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BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

ARTICLE I.

THE REFORMATION. 1517–1917.

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DURING Luther's lifetime the world passed through a transition such as men have rarely, if ever, passed through in an equal period before or since. It is no metaphor but the simple fact that the Reformer's contemporaries discovered a new heaven and a new earth. Then, Copernicus established his momentous theory that our globe circled a much larger sun. Then, Vasco da Gama and Columbus and Magellan opened the paths to the new lands beyond the seven seas. The world, that seemed thus to burst its physical bounds, burst many an old spiritual mete as well. During Luther's lifetime was largely accomplished the economic revolution from the medieval, coöperative society of guild and feudal due to our modern capitalistic and industrial civilization. Partly as a result of this, partly owing to new methods of warfare, the nobility lost much of their old prestige and privileges. Simultaneously the other privileged order, the clergy, were expropriated from their monopoly of learning, and many of their pretensions discredited. In place of the noble and sacerdotal orders, the third estate, or at least that part of it consisting of the wealthy city bourgeoisies, took the leadership in the state. In the things of the mind medieval scholasti-

cism was giving way to modern science, while the greatest artists of the Renaissance were transforming the earlier Gothic twilight into the full blaze of the newer beauty. Last, but not least in importance, the monarchy of the Roman Catholic Church was broken, and a large portion of her dominions seceded to form new organizations, governed by other powers and animated by a different spirit.

In various ways the Reformation represented or fell in with many of the changes of a secular nature contemporaneous with its rise. That in one aspect it was the revolt from the Latin spirit and the Roman ecclesiastical state cannot be doubted. As a racial, or cultural, movement, it was one of the representative manifestations of the Teutonic spirit. The philosopher Fichte called it the consummate achievement of the German people, "its perfect act of world-wide significance" (*vollendete Weltthat*). We need not exaggerate its importance to recognize that the Reformation has for mankind a value equal to, though characteristically different from, that of the Italian Renaissance, or the English, American, or French Revolutions. Where the Italian strove for intellectual or artistic ends, where the French demanded political equality and the Anglo-Saxon economic freedom, the German sought and won spiritual and religious emancipation. The great characteristic of the German mind is its idealism, its emphasis on the inward condition rather than on the outward manifestation. Where the Latin spirit demanded good works, the German hungered for inward righteousness and therefore found the formula of justification by faith only. If we read Luther's "Freedom of a Christian Man" we learn that he cared neither for universal suffrage, nor for equal economic opportunity, nor for our modern joy in wandering untrammeled in the things of the mind — art and science.

No: "the Christian man is most free lord of all," simply because no power on earth can make him renounce his inward faith.

So also in its political aspect the Reformation was a revolt from a church that had become an international state. The identity of the Roman Empire and the Roman Church in many particulars has been noticed by almost all philosophical historians, *e.g.* by Hobbes and Harnack. When Hobbes spoke of the Latin Church as the ghost of the empire sitting crowned upon its grave, he attenuated rather than exaggerated the truth. The church had its monarch, its laws, its representative legislative assemblies, its law courts, its lawyers. It was not a voluntary society, for if citizens were not born into it they were baptized into it before they could exercise any choice. It kept prisons and passed sentence (virtually if not nominally) of death; it was supported by involuntary contributions; it treated with other governments as one power with another; it took counties and occasionally whole kingdoms in fief.

Now the character of the Reformation was in part determined by the fact that it was, in one aspect, a revolt from this state in the interests of nationalism. During the later Middle Ages the European nations came into a self-consciousness that showed itself, among other ways, in the assertion of ecclesiastical independence. In the English statutes of mortmain, provisors, and præmunire, and in the French pragmatic sanction of Bourges and the concordat of Bologna, we see the beginnings of the movement that culminated in the Reformation. The national church took the place of the universal church; the ultimate spiritual authority in the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican communions was always the territorial government. There is an analogy be-

tween the dissolution of the Roman Empire and the break-up of the Roman Church. Both were caused by Teutonic invasions. So much had the world church retained the spirit of "Romanitas," as Augustine called it, that when the Protestant revolt had reached its maximum the boundaries of the Roman Church were almost exactly those that had once contained the Roman Empire. Once again the Rhine and the Danube divided the Teutonic from the Roman lands, and in the British Islands England, having changed its character as well as its name by the Saxon conquest, became Protestant, but Ireland, untouched, remained Catholic.

Far more than a political, the Reformation was a religious revolution. As such it has not yet been fairly studied. The religious element is exclusively selected for treatment, and thus detached from its environment by the church historians of either side. By the secular historians, on the other hand, the religious element has been neglected to the point of being altogether ignored. The double tendency of our contemporary scholars to interpret everything economically and to find deep, underlying, obscure causes instead of obvious ones, has led to the assumption that the movement was in reality anything and everything but what it purported to be, a religious reform. Henry Charles Lea says: "We may dismiss the religious changes incident to the Reformation with the remark that they were not the object sought but the means for attaining the object."[1] From other writers one might infer that the religious changes were not even the means, but were rather mere pretexts for secular ends; that "the real economic content" of the Reformation was the desire to avoid payment of tithes or to confiscate ecclesiastical property. With these views I wish to take issue. In my judgment the

[1] Cambridge Modern History, vol. i. p. 653.

Reformation owed both its origin and its success to its spiritual appeal. Although it necessarily reflected the spirit of the age as evinced in temporal matters, its primary achievement was religious. I should like to evaluate this achievement by pointing out the most important differences between medieval Catholicism and sixteenth-century Protestantism.

1. Protestant ethics are, far more than Catholic, oriented by a reference to the things of this world. It is, of course, merely a matter of emphasis, for the Catholic neither could nor would leave this world wholly out of account, and the early Protestant was not only fully convinced of the existence of heaven and hell, God and the devil, but vividly conscious of their reality. And yet the contrast is undoubted, and important. It is illustrated best by the opposite views of the two parties on asceticism. The Catholic ideal is the monastic, to win heaven by mortifying the flesh, and saintliness by celibacy, poverty, humility, fasting, and self-torture, — in a word, by renouncing this life and its pleasures as far as possible. But to the Reformers there appeared absolutely no virtue in asceticism as such. Not to forsake the world but to use it for God's purposes was their ideal. Married and industrial life became typically godly. Protestantism has been called by one of its critics "consecrated worldliness," but I do not see why it should hesitate to adopt the characterization for its own. When Luther said that the man at the plow and the maidservant with the broom were doing God better service than the monk and nun who fasted and prayed, he introduced a new element into religion. For the first time in a thousand years, if not in all history, piety became *chiefly* a matter of everyday, homely duty. In this Protestantism fell in with the opulent and optimistic spirit of the age. A life of idleness and pauperism was no longer tolerated, much

less canonized. Thrift and industry were inculcated and the ensuing prosperity regarded as the blessing of God. Modern industrialism took its rise from other sources than Protestantism, but the ethics of the Reformers for the first time gave it a good conscience. Calvinism and capitalism went well together; Luther's proclamation of monastic emancipation restored to the world the energies of a vast host of men and women whose lives had been spent almost wholly in the cultivation of their own salvation in a manner sterile and unproductive to society.

2. The laws governing the rise and changes in religions are as certain as are all natural laws. The *a priori* probability that Protestantism was but one expression of the spirit of the age becomes a certainty when we study it closely. As the cultural exuberance of the new time was expressed in the first point of difference I have just mentioned, so an important intellectual tendency was evinced in the second which I am now about to discuss. Religious belief cannot long remain in contradiction with contemporary knowledge. Notwithstanding some exceptions, often more apparent than real, men cannot long continue to assert opposites, to believe one thing in the head and something inconsistent with that in the heart. Now the sixteenth century, still far from the modern scientific conception of the uniformity of natural law, had yet arrived at a far more philosophic idea of God than had the simpler ages preceding it. From Erasmus and other writers prior to Luther we know that instructed men found nothing but offense or matter for ridicule in the prevalent worship of the saints. Medieval Christianity was only nominally monotheistic; practically a host of canonized persons took the place of the heathen pantheon. There was a separate holy patron for every locality, for every common experience in

life, almost for every disease, and how assiduous and grossly material were the prayers of the vulgar to them can be verified by anyone familiar with the literature of the time. In abolishing the cult of images and of the saints and the Virgin, Protestantism expressed the spirit of the time also seen elsewhere, and restored Christianity to monotheism much as Christianity had triumphed over polytheism in its earlier epoch. There is an analogy, and an instructive one, to the curtailment of the powers of the saints in the political movement of the age from feudalism to an absolute monarchy supported by the third estate. Neither God nor king any longer needed vassals or intermediaries to come between him and his people.

3. When, in the name of justification by faith only, Luther attacked and overthrew the sacramental and hierarchical system of Catholicism, he introduced a change of vast import. The Catholic Church teaches that salvation is dependent on the grace imparted by certain rites known as sacraments. This grace is bestowed on all who partake of the sacrament without actively opposing its operation, and it is bestowed automatically, or, in the scholastic phrase, "ex opere operato," merely from the work being done. These sacraments, save baptism, could be administered only by priests, who thereby became arbiters of the future eternity of their fellow men. To a believing age this made of the priests a ruling class, privileged and armed with the most fearful of powers. It also made the sacraments mechanical means of winning definite ends; magical or supernatural rites. Every mass devoutly attended by a living person, and every mass chanted for a soul in purgatory, accumulated just so much merit and so much remission of sin and of penalty. It represented God as keeping a sort of debit and credit with individuals, and, con-

versely, it represented the individual as capable, if not of bribing the Almighty, at least of buying his grace at a fixed, sometimes at a bargain, price. Luther swept all that away at one stroke, for his own experience made him believe that when faith is lacking and the grace of God not freely given, the sacraments are an illusion. His attack on the sacramental system of the church was important not because he reduced the number of sacraments, but because he absolutely changed their character. They no longer had the slightest power to influence a man's salvation. Grace was given freely or not at all, wholly independently of any act or effort of man's will at all. By the same blow Luther destroyed the old hierarchy. According to him there was absolutely no distinction in Christians; some men were set apart to preach just as others were chosen to make shoes, but, and this is his own illustration, one calling is no more spiritual than the other.

We are so much accustomed to think of dogma as the essence of religion that it is hard for us to do justice to the immense importance of this change from a sacramental, priestly cult to a religion of individual, unconditioned, and unmediated responsibility. It really represents a religious revolution equal to that accomplished by modern science in the dogmatic sphere. According to many students of comparative religion, as Durkheim and Frazer, there is something more fundamental in religion than dogma. The sacrament, the rite, the habit, generally antedate the creed. This sacramental habit, or attitude, was common to medieval Christianity and many other faiths. For it Luther substituted its antithesis, the almost purely ethical attitude of disinterested morality and unconditioned salvation. The transcendental philosophy and the categorical imperative lay implicit in Luther's famous *sola fide*.

4. There is a certain contrast, though one that cannot be pressed too far, between Protestantism as the religion of private judgment and Catholicism as the church of authority. Luther himself expresses the theory as clearly as anyone can in a letter written in 1521: "The pope is no judge in matters concerning God's Word and faith, but every Christian must examine and judge for himself, just as he must live and die according to it; for faith and the Word of God is the property of every man and of the community." This is splendid: the only trouble is that Luther did not persevere in this high level of trust in reason. In later life he came to regard subjectivism as tantamount to anarchy. Private judgment was conditioned, in his theory, by the external, objective (or objectively felt) authority of the Bible and of the Christian community. But his example worked more powerfully than his precept. He had appealed from indulgence-seller to pope, from pope to general council, and then had declared that general councils had erred. What authority was left? None but that of the Bible and the interpretation of that was necessarily various. Only on the untenable assumption of the perfect clearness and consistency of the Bible in all points could any ground for enforcing uniformity be found. Luther insisted on thinking for himself, and thus successfully vindicated the right of private judgment for at least one man. Others were not slow to follow his example. Within ten years of the posting of the Theses a number of men had already arisen within the new fold to differ from Luther, and several divergent sects had already been founded. Indeed, it is the paradox, one might almost say the torment as well as the beauty, of Protestantism that it can never stop at any given point, but must always lead to something and look to something beyond.

And now, having pointed out the essential facts of the religious revolution, I beg leave to say something on the relation of the Reformation to progress, specifically to the causes of tolerance, democracy, and science. As everything is now apt to be judged by this standard, and quite rightly, it is natural that the question should have been vigorously agitated. From the eighteenth century, when the idea of progress began to spread, until late in the nineteenth, the Reformation was nearly always reckoned with the Renaissance and the English, American, and French Revolutions as one of the great emancipations of humanity. But there were a few dissenters. Goethe, for example, though at times he expressed the most lively admiration for Luther, at other times hinted that it might have been just as well for freedom of thought if the forces of the Renaissance had been allowed to work themselves out uninterrupted. Friedrich Nietzsche, bringing to the study of Christianity a brilliant intellect sharpened by demoniac hatred, was the first to express this view with unqualified clearness. According to him the Reformation was "a reaction of spirits behind the times against the Italian Renaissance." Luther's "evangelical freedom" was nothing but "the courage of his sensuality." His revolt from the church was the "jacquerie of the human spirit," full of sound and fury but destitute of any principles of light and culture. In short, "the Reformation was a reduplication of the mediæval spirit at a time when that spirit no longer had a good conscience." Nietzsche thus expresses, in the most picturesque language, a view that has obtained considerable currency of late. In certain quarters, especially of America, it has become almost a commonplace that, as one professor has put it, "the Protestant Revolt was one tenth conservative and nine tenths reactionary." Let us examine the facts.

In the first place, it is pointed out that the Reformers were not usually tolerant. Luther himself was fairly so until about 1525, saying that "thoughts were free of taxes," and that it was wrong to put heretics to death. "Heresy," he wrote in 1523, "can never be prevented by force . . . even if the secular power fill the world with blood. For heresy is a spiritual thing; it cannot be cut with iron nor burned with fire nor drowned with water." Nor was this a merely academic opinion. There were at this time in Saxony men who set themselves up against Luther, and whom he protected from punishment. But the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 unhappily convinced him of the necessity of enforcing some sort of uniformity by the state. In 1529 an imperial edict was passed with the approval of the Lutherans condemning Anabaptists to death, and in pursuance of it a regular inquisition was set up in Saxony with Melanchthon at its head. Several nonconformists were put to death, and others imprisoned for long terms or banished. Luther wrote a tract to justify this, dividing heretics into three classes: 1. Those who were anarchists or seditious, or who preached against private property, should be put to death. 2. Those who taught against a manifest article of faith universally believed, as, if one taught that Christ were not God but a mere man, were not only heretics but blasphemers, and should be put to death. 3. Where there are two sects, like Lutherans and Catholics, in the same territory, the government should banish one to preserve order. Jews should also be prohibited from practising their religion.

Their ideas were followed all too faithfully by other reformers. Zwingli had Anabaptists drowned, the punishment being considered a practical satire on their rite of baptism by immersion. Calvin's name is stained by the judicial mur-

der of Servetus. Knox was pitiless. Freedom of conscience, foreshadowed in the Religious Peace of Augsburg and the Edict of Nantes, was first granted on principle in the American colonies, and in them cannot be considered chiefly the fruit of Protestant belief. Nevertheless, though it is no credit to the Reformers' enlightenment, there was something in their sturdy individualism as well as in their mutual disagreements, that made for ever-growing breadth. The men who vindicated for themselves the right to freedom cut away their only ground for persecuting others.

Democracy owes much to the Reformation, but here, too, the gain was indirect, an unforeseen consequence and not an intended result. There never was a more essentially democratic message than that of the excellence of the humblest Christian and the perfect equality of all before God. This element was present in both Lutheran and Calvinist communions, but in the former it was inhibited by other and stronger tendencies. Luther was a mystic, a man who cared so much for his citizenship in heaven that he almost despised his rights on earth. For social reform he cared much, but it must come from above, not from the people. From the New Testament he took the maxims that the bondsmen should not seek to be free, and that the subject owed perfect obedience to the divinely constituted king. He reserved the right to criticize kings, to say that they were "commonly the worst fools and greatest knaves on earth," and to call one of them "a damnable and rotten worm"; but, nevertheless, he preferred their rule to that of the multitude. This, he thought, would result in anarchy, and, moreover, he esteemed the right of political freedom very low. To seek enfranchisement, he once said, is to make the freedom Christ has given us a carnal thing. Is it not instructive to note that in Lutheran Germany there

has arisen a government of the kind Luther would have approved, one enlightened and efficient beyond others, at least in the treatment of its own subjects, but one in which the people have little say?

Even where Luther's principles were not democratic his methods were so. Lacking, at the start, any governmental or aristocratic support, he must needs appeal to the people by way of argument. His success was a triumph in fact of public opinion, that is, of the common man.

Calvinism, lacking the inhibiting mysticism of Luther, was from the first actively republican. If the theocracies of Zurich and Geneva were tyrannical in some respects, they were freer than the monarchies around them. There was a good deal of republican feeling in Europe in the sixteenth century, and all of it cannot be traced to the Reformation. Humanists like Erasmus poured scorn on the absurdities of monarchy; the free cities kept alive the love of liberty; the study of antiquity made the Greek and Roman republics popular, and even the Jesuits were capable, when it suited them, of defending tyrannicide. But it was the Huguenots and the Puritans who were most fiercely and consistently egalitarian. Regarding themselves as kings by the election of grace, and priests by the imposition of the hand of God, seeing that all men were separated from Him by an infinite distance in comparison with which human distinctions in rank vanish, these men went through life with a matchless pride and disdain of all earthly pretensions to grandeur. While they prostrated themselves before the terrible decree of Providence they trod on the neck of kings. In France, in Scotland, in England, they awakened strong democratic passions; in Holland they erected a Republic; and in America they sowed the wilderness with the most democratic communities the world has ever known.

For social reform, as distinct from popular government, Luther cared a vast deal. There is no doubt that the Reformation brought in a new and powerful impetus in this direction. The whole change of spirit from that of asceticism and other-worldliness has already been noted, as has the most influential of all sixteenth-century reforms, the abolition of sacerdotal celibacy. I may here mention a few other fields in which the Reformation has won for us valuable results.

In the field of education Luther was a leader. Both in extending it and in introducing better methods his work was tireless, enlightened, and successful. He valued education partly for religious reasons, for the Christian must be able, he thought, to read and understand God's Word; but also for itself, in order that, as he put it, young men might be fitted for their public duties, war, and government, "and be brilliant, reasonable, and able persons, polished in all arts and sciences." One of his important works was "On the Erection and Maintenance of Christian Schools." In it he urged all cities to build such schools, and all parents to send their children to them. Many parents, said he, reason that their children would do better to learn a trade early than to learn to read and write, but he labors hard to convince them of their error. "The civil authorities," he wrote, "are under obligation to *compel* the people to send their children to school. If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear pike and musket, to mount ramparts and perform other military duties in time of war, how much more has it the right to compel people to send their children to school.", This is the first definite demand for the compulsory and free education that is now at the basis of our modern life. Nor did Luther limit his interest to the training of boys. Girls should also be taught, he urged. One

immediately thinks of the large number of learned ladies, Margaret Pirckheimer and Margaret More, Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth, who adorned that period. Public libraries in each town he recommended.

In method Luther also improved upon the medieval curriculum. Latin continued to be the chief subject taught, as it is still in England. In addition to that, Greek and Hebrew, mathematics, history, and music are recommended. The universities were to be purged of most of Aristotle's works, which at that time meant medieval scholasticism, but his Logic, Rhetoric, and Poetics were to be kept. The humanities and some science were to be substituted. Physical exercises are recommended for their benefit to health, and of course abundant instruction in religion is provided for.

Luther also protested against the harshness of the prevalent method, whereby, as he put it, "we were martyred with declension and conjugation and yet learned nothing with all our anguish and crying." I cannot go into the medieval system here, but if anyone has ever seen a Latin textbook of that time, written all in Latin and in an inconceivably abstract, difficult, and scholastic style, he will understand the necessity of getting better methods. The martyrdom of the rod was perhaps even worse than that of the book. Boys were flogged repeatedly and savagely for slight faults. Luther did not believe in abolishing this altogether, but he did protest against its extreme. Moreover, he did much to exalt the consideration of the public for the schoolmaster, who was then regarded as a sort of lackey, and acted accordingly. But Luther said that there was no nobler profession, save that of preaching, and that in the last day he believed an honest teacher would be honored more than any pope.

A second social reform we owe to the Reformation is scien-

tific poor-relief. The exaltation of "apostolic poverty" by the monks had filled Europe with a horde of beggars. Figures must be given with caution, but probably a quarter of the population lived in this sordid way. Charity was regarded as the highest of virtues and was administered indiscriminately by individuals and institutions. Only the government regarded pauperism as outside of its purview. Luther changed all that. As early as 1520 he advocated that begging be forbidden by law, as a rascally trade, and that each city take care of its own poor. Following his principles, ordinances were passed at Wittenberg in 1521 for the first time scientifically caring for the poor. Sturdy beggars were punished, but the deserving poor, orphans and students, were helped, poor girls given dowries, and workmen loaned capital at the low rate of four per cent. The principles thus introduced spread to other cities, and have become of immense benefit to society at large.

In many other matters the Reformation tried to solve hitherto unsolved social problems. What is now known as the social evil was attacked and partly suppressed. Luther recommended wise laws against monopoly and in favor of government regulation both of production and of prices. He vigorously urged a simplification of law, a matter at that time more needed than it is now. The Canon Law he would abolish, and would greatly reduce the Roman law, leaving each state to be governed "by its own short laws according to its own ways and gifts." But we must not imagine that Luther was too far ahead of his age. He was in general against the taking of interest on money, and he had too little sympathy with the altogether reasonable demands of the peasants set forth in their official programme, The Twelve Articles.

In all reforms advocated by Luther there was a spirit not only of moral earnestness but of sweet reasonableness as well.

It is noteworthy that the Calvinists, in their extremer bodies, carried social reform to a point beyond the power of human nature to endure. Regulations which would have been intolerable to the free and joyous spirit of Luther, or to the serene and liberal mind of Zwingli, were put through by the Puritans with uncompromising ruthlessness. They reformed away not only vice, but innocent pleasure; dancing, games, the theater. Indeed, they finally reduced the staple of a Christian's legitimate recreation to meditation and prayer. But these excesses should not blind us to the real and valuable element of reconstruction introduced by Luther.

It is sometimes said that the spirit of the Reformation was directly hostile to science. It is alleged that by focusing men's attention on dogmatic subtleties it diverted them from cultivating more fruitful fields of knowledge. This view, advanced by Francis Bacon, has often been maintained. The rather peevish judgments of Erasmus that "where Lutheranism flourishes learning perishes, although that sort of men is particularly nourished by learning," and, again, "that just as the obscurantists were being worsted Luther came and threw the apple of Discord into the arena," have been much quoted.

It must be admitted that the spirit of the Reformation was anything but consciously rational. Luther spoke of "natural reason" as "Frau Hulda, the devil's harlot."[1] Calvin warned against the danger of consulting the light of reason rather than that of the gospel as strongly as did the Council of Trent. Nor has either church been hospitable to science. Luther rejected Copernicus in these words:—

"A new astrologer wishes to prove that the earth moves and re-

[1] Hulda, the old Northern goddess of love and beauty, had become, in medieval mythology, a foul witch and the devil's paramour.

volves instead of the heavens, the firmament, the sun and the moon, just as when one is sitting in a wagon or ship imagines he is still and the earth and trees marching by. So it is nowadays. Who would be wise must not allow himself to be pleased by anything which others do; he must do something original and claim his way of doing it as best of all. The fool wishes to revolutionize the whole science of astronomy. But, as the Holy Scriptures show, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, not the earth."

So, later, the Catholic Church condemned Galileo and forced him to recant. But it is not fair to charge religion with the whole weight of the negative opinion. The evidence of the senses seemed very strong in favor of the stability of the earth, and the evidence of tradition also. The absence of any observed stellar parallax long after Copernicus's day convinced some men, like Bacon, who were under no theological bias, that Copernicus was wrong. If the churches have opposed many other scientific discoveries, from evolution to anæsthetics, they have made a mistake, but they have not been by any means the only opponents of progress.

In one field of science particularly their own, that of Biblical criticism, the record of the Reformers' is singularly mixed. Just as in modern times the higher criticism of the Bible has been opposed by organized religion, so in the sixteenth century the rational textual criticism of Erasmus was bitterly denounced by Luther. On the other hand there was never a freer critic, nor up to his own time a sounder one, than was the Wittenberg professor. Some of his historical and philological judgments about the books of the Bible, as that of the Book of Kings was more credible than Chronicles, that Moses did not write all the Pentateuch nor Paul the Epistle to the Hebrews, are undoubtedly correct. In other cases, as in his doubts about the Apocalypse and his wish to exclude James from the canon, he at least evinced great freedom of opinion.

Speaking of the relation of the Reformation to reason, it is sometimes urged that the horrible superstitions of demonology and witchcraft flourished as luxuriantly on Protestant as on Catholic soil. Luther himself was not only a believer in the Devil but actually visualized him in a terribly vivid way. He also believed in witches, and advised, as the medieval church has commanded, that they be put to death. And yet here again, as the latest writer on the subject has shown,[1] the superstition was not deduced from any theological premises, but was already deep in the soil. Where the people were tinctured with beliefs in magic, they seldom thought of referring their ideas to religious authority.

The most we can fairly charge the Reformation with, in my judgment, is that it did not actively espouse the cause of reason. And yet, even here, it has been easier for Protestants to assimilate the results of modern science and philosophy than for Catholics. Claiming no infallibility they could withdraw from positions previously held. Divided into numerous sects, the exile from one could find refuge, if he chose, in another. One belief after another could be discarded as non-essential until Protestantism has sometimes become, what a philosopher has called it, little more than "a pious skepticism."

If, then, the services of the Reformation to the causes taken as typical of modern progress were indirect and unintended, wherein did the revolutionary character of the movement consist? To my mind it was a revolution, and a great one, chiefly because it sharply challenged and in part overthrew the religion that had been accepted for twelve hundred years, that had dominated the spiritual and intellectual life of Western Europe, that had molded its art and literature and knowl-

[1] Kittredge, American Historical Review, October, 1917.

edge and education, that had inextricably interwoven itself in every department of political, of social, and of private life. Even now religion is one of the great conservative forces, but in the sixteenth century it was far stronger, narrower, and more sure of itself. It had neither remained unquestioned in the schools, nor was it by any means the exclusive interest of the masses, but it was far more generally held and far more deeply felt then than now. The man who could change the character of this religion for half of Europe (and, indeed, to some extent for the remaining half) effected a revolution of prime importance in itself and one which became in all departments of thought a powerful solvent of conservatism. The only real revolution is the change of the public mind. To make the whole people think, earnestly and passionately, on their own beliefs and habits, *this* is the essence of change and the beginning of progress, and this is just what Luther did. To expect from him the sympathies and interests of a modern radical is an anachronism. It is because he was so successful that we have gone beyond him. What was new and vital in his day has become commonplace in ours. But historically we can appreciate his services, which I conceive to be as follows:—

1. He introduced various practical reforms, as in education and poor relief.

2. By sharply questioning the ancient and almost unanimously held religion of Western Europe, he made the masses think for themselves, and thus introduced a powerful solvent of the "cake of custom" not only in religion but in all departments of life.

3. He broke the monopoly, which had too often proved the tyranny, of the medieval ecclesiastical state. Even in

Catholic lands the church was never able again to assert its former supremacy.

4. By declaring all laymen priests he made all priests simple laymen, and thus abolished a privileged class.

5. By preaching the excellence of the humblest Christian and the equality of all before the divine majesty, he sowed the seed which, on proper soil, was destined to bring forth the demand for popular rights.

6. For a primitive, sacramental religion he substituted a new type of piety more in harmony with the ethical and philosophical ideals of the age.

7. By asserting for himself the right of private judgment he introduced a new spirit into Christianity, one inevitably bound to evolve in time complete religious individualism and complete religious liberty.

8. By shattering the ascetic ideal of the church he restored to this world energies previously dedicated to the next, and gave an immense stimulus to the forces making for wealth and social improvement.

For these reasons I regard the Reformation, with all its limitations, as a progressive movement, and not in any sense the return to an earlier point of view, either to that of primitive Christianity, as the Reformers themselves claimed, or to that of the dark ages, as has been latterly asserted.