reason, with all its high powers, is limited and dependent. When it attempts to soar beyond its proper sphere and divinely-appointed limits, it is shorn of its powers and falls helpless to the ground. It is no longer reason, but becomes *un-reason*. The Church, in the first ages of its existence, had to contend with those who attempted to exalt reason above faith and subject to the test of human understanding the incomprehensible mysteries of divine revelation. In this the Church simply followed the example of St. Paul, who, though profoundly philosophic in some of his Epistles, discards and denounces the "vain philosophy" which would put human thought and knowledge above faith. This principle the Church has always adhered to in her relation to human science.

But this, far from convicting the Church of tyrannizing over human thought, proves that the Church knows its just limits; that she both understands in what its true freedom consists, and respects and promotes it. Man is not free to believe error. This principle is accepted universally in the exact sciences. The man who would insist that he is at liberty to believe that two and three are seven, would be set down as a fool. Yet, strange to say, when the Church applies this same principle in the sphere of religion she is held up to scorn and detestation as tyrannical, and as striving to keep human reason in bondage. And then, again, with glaring incon-



sistency, the same persons who hurl these reproaches upon the Church, accuse her as having been too active, particularly in the last two centuries of the Middle Ages, in promoting the study of philosophy and of ancient classic literature.

As soon as, and even before, the Church emerged from the Catacombs, whenever the early Christians could obtain a momentary respite from persecution, they established schools for the promotion of secular science as well as of Christian doctrine. And ever onwards, in every age of the Church, the acts and decrees of her Councils, and the letters and briefs of her sovereign Pontiffs, testify to their constant, ardent zeal to diffuse knowledge and promote intellectual training and culture. When successive invasions of barbarians destroyed knowledge, education and civil institutions, it was the Church which, immediately upon the cessation of that flood of ignorance and barbarity, indeed even while it was inundating different regions of Europe, sought for and rescued and reproduced the most precious monuments of ancient learning and cultivation. It is owing to her zeal, using the monks of different orders chiefly, and particularly those of the Order of St. Benedict, that we have to-day any of the works of Virgil, Cicero, and other distinguished writers of heathen Rome. Wherever her priests and bishops could secure a foothold, and wherever her missionaries could penetrate, schools were established, which grew into academies, and many of them into universities. The work of educating the barbarians and diffusing knowledge among them went hand in hand with that of converting them from heathenism to Christianity. The immensity of this work and its difficulty may be judged by the slow progress and small success of the people of the United States in educating the colored people of the South and the Indians within their States and Territories. It was a work of far greater extent and far greater difficulty. Yet the Church succeeded, and throughout all Christianized Europe schools were rapidly multiplied; schools, too, not chiefly for the children of kings and nobles, but specially for the children of the common people,—the poor. The sons and daughters of kings and dukes and counts sat on the same benches and side by side with the children of peasants and serfs.

This educational work of the Church culminated in the fourteenth century, and still more in the fifteenth, in covering Europe with universities, and carrying educational training and literary culture to a height never since surpassed, and it is questionable whether it has even now been reached. The universities of that period were certainly superior as regards extent of mental training to any that now exist. Their number was greater, and the numbers of students attending them have never since been equalled. Going back even to the thirteenth century, we search

in vain among the learned of our own time for scholars of equal encyclopædic knowledge to that of Albertus Magnus, taking into consideration the respective facilities for acquiring knowledge in his age and ours; and for minds as acute and profound as those of St. Thomas Aquinas and the galaxy of brilliant thinkers who surrounded him, or were his immediate predecessors or successors. And never before or since has there been such a multitude of thoroughly-learned and cultivated scholars as those who, particularly in Italy, were the intellectual glory of the age immediately preceding the so-called Reformation.

The "Reformers" themselves owed all the learning and intellectual training they possessed to the educational facilities provided by the Church. Their immediate successors and those who in the course of time succeeded them, were far inferior in extent of knowledge and mental development. The so-called Augustan age of France and England owed whatever literary excellence and culture it possessed to the impulses previously given by the Church.

The promoters of the "Reformation" could plunder universities or destroy them, as they did at the instigation of Luther and other "Reformers," but they could not restore them, or establish new ones. Those which they did not utterly demolish, they maimed and crippled. They tore into pieces and scattered to the winds, or burned, or sold to bakers as fuel for their ovens, their libraries, containing priceless treasures of learning and materials for authentic history, which are irrecoverable. They appropriated to their own use and squandered the revenues of those universities, ejected their professors, and then found themselves unable to find other teachers of competent ability and knowledge to replace them. The students, too, were greatly inferior in numbers, in application to their studies, and in morality, to their Catholic predecessors. The "Reformation" pulled down, destroyed, or plundered the educational institutions of its time, but was unable to rebuild and restore them, and infuse into them their former intellectual vigor and life. The writers of that age and of the one immediately following constantly refer to the decay of learning and of interest in education.

Of England like remarks are true. It is only necessary to turn over the pages of Hume, Macaulay, Hallam, and Disraeli, for more than sufficient proofs of the decay of learning and the ignorance of the Protestant clergy in England, long after the so-called "Reformation." The libraries of the monasteries, containing priceless treasures and invaluable materials for history, were scattered to the winds, or sold for fuel to bakers. The splendid library of Oxford subsequently met with a like fate. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were not destroyed. They still survive. Of them,

as of the present universities of Germany, it may be truthfully said that they send forth some respectable scholars, and a few who are erudite, but the majority of their students go to them for any other purpose than to *study*. In those of Germany, drinking, smoking, duelling, profligacy and secret associations are the order of the day. At Oxford and Cambridge, the greater number of their "students" go there simply for the name and prestige which attendance upon those ancient seats of learning confers.

Catholicity and Protestantism have now confronted each other for nearly four hundred years. They have had ample time to show to the world what their respective influence is upon the intellect of those who severally adhere to them. We sum up with the utmost possible brevity the results of a comparison. Take, first, the lowest classes, the common laboring people of Catholic and Protestant countries.

No intelligent and unprejudiced traveller (nor many even of those who are prejudiced against the Catholic religion) will deny that the peasantry of France, of Ireland, and of Spain, are not only the equals, but the superiors, of the same class in Protestant Germany, England, and Denmark, in intellectual brightness, dignity, and respectful manners. And the same remark holds good as to the higher grades of society. In the city of Rome, previous to the Italian Revolution, according to Laing, a Scotch Presbyterian (who travelled over all Europe, investigating the social, moral and intellectual condition of its different countries), and of the late N. P. Willis, a non-Catholic, there were a greater number of schools for the common people, in proportion to population, than in any other city in Europe. And it is a notorious fact that the institutions for higher learning were incomparably superior as regards the extent and thoroughness of their courses of study, to any existing elsewhere throughout the world.

As regards our own country, Protestants, in virtue of their numbers, have had almost exclusive control, and Catholics till recently formed but an insignificant part of the population; mostly poor, and burdened, too, with taxation to support schools, in which the tuition and reigning spirit are directly hostile to their religion. Yet, no one will say that, despite these disadvantages, Catholics are inferior to Protestants in intelligence or in zeal to promote education. And to-day they are not only abreast of Protestants in these respects, but bid fair soon to be in advance of them.

Thus, as judged either by the past or by the present, by its immediate action at the outset or by its subsequent results, the so-called Reformation produced no advance in mental development, training, or education. It retarded them, and society is only now recovering from the effects of retardation.

IV. Did the Reformation advance society as respects civil liberty?

It is claimed that this so-called right of private judgment promoted the progress of civil liberty. It did just the opposite. It promoted a license of opinion and action that was unbearable, because of the excesses, moral and political, which it quickly produced. Consequently, the "Reformers," who first declared that private judgment was an inalienable right, quickly began to limit its exercise to themselves. They allowed it to none others. They denounced with utmost bitterness, and in words which Protestant historians are ashamed to quote, all who presumed to dispute their doctrines. They split into opposing factions, the leader of each faction ruling his followers as with a rod of iron and anathematizing all other Protestants as (along with "papists") children of the devil. Surely, this was a strange though true exhibition of how private judgment promotes true freedom, civil and religious.

No despotism is so arbitrary, so unreasoning, so limitless, as the despotism of anarchy, and to that private judgment, if carried out to its last consequences, inevitably leads. But men are not maniacs, nor yet are they devils (though the Protestant doctrine of total depravity represents them as such, or akin to them). Consequently even the Reformers practically confined the so-called right of private judgment each one to himself and his followers. Soon, too, they virtually surrendered it to the secular princes who protected them. Refusing to submit to the spiritual authority of the Church, they quickly placed their belief at the disposal of the secular authorities whose favor they had secured. *Cujus regio, ejus religio*, became their ruling maxim. Dukedoms and kingdoms became "Lutheran," or "Sacramentarian," or "Calvinistic," or adopted some other phase of Protestantism, according to the dictate of the prince or duke or king who ruled them. This is simply an historical fact. It is also undeniable that, with few exceptions, the almost countless Protestant "confessions" and declarations of belief of the sixteenth century were submitted to the approval of secular rulers and enforced by them. This is the fact as regards the Augsburg Confession, which is the fundamental declaration of belief of the Lutherans; the Heidelberg Catechism, the most generally accepted formula of belief of the "Sacramentarians," or followers of Zwingli and Calvin, or, as they style themselves, the "*Reformed*" churches of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland; and it is notoriously true with regard to the "Thirty-nine Articles" of the "Established Church of England."

Where the Reformers dared attempt it, as in Switzerland, they fused the secular and spiritual authority together, and established

a theocracy. Where they dared not attempt this, they placed themselves sycophantly at the feet of secular rulers as in England and Germany.

The lesson of the Reformers was quickly learned by those of the temporal rulers who professedly remained Catholic. They were Catholic in their expressed belief in Catholic doctrines, but anything else than Catholic in their political policy, and their utter lack of that obedience which real faith includes and requires. Francis I. of France, Charles V. of Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands, Philip II., his son and successor in the two last-named countries, were Catholics in belief. In their actions as regards both Church and State they were not Catholics but Protestants. If they protected the Catholic religion to some extent, and sometimes persecuted Protestants (as Philip II. did most cruelly in the Netherlands), they did it professedly in the name of religion, but in reality as a part of their political policy. The Duke of Alba, satrap of Philip II. in the Netherlands, put to death Catholics as well as Protestants who refused to tamely submit to his iron rule. All three of them were ambitious secular rulers, whose hearts were set on self-aggrandizement and the extension of their royal prerogatives.

Following the example of the "Reformers," they set up *their own* private judgments as the supreme tribunal for the determination of all matters, ecclesiastical or political, within their respective domains. The two first-named alternately resisted the Sovereign Pontiffs of the Church or sided with them, as considerations of expediency for the time being seemed to indicate would be politic. Each of them wished the "Reformation" to acquire a certain degree of power (though not to become predominant) as a check upon the exercise of authority by the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church. They subsidized and made alliances with Protestant princes and rulers, and instituted a policy which, as systematized and further carried out by their successors, culminated in the almost entire demolition of the institutions of constitutional government and of the safeguards of civil liberty in all Protestant countries and in most of the Catholic countries of Europe during the seventeenth century, and far on into the eighteenth.

Referring to this, Guizot says: "The *emancipation* (!) of the human mind (by the 'Reformation') and absolute monarchy triumphed simultaneously in Europe." His statement is the simple truth.<sup>1</sup> During the one hundred and fifty years that followed the so-called Reformation, Europe went back as regards civil liberty almost to the absolutism of Cæsar Augustus and his successors.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, the *fact* stated is true, reserving the word "emancipation."

The ancient liberties of the people were crushed, and temporal rulers were virtual despots. Passing over England with its tyrannical sovereigns, its alternately sycophantic and rebellious Parliaments, its revolutions and restorations, it is only necessary to cite Protestant Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. Nor does the fact that the statement applies also to France and Spain weaken in the least the force of our argument. Their peoples were Catholic; in Spain exclusively so, in France by a vast majority. Their rulers were professedly Catholic. But, to be truly Catholic, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, requires obedience to truth as well as belief in it, both as to faith and good works. The kings of France and Spain were behind no other temporal sovereigns in extending their royal prerogatives and breaking down all the ancient guarantees of constitutional liberty in their respective dominions, despite the remonstrances and protests of successive Sovereign Pontiffs of the Church.

In all this the kings of France and Spain acted not as Catholics but according to their own imperial "private judgment," defying alike the authority of constitutional civil law and that of the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church. The famous *dictum* of Louis XIV. of France, "*I am the State*," was carried out by him to a despotic extent with regard also to ecclesiastical affairs. He might consistently have added, as expressing his own idea: "*I am the Church*." Since the "Reformation" up to to-day, the peoples of France and Spain have never possessed the civil freedom and constitutional rights which they enjoyed before that revolt against authority, human and divine.

A like remark holds good emphatically of Prussia: Albert of Brandenburg, who laid the foundation for the present kingdom of Prussia by sacrilegious plundering and invasions, was called by his contemporaries "the Attila of the Reformation." He was an apostate, treacherous and unprincipled. He appropriated to his own use the vast property of the Knights of the Teutonic Order.<sup>1</sup> He established a despotism, and his despotic rule has descended as a part of his patrimony to his successors on the throne of Prussia. In no country in Europe has despotism been so thoroughly systematized as to Church and State as in Prussia. No more perfect tyrant ever sat on a throne than Frederick "the Great;" the rule both of his predecessors and of his successors has been of like character.

Thus, from the very outset of the Reformation onwards, that movement has not promoted civil liberty, but has retarded its

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<sup>1</sup> It was to encourage Albert of Brandenburg and other Teutonic Knights to violate their religious vows, that Luther wrote that by the mercy of God he could expect to be saved if he practiced concubinage, but never if he adhered to his vow of celibacy.

progress. It taught no true principle respecting human rights and civil institutions that was not previously known and taught by the Catholic Church, her doctors and theologians, long ages ago. It introduced principles of disorder and confusion, which inevitably led to anarchy on the one hand and tyranny on the other.

Every guarantee of personal rights, every institution that protects and defends personal freedom, every element that enters into constitutional government, republican government, were known and in full practice long before the sixteenth century,—trial by jury, the election of officers and rulers, the restraint of their powers within just limits, the confederation and union of sovereign States for a common purpose. The Church has always fostered and promoted them, and always will do so. Modern constitutional governments are not built upon any basis of principles and institutions discovered or brought into exercise by the so-called Reformation, but on one which preceded that movement. All through Europe, and particularly in Italy, there had been for centuries free cities and republics, in one or another of which every essential principle of constitutional government was recognized. And it is an historical fact, too, that the peoples of most of these Italian republics lost in great degree their ancient liberties, and fell under the domination of ruling families, only *after* the spirit of revolt against legitimate authority in Church and State, which Luther subsequently formulated, had sapped in Italy, as elsewhere, the true foundation of all government. Centuries before the so-called Reformation, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote as follows :

"The law, strictly speaking, is directed primarily and chiefly to the common good ; and to decree anything for the common benefit *belongs either to the whole body of the people or to some one acting in their place.*"

Then, as to the best form of government, he wrote :

"The choice of rulers in any state or kingdom is best when one *is chosen for his merit* to preside over all, and under him are other rulers *chosen for their merit*, and the government *belongs to all*, because the rulers *may be chosen from any class of society*, and the *choice is made by all.*"

Nor were these statements made by St. Thomas as new ; they were made as explaining and maintaining principles always held and taught by the Church. And, after the Reformation had paved the way for, and actively promoted, ideas destructive of constitutional liberty,—and which, in England, culminated among the Episcopalians in the doctrine of "passive obedience" to kings, and the declaration of James to Parliament that "God had appointed him absolutely master, and that all privileges which co-legislative bodies enjoyed were pure concessions from the bounty of kings"—the

Catholic theologian, Suarez, wrote a treatise, entitled "A Defence of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith against the Errors of the Anglicans." In this treatise Suarez declares that society has received political and civil power immediately from God, and communicates it to certain persons whom it selects. He then says:

"In the second place, it follows from what has been said that the civil power, whenever it is found in a man or a prince, has emanated according to usual and legitimate law from the *people and the community*, either directly or remotely; *otherwise, it cannot be justly possessed.*"

And in this Suarez repeats and defends what Cardinal Belarmine had previously written, declaring—

"Political power emanates from God alone; for, being necessarily annexed to man's nature, it proceeds from Him who has made that nature. *It resides primarily in the body of the people.* The divine will has not given it to any man in particular. The people *transfer it*, to one person or more, *by natural right.* Particular forms of government, accordingly, are by the law of nations, and *not by divine law*, since it depends on the consent of the multitude to place over themselves a king, consuls, or other magistrates, as may seem best; and, for a legitimate reason, they can change royalty into aristocracy or democracy, or *vice versa.*"

St. Alphonsus Liguori, in his *Moral Theology*, in speaking of laws says:

"It is certain that the power of making laws exists among men, but so far as civil laws are concerned, this power belongs naturally to no individual. It belongs to the community, who transfer it to one or more, that by them the community itself may be governed."

Billuart, in his *Moral Theology*, says:

"I maintain in the first place that legislative power belongs to the community or its representative. . . . It is the duty of the community, or its ruler, to watch over the common good. . . . The law has the power of commanding and coercing in such manner that no individual has any authority to command or restrain the multitude. This authority belongs exclusively to the community or its representative; to these, therefore, legislative power belongs. . . . The community may be considered collectively as one moral body, and in this sense it is superior to itself as considered distributively in each of its members. Again, it may be considered as acting in the place of God, from whom emanates all legislative power, as it is said in Proverbs, 'By Me kings reign, and lawgivers decree just things.'"

Lastly, Concina, in his *Dogmatic and Moral Theology*, says:

"God does not confer this (civil) power by any *special act distinct from creation*, but it is a *property of right reason*, inasmuch as *right reason dictates that men, united in one moral whole, shall prescribe, by express or tacit consent, in what manner society shall be governed, preserved, and upheld.* . . . It is evident, therefore, that the power existing in the prince, the king, or in many persons, whether nobles or plebeians, *emanates from the community itself*, directly or indirectly."

Compare these luminous and consistent expositions of the true basis of civil power by Catholic theologians, before and after



the Reformation, with the confused, contradictory declarations (sometimes anarchical, and sometimes direct apologies for tyranny and despotism) of the "Reformers" and their followers, and the conclusion is unavoidable that the Reformation did not promote higher or truer ideas of civil liberty than those which the Catholic Church has always taught.

We have thus gone over all the points in respect to which the movement in the sixteenth century is claimed to have been a "reformation." It is obvious, we think, that it reformed nothing; that it was not a "reformation," in any true sense whatever. It was a rebellion, not only against the then existing order of things in Church and in State, but also against all the principles that form the basis of civil government and civil liberty, as well as against the *one* divinely-founded and divinely-constituted and commissioned Church of Christ.

It was a revolt against all legitimate authority, ecclesiastical and civil. It started with an attempt to place the individual above society, as well as above the Church; to make *his* private judgment superior to the collective reason of men in society, as well as to the authoritative teaching of the Church,—the sole infallible interpreter of Divine Revelation. In its successive variations and divergencies it was productive, first, of general confusion, fanaticism, and anarchy, and then, of tyranny and despotism; taking sometimes, according to circumstances, the despotism of fanatics, who imagined that they only were the saints and elect of God, and that they only had the right to rule in Church and State, and, at other times, lodging unlimited power in temporal rulers, princes, and kings.

V. We have said little or nothing respecting abuses in the Church, the reformation of which was the ostensible object of the movement miscalled "The Reformation." It seemed scarcely pertinent to our subject to do so. Whatever abuses did or did not exist in the Church, whether as to its head or its members, the "Reformation" did nothing to abate or cure them. It had nothing in fact to do with them, except to employ them as a plausible pretext and excuse for its revolt against authority.

Whatever reform the "Reformers" undertook or professed to carry out, it obviously was not a reformation of abuses in the Church. They went out from it, broke loose from it, denounced it as "the synagogue of Satan." According to them it was apostate, utterly corrupt, Antichrist, and the only duty they and their followers acknowledged with regard to it, was to fight against it to the death and utterly destroy it.

Thus, the so-called Reformation, as soon as it took shape or shapes, and moved in its various divergent directions, was outside

of the Church, independent of it, and had "no part or lot" in any reformation instituted and carried out by the Church. Yet still it may be proper to say a few words on this subject of abuses.

That grievous abuses, causing great scandals, existed, is acknowledged. It was not only universally acknowledged at the time of Luther's outburst, but had been acknowledged long before. The abuses had been pointed out, lamented over, condemned, denounced, and attempted to be reformed by numerous Popes, Prelates, Saints, and Doctors of the Church. Their efforts were thwarted and rendered ineffective, except in the way of making partial reforms, by the opposition and jealousies of the different temporal rulers of Europe. But to this we shall refer again.

Abuses and scandals have always existed in the Church as regards its members, hierarchy, and, sometimes, as regards its head. They existed in the time of the Apostles, as their Epistles plainly show. They existed immediately after the Apostles were called to rest from their labors, as the writings of the earliest post-Apostolic ages prove. They continued to exist in every subsequent age. They always will exist. Our Saviour plainly warned His Apostles of this. "Scandals," he says, "must needs come," though woe to those by whom they come.

The "need" of scandals coming arises not from the divine will, nor from any lack of divine grace, extended to all who seek it and employ its help. To suppose the contrary would be horrible impiety.

The "need" arises from the constitution of human nature. God has endowed our nature with free-will, a gift inexpressibly precious, yet inexpressibly terrible in view of the awful responsibilities that gift includes. Man, in the exercise of his free-will, may do good or do evil; may engage in the service of God or the service of the devil. Of this gift, which makes man only "a little lower than the angels," God will not deprive man. To do so would be to make him the gift of reason He has bestowed on man only a mockery. It would be to give him reason, yet to deprive him of the power of rightly directing and employing his reason. It would make a mere automaton, destitute of self-volition and self-control, and degrade him to the level of a brute or below it.

Consequently, men have not only the option and choice of entering into the Church,—the true Ark of Salvation,—but, after they have entered, the free option of availing themselves of its spiritual blessings and rightly employing the divine grace which the Church dispenses, or of neglecting it, misemploying, abusing it, and thus incurring deeper guilt than those who remain outside of the Church. This truth holds good as to all who are in the

Church, without regard to station or order, to the laity, the priesthood, the episcopate, and the Pope, the Visible Head of the Church and Primate of its priests and bishops. And the higher and more exalted the office, the greater the responsibility, and the greater the need of care, and vigilance, and prayer, and of correspondence with the special grace attached respectively to the offices of Priest, Bishop, and Sovereign Pontiff of the Church. Hence, Priest, Prelate, and Pope, if they fail rightly and diligently to employ the special grace connected with their sacred offices, may fall, will fall into sin, and create scandals, as readily as—more readily than—even the lowest layman, and will incur immeasurably greater guilt. For, "to whom much is given, from him shall much be required."

God has given immunity from sin—impeccability—to no human being, in the Church or out of the Church, no matter what position, dignity, or office he holds. The sole special safeguard and privilege Christ provides for the perpetuity of His Church, and its indefectibility, is its incapability of believing and teaching error, its constant, unchanging belief in, and teaching of (without corruption), the truth He gave to it and commissioned it to teach. And the sole privilege He granted to Peter and his successors in the Primacy is, that in their *ex cathedra*—official—promulgations and definitions of doctrines respecting faith and morals to the Universal Church, they should be preserved from error.

The fact, therefore, of abuses and scandals in the Church, whether on the part of the laity, the priesthood, the episcopate, or the Primacy, is no proof or argument against the divine institution of the Church, or its divinely-established constitution and mission. Abuses and scandals arise, and will ever arise, from the abuse of that freedom of the will with which God has endowed us. Yet, the Church, in the fulfilment of her divine mission, strives and ever will strive to correct and reform those abuses.

But while this general primal cause of abuses was especially active during the one or two hundred years immediately preceding the "Reformation," owing to the increase of knowledge, the thorough intellectual training, and the intense intellectual activity which the Church promoted, but which learned scholars, in the pride to which the human heart is prone, abused and perverted, there were other causes subordinate to this.

Among these, the chief one, and of long standing, was the constant interference of the secular powers of Europe with the freedom of the Church, and their constant restriction of her legitimately-divine power and liberty. The Church ever strives to promote peace. She recognizes, respects, and upholds the rights and authority of temporal rulers within their proper sphere. She endeavors to work in harmony with them for the welfare of mankind.

Hence, to a certain extent, she is willing to consult their preferences and wishes in the appointment of bishops, and in the administration of the temporal affairs which necessarily belong to the practical carrying out of her divine mission.

But the secular governments of Europe, from the time of Constantine onwards, and particularly during the Middle Ages, and specially those of Germany, France, and England, taking advantage of these concessions by the Church, claimed as *rights* what the Church allowed only for the sake of peace and harmony. Moved by that ambition which is inherent in the human heart, by a desire to extend their prerogatives and power, and by cupidity, they constantly claimed the right of supervising and guarding (as robbers guard their plunder) the revenues of the Church's charitable and religious foundations, and of selecting and nominating, and even investing with the symbols of their sacred offices, the abbots, and bishops, and archbishops, within their respective dominions. The Church resisted this preposterous assumption to the full extent of her power. How many conflicts she engaged in, successfully or unsuccessfully, on this account, history records, but want of space will not permit us even to advert to them. But, opposed and tyrannized over by counts, dukes, kings, and emperors, who, though they professed her faith, were anything but obedient to it, she reluctantly submitted to what she could not successfully oppose for the sake of peace and lest in rooting up the cockle the wheat also should be rooted up. The secular rulers of Europe compelled the Church to acquiesce in the appointment to abbacies, bishoprics, and archbishoprics, of men who were their choice.

In many cases, and yet fewer than might be supposed, these were from the start unfit for, and unworthy of the high offices to which they were appointed. They became mere courtiers and dependents upon the rulers who exercised so potential a voice in their selection. They became worldly-minded, and neglected to employ the grace connected with their exalted offices. They failed to devote themselves to the faithful discharge of their sacred duties. They set a bad example to their clergy, and to the laity under them, permitted discipline to become relaxed, and thus created scandals themselves, or allowed them to be created by others and to grow unchecked.

This was the chief, special cause of the abuses which undoubtedly existed in the Church at the time of the so-called Reformation, and previous to it. Those abuses were protested against, condemned, and denounced repeatedly by the Sovereign Pontiffs of the Church, her Saints, and Doctors. Yet the Church, how unjustly we need not say, was held responsible for them.

Yet, at last, the Council of Trent was convened after almost interminable delays and postponements owing to the jealousies and hostilities of different temporal rulers of European countries, and the intrigues and opposition of the Reformers and their adherents, and a thorough reformation of abuses was achieved. In this real reformation, the supporters of the so-called Reformation did not participate. They opposed it, and endeavored to prevent it by all means in their power. Into the details of the reformation effected by the Council of Trent we cannot enter. Suffice it to say, it swept away a countless number of abuses caused by laxity of discipline, growing directly out of the unrighteous assumptions of authority by the temporal rulers of Europe. It provided for the thorough education and training of the clergy, for the instruction of the laity in Christian doctrine. It set forth more explicitly the functions and duties of bishops. It expounded and defined with greater precision and clearness the doctrines which errorists and heretics had confused, obscured, and perverted. In this work, as we have said, the Reformers and their followers did not participate, and from it they utterly held aloof. They conspired against it, and endeavored to prevent it.

The so-called Reformation was a rebellion against the existing Church, an effort to destroy it, a revolution. Yet as a revolution it failed, signally failed in its immediate, direct object; and in thus failing it has failed also in obtaining that false criterion by which revolutions are now popularly justified—success. The Catholic Church of to-day is the unquestioned continuance of the existing Church of all previous ages. And the Catholic Church of to-day has sustained not only without destruction, but without diminution of her strength, all the assaults that have been made upon her. As soon as, and even before, the various heretical schisms which conglomerated constitute the so-called Reformation, the Church, in the plenitude of her divinely-given authority and powers, renewed her strength, and erected defences against newly disseminated errors, by promulgating additional definitions of her faith and doctrine. She reformed abuses, introduced stricter discipline, infused increased zeal and devotion into her children, and sent her missionaries, glorious examples of heroic self-abnegation, virtue, and purity, and of spiritual power, into all regions of the world. She lost thousands from her communion of those whose faith had been weakened and corrupted; but she more than made up for the loss by the greater number of converts she gained in India, Japan, the islands of the Southern Seas, and in America. And to-day, though her Sovereign Pontiff is a prisoner in the Vatican (a voluntary prisoner, the world sneeringly styles him), because he refuses to become the subject of any temporal power, she stands

visibly more compact in her organization, more uniform and strict in her discipline, more conspicuous in the salutary influences she is exerting upon society, than in any previous age. Her unchanged and unchangeable faith more clearly and fully defined, and universally respected, even by those who fear and hate her. Though Protestants and infidels—with the rise of every little petty schism, like those of Rongeism, thirty years ago, in Germany; and Old Catholicism, ten years back; and with every movement to persecute and plunder her, like those of Bismarck in Germany, and the Garibaldians in Italy—have constantly predicted her downfall, yet their predictions are scarcely made ere the signs of their certain falsification begin to show themselves.

To-day the Czar of Russia longs to make peace with the Holy Roman See, and wavers between his desire to secure its support by freeing the Catholic Church in his dominions from persecution, and his reluctance to surrender the traditionary assumption that is attached to his office as supreme ruler of religion in Russia. The clergy and bishops of the schismatic body styled the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia, of which he is the official head, he despises, as well he may, for they are his sycophantic tools and slaves.

Bismarck, with all his arrogance, has humbled his pride, and tacitly acknowledged that though arbiter of all secular Europe, yet his astute diplomacy and his stubborn persistence, backed by the entire power of the German imperial government, have not been able to destroy the faith of German Catholics, nor tear them from their unity with the Holy Roman See.

In France, the infidels, who have seized the reins of secular power, partly through the remissness of its Catholics, and partly because the Catholic faith strives for peace and quietness, exercises patience when wronged, and fights persecution chiefly with spiritual weapons, have gone on from one wicked step to another. They have suppressed religious orders, driven their members into exile, expelled Sisters of Mercy and Charity from hospitals, closed Christian schools and convents, banished the very name of God from their public schools; and yet to-day the Catholic religion has a stronger hold on France than when the so-called Reformation divided its people into two antagonistic, warring factions. And to-day President Grévy dreads coming to an open breach with the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church more than with any secular European power.

In England, the Crown, or its Cabinet which really exercises the executive and administrative powers of government, pays no regard, or merely a contemptuous show of respect to the bishops and archbishops of the "Established Church." (Why should it? they are but its own creatures.) But it would gladly enter, if it

could, into diplomatic relations with the Holy Roman See, and secure its assistance and co-operation in settling questions with which the English Government feels itself unable to cope.

In Italy the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church has more real power (though despoiled and confined to the Vatican) than the usurpation which forms to-day the secular government of Italy. That government, though it has three hundred thousand soldiers to back it, fears and dreads the Church's Visible Head, even more than Nero or Domitian feared the then Sovereign Pontiff of the Church, hidden in the catacombs.

In the United States, so far as religion is at all really respected it is the Catholic religion. *It* is acknowledged to possess a definite faith which those who profess it really hold. Its power is confessed, and it exerts more real influence upon the general public than all the Protestant sects combined, so far as they can combine. It is felt to be the only bulwark against the progress of ideas which threaten to overturn social and civil order, and to be the only consistent representative of Christian morality.

All over the civilized world and even in the regions dominated by Mohammedanism and heathenism the Catholic Church exercises a power and an influence beyond all comparison greater than any that Protestantism can exert. The number of her faithful children has gone on increasing since the day when Luther's hammer on the Church-door in Wittenberg sounded the signal for rebellion against spiritual and civil authority in Europe, and to-day they far outnumber the collective aggregate of all the adherents of Protestant sects. The Encyclicals of her Sovereign Pontiff are read, and studied, and commented on as documents of supreme importance, securing a consideration which is accorded to no state-papers of secular governments, and (we need scarcely add) to no declarations of Protestant Bishops, Archbishops, Conventions or Synods.

As for Protestantism, its power has waned. Except in America, it is mostly a part merely of the state-machinery of the different countries in which it exists. Its various creeds are obsolete, effete, and not even the members of the sects which are supposed to hold them pay the slightest attention to their declarations; and indeed, in greater part, are profoundly ignorant of what their declarations are. Protestantism, in brief, has gone on disintegrating and dissolving until no one knows or can tell precisely what it is. Only one uniform constant movement can be distinguished amid its constant, whirling eddyings, and the direction of that movement plainly is towards rationalism. The dividing line between Protestantism and outspoken rationalism is invisible. There is none.

Thus, whether regarded as a revolution striving to destroy the

Church, or a reformation aiming to amend and improve it, the movement of the sixteenth century is a failure. It is plainly rapidly reaching its logical conclusion,—individualism. It is equally plain to every thoughtful, discriminating mind that if the religion of Christ be the power by which men are to be brought into subjection to a law higher than that of mere self-will and individual opinion, it is through Christianity, not as Protestantism presents it, but through that of which the Catholic Church has been, according to the testimony of history, both secular and sacred, the witness, the teacher, the guardian and preserver, from the days of the Apostles till now.

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### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ONE of the most common objections to the Catholic religion is that it tends to formalism; that, in fact, the whole system of worship and morals of the Church is a thoroughly perfunctory system, destitute of the life and power of godliness, and totally inadequate to the great purposes of "vital" religion. Indeed, so firmly has this "first principle of the Protestant tradition," as Cardinal Newman calls it, become fixed in the minds of our separated brethren, that, when they meet with a truly devout and earnest Catholic, they will unhesitatingly tell you that he is what he is in spite of his religion, and that he ought to be a Protestant; and when they discover a superior book of Catholic devotion or of practical religion, they will unblushingly use it as if it belonged by good rights to them, and claim it as a good Protestant book, which has undoubtedly been written by some one who was entirely out of place in the Catholic Church, and ought to be numbered in the ranks of her opponents. Indeed, the coolness with which some Protestant writers and publishers, more especially in England, are of late appropriating the lives of our saints and doctors, and holy men and women, is really refreshing. We admit that it is a cheering indication of the revulsion of religious thought and feeling that is going on in the minds of the non-Catholic community, that almost unexceptionable lives of such Catholics as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis of Sales, Bossuet, Fénelon, Henri Perreyve, Père Besson, Père Lacordaire, Charles de Condren and Madame Louise de France, not to mention others of equal merit, should be published and circulated among them quite as a matter