The Reformation Crisis

edited by
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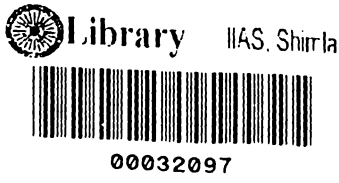

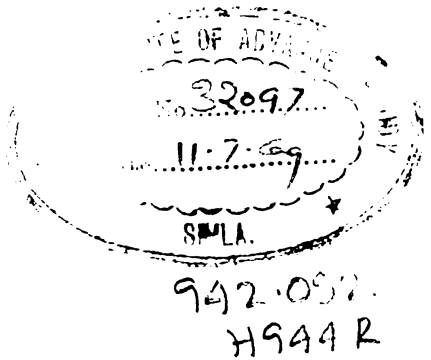

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Preface

THIS volume originated in a series of talks arranged by Miss Jean Rowntree of the B.B.C. and broadcast in 1962. To her and her colleague Roger Toulmin we are much indebted. All the broadcasts have now been revised for this book, while two further chapters, 'The Reformation in England' by Professor A. G. Dickens and my own on 'The Framework of Crisis', have been specially written for it. Our aim has been to analyse each sector of the crisis without losing sight of its central theme; and we have in many cases called upon contemporaries to give their own account of the impact of the Reformation upon the religion, politics and society of their age.

I am very grateful to Mr. B. W. Fagan for reading and commenting on the volume while it was in proof, and to my son, Julian Hurstfield, for help in seeing it through the press and in making the index.

J.H.

University College, London
June 1965

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Introduction: The Framework of Crisis

JOEL HURSTFIELD

The crisis of the Reformation has no beginning and no end. For good historical reasons we associate it with the sixteenth century, and more especially with the five or six decades which span its middle years. In more precise terms, it was a process which began with the formal publication of the Ninety-five Theses by Martin Luther in 1517 and ended with the last session of the Council of Trent in 1563. The crisis was, of course, not over, but men's frontiers were more clearly defined.

The Reformation is thus generally taken to mean the series of events in different parts of Europe which led to the fragmentation of the universal Church. The threat of disintegration had always been present, especially during the preceding two hundred years. At the same time the new methods of thought and scholarship, associated with the Renaissance, had placed the established religious assumptions under severe challenge. None the less it was Luther's searching questions into Catholic tradition, practice and claims, coming when they did, which made a permanent breach in a great European institution which had survived so many earlier assaults. But the Reformation crisis involved much more than religion. And contemporaries themselves came to realize this before long.

For it was in the profoundest sense a crisis of authority which, in the circumstances of the time, expressed itself with the peculiar fervour of entrenched religious dogma. The result is that some of the fundamental issues which confronted Europe were driven into the narrow technical channels of theology and were therefore obscured and distorted almost beyond recognition. Men argued with the

greatest intensity because they were insecure and frightened and in any case uncertain as to what the argument was about. The crisis, however, has a long pedigree and it has exercised an enduring influence. Some of the lessons learned by the Reformers have had to be learned over and over again, in various times and places, at a heavier cost, and not least by the present generation.

The assumption that the Reformation was a revolution, which of course it was, implies that there was a stable system of government and society which it overturned. In fact, the two central organs of this universalism, the empire and the papacy, were far from stable and displayed profound weaknesses for all the world to see. The empire was a travesty of the Roman Empire, after which it was named, and, on the other hand, it was no more than a frail shadow of its other ancestor, the Germanic Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne, the Ottos or Frederick II. Although the office of emperor was elective, it had become the family inheritance of the Habsburgs, who, by war and marriage, had joined Austria to Hungary, to the German states, to Spain and to the Netherlands. Charles V, who became emperor in 1519 ('after an election conducted with the publicity of an auction and the morals of a gambling hell', as R. H. Tawney put it),[1] succeeded to a confusion of dominions confounded in the empty splendours of a European empire. The ideals of empire lingered on to trouble and thwart the true interests of the Habsburgs, but it had no effective machinery to enforce its will.

With the papacy it was the reverse. It had an elaborate machinery which it had built up over the years, but the ideals of Gregory VII and Innocent III, which had once sustained it, had long since departed. Only the machinery and the claims remained. The flesh was willing but the spirit was weak.

If the emperor had had better civil servants and better organization to carry out his aims, or the pope nobler aims to inspire his civil servants and organization, then the power and the momentum of the upheaval might have been significantly reduced. Yet even this is doubtful. For if religious dissent pressed ever harder on the established order, behind religious pressures there were social pressures more powerful still.

[1] *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1929, p. 79.

These, too, had a long history. The great fall in population during the fourteenth century, and the consequent shortage of labour, had disrupted the traditional framework of economic life. Agriculture had for centuries been generally based upon dependent, often unfree, labour, earning its use of the land by service of the lord. But when labour became scarce, was reluctantly given, poor in quality and difficult to retain, the lords turned to alternative methods of exploiting their lands. Rents instead of labour service offered to the lords greater stability in profits as well as an easier means to purchase the imported commodities which were becoming part of their rising standards of living. But essential to this was stability in prices; and in the sixteenth century prices were no longer stable. Hence the renewed efforts of the lords to regain possession of their land from the peasants who held it by long-established rents of falling value. Alternatively the lords tried to reimpose heavy feudal burdens and to tie the labour to the land. But although the lords were sometimes weak the peasants were by no means strong, for population was rising and the land hunger was widespread. Thus was inaugurated a new period of instability, discontent and social disorder. It was no wonder that the Lutheran Reformation in Germany became involved in princely wars, knightly wars and peasant revolts; or that the Calvinist Reformation in France was absorbed into a major series of political and social conflicts which shook the whole country; or that the Tudor Reformation in England coincided with provincial risings in the West Country, East Anglia and the North.

This sense of instability was reflected in the towns no less than in the country. Men had for centuries looked beyond their village for their markets and their supplies. Increasing demands had led to increased production, division of labour and specialization. The towns, therefore, came to provide the specialized services of finance, industry, administration, education and the law. All over Europe sophisticated urban civilizations had developed, of which the north Italian cities were the most advanced examples. Augsburg, Antwerp, Paris, London were merely a few among the many great centres of business and government.

But their very size and prosperity made them heavily dependent upon a complex capitalist system, subject itself to enormous

fluctuations. A harvest failure could prove as disastrous to commerce as to agriculture. Financial mismanagement, overproduction or war could wreck the fortunes of great cities and whole regions. The collapse of Antwerp during the second half of the sixteenth century showed how vulnerable were the economic foundations of great cities. In any case, all of them witnessed the growth of a great, disorderly, urban proletariat, footloose, wayward, discontented, with no adequate social services to meet their reasonable needs, and no adequate police system to restrain their unreasoning outbursts. The Anabaptists of Münster showed what could happen at such times to a religious movement when the initiative had passed from the reformers to the reformed.

The cities were, of course, no new phenomena in Europe. But their importance had, by the sixteenth century, vastly grown, not only because of their material resources but because they were great centres for the dissemination of ideas in their own regions and in interchange with centres abroad. And in this the printing press proved their great ally of ever-increasing influence. Their religion—and their fate—could set the pattern for the whole nation. That is why the city and port of London was of such consequence during the ebb and flow of Protestantism in mid-Tudor England. That is why Henri IV, having failed to conquer all France with his army, took Paris by going to Mass.

If civic progress and civic pride gave to the governing burghers an identity and purpose, there was a more powerful force—that of national kingship—at work all over western Europe. It, too, had a long ancestry reaching back to the aspirations of the medieval kings of France, England, Spain and other countries. Their monarchies had striven intermittently—and with only intermittent success—to turn their feudal overlordships into territorial authorities whose writs ran through all their dominions. By the sixteenth century they had in western and northern Europe achieved a considerable measure of success, in eastern Europe much less. This aggressive power of centralized nationalism, with its own bureaucracy, ideology and propaganda, was no friend of the great cities whose 'liberties', that is privileges, lay athwart its advancing power. Where the cities were relatively strong as in Italy and Germany the establishment of nation

states was postponed indefinitely. In contrast to this, provincial liberties, as for example in England and Spain, were overridden by the ambitious purposes of unitary kingship; while representative institutions in many parts of Europe—England was an outstanding exception—were, by the end of the sixteenth century, weaker than at its beginning.

I have stressed that the states of Europe lacked the unity and stability that their names imply. They were each, in fact, a mosaic of jurisdictions of conflicting patterns. There were the jurisdictions belonging to cities, to provinces, states, monarchies and to the Church. In short, there were ever present the conditions favourable to internal warfare. The high-sounding titles of majesty represented often enough no more than a declaration of intent rather than a demonstration of power. But whatever their internal difficulties, these monarchs were quite clear that the liberties of the Church must be brought within the framework of their sovereign power. The Church had, throughout the Middle Ages, constituted the greatest barrier to the extending authority of kings. But now it was weak, both within the states and at its centre in Rome. As a result, the monarchs were able to wring concessions from the Papacy and thereby tighten their hold upon ecclesiastical policy and institutions within their dominions. But the threat of opposition was always inherent in the very existence of a universal Church governed by a supreme head. Hence the most severe threat to papal supremacy lay not in doctrine but in nationalism. It is worth recalling that, if the Protestant Defender of the Faith was excommunicated by the pope, so, too, was the Most Catholic King.

It was in conditions of such widespread European tension that the complex forces of the Reformation made themselves felt. Everywhere there was, to a greater or less degree, the same intellectual stress of the Renaissance, everywhere the same distrust and hatred of the papacy's abuse of its authority. But in each case these movements expressed themselves within the characteristic framework of the separate territories in which they took root. If Lutheran Protestantism was so different from Calvinist Protestantism, it was not only because Luther was different from Calvin but because the history, geography and social structure of Germany were utterly different

from those of Switzerland. In the chapters which follow my colleagues and I therefore examine the various forms the Reformation and Counter-Reformation took at different times and in different places. But, in spite of the diversity within the European system of government and society, this was a time when men throughout the whole continent were above all trying to discover and define the role of the individual in Church and State.

So, when Luther opened the debate about whether his soul had direct access to God, without intermediary, he was raising the dominant question which still exercises us today: where does authority lie? Do I obey my conscience, the established religious creed, my government or the larger claims of all mankind? To this question no universally acceptable answer has yet been found. But when it first emerged during the Reformation period it challenged not only the existing order in Church and State but the very authority of the Reformation leaders who had set the movement in train. Luther and Calvin had no greater love for liberty than had Loyola or Pius V. Henry VIII saw the dangers of dissent as clearly as did the Emperor Charles V. And the coming of the first sign of liberty of conscience seemed in practice to threaten the dissolution of the whole social order. It is hardly surprising that before the end of the sixteenth century intolerant men were moving into positions of power all over Europe.

For this and other reasons the term Counter-Reformation is an unsatisfactory one to describe the processes at work during the second half of the sixteenth century. This is partly because it blurs the enormous achievements of *internal* reform which the Catholic Church accomplished during this period, and which indeed in some places predated Lutheranism. Moreover, if we use the expression in the traditional sense to mean the forces of Catholic resistance to change and dissent, then we ought also to employ it in the Protestant context, because here, too, among their leaders there was powerful resistance to dangerous thoughts. For this was the crisis of liberty as it was the crisis of authority.

So the forces of resistance within each state turned to the conservative sector of the Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, to stand against those who were pressing for change. In central Europe

such an alliance was forged between the emperor and the Catholic Church. In England, Elizabeth I looked for support to Whitgift and men of like mind in the Church of England. For safety's sake it was best to conform. 'I have deemed it better,' said a Spanish nobleman, 'to be damned for frivolity than for heresy.'[2] 'This liberty,' said the Protestant Bishop Sandys of London, 'that men may openly profess diversity of religion, must needs be dangerous to the Commonwealth . . . One God, one king, one faith, one profession is fit for one monarchy and commonwealth . . . Let conformity and unity in religion be provided for; and it shall be as a wall of defence unto this realm.'[3] It was as though men had had their first glimpse of liberty and hastily drew back from what they saw. For liberty had brought powerful threats to hierarchy, order and peace. All over Europe the 'walls of defence' were being erected. Church and State were moving together to imprison the best minds of their generation.

As ever, the deepest quarrels were over ideology. But when men quarrel with unyielding intolerance over the unverifiable details of religious dogmas, they lead in the next generation to doubts as to the dogmas themselves. That is one reason why, in the late sixteenth century, we notice the rise of sceptical humanism among educated men. And men sought for new inspiration in the questing mood of the scientists, trying in their own way to break through to the sources of authority. 'I profess to learn and teach anatomy,' said William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, 'not from books but from dissections, not from the tenets of philosophers, but from the fabric of nature.'[4]

Meanwhile, the theologians, having discredited each other in their bitter quarrels, found to their dismay that they had brought discredit upon the very fundamentals of their religion and thereby helped to open the door to scepticism, free thinking and rationalism. The citadel was in the end betrayed by the defenders themselves.

[2] Cited in A. Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History* (Princeton, 1954), p. 638.

[3] *Sermons of Edwin Sandys* (Parker Soc., 1842), p. 49. See J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments*, 1559–81, 1953, pp. 185f.

[4] De Motu Cordis et Sanguinis, cited in D. McKie, 'Origins of the Royal Society', *Notes and Rec. of Roy. Soc.*, 1960, XV, p. 10.

I

The Background to the Reformation

DENYS HAY

Many of us when we were at school 'did the Reformation'. We probably also 'did the Renaissance' at the same time. Our teachers and our textbooks tended to assume that these sixteenth-century events were turning-points of a special kind, making for the modern world, for values which (in broad terms) hold good today. In the history of any Protestant country the Reformation must be expected to play a central role: after all, until two generations ago practically all higher education in England was in the hands of men who were in Anglican holy orders, or who had at any rate been taught by men who were parsons in the Church of England.

I, too, 'did the Renaissance and Reformation' at school. But in the last twenty-five years I have spent most of my time reading and thinking about the centuries *before* the sixteenth. I now come upon the Reformation from the other side, so to speak, and this makes a big difference. Of course, no one can reflect at all on Luther, Calvin and the reformers without remembering a little what lay behind, and I am sure most people think that the pre-Reformation Church was corrupt and crumbling. But a closer study of the later Middle Ages makes such a brief and sweeping condemnation seem quite inadequate.

What actually happened at the Reformation? First of all there was a massive and widespread rebellion from control of the Church by the Roman pope: much of Germany and Switzerland, all of Scandinavia and Britain in the end deserted the leadership of the

pope and for a time a large part of France followed suit. In place of the old order in these areas the sixteenth century acknowledged the existence of state churches. These were not all managed in the same way. In some it was the king who was effectively head of the whole community, including church and clergy, in others power was in the hands of a committee of influential men; but in all Protestant areas leadership in religion passed away from the old hierarchy into secular hands. In a still broader sense, and looking at the faith rather than church organization, the Reformed Churches for the most part experienced now a lay leadership in spiritual matters or at least attempts in this direction; the older pattern of a devout Christian had been a monk or a friar and now it was a citizen. In view of this it was natural that the services and the Scriptures should both have been officially vernacular—the old Latin service and the Vulgate Bible were replaced by rituals and Bible in French, English, German and so on. Just as the old clergy had been deprived of their monopoly of a Latin liturgy, so they were despoiled of their lands. All over that part of Christian Europe where the Reformation took root we find the monasteries were dissolved and church lands confiscated by kings and laymen. And, finally, the Reformation also brought some vital doctrinal matters under review—free will and predestination, good works and faith; these were settled one way in Protestant Europe and another way in Roman Catholic Europe.

Yet there remains an important question: how much of all this had occurred before, long before, Luther was born? This is also a reasonable question. It would indeed have been strange if the old order had persisted unchallenged and unchanging for the previous thousand years.

I wonder how many Reformation experts could identify the reformer who wrote this:

> During all this time, the small fire of the true faith began to die away, so that it was almost reduced to ashes, and seemed scarcely to emit a single spark. For simony was now practised without a blush, and usurers openly, by various arguments, extorted money from the people and from minors; charity expired; the liberty of the church was crushed; religion was trodden upon, and of no value; and the daughter of Sion became, as it were, a

> shameless harlot without a blush. Illiterate persons, of the lowest class, armed with the Bulls of the Roman church, bursting forth into threats, daily presumed, despite of the sacred privileges we enjoy from our holy ancestors, to plunder the revenues left by pious men of old times for the maintenance of religious men, for the support of the poor, and to afford hospitality to pilgrims; and, by thundering forth sentences of excommunication, they at once obtained what they demanded. And if any of the injured or robbed parties resorted to the remedy of appeal, or to the plea of privilege, they immediately suspended and excommunicated them by means of some other prelate, on the authority of a warrant from the pope, and in this way, not by prayers, not canonically, but by imperious extortion, did they rob the simple-minded . . . Hence it came to pass that, where formerly noble and bountiful clerks, guardians and patrons of churches, used to make themselves renowned throughout the whole of the adjacent country, by entertaining travellers and refreshing the poor, there debased men, void of morals, and full of cunning, agents and farmers of the Romans, now scraped together all that was useful and valuable, and transmitted it to foreign countries to their lords, who were living daintily on the patrimony of Christ, and bragging on the possessions of others. Then was to be seen heartfelt grief, the cheeks of the saints became wet with tears, and sighs and complaints were heard to burst forth and multiply, and many said with a sigh, 'It were better to die than to behold the sufferings of our people and our saints.' Woe to England! which, once the chief of provinces, mistress of nations, the mirror of the church, and a pattern of religion, is now laid under tribute; ignoble men have trampled her under-foot, and she has fallen a prey to degenerate men.

In fact, this is not from the writings of a reformer. It is not even from the mouth of a heretic. It was written in his chronicle (along with dozens of similar passages) by the worthy and entirely orthodox Benedictine monk Matthew Paris, who lived at St. Albans in the middle of the thirteenth century.[1] He was perpetually incensed by the politics, and the consequent financial demands, of contemporary popes. It was a widely shared view among Englishmen, Frenchmen

[1] *Matthew Paris's English History*, trans. J. A. Giles, 3 vols., 1852–4, i, 50–51.

and others who did not for a moment deny the pope's spiritual leadership but resented his interference in their own lands. The bitterness this provoked in Germany and Italy, where it was the popes' consistent aim to prevent the rise of strong princes, can well be imagined. It was only a shade less irritating in other countries and in the fourteenth century it was perhaps even stronger in England than elsewhere. For in 1307 the popes established themselves at Avignon—which was then on the border of France—and until 1377 they remained there. These popes were Frenchmen and were on balance able and disinterested: but they claimed the right to 'provide' or nominate to church appointments throughout Christendom, and they taxed the clergy on appointment. It was a time when England and France were at war and it seemed intolerable to English nobles and gentry, as well as to many clergy, that dues should be paid from England to a pope allied to the 'natural enemy'. From 1307 onwards there was legislation against papal interference in the Church of England, culminating in the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire which, as reenacted under Richard II, did much to cut off the clergy in England from the legal controls of the popes. To read the Statute of Provisors (1351) is an illuminating experience. Here is a passage which might have come from the pen of Thomas Cromwell:

> . . . Whereas the Holy Church of England was founded in an estate of prelacy in the kingdom of England by the said King [Edward I] and his progenitors and by the earls, barons and nobles of his kingdom and their ancestors, to enlighten themselves and the people concerning the law of God and to provide hospitality, alms and other charitable works in the places where churches were established, for the souls of the founders and their heirs, and of all Christians . . . [Now] the pope of Rome, seizing to himself the lordship of such possessions and benefices, gives and grants them to aliens who have never lived in the kingdom of England and to cardinals who cannot live there . . .[2]

And so on.

[2] Translated from *Select Documents of English Constitutional History 1307 1485*, ed. S. B. Chrimes and A. L. Brown, 1961, pp. 72–73.

In fact, what was tiresome to secular governments in the fourteenth century was less the practice of papal interference than the threat of it. For then, as earlier, kings all over Europe never relinquished their right effectively to nominate to bishoprics and greater abbeys in their domains. A bishop or abbot was a great territorial lord; kings could not be indifferent to the kind of men appointed; and it was only at moments when kings were temporarily weak that genuine elections or genuine provisions took place, though in England monastic heads were normally freely elected without interference from pope or king. Normally the king told the chapter whom to elect (the *congé d'élire*) and he told the pope whom to provide. Among other things this enabled princes to give suitable rewards to the clergy they employed in their own administrations.

Just as the residence of the popes at Avignon exacerbated the situation so did the Great Schism in the Church which occurred in 1378. The French pope who had returned to Rome died there and at the conclave the cardinals elected a relatively unknown Neapolitan who took the title of Urban VI. He was a neurotic man and he alienated not only the French cardinals, who were a majority of the College, but the others as well and soon after the French cardinals elected a Frenchman who took the name Clement VII; he retired to Avignon and the Schism had begun. It lasted till 1417, but its consequences lasted long after that. These consequences were: a forced administrative division of the Church into regions largely corresponding with kingdoms; a sharp decline in the standing of the pope *vis-à-vis* princes; a doctrine that councils of the Church were in the last resort superior to popes; and a recognition of a divided Church in the concordats. Each of these points deserves a brief comment.

The administrative divisions of the Church had always corresponded more or less with areas of secular government: in this sense one talked in the Middle Ages about the Church *in* England, even (as in the Statute of Provisors just quoted) the Church *of* England. But the great international orders of monks and friars had been a visible indication that the Church was one and undivided. Now, with the Schism, the headquarters of the Cistercians and the Cluniacs were in the obedience of Avignon, and this inevitably led to the

rulers of areas which accepted the claims of the Roman pope insisting on the separation of monasteries in their lands from the order as such. In many territories the great international orders, broken into pieces in this way, never recovered their former unity.

Beyond that the Schism weakened the Church as a unit by putting it in the power of princes to choose which pope they would obey. There had been a time in the thirteenth century and earlier when popes claimed they might choose kings; now it was the other way round and the allegiance of kings was determined not by their views as to the spiritual claims of Avignon or Rome but of political advantage. It was a happy period for kings and the memory of it lived on among princes: as late as 1477 Lorenzo de' Medici wrote to a friend in Rome that 'three or four popes would be better than a single one'.[3]

The ending of the Schism also caused embarrassment to later popes. In 1409 the cardinals from the two rival camps met in council at Pisa and elected a pope who they hoped would command the loyalty of the whole Church. This did not happen and for some years there were three lines of popes. The scandal ended with the summoning of a great Council at Constance. From 1414 onwards the senior clergy and ambassadors who attended wrestled with the twin problems of reform and ending the Schism. In the end they did end the Schism. In an extraordinary conclave, in which the cardinals were joined by representatives of the 'nations', the significantly named committees through which the Council transacted its business, a pope was elected who was universally accepted.

In the course of these years a doctrine had grown up, embodied in a decree or canon of the Council, which said that a General Council was in the last resort superior to a pope; and machinery was laid down for regular meetings of Councils in the future. This meant that any political opponent of the popes would be able to appeal from papal decisions to a future Council—and many did so, from little brigands in the Papal States to great kings like Louis XI of France. It did not mean that General Councils were, in fact, held regularly. One assembled at Basle in 1434—but it attracted only a modicum of support and the popes succeeded in whittling away the

[3] L. Pastor, *History of the Popes*, trans. Antrobus, 1894, iv, p. 300 n.

doctrine of conciliar supremacy. Indeed, one of the most far-reaching consequences of the whole Schism and the Councils which followed was to make popes so frightened of General Councils that, when the need for one was greatest, in the early years of Lutheran revolt, they avoided calling one till it was too late.

The reform of the Church at Constance was confined to a few broad resolutions, condemning non-residence of clergy and corruption. Beyond that the prelates could not agree: the bishops and university men both criticized papal taxation and the College of Cardinals; the bishops wished to restrict the pope's rights to appoint to benefices; the university men, present in great strength, favoured papal provisions of benefices for graduates, but were just as critical of papal taxation; and each of the 'nations'—the English, French, German, Italian and Spanish—had its own particular grievances and solutions. The upshot was a series of national concordats between the pope and the various nations, in which the share of papal rights to benefices and taxation was hammered out. The English concordat said little: there really had been a kind of tacit concordat ever since the Statute of Provisors in 1351, which had been re-enacted in 1390 when it really began to be effective. It is also worth pointing out that it was at this time that the 'Liberties of the Gallican Church' begin to be talked about in France. As in England so in France the basic rights over the clergy exercised by the secular government were recognized.

There is no doubt that the Avignon papacy, the Great Schism and the Councils all contributed to making churches more regional in spirit and more secular in their control. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries see other developments along similar lines. In the later Middle Ages both heresy and reform existed also only at a regional level and were effective in so far as they enjoyed lay support.

Compared with Catharism, widespread in Mediterranean Europe in the twelfth century, and the Fraticelli of the thirteenth century, the heresies associated with Wycliffe and Hus are homespun, provincial affairs. English Lollards, with their Bible fundamentalism, were never a victorious group—perhaps because there was no association of official religion with a foreign political threat. This political threat did exist in Bohemia. Huss and other Czech reformers were hostile

to German influence in their country. The Hussites, faced with German crusades, developed more extreme forms of Protestantism, in close association with social revolt and patriotic sentiment. For a time Hussitism was dominant in parts of Bohemia and, in a sense, it was never killed off entirely. But it did not spread. Like the English Lollards, the extreme Taborites did not seek to convert neighbouring countries.

Spiritual revival and reform was also confined. No Bernard or Francis fired the imagination of all men in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There were indeed many mystics—predominantly lay folk—who were sometimes organized, though such movements were of limited geographical extent. The Friends of God and the Brethren of the Common Life of the Low Countries and the Rhineland are examples of piety, largely lay piety, based on a fairly narrow area. The Observant Franciscans, who tried to revive the ardours of the original movement from the 1360s onwards, in fact were organized in two separate groups, north and south of the Alps, and were really even more divided than that. In similar fashion groups of monasteries were sometimes reformed and associated in 'congregations'. Such were the larger units into which reform was grouped. In even smaller centres we find isolated groups of Beghards and Béguines, and members of the Third Orders of the friars. All of this meant much genuine religious activity and many fine works of mysticism. But spiritual effort was splintered, it was not co-ordinated by the pope, and it was indeed often regarded very critically by the orthodox devout. This state of affairs should be compared with the commanding position in the Christian world of a pope like Innocent III (1198–1216), with the extraordinarily rapid diffusion all over Christendom of the Franciscan and Dominican friars at that time.

All of this spirituality was also increasingly in the vernacular, for the men and women who were fired by religion in these later centuries were usually not learned in Latin. They were, however, increasingly literate. Schools multiplied in the later Middle Ages everywhere. So did universities. In both schools and universities we also find a quite new type of student. In earlier times a boy who learnt his letters to the point of embarking on what we would call

secondary education aimed at becoming a clerk in the technical sense —a clergyman. And this is equally true of the university men of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Now in the later Middle Ages men put their children to school and university as part of their general education. They went to Paris or Padua or Oxford for a year or two and left without a degree, having learnt a bit of Latin, perhaps a bit of philosophy, and, almost certainly, a good deal about life. It was because of the rising numbers of literate laymen that the invention of printing by movable metal type was developed in the Rhineland in the mid-fifteenth century. It was the only way in which the supply of books could match the demand. Among the most significant of the books produced by the early presses were service books and Bibles—Bibles not only in Latin, but in German, French and Italian. (One of the commonest delusions of the Protestant in Britain is that on the Continent the vernacular Bible only came with the Reformation.)

If heresy and piety lacked central direction and commanding leaders, with an appeal over the whole of Christendom, there were some general attitudes prevailing everywhere about the relationship of laity and clergy. There was a widespread resentment of clerical endowments; and there was an even more ancient and deep-rooted hostility to the clergy.

All over Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we find legislation limiting or prohibiting gifts of land to the Church. Land so given was lost to circulation, for it went to a corporation which never died, it went (to use the term of Edward I's statute) to the *mortmain*, dead hand, of the Church. Of course, princes and governments sold licences permitting donors to make such grants and considerable quantities of land were so given in the later Middle Ages, especially to the Franciscans and Dominicans who were vowed in theory to poverty. But the endowment of the Church after 1300 was a mere trickle of what it had been before 1200. And it went with sporadic attempts by laymen to recover or at any rate to enjoy church lands. Acts of outright spoliation are not common; but in practice many a monastery had its estates managed by lay protectors and stewards, often related to the abbot, who made a very good thing out of it. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were a time when the

agricultural and commercial prosperity of the thirteenth century was replaced by slump conditions. Many a church got into debt and its lands were at the mercy of its creditors. There was also in the fifteenth century a beginning of that habit of granting the bulk of monastic incomes to non-resident 'commendators' and in certain parts of Europe these grants *in commendam* went far to stripping the monasteries of their wealth. Grants *in commendam* were almost unknown in England before Wolsey, but there was no dissolution of the monasteries in Protestant Scotland: the lands had practically all passed into lay hands before the Reformation.

The friars were popular at least in part because in the early days they practised poverty. But by the mid-fourteenth century they had largely abandoned their earlier rigour and so they shared much of the contempt and anger which all clergy regularly attracted. One should hesitate to call this 'anticlericalism'. The word itself would have meant nothing to Boccaccio or Chaucer (in whose pages hostility of laymen to clergy is so clearly seen) and in modern usage it has all kinds of associations which are out of place. It is, I imagine, rare to find a modern anticlerical who is a regular churchgoer. But the men and women of the Middle Ages who told with relish dirty stories about priests and friars, about monks and nuns, about bishops and popes, were completely convinced of the reality and the validity of orthodox Christian religion. The priest at the altar and his role in the ordered services of the Church were not questioned. It was only in the market-place that the uniform of the clergy, both secular and regular, so frequently provoked derision.

This is, of course, an old story and its roots lie in the very privileges which the clergy had secured over the centuries as a result of their unique place in the sacraments of the Church, and in the admiration men felt at the renunciation of the world practised by monks and friars in earlier more heroic days. But there is no doubt that the criticism of the clergy was mounting. Dante in the first years of the fourteenth century had bitter things to say, and so had many of the great vernacular writers that came after him—Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Villon. They were repeating in their finer way the cruder tales of the old *fabliaux*. Three matters in particular irritated men. First the demands of the clergy for money: not big sums, but endless

little sums—for tithes, for burial services; and the nagging suspicion that money given for devout causes often stuck to the individual friar or clergyman who collected it. Second, it was obvious that many of the clergy did not live up to their profession. Ignorant priests, vagabond friars and monks, licentious nuns are not found everywhere and all the time, but they are all too common and they are vouched for not just in the pages of poets and novelists but in the sober records of the Church itself. Here, for example, is a typical attempt by a bishop to reform the affairs of a not very corrupt nunnery, the convent of Godstow near Oxford. In 1432 the Bishop of Lincoln conducted a 'visitation' and the resulting orders indicate what had been going wrong:

> In the first place, that all the nuns, those at any rate who are able, be present every night at matins in the quire; . . .
> Also that strangers who come to the monastery be straightway brought into the Abbess' hall by the gatekeeper of the monastery; . . .
> Also that the bailiff of the monastery who now is hold no private conversations with any nun, since he says that there is no good woman in the monastery.
> Also that there be no watchings or drinkings after compline; . . .
> Also that seemly and sufficient cells be set in order in the infirmary for nuns who are in bad health.
> Also that the young nuns go not out of the cloister precinct to the outer court alone, . . .
> Also that no secular person, friar or other man of religion enter the cloister precincts for the nuns' lodgings after compline or before the bell rings for prime. . . .
> Also that the recourse of scholars of Oxford to the monastery be altogether checked and restrained.
> Also that [neither] the gatekeeper of the monastery nor any other secular person convey any gifts, rewards, letter or tokens from the nuns to any scholar of Oxford . . . and if any nun shall do the contrary, she shall undergo imprisonment for a year.[4]

Yet these very men and women asked for special treatment, for

[4] *England under the Lancastrians*, ed. Jessie H. Flemming, 1921, pp. 222–3.

privileges on the basis of their vows—vows of obedience, chastity and poverty which, even when not flagrantly abused, are often respected in the letter rather than the spirit. The third source of irritation lay in the operation of justice. The laity were beyond measure angered when a criminal clerk, guilty of murder or other serious offence, saved his skin by 'benefit of clergy'. There were, indeed, very many occasions when an angry crowd lynched the peccant priest and gave him no time to plead his clergy: but often a rogue in holy orders could escape the harsh laws that other people had to obey.

All of this was well enough known and councils of clergy laid down severe penalties for clergy who broke the laws of the Church. But all to little avail, perhaps because some of the popes were themselves breaking such laws, perhaps because they were mostly indifferent to the urgency of reform. It is doubtful if contemporaries outside a small circle of courtiers in Rome knew at the time of the sordid dynastic scheming of Sixtus IV or the hair-raising private life of Alexander VI. But it was evident to all educated men that even the best of the fifteenth-century popes were mainly concerned with Italian politics. The successors of St. Peter, of Gregory VII, of Innocent III were princes—and not particularly rich or impressive princes. If a great pope could make no impression on William the Conqueror or Edward I, what could be expected of the little popes of the Renaissance?

One must not conclude by giving an impression that nothing happened at the Reformation, that all that Luther and Calvin, Henry VIII and Francis I and Charles V did was to dot the i's and cross the t's. A good deal of what happened in the sixteenth century *was* dotting i's and crossing t's, but if one does not dot and cross it is very difficult to make out what is written. Henry VIII, in many if not most ways, had no more power over the clergy than Edward I had, and he was not much more ruthless in exercising it. But Edward I did not declare that he was supreme head on earth of the Church in England, and Henry VIII did. Also all those profound theological matters of the Reformation, discussed by the reformers and settled for Roman Catholics by the Council of Trent, profoundly influenced Christian behaviour in centuries to come. On the

other hand, the really profound change in the moral climate of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—by which a belief in renunciation of the world was replaced by a belief in the virtue of action in the world—owed, I think, little to the theologians either Protestant or Catholic. But that, as they say, is another story.

II

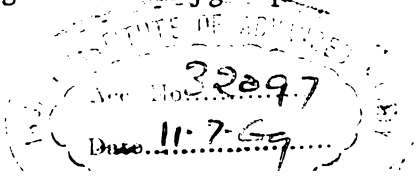
Luther and the Reformation

GORDON RUPP

Martin Luther is in relation to the Reformation rather like the opening notes of some great piano concerto—say Beethoven's Fourth—which state the theme, which is then taken up by other instruments, and finally lost in the developing pattern of music. What happened in this man's private soul affected the direction of a great religious movement involving many millions of people. He cannot but be a controversial figure, for what Luther did gets in the way of our answering the question, 'What was he really like?' How natural for Catholics to think of him as a kind of Guy Fawkes in reverse, a terribly successful one, since he blew up medieval Christendom. Protestants, on the other hand, are always making him too tidy, turning him into a plaster prophet.

Then Luther himself was a complex person, a puzzle to himself and his friends. Emphasize one side of him and you get a false picture. Think of him as the loud-mouthed, beer-swilling German, the great talker—like Hiawatha's Iagoo, 'the great boaster'—and you've drawn not Luther but his Catholic opponent, John Eck. Or think of him as the muddled mystic, the inveterate trouble-maker, the choleric rebel—but that is not Luther, but Andrew Karlstadt, the Judas of the Wittenberg team. Or the angry young man, in whom compassion is lost in indignation and hatred—and that's not Luther either, but his arch-enemy, the peasant leader Thomas Müntzer.

And how easy to miss the small but very important clues—the light, clear voice; the warm, gentle, often frightened eyes; the small, neat handwriting. If he was a problem for his contemporaries, what a problem there is for the modern historian coping with a vast mass of material, filling in bits of a vast jigsaw puzzle which keeps growing



all the time. Luther was himself a prodigious writer: at one time he kept three presses on the go, and wrote something like a treatise a fortnight over twenty-five years. When the great Weimar edition of his works is complete it will have about one hundred folio volumes, a huge mixed bag of letters (four thousand of them!), sermons, books, tracts, commentaries, table talk. Somewhere in all this, if we could catch it, is the rise and fall of a human voice, the authentic words of a man who struck deep into the complicated structure of our modern history.

He was born in 1483 in Thuringian Saxony, whose forests had once produced great mystics with special devotion to the sacred humanity of Christ. But there was nothing mystical about Luther's home with its sombre peasant piety, or about the hard-headed anti-clericalism of his father Hans Luther, a miner on the make, who sent his gifted son to the university to become a lawyer, only to find that sons go their own way, and that this one had abruptly decided to enter religion, to become a monk, an Austin Friar.

With characteristic seriousness, Martin set out on the road to evangelical perfection, keeping the rule of his order. But once the new routine had settled he found himself in deep waters, fighting for faith in storms of doubt, trying to make acts of love to God under a crippling burden of guilt. 'It's the single words that trouble me,' he cries in Osborne's play, and it's true that at this time his troubles centred in one word—'Justitia', the righteousness, the justice of God as he found it in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapter one, verse seventeen: 'For in the Gospel, the justice of God is revealed.' This justice he understood and felt to be the punishing, avenging judgement of God. You remember how Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* demanded his legal pound of flesh; but the just God as Luther thought of him was a kind of super-Shylock—he not only demanded his pound of flesh, the law of the ten commandments—but he could weigh the heart's blood—by demanding, in the New Testament, purity of the heart, taking account of the inward intention. You could fear such a God, but you couldn't love him. This is what Luther said:

> For however irreproachable I lived as a monk, I felt myself in the presence of God to be a sinner with a most disturbed con-

> science . . . I did not love, I rather hated this just God who punishes sinners, and with huge murmuring I was indignant against him—as if it were really not enough for God to oppress miserable sinners with the ten commandments, but he must bring sorrow on sorrow and through the *gospel* reveal his justice and through the *gospel* bring his wrath to bear. Thus I raged with a fierce and agitated conscience and yet I kept on knocking at St. Paul in that place, with a burning thirst to know what he really meant.[1]

Then, as he prayed and meditated on Scripture, light came:

> At last, by the mercy of God, I began to understand the justice of God as that by which God makes us just in his mercy and through faith, as it is written, 'By faith the just man shall live . . .' and at this I felt as though I had been born again, and had gone in through open gates into paradise itself.[2]

The importance of the discovery, says the Catholic historian Lortz, is not that it was new, but that it was new for Luther. What he saw in the Bible with fresh eyes he was able to teach others to understand, so that this doctrine of justification by faith had a new importance, stood high up on the new Protestant agenda, instead of being, as it was during the Middle Ages, down among 'Any other business'. That salvation is a divine gift, that God's forgiveness is free and undeserved, these are truths which the words 'by faith alone' were intended to safeguard against an over-reliance on human achievement or ritual observances.

Meanwhile Luther was caught up in a public career. After theological study at Erfurt he had gone to the quite new University of Wittenberg, where he took his doctor's degree in 1512 and became professor of biblical theology. This was his real, regular job for the rest of his life. Universities were undergoing a crisis in Luther's day as they are in our own. And just as our brand-new universities are sensitive to the tension between two academic traditions, of technology and the humanities, so in Luther's day the choice was being made between an older programme dominated by

[1] From the Preface to a collected edition of his works, 1545.
[2] ibid.

Aristotle and the medieval theologians and a new programme based on the Bible, the early Fathers (and notably in Wittenberg St. Augustine), and the revived study of the sacred languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. With the help of his senior colleague Andrew Karlstadt and his new young friend, Philip Melanchthon, Luther launched theses about the new academic programme offering to defend them at other universities.

It was almost as a side-line from this engrossing affair that he became involved in the hubbub about indulgences, which we may define in modern language as a Christian stewardship campaign which had got out of hand. Indulgences were certificates issued on papal authority which let men off some of the penalties of sin. They were carefully worded to exclude the suggestion that God's forgiveness could be bought and sold; but it is certain that there was abuse and scandal, and John Tetzel, who hawked these certificates in Saxony and said outrageous things about them, was in fact repudiated by the authorities and died in disgrace in 1519. But indulgences touched the one doctrine about which Luther was hyper-sensitive, the forgiveness of sins. His Ninety-five Theses about them, which sparked off the explosion of the Reformation, were not extreme, and might have been hushed up had not the invention of printing made possible their swift circulation, far and wide. The programme of university reform was forgotten in the new crisis, but Luther's colleagues rallied round him, and informed their prince that in his fate that of the university was also involved. Luther's relations with Frederick the Wise were curious—they only spoke together once, and the prince had no sympathy at all with attacks on indulgences, as his own vast collection of holy relics had been paid for out of these very things. But he was immensely proud of his university. He was also, fatefully, one of the seven prince electors of the empire, and at this very time his vote became one of great importance to the pope, with the prospect of a new emperor. The result was that in the last months when the 'Luther Affair' might have been solved with swift, drastic action, there was soft-pedalling in Rome. Luther had time to work out the implications of his stand, as it became evident that behind the question of indulgences lay more dangerous themes, the nature of papal authority, the question whether in the

last resort appeal lay to the pope, to a General Council or to the Bible.

Luther's doctrines were publicly condemned in the Papal Bull of 1520; he replied in three revolutionary tracts. The first, addressed 'To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation', was a manifesto. It appealed to long-pent-up indignation in Germany about a whole list of grievances felt by Catholic princes over their relations with Rome. It found an echo in important classes of German society, among knights and merchants, and the German historian Gerhard Ritter has shown how Luther was at this time the focus of a great national ferment, and that for a moment it seemed as though the German nation might find its unity in him. The second tract, 'Of the Babylonish Captivity of the Church', was written in Latin, for a scholarly and clerical audience—there were as yet no Lutherans, but there were very many whom I might call 'Martinians'—who applauded and admired his courageous stand. But this document, which denied the Mass and Transubstantiation, and rejected five of the seven sacraments, did much to divide scholars of whom not a few refused to follow Luther from reform to revolution. The third tract, 'Of the Liberty of a Christian Man', is a little edifying work expounding the relation of faith to Christian obedience, showing how his view of the gospel of salvation was related to active, public affairs.

Luther had been condemned by the pope, and the papal nuncio Aleander tried to persuade the young Emperor Charles V that this was enough. Charles was persuaded by Frederick the Wise and his advisers, however, to give Luther a hearing before the coming Imperial Diet.

So in April 1521 Luther made his dramatic appearance before the notables of his world, in the thronged city of Worms. A pile of writings in front of him, he refused to recant and disavow them, in obedience to his conscience and to God's Word. The words, 'Here stand I, I can do no other', may be mythical, but they register the authentic note of unyielding defiance which confirmed the resolution of thousands of his contemporaries. But it would be wrong to emphasize the Diet of Worms and forget the Edict of Worms which was passed a few days later. For it made Luther an outlaw and it was

to shadow him all his days. It meant, too, that in the next months his prince had to be very wary indeed lest he provoke his own dispossession by his Catholic neighbours. The problem was how to keep Luther safe, without seeming to support him, and he solved it by having him kidnapped and lodged in the romantic castle of the Wartburg. Not that Luther found it romantic: enforced idleness brought on constipation, with painful complications: after months of acute spiritual crisis, flung back on himself, he knew intense spiritual depression.

But this did not stop his creative activity; in the Wartburg he returned to his rich, many-sided conception of God's Word, that living energy of God which was made flesh in His Son, and is still creatively at work in the preaching of the gospel, in the Bible and in the life of the Church. For Luther it was the Word of God which reforms the Church.

> Take me, for example. I opposed indulgences and all papists, but never by force. I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word: otherwise I did nothing. And then while I slept or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip of Amsdorf the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing: the Word did it all. Had I wanted to start trouble I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany. Yes, I could have started such a little game at Worms that even the emperor wouldn't have been safe. But what would it have been? A mug's game. I did nothing. I left it to the Word.[3]

Here on the Wartburg, Luther began to give the German people God's Word in their own tongue, to translate the Bible. It was a monumental work, and one of the best tributes came to it recently from East Germany, where the Communists staged a fine exhibition on the Wartburg, showing Luther not as the religious prophet but as a supreme artist in words, a really great poet and philologist.

Luther's exile meant another price too, however, to be chalked up to the Edict of Worms. He had raised a great number of practical questions. In the medieval world, Church and State were closely bound together; religious truth, civil law, and even finance were

[3] *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia ed., 1943), ii, 399–400.

hard to distinguish clearly or separate. Now the time had come, it seemed, for drastic action, about the Mass, about the celibacy of the clergy, about monastic vows—but who should take the initiative? The pope at one end—a mob at the other? Or the civil magistrates and the church congregations in between?

At the end of 1521 there was great upheaval in Wittenberg led by Andrew Karlstadt, and followed by disturbances in other cities. Luther felt that a religious upheaval at this juncture would be disastrous; it would also be highly dangerous politically, since it would suggest his prince could not keep order in his own dominions and open the way to intervention by Catholic princes. In March 1522 he felt the position was so serious thas he disobeyed his prince, left his hiding and returned to Wittenberg. There he shaved his beard, put off his layman's clothes, and deliberately resuming his monk's habit, entered the pulpit and began to preach a series of tremendous sermons which restored the situation. The sermons are a classic statement of the difference between Protestantism and radical Puritanism. Luther insisted that there was more than timing and method involved, the whole business of reformation by the Word rather than by human law, and of Christian charity and concern for the conversion of weaker brethren.

> What you did was good, but you have gone too fast. For there are brothers and sisters on the other side who belong to us and must still be won.[4]

In other parts of Saxony, too, there was a growing radical ferment. Most formidable was a former 'Martinian', Thomas Müntzer, a brilliant, learned, fiery preacher—whom Russian historians now put forward as the hero of the real ('People's') Reformation. He advocated a bloodthirsty programme of holy war against the godless, drawing on late medieval mysticism and Bohemian Hussitism for his ideology, and on the grievances of the peasantry for popular support. What the peasants were concerned with was not so much liberty in our modern abstract sense as specific 'liberties' concerning such things as hunting, the game laws, and tithe; and with very real economic and social anxieties—for many

[4] *Ibid.*, ii, 393.

men were at their wits' end to support their wives and children. Luther repeatedly warned the authorities of the danger of Müntzer's teaching in the excited condition of Germany. In the autumn of 1524 the Peasants War broke out in the Black Forest area—a series of sporadic, incoherent uprisings, which in the absence of first-class military leadership and planned commissariat moved destructively about the countryside, pillaging, burning and killing.

In the spring of 1525 the Thuringian peasants rose in their turn, egged on by blood-curdling manifestoes from Thomas Müntzer, and in the first flush of success threatened to carry all before them. Luther who saw in this a trump card of the devil, who would engulf the Reformation in social chaos, replied to Müntzer's hysteria with a broadsheet, violent and brutal, which he printed as an appendix to a moderate appeal to both sides which he had written earlier. It read differently, however, when the peasants collapsed like a pricked balloon at Frankenhausen, and in the awful blood bath which followed. Luther did not let down the peasants, for he never took up their revolution; but his teaching had been one element in their ideology and he lost at this time the support of many followers, who turned to the more congenial teaching of the new movement of the Anabaptists who in south Germany had an apocalyptic element which bred a rather high proportion of crackpots and wild men.

The year 1525 is in other ways a watershed in Luther's life. A long dog fight with the great Erasmus showed how sharply his Reformation had by now parted company with the earlier programme of the scholars; and then there was his marriage. He certainly needed looking after, for his bed had not been made for two years. His wooing was one of those common-sense sixteenth-century affairs rather like that of Sir Thomas More in England, and turned out equally successfully. Luther's letters to the former nun, his Kate, with their cheerful banter are among his finest writings.

She was a good businesswoman, and stopped her husband giving everything away. As he settled in his home, played with his children, and watched some of them die, and as he pottered about in the garden and mended the clocks, he lived out another important part of his theology, his doctrine of vocation, the view that married life,

home life, is an estate honourable in God's eyes, and for most people the road to heaven.

By 1525 it is also plain that the solo instrument was becoming lost in the great concerto. Beside the radical pattern of Karlstadt, Müntzer and new sects of the Anabaptists, another great Reformed tradition was emerging in the cities of Switzerland and south Germany, throwing up its own leaders in Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer. The possibility of a vast Protestant common front was ended at this time by disagreement about the eucharist. While Swiss and German reformers both repudiated the Catholic doctrine of the Mass, they were sharply divided about the nature of Christ's presence in the eucharist. Luther, with simple Biblicism, insisted that the words 'This is my body' mean what they say. Zwingli affirmed that since Christ's natural body is in heaven, he can only be spiritually present to the eye of faith. The gallant attempt to paper over the cracks at Marburg in 1529 failed. Though Luther and Zwingli must take some blame, it was rather the little Luthers and the little Zwinglis who made the rift deplorable as they carried on in scores of cities acid debates which added nothing to their leaders' arguments but heat and sound.

Reformation by force Luther had declared to be a mug's game. But the growth of political Protestantism involved the reformers in just this, preparing the way for the horrors of religious war which in the course of a century was to turn large parts of Germany into barren desert. It is not insignificant that the name Protestant was given to a group of princes and representatives of imperial cities in the Imperial Diet at Speyer in 1529, who became the founders of the formidable military alliance of the Schmalkaldic league.

None the less, the Word went forth conquering and to conquer, in the end more creative and permanent than are the bloody ploys of soldiers and politicians. Like Jack in the Beanstalk's drab seed, the new form of the gospel grew in the night, a way up which men might climb into the spiritual world, to find at the top new treasures and to fight new giants. There was the German Bible, open to a growing literate audience of all classes. There was Luther's own powerful preaching, echoed by hundreds of other evangelical preachers. There were new forms of Christian instruction, like

Luther's lovely children's catechism from which with simplicity he said his prayers to the end of his days. His people learned to pray his German liturgy, and to sing his fine hymns, one of which, the great 'Eyn Feste Burg', is more than a piece of music, for it is an event in European history.

War between the emperor and the King of France, the menace of the Turks brought the reformers a breathing-space after the Truce of Nuremberg in 1532. But Luther's last years were troubled. Aged before his time, he suffered from a long list of diseases, was always in discomfort, often in pain. He had also to watch a revival of papal power. His attitude to the papacy has been likened to that of Captain Ahab in Moby Dick, with his obsession with the great white whale. But he did not, in fact, fulfil his boast, 'Living I have been thy plague, dying I will be thy death, O Pope.' Something indeed he did help to kill—popery, the secularized Renaissance papacy—but he underestimated the wonderful resilience of the Roman Church, and knew nothing of new spiritual energies in Italy. In the last months of his life he wrote the savage writing, 'Of the papacy at Rome, instituted by the Devil', of which the best that can be said is that it is like the angry roar of a wounded old lion, bayed by its pursuers. But he went on lecturing until he could hardly see or croak, and those last lectures of his have some of his finest, profoundest thought. In February 1546 he made a long, arduous journey to mediate between two young princes, nasty, arrogant, Nazi types but none the less his 'Obrigkeit'—authorities appointed by God. His letters home to his anxious wife, teasing, thoughtful, affectionate, are full of simple faith. But he had overtaxed his strength and in a few hours the chill of death came upon him. His last letter contains words which run back like a thread through all his life—'Who knows what God will do?'

I cannot speak of his character—a touch of Churchillian greatness, like Churchill's so close to the weaknesses and obtuseness, but able by his courage to give heart to millions. Or of his humour and melancholy, his passion and tenderness, his faith and his doubt, his despairs and hopes, his loneliness and friendship. What do they know of Luther who only Luther know? By 1525 and still more by 1546 Luther was but one element in the Reformation story. In comparison

with the great pressures of history, even the giants are but dwarfs. Yet there are moments in world history, sometimes creative, sometimes destructive, or like the Reformation a bit of both, when it seems to matter that there are men who speak out in order to keep faith with their conscience, and who in a dangerous hour stand firm because, God helping them, they can do no other.

III

Zwingli and Calvin

G. R. POTTER

Two figures, the one German, the other French, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, gave an edge to the Reformation which it never entirely lost. They are inseparably connected with two Swiss cities, Zürich and Geneva, and what they were able to do was shaped by political as well as religious motives.

Zwingli, externally, was like a rather rough Swiss peasant. He spoke and wrote Swiss-German. 'A shaggy, tangled German,' Luther called it, 'which makes you sweat before you understand it.' His language frequently reminded his hearers that he came from a farm—the house, in the village of Wildhaus, in central Switzerland, is still there and much visited by admirers.

Ulrich Zwingli was born in 1484, one of a large family. His father was a substantial farmer and his uncle Bartholomew was a priest well known in the neighbourhood. Ulrich was a gifted and sensitive boy with an ear for music; he showed ability at school and university. At Vienna he learnt the philosophy and dialectic of his age and at Basle, the new university at which he graduated, he demonstrated that he could write good classical Latin. Like Erasmus, whom he greatly esteemed, he became a man of the New Learning with a sound knowledge of Greek and a working acquaintance with Hebrew. In 1506 he was ordained, chosen as parish priest at Glarus and added to that duties at Einsiedeln; so far his career was perfectly normal. As a scholar and a humanist he was drawn to Bible study; but he never lost contact with the common people from whom he came. He went with soldiers from his parish to the wars in Italy, and returned a lifelong opponent of the system by which Swiss mercenaries shed their blood for foreign gold.

The more Zwingli read the Bible (and he rejoiced in the appearance of the Greek text of the New Testament in 1516), and the closer he became acquainted with the early Fathers, the more he became convinced that the doctrines and practices of the early Church had been abandoned. He never wavered in his acceptance of the creeds of the Church or in his certainty that the Bible was the inspired word of God, but on this basis he was prepared to think things out afresh for himself.

This he was already doing when, in 1518, his reputation as a preacher and a scholar brought him an invitation to join the staff of the Great Minster at Zürich. Zürich was the capital (*Vorort*) of the most important of the thirteen independent states—cantons, as we now call them—that made up the Swiss Confederation. It was governed by a Council chosen mainly by the manufacturers and tradesmen of the city; and what Zürich did the other states, particularly Basle, Berne and Schaffhausen, were likely to follow.

On January 1st, 1519, the new preacher created something of a sensation by announcing that he intended to expound the whole gospel of St. Matthew directly from the text instead of limiting himself to the prescribed and customary homilies known as 'Pericopes'. From that moment on his sermons were eagerly listened to.

The pope, who needed the service of Swiss guards and who had appointed Zwingli as one of his chaplains, was not likely to intervene unless obliged to do so, and Zwingli therefore enjoyed a good deal of freedom. Indulgences, soon to be so hotly contested in Germany, were not a major issue in Switzerland, nor did irregular clerical marriages arouse much comment. At the time the main Swiss grievances were against the unpopular church courts and the compulsory payment of tithe.

The first open challenge to ecclesiastical authority came in 1522 when the Zürich printer Froschauer, and others, ate some sausage with their evening meal during Lent. Zwingli did not partake of it, but he was present and publicly upheld the principle of freedom of choice in eating. It was, and was intended to be, a deliberate defiance of church authority; public opinion and the Zürich Council were ready to take decisive steps further, but Zwingli was careful not to

move too fast. By marrying, he declared against clerical celibacy, and then went on to attack images in churches, the veneration of relics, the intercession of the saints and finally the doctrine of transubstantiation and the primacy of the pope.

Public debates about doctrine were the fashion of the age, and in 1522 the Zürich Council commanded Zwingli publicly and officially to argue his case with a view to determining state policy.[1] He had already set out his views in German in sixty-seven articles, which he now upheld against Johann Faber, vicar-general of the Bishop of Constance, and was duly adjudged to have had the best of the argument. From then on Reform went forward apace; though it was not until three years later, in 1525, that celebration of the Mass was officially abolished.

Zwingli never imagined that his teaching could be expounded in a few sentences, but a short illustrative quotation from his own *Exposition of the Faith*, written towards the end of his life for Francis I of France, may be helpful.

> Nothing is of more concern to a man than to give account of his faith . . . The sacraments we esteem and honour as signs and symbols of holy things, but not as though they themselves were the things of which they are the signs. For who is so ignorant as to maintain that the sign is the thing which it signifies? . . .
>
> Thus in the Lord's Supper the natural and actual body of Christ in which he suffered on earth, and is now seated in heaven, at the right hand of God, is not eaten naturally or literally but only spiritually, and the papist teaching that the body of Christ is eaten in the same form and with the same property and nature as when he was born and suffered and died, is not only presumptuous and foolish, but also impious and objectionable.[2]

Thus on the central issue of the Real Presence in the eucharist the Swiss Reformer parted company with Luther. The words 'This is

[1] E. Egli, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation* (Zürich, 1879), pp. 111–12.

[2] *Zwingli, Hauptschriften. Zwingli, der Theologe*, ed. R. Pfister (Zürich, 1948), iii, pp. 301, 304, 315–16.

my body' he interpreted as 'This signifies my body'; for him, the sacrament was a service of remembrance, at which, for convinced believers and participants, Christ was spiritually (and in that sense 'really') present.

Zwingli always refused to be classed as a Lutheran. He insisted that he had discovered the gospel for himself in 1516, whereas it was not until 1519 that Luther began his attack on Rome. 'I object to being called Lutheran by the papists; for I did not learn Christ's teaching from Luther but from the very word of God.'[3]

Not only did he claim priority and independence, but he also repeatedly set out his own doctrine, relying upon certain favourite Bible texts (especially 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing'). The violence of the controversy distressed milder thinkers, such as Bucer, Oecolampadius and Melanchthon; and it was embittered in a number of ways—by Zwingli's own deep conviction, his very human rivalry with a competing evangelist, his anxiety not to be involved in the legal ban on the Lutherans of the Edict of Worms, and by Swiss resentment of German superiority, and the knowledge that the Lutherans were regarded as allies of the papal party in Zürich.

In the end, the politicians had to intervene. If Protestantism was to make progress, if the south German cities were to have freedom of worship, if they and the Protestant princes were to be brought together with France, the Swiss, and possibly Venice, into an anti-Habsburg coalition, a compromise must be arranged. And so at Marburg, in October 1529, Luther and Zwingli met for the only time in their lives at a kind of religious summit conference. With *hoc est corpus meum*—this is my body—chalked by Luther on the table they argued for four days. On a number of issues such as the Trinity, original sin and baptism, agreement was easy. But neither side would give way on the issue of the Last Supper. Zwingli's counter-text from St. John vi, 64, *Caro non prodest quidquam*—the flesh profiteth nothing—Luther insisted was irrelevant to the point at issue. 'No, no,' Zwingli exclaimed, 'this text breaks your neck.' 'Not so fast,' was Luther's answer; 'necks don't break so easily here.

[3] *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, ed. Egli, E., and Finsler, G. (Leipzig, 1908), ii, p. 149 (*Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 89).

You're in Hesse, not in Switzerland.'[4] The two men did not part friends, but each thought better of his opponent than he had before they met, and a communiqué issued at the end of the conference, signed by all the participants, skilfully disguised the extent of the rift.

At home Zwingli had much to do. He wrote indefatigably, encouraging fellow travellers in Basle, Berne, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glarus and elsewhere, and opposing extremist sectaries, both those who would re-baptize all adults because infant baptism finds no place in the gospels and those who refused to pay lawful taxes and dues because they disapproved of the ends to which they might be put. Zwingli saw nothing wrong in the enforcement of a single faith in one state; with him, as with Luther, the authority of a lawful, godly government, such as that of the Zürich Council, must be upheld.

Further, he had a vision of a united Protestant Switzerland, led by Zürich, joining forces with co-religionists in Germany to bring about a great extension of the area in which there should be freedom of preaching, discussion and circulation of literature. And as Swiss armed forces were still believed to be unequalled in Europe the vision had something ofreality behind it. But Berne, Basle, St. Gall and Schaffhausen were suspicious of Zürich imperialism, although they all joined forces to form a defensive 'Christian Civic League' for mutual security. They were opposed by the peasant democracies round the Lake of Lucerne which combined into a Catholic union supported by the Holy Roman emperor. War between the two parties nearly broke out in 1529, but Swiss soldiers were reluctant to fight their fellow countrymen and a first bloodless collision was followed by appeasement and compromise.

Zwingli himself, however, was now convinced that coercion was the only way out.

> The peace that you want means war; the war that I advocate will bring peace.[5]

[4] A. Erichson, *Strassbürger Beiträge zur Geschichte des Marburger Religionsgesprächs*, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, iv (1881), p. 42.

[5] *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, ed. Egli, Finsler, Köhler and Farner, x, p. 147 (Letter of June 10th, 1529, *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. XCVII).

And so, in 1531, Zürich, without even the indispensable support of its allies in Berne, had to face a Catholic attack from central Switzerland. An armed force, inexplicably quite inadequate for its task, moved south with Zwingli in its ranks. At the battle of Kappel, in the afternoon of October 11th, 1531, the reformer was killed. He was forty-seven.

It looked like the end; the more so since Oecolampadius, his friend and supporter at Basle, died a few days later. In Zürich, however, Zwingli's mantle fell on his son-in-law Bullinger, who upheld his teaching there without his aggressive foreign policy: Basle remained firm, guided by Myconius—and Zwingli's own writings continued to circulate widely. Switzerland, however, remained permanently and deeply divided in religion and until the nineteenth century ceased to be of much account politically, except as a haven of safety for refugees.

But in fact, far from coming to an end, the Swiss Reformed faith expanded rapidly. This was due to its reinforcement by German philosophy and French logic. In France, as elsewhere, there had been demands for a better and purer church, and if Francis I had had half the strength and ability of Henry VIII of England, an independent Reformed church of France might well have been the outcome of the studies and influence of the 'group of Meaux', Lefèvre d'Etaples, Briçonnet, Vatable, Roussel, Farel and du Bellay, which combined learning with piety. But royal policy decided in favour of Catholic orthodoxy, and the French Reformers, after placing on the market a translation of the New Testament, had either to conform or to leave. Those who left found their way most readily to Strasbourg, where the independent-minded Bucer was trying to build a bridge between Lutheranism and Zwinglianism. Among those who found his new faith confirmed and his critical faculties sharpened by exile was Guillaume Farel, who had preached his way south, via Neuchâtel and Aigle to Geneva.

This ancient French-speaking city, so like Zürich in its geographical situation, so unlike it in spirit and outlook, had maintained its independence into the sixteenth century because its citizens and bishop had long joined forces to resist the encroachments of the Counts of Geneva and of Savoy. When the bishop became a client

of Savoy, he was bound to come into conflict with the leading citizens, who obtained co-citizenship with Fribourg and Berne and evolved an effective system of internal self-government.

The conflict came about at a time when Berne, under Zwingli's influence, had decisively rejected the Catholic Mass and had extended its influence to the frontiers of Savoy by occupying the Vaud.

The impact of the new religious teaching on Geneva, backed by Bernese pressure, led to internal strife and street fighting followed by a public disputation and a decision of the City Council against the Catholics. The exposition of the new doctrines was left to two Frenchmen, Antoine Froment and Farel, who were not equal to their task.

Fortunately there came to their aid a man who was. John Calvin was born in 1509—twenty-five years after Zwingli—at Noyon in northern France. He was a lawyer's son, a precocious and rather unhappy boy, who at the age of twelve had been provided with an ecclesiastical benefice as a kind of student grant. In the University of Paris he won academic distinction of no mean kind at the tough Collège de Montaigu, where Erasmus had complained of the food and where Ignatius Loyola (the future founder of the Jesuits) was his fellow student.

Calvin was soon a Latinist of the best humanist pattern, a logician versed in every trick of formal disputation and informal argument, a disciplined scholar. At Orleans he studied under the greatest civil lawyer in France, Pierre de l'Étoile, and in 1532 he illustrated his classical attainments in a learned commentary on Seneca, *De Clementia*. So far there was nothing unusual: he seemed marked out for a successful legal career.

But this gentleman-scholar had given much thought to religion, far more than his friends perhaps realized. He left no record of profound psychological struggle as Luther did, nor can we show, stage by stage, what he learnt from Erasmus or Luther. But reflection, and study of the Bible, shaped his final conviction, and illumination came to him 'suddenly', as he tells us; and thereafter he never doubted that he was right. To save his life he went to Strasbourg and thence to Basle, that wonderful city of printers and scholars, where in March

1536 he published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a mighty influential book for a young man of twenty-six.

Having prefaced his work with some plain speaking to the King of France, Calvin wrote of worship, morals, religious society, and the duties of the true Christian. After the Bible, Calvin relied on the writings of St. Augustine, especially his controversial works against the Pelagians. And Augustinian teaching interpreted by a French lawyer meant the conviction that man was inspired and guided by God as his instrument for a destined work.

> When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things have always been, and perpetually remain, under his eyes, so that to his knowledge there is nothing future or past, but all things are present . . . This foreknowledge is extended throughout the universe to every creature. We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he determined what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is ordained for some, eternal damnation for others.[6]

It is easier to laugh off the doctrine of Predestination than to refute it, provided we accept Calvin's own postulates of the divine inspiration of the Bible and the outlook of an age which had hardly started on textual criticism.

In any case, Calvinist, and later Presbyterian, thought, developed and changed with time and circumstances, for Calvin's writings were never regarded as infallible guides. The Elect, indeed, knew that they *were* the Elect and acted with the assurance that this carried with it: no one, on the other hand, could be sure that he was numbered among the reprobate, for perfect faith might be vouchsafed to the dying Christian.

Perhaps the special appeal of Calvinism lay in its simplicity: the common man expected to be instructed by God's ministers how to worship, how to behave and how, through belief in Christ, he could hope to escape eternal damnation. The austerities of a life based on the Law of the ancient Hebrews, modified by the teaching of the gospels, meant self-discipline and self-reliance to the rising citizen

[6] J. Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne*, ed. J. Pannier (Paris, 1936), Tome III, p. 62.

class, and could be squared with capitalism and a credit economy—there was some biblical authority for equating worldly prosperity with divine favour and vice versa; but I am neither theologian nor philosopher, and cannot discuss these wider implications here.

In the *Institutes* there was much more than predestination; much about worship, church government, morals, divine grace, faith, prayer and the sacraments.

While his book was printing Calvin visited Italy and was on his way back to Basle when he halted in Geneva. There Farel, who was finding the burden of preaching the gospel too heavy to bear, sought him out, begged him, adjured him, ordered him in the name of God to stay. And reluctantly the pale, thin, asthmatic young preacher consented.

At Geneva, Calvin set about organizing the reformed church, regulating worship, composing a liturgy, writing a catechism for the children, rebuking the unrighteous. Soon a strict watch was kept over the behaviour of the city. The bishop's place had now been taken by the Council, and over this body Calvin soon exercised a decisive influence. His splendid memory, tremendous powers of work, his knowledge, and his capacity for judging men, made him irresistible.

Too irresistible for some, perhaps. At any rate, after two years his influence over the City Council weakened; his opponents, who seemed to him subservient to Berne, were in a majority and commanded him to leave the city.

> If I had served men [he answered], this would have been a poor reward, but I have served a greater master who never fails to perform what he has promised.[7]

For three years Calvin lived in Strasbourg, where he married a devoted wife, Idelette de Bure, and wrote extensively. This was an important break. He saw in Strasbourg how Bucer and his friends had reformed the liturgy, instituted a form of church government which included lay spiritual officers, and how they used the catechism as a teaching method. All these lessons he applied when, in September, 1541, he was recalled by the Genevan Council, begged to return on

[7] E. Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin* (Elberfeld, 1863), i, p. 156.

his own terms, to save the city from Savoy and Rome. Then, as later, Geneva was in a special degree an international city, and from it Calvin, who was not a native, could speak to the world.

These were critical and anxious days. In Germany, France, England, Switzerland and the Netherlands the Reformed faith seemed to be falling back, divided internally and perishing of its own differences. It was saved by this retiring, orderly, serious French scholar, convinced that he was God's instrument for the salvation of mankind, a leader, a realist and an opportunist. Even more than Zwingli, Calvin was ready to use in the service of God the instruments that lay ready to hand, whether political (as the King of France, the German princes, the Swiss cantons) or religious (as in the ministers whom he chose and trained).

For Calvin and his followers the Church of God, one and undivided, consisted of the Elect, known to God alone. On earth, necessity and the wiles of Satan had brought into being local churches, dependent in some degree on the State. The Church must neither be separated from the State, nor inferior to it, nor identical with it: their functions were parallel, but God's Church was eternal, the State temporal. This does not mean that Calvin did not comprehend and stress the vast significance of a visible church. He fully accepted the implications of 'Mother Church', bearing and nourishing believers, and necessary for salvation, with ministers deserving respect.

Further, the powers within the State, kings, nobles, councils, magistrates, held their authority from God so long as, and only so long as, they used it for the true good of their subjects and the advancement of true religion. It was a conditional obedience given to the 'godly magistrate' only.

The ministers of the Church formed no hierarchy. Anyone who believed he had a vocation could become a minister, but, before being accepted, he had to be tested, ruthlessly and reverently, by the existing ministers as to his beliefs, his conduct, his knowledge, his capacity for preaching, his determination to continue on his chosen course, his ability to inspire faith and devotion in others. Then, after a severe oral examination, the candidate was presented to the Council, given leave to preach, and hands were laid on him as a sign that his authority came from heaven.

From then on he must preach to his congregation frequently, advise, pray, administer the two sacraments of baptism and holy communion, visit the sick, relieve the poor, call sinners to repentance, rebuke vice and indifference. In conjunction with his fellow ministers he must study, discuss doctrine and share in their corporate guardianship of the conduct of the faithful. All pastors were equal, there were no bishops; guidance was provided by the Consistory of six ministers and twelve elders, and in this annually re-elected body Calvin's influence was supreme. The religious weapon was exclusion from the Lord's Supper, but resistance to the authority of the Consistory was also resistance to the government. Hence the legal enforcement of the sabbath day, the notorious prohibitions of gambling, dancing, frequenting taverns, extravagance in dress, excessive meals, theatre-going and the rest.

Geneva was treated as if it were a city in a state of siege; the religious morale of the garrison must be kept high, and so it was. A Bible-reading state implied an educated people; in addition to the adult education from the pulpits, Calvin, who knew what scholarship was, saw to it that the schoolmasters of his city were able to teach good Latin as well as the rudiments of the Christian faith. School textbooks were carefully examined to ensure both their orthodoxy and their educational value.

Calvinism, ever more clearly defined, was the creed of the State: to oppose it was to oppose the law and this was treason. Hence, as elsewhere, heresy was punishable by death, and Anabaptists and sectaries, however virtuous their private lives, were allowed no toleration.

Two classic cases illustrated the system. In 1547 Gruet, formerly Secretary of State and a political rival, was executed for blasphemy, scepticism and the possession of infidel and immoral books, construed into atheism.

In 1553 the mild, learned and slightly neurotic Spaniard, Dr. Servetus, who had taught a simplified unitarianism and had few followers, foolishly visited Geneva. Calvin, who knew his doctrine was dangerous, had already sent evidence sufficient to cause his condemnation by Catholic inquisitors at Vienna, from whom he had escaped. Now Calvin convicted him publicly of heresy and saw him

burnt at the stake—in spite of the fact that as a foreigner Geneva had no jurisdiction over him.

Neither case makes pleasant reading for our age, where we reserve similar treatment for spies and betrayers of state secrets. But we find Calvin's actions repugnant because religious toleration or indifference is as natural now as it was unacceptable then.

French exiles poured into Geneva for safety, and were enrolled in the work of propaganda; and from Geneva the Reformed doctrines spread widely. There were many Calvinists in Italy until the Inquisition and the Jesuits rooted them out; in Protestant Switzerland, Calvin and Bullinger joined forces in an agreement (the so-called *consensus Tigurinus*) of 1549 after which date Zwinglianism ceased to exist independently. It was also the date of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI in which, and its successor, Zwinglian thought is apparent. Indeed, it may without exaggeration be said that the Scottish Church looked to Geneva and the English Church to Zürich for examples. The new faith took root in Bohemia, in Poland, in the Palatinate, most of all in the Dutch Netherlands. Translations of the Bible into local languages became common, often with Calvinist notes or commentary; the ministers who expounded a form of church government without bishops, and conducted services in which the sermon and Bible-reading occupied a central position, ultimately derived their inspiration from 'the pope of Geneva', as Calvin, a little unfairly, came to be known.

Up till his death in 1564, at the age of fifty-five, Calvin's hold on the city was irresistible. The moral force which saved the Reformation came from Geneva, a seminary of martyrs, students and missionaries. One of them was John Knox, who was to carry the new faith to one of its most resounding triumphs in his native Scotland, and who testified to his admiration for

> The most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles.

It was fair, if prejudiced, comment.

IV

The Reformation in England

A. G. DICKENS

'The one definite thing which can be said about the Reformation in England is that it was an act of State. . . . The Reformation in England was a parliamentary transaction.'[1] So, not many years since, wrote one of our greatest historians, and his view would be supported in substance by most of the 'standard' books. Generally speaking, historians have been satisfied to contemplate kings, popes, legates, archbishops, parliamentary statutes, prayer books, articles of religion, the famous documents, the façades of Church and State; to contemplate everything except the religious and social history of the English people during the crisis of the Reformation. Indeed, if we persist in our absorption with the records of the State-Reformation, we shall naturally continue to see the Reformation as an act of State! Yet these are far from being the only records of the crisis. The Reformation in Tudor England is well documented at all levels and if we want to delve more deeply we shall not suffer unduly from lack of information.

Even without doing so, we might also accept it as a definite fact that the Reformation was a process of Protestantization. In Catholic phraseology, it involved the infiltration and growth of heresy, for while English religion was predominantly Catholic in 1520, it had become predominantly Protestant well before 1600. Other propositions seem to me equally uncontroversial. The Protestantizing process was not initiated by royal or parliamentary action. Again, in some of its important phases it went ahead in the teeth of active persecution by both Church and State. While still in its infancy this

[1] F. M. Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, 1941, pp. 1, 34.

process was detected and its future foreseen with prophetic accuracy by the greatest Catholic of Tudor England. Sir Thomas More did not think that Protestantism was made in Parliament.

> And yet, son Roper, I pray God . . . that some of us, as high as we seem to sit upon the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, live not the day that we gladly would wish to be at a league and composition with them, to let them have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be content to let us have ours quietly to ourselves.[2]

Long before Henry VIII broke with Rome numerous developments were preparing Englishmen for some sort of religious and ecclesiastical change or crisis. Anticlericalism, always endemic in societies where clerical power bulks large, had reached a new virulence by the early years of the sixteenth century. The English clergy formed a highly privileged and wealthy order of society; they made laws and granted subsidies in their convocations sitting alongside Parliament; their courts, administering an international canon law, punished laymen guilty of moral offences and heretical opinions; they controlled large spheres of jurisdiction (like that of wills and testaments) which would now be regarded as secular. Laymen grudgingly paid them tithes and mortuary dues, but ceaselessly combated such claims in the courts whenever opportunity arose. Monasteries and chapters were large landowners and not exceptionally easy-going ones. Diocesan bishops, appointed in effect by the Crown, were great lords remote from their people, mostly at work as ministers, civil servants and ambassadors. Below the upper crust of rich pluralists and absentees, the parish clergy were poor and unevenly educated, too numerous, too often ordained without due tests of learning and vocation. In the face of advancing lay education they were becoming less able to preserve their once easy intellectual prestige. Inevitably, so large a group of enforced celibates was bound to produce enough sexual lapses to provide material for hostile gossip and propaganda. In his notorious *Supplication for Beggars* (1529) the London lawyer Simon Fish, with the sure instinct of the yellow press, harped without ceasing upon this theme:

[2] *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore . . . by William Roper*, ed. E. V. Hitchcock, Early English Text Society, original series, 1935, cxcvii, p. 35.

> Yea, and what do they [the clergy] more? Truly nothing but apply themselves, by all the sleights they may, to have to do with every man's wife, every man's daughter, and every man's maid, that cuckoldry and bawdry should reign over all among your subjects, that no man should know his own child. . . . These be they that have made a hundred thousand idle whores in your realm, which would have gotten their living honestly, in the sweat of their faces, had not their superfluous riches elected them to unclean lust and idleness. . . . Yea, some one of them shall boast among his fellows that he hath meddled with an hundred women.[3]

Mention of Simon Fish reminds one to observe that these common lawyers, with their professional jealousy against the canon law, their exaltation of State over Church, formed the very spearhead of anticlericalism. And here we are not concerned with any small fraternity, since a large section of the English political and administrative class had been educated at the Inns of Court in the common law. This rivalry—and anticlericalism among the public at large—rose to greater heights during the career of Thomas Wolsey, the mighty upstart who seemed, as Lord Chancellor and Papal Legate, to monopolize all ecclesiastical and civil power in the realm. In fact, he chiefly oppressed his brother clergymen, yet he attracted the indignation of the laity against churchmen as a whole, and when the Reformation Parliament met at his fall in the autumn of 1529 this indignation exploded in a whole series of measures against the Church.

Forces more distinctly religious were also at work in English society long before this time; indeed, long before the doctrines of Luther and Zwingli reached our shores. The Lollard heresy stemmed from Wycliffe, but it taught most of the doctrines later embraced by Luther. It still flourished between 1490 and 1530 in the Chilterns, in London and Essex, in East Anglia, West Kent, the upper Thames valley and some other areas. While the organized Lollard congregations can have numbered only a few thousand members—mostly artisans, husbandmen and other humble people—the Lollard anti-

[3] *Four Supplications*, ed. J. M. Cowper, Early English Text Society, extra series, 1871, xiii, p. 6.

sacerdotal, anti-sacramental, anti-ceremonial criticisms seem to have expanded into a far wider section of society and to have augmented the fund of antagonism toward the Church. It is hard to resist the impression that many orthodox Londoners were no longer shocked when they heard of neighbours who questioned transubstantiation, disliked confessing to priests, or surreptitiously read the old Wycliffite translation of the Scriptures. In 1514 the London merchant Richard Hunne, after waging numerous lawsuits with his parish priests, was imprisoned on a charge of heresy and later found murdered in his cell in the Lollards' Tower at St. Paul's. The passionate outburst of hatred against Bishop Fitzjames and his officials convulsed the capital. Prolonged by consequential disputes between the bishops and the judges in the presence of the King, this affair was still vividly remembered when the Reformation Parliament met fifteen years later. And speaking of London Lollards, we know that many of them joined forces with Lutheranism. They played an active part in the dissemination of continental Protestant books, especially the first printed New Testament in English, which William Tyndale completed in 1526 in Antwerp. Even in the forties and fifties many of the prosecutions for heresy recorded in our episcopal records show the survival of a proletarian radicalism stemming from Wycliffe rather than from Luther.

Over and above the effect of anticlerical and heretical ideas, English Catholicism on the eve of the Reformation showed certain inherent weaknesses and rigidities inappropriate to the challenges of the time. Early Tudor England was indeed far from being a godless country and Catholic piety survived on various levels, from the simplest to the most sophisticated. Interest in the great English devotional writers and their modern successors continued in literate circles; the small and select Carthusian order still produced mystics; fine churches were still being constructed or completed; pilgrims streamed to Canterbury, Walsingham and even overseas to foreign shrines. On the other hand, the mystical approaches to religion were impracticable for most men and women in the world; the sale of masses and pardons, especially the abuses of the doctrine of purgatory by a fund-raising priesthood, had begun to arouse resentment; the saint-cults seemed increasingly puerile to critical people. One finds

it hard to resist the conclusions that the saints had captured overmuch attention, and that devotion to the person of Christ tended to revolve too narrowly around the Passion.

With a few notable exceptions, monasticism was lukewarm and insular, commanding little veneration outside the cloister. Whereas in France and Germany many vernacular editions of the Bible had appeared, English bishops, appalled by Lollardy, rigorously opposed the translation of the Scriptures, leaving the Bible to be presented by Tyndale and the heterodox Protestants working abroad. The abuses of Renaissance Rome, vaguely sensed by the common man behind the person of Wolsey, were known at first hand by a number of influential Englishmen. The scholastic approach to religion had long been divided and even discredited; in any case it did not cater even for the educated among the laity. On the other hand, the humanist approach, exemplified by Dean Colet, tried to set forth the plain sense of the Scriptures against their historical background. This could have formed a sound basis for a reformed Catholic devotion, but Colet was held in suspicion by the ecclesiastical die-hards. The bishops, in whose hands lay the chances of renovation, occupied themselves not merely in the King's employment but in jurisdictional disputes between one another, or with Wolsey. Indeed, they tended to see the life of the Church in terms of law and jurisdiction rather than in terms of spiritual education. Altogether, the English Church during the period 1500–30 stood poorly equipped to weather the storms of the new age. It was a grandiose but unseaworthy hulk, its timbers rotted and barnacled, its superstructure riddled by the fire of its enemies, its crew grudging, divided, in some cases mutinous, its watchmen near-sighted and far from weather-wise, its officers lacking in navigational skill. If in this situation the King decided to take personal command, most Englishmen—even most churchmen —would be likely to applaud rather than to object. And few would stop to consider that the kings of England bore not a little of the responsibility for the problems of the Church!

As everyone knows, this change of command, beginning with the divorce quarrel (in fact a matter of nullification), was completed during the lifetime (1529–36) of the Reformation Parliament. Whatever may be thought of his personal morals, the King and the nation

desperately needed a male heir to the throne. Moreover, he had quite a strong legal case for the annulment of his marriage and other kings with claims less strong had been in the past accommodated by the papacy. Since, however, Queen Katherine's nephew Charles V happened to hold military sway over Rome, Pope Clement VII could not meet Henry's demands. There followed the decisive legislation whereby the King not only severed England from the Roman jurisdiction but made himself Supreme Head of the English Church, with powers to control even the definition of doctrine. He summoned the almost unknown Thomas Cranmer to the see of Canterbury, with orders to complete the divorce. He made his minister Thomas Cromwell—a businessman and lawyer trained in Italy, Antwerp and Wolsey's household—Vicegerent of the Church, giving him precedence over the archbishops themselves. Cromwell now seems one of the misjudged figures of English history. Profoundly interested in political and social ideas, he was in his fashion something of an idealist and a revolutionary; on the ruins of feudalism and an overmighty Church he strove to build a more efficient society based on education, greater breadth of opportunity and the conditioning of a turbulent people to the rule of law.

With phenomenal application, Cromwell devised the complex legislation and administrative institutions demanded by these changes. He defended them by an unprecedented use of the presses. A would-be reformer of the secular clergy, he wrote off the monasteries as beyond reform; he thought them only worthy to solve the King's financial problems. Their legal confiscation (1536–40) Cromwell doubtless conceived as a permanent endowment of the Crown, but after his overthrow Henry sold off most of the monastic estates in order to pay for a futile war against Scotland and France. This most important economic phase of the English Reformation hence had as its main long-term result the enlargement of the landed gentry, who grew—collectively at least—to ever-greater stature in the nation. In the longer run the material gains of the Crown proved surprisingly small.

Flattered and managed by the King and his minister, the political classes gave every support to this jurisdictional and confiscatory Reformation. Only two men of eminence, Sir Thomas More and

Bishop Fisher, offered their lives for the Papal Supremacy and the unity of the Catholic Church. The following year (1536) arose the Pilgrimage of Grace, but in only some of its manifold aspects can it be called the outcome of northern religious conservatism. The discontent of the masses was overwhelmingly economic in origin and secular grievances dominate the voluminous records. All the bishops, whatever their doctrinal opinions, were now backing the King against the pope. The leader of the group which still accepted Catholic doctrine was Stephen Gardiner of Winchester, yet it was he who published the strongest manifesto in support of the Royal Supremacy and in condemnation of the Papal claims.

This State-Reformation is nevertheless very far from comprising the whole of the story. Before it and alongside it, Protestant doctrine was winning a place in the nation, but winning it against the King's will and largely in opposition to the machinery of Church and State. The first known Lutheran group was meeting in the White Horse Tavern in Cambridge from about the year 1520, a time when most of the future Protestant leaders and martyrs were undergraduates or junior dons in that university. For the rest of the century Cambridge exerted an influence upon history hardly surpassed by any university at any period. The movement spread thence to Oxford, especially when a group of Cambridge men came to staff Wolsey's new Cardinal College. Also during the twenties the tentacles of Lutheranism embraced another social group with extraordinary facilities for combating a hostile government and episcopate. This group consisted of London merchants and their colleagues, the large colony of English businessmen in Antwerp, an invaluable base outside the direct control of Henry and his bishops. Here in the great cosmopolis of that age, dominated by the heroic and bitter spirit of William Tyndale, the biblical translators and Protestant publicists did their work under the protection of the Merchant Adventurers. This defeat of a rudimentary police system by presses working abroad was to be repeated in the reign of Mary thirty years later.

The Bible, translated into plain and moving English, effectively crushed the unscriptural world of 'good works', of saint-cults, pilgrimages, purgatory, pardons and minor sacraments. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone may be held to have some-

what extended or simplified the message of St. Paul, but it stood near enough to his actual emphasis to command a ready assent from Scripture-readers. Moreover, the simple integrity of Christ and his Apostles provided a harsh comment on the Renaissance papacy, the lordly prelate, the non-resident tithe-seeker, the priest grasping for his mortuary dues, the slothful monk, the canon lawyer exacting huge fees for the probate of wills. In truth, the New Testament also sat in judgement on the greed, violence and injustice of lay society, but this aspect of its message had a less general appeal!

The growth of Protestant biblicism should not be depicted as a predominantly lay movement. In fact, it found dedicated agents not only among university clerics but amongst a minority of unprivileged priests; some of them (like Robert Barnes, Miles Coverdale, John Bale, George Joye and John Hooper) were former friars. That the policy of the open Bible at last managed to obtain some support from the Government was due largely to Thomas Cromwell, who had been interested in the translation of the Scriptures years before he entered the royal service. Despite his secular, unfervent personality, he stood—in the end none too cautiously—on the side of the Reformers. The documents make it quite certain that he was the chief political agent behind Miles Coverdale's final work of revision and the publication of the 'official' Great Bible (1539–40), which he and Archbishop Cranmer persuaded the King to put into the churches. As events proved, this was the step which could never be retraced.

In 1539–40 Henry VIII, offended by Protestant attacks on the doctrine of transubstantiation and listening to conservatives like the Duke of Norfolk and Bishop Gardiner, imposed the reactionary Six Articles Act, allowed Cromwell to be attainted on treason and heresy charges, and abandoned his negotiations with the German Lutheran princes. According to conventional statute-book history, the King's last years represent a Catholic reaction. Yet among the English people, even among the top people, these years were a period of Protestant advance. Much Protestant literature—some of it surprisingly liberal and tolerant—was smuggled in from abroad or quietly printed at home. The King's attempt to withdraw the Bible from uneducated readers seems little to have diminished its impact

on the nation. An analysis of the religious phraseology in middle-class and gentry wills—they suffice at least to indicate general trends—strongly suggests that Protestant convictions were still advancing and saint-worship declining. A strong party at Court, headed by the Earl of Hertford (the future Protector Somerset), cautiously leaned toward the new beliefs. Even the King himself put his heir in the care of tutors with known Protestant inclinations. Archbishop Cranmer, though compelled in 1539 to return his German wife to her relatives, succeeded in maintaining his personal credit with Henry and in continuing his plans for an English liturgy.

On Henry's death in 1547 the seizure of power by the Protestant group under Hertford gave the English Reformers a period of power and experiment lasting more than six years. Somerset's overthrow in 1549 by the opportunist John Dudley merely hastened the process, since Dudley took as his clerical allies the extremer Reformers like John Hooper and John Knox. Already during Cromwell's ministry Englishmen had become familiar with the concept of a national Church based on the Scriptures and pursuing a middle course between outworn superstitions and the arrogance of extremists. Now in 1549 this nascent Anglicanism was equipped with a remarkable English Prayer Book, for Cranmer, so often weak and wavering in political life, proved himself a creative liturgist, one able to blend Catholic and Lutheran forms into a convincing devotional unity. His first Book could be interpreted in a Catholic sense, but the second Book (1552) was a distinctly Protestant document, reducing the mass to little more than a memorial service. It still remains doubtful whether Cranmer sanctioned some of its final features; we know that by this stage more radical Reformers like Knox and Hooper were exercising heavy pressures upon the politicians, who could overrule Cranmer himself.

Meanwhile the dissolution of chantries, chapels, religious guilds, collegiate churches and other institutions reshaped the character of the English parochial life. Many of these foundations had already been embezzled or converted to other uses, while belief in intercessory masses for the dead had for some time been declining. These facts, however, justified reform rather than confiscation. And though measures were taken to continue the chantry schools, together with

some essential chapels and other foundations, this dissolution proceeded in an atmosphere of profiteering, corruption, financial embarrassment, and loss of face for the Protestant cause. In 1553, having seized even the surplus plate of the parish churches, Dudley's government was struck down by the death of its puppet, the young King Edward. The attempt to alter the succession in favour of Dudley's daughter-in-law Jane Grey was resisted even by Protestants who realized that a Catholic reaction would follow under the legitimate heir, Mary Tudor.

These conspicuous events of the reign of Edward VI have often tended to overshadow a development of profounder importance in English religious and intellectual history. During the reign of Henry VIII Lutheran influences had predominated among English Protestants, though in its last years the teachings of Zwingli in Zürich and Calvin in Geneva had begun to bear heavily upon some English theologians. Now this reorientation from the Saxon to the Swiss emphasis became decisive. When Cranmer sought to call a conference to unite European Protestants he was rebuffed by the unimaginative Lutherans. On the other hand, thousands of religious refugees, the great majority of them owing no direct allegiance to Luther's Wittenberg, came to settle in England. Martin Bucer and several other eminent foreign theologians occupied key posts in the universities, while the great company of foreigners in London were given the Austin Friars and there allowed by Cranmer to organize their congregations along Swiss lines. This signal act of liberalism provided a public exhibition of the Reformed religion in the heart of the capital, a thing which Nicholas Ridley found disquieting in his capacity as Bishop of London. Among Englishmen, in theory bound to use the official Prayer Book, Calvin and the Zwinglians had now many admirers, who demanded that the English Church should be remodelled along the lines of the Reformed faith. Such early Puritans embraced Calvin's views on grace and predestination; and not satisfied to accept the Bible simply as general guidance in matters of worship, they believed that *all* devotional practices without direct scriptural warrant were sinful and intolerable. But in opposition to this rigid attitude there stood advocates of a liberal tradition, based largely on Melanchthon, men who distinguished between the

unchangeable essentials of the Faith and its *adiaphora*—'things indifferent', which might be either retained or abolished without sin. This sensible view, always a stout pillar of Christian toleration, obtained some recognition in the official Articles of Religion. Yet at this parlous stage the Calvinist disciplinarians had certain advantages over the liberals. They knew exactly what they wanted; they knew the battle still raged and they sought to re-order the confused Protestant ranks against a reviving Rome on the one hand and against the Anabaptists (now increasingly active in England) on the other.

With the accession of Queen Mary the fate of the English Reformation hung once more in the balance, yet in the event this zealot ended by making invaluable contributions to the Protestant cause. She first identified Catholicism with unpopular Spain by marrying Philip against the advice of her own Council. Discarding the worldly-wise Bishop Gardiner, she ended by relying upon a most remote and unpractical guide, her cousin Reginald Pole, who in 1554 returned to England as Papal Legate, bringing absolution to the realm. Their failure to stimulate Catholic ardour or to introduce the spiritual Counter-Reformation remains a great negative fact. And much as they desired to do so, they could not restore to the Church the monastic lands sold or given to the laity without risking revolution. Finally they conducted a persecution too small to eradicate Protestantism yet big enough to restore its waning prestige by providing an army of martyrs. An equally important outcome of Mary's policy was the exile of some 800 leading Protestants, who founded active communities at Frankfurt, Strasbourg, Geneva and elsewhere. For them there followed an intense period of debate and study, of writing and propaganda, of preparation for the recovery of England.

In the event, the recovery proved surprisingly painless and rapid, for in November 1558 death removed—within a few hours of each other—the tragic figures of Mary and Reginald Pole. At this juncture the Calvinist exiles missed their opportunity. At Frankfurt, led by John Knox, they had quarrelled with the Anglicans and had mostly gone off to Geneva, whence they were slow to return. Their voices were unheard in that fateful Parliament of 1559, in which the Elizabethan Settlement was so rapidly hammered out. This being

so, the Settlement became a compromise between the returning Anglican exiles, who wanted a Prayer Book even more Protestant than that of 1552, and the young Elizabeth, who looked back to the days of her brother—even to those of her father—and would have preferred the conservative Book of 1549. She had at this moment no ecclesiastical advisers, since Mary's Catholic bishops stood firm, while the parish clergy wisely waited to be led. Elizabeth had hence to rely on the exiles, but she made them agree to some changes in the Prayer Book of 1552, including a deliberate ambiguity on the vexed question of the Presence in the service of Communion. There emerged a national Church neither Roman nor Genevan, but under a Supreme Governor who exercised a more remote, a less quasi-papal control than that exercised by Henry VIII as Supreme Head. In the year 1559 this was a politic solution, corresponding with the public mood. Outside the relatively small groups of ardent Catholics and ardent Protestants, the nation seems to have become tired of excess, of experiment, of cocksure theologians and violent vicissitudes. It was willing to march loyally with a legal government promising order and quiet. Needless to add, the Catholic and Puritan malcontents were ultimately to press their cases. Yet the great majority of the former refused to join Spain against Elizabeth. As for the Puritans, they pervaded the national Church, tried to push it toward Geneva, but only in exceptional cases did they envisage breaking away into Separatist bodies. After 1559 the greatest extremity of the crisis was past and a less violent dialectic beset the religious life of the nation.

The story we have told is complicated enough, but it forms the baldest of outlines. In a recent book I have found it hard to explain the inwardness of all these events within 400 pages. In its insular nuances, its semi-detached relation with the continental movements, its obstinate refusal to be comprehended within simple formulae, this was a truly English episode. Though rich in human character, it refuses to be dominated by any single great man. The English listened to the foreign prophets, but they then went away and thought for themselves. I have tried to show that the State-Reformation was rather remotely geared to the social and religious Reformation, and that each had its own dynamic. The English

produced their usual impressive array of individualists and cranks; they did not always dutifully obey their governments, though on more than one occasion a government helped them to find a tolerable religious solution. There could be no ideal solutions in sixteenth-century Europe, but some were more tolerable than others. The Elizabethan solution was characteristically one of compromise, renouncing fanaticism in favour of national unity, national independence, even national comfort. The English may have been spiritually incapable of grasping the genius of Catholicism or that of Protestantism, but at least they knew how to dethrone pseudo-logic, overdogmatic theology and various sorts of clerical messiahs.

Though there were to be later crises, that of the period 1529–59 saw the exploratory and the prophetic episodes. When we have studied these nothing can surprise us, for we have seen in microcosm the whole of the Reformation. On the other hand, these changes in England cannot be wholly understood without reference to a mental background which ranged far outside the sphere of religion. The essence of the religious Reformation lay in an appeal to the authority of the primary sources in the New Testament, but in a more literal sense Englishmen were becoming men of the word. Tyndale, Latimer and Cranmer, those great masters of the vernacular, were in some sense precursors of Shakespeare, Spenser and Marlowe. Minds were moving from the image to the word, from visual representation to literary presentation. New horizons were opened in secular thought and culture, which had begun to claim an enormously greater share in the attentions of authors, printers and readers. By Elizabeth's reign, even remote country clergymen are often found to possess numerous secular books. This enlargement of the universe should not be identified too narrowly with the imaginative literature of the so-called Age of Shakespeare. From Colet to Bale, to Foxe, to Hooker, the progress of Reformation thought is coupled with a steady enrichment of historical perception and method. Again, even during the Marian persecution, Copernicus was being expounded by Englishmen in England. William Turner, chaplain and physician to Protector Somerset, stands among the patriarchs of English Puritanism, but he is remembered rather as the Father of English Botany. Before the end of Elizabeth's reign

Francis Bacon had begun publishing and William Harvey had become a Doctor of Medicine. We might with profit devote more effort to exploring the interactions between the sacred drama and the profane setting in which it had to be played. At all events, in England the Reformation was more than a series of constitutional, social and religious changes; it was part of the greater complex of change which made the seventeenth-century mind so profoundly different from that of the fifteenth.

V

The Counter-Reformation

H. O. EVENNETT

By the Counter-Reformation is here meant the long and difficult process by which, after the unexpected shock of the Reformation, the old Church underwent a spiritual revival and an administrative renovation, putting her own house into better order and deploying her rejuvenated forces against her assailants. It was in active movement, in one way or another, from the early decades of the sixteenth century to the middle decades of the seventeenth, a many-sided phenomenon that formed a decisive stage in the transition from medieval to modern Catholicism.

The Middle Ages had had their heretical movements in plenty, but they had all, after condemnation by the Church, been either stamped out or driven underground. The Counter-Reformation, however, failed to destroy the Protestant Reformation in this way, for it had to do with something quite new in strength and complexity, and it was not perhaps surprising that the papacy should not have immediately perceived this. The famous Bull of Leo X of June 15th, 1520, opens with fine rhetoric drawn from the Psalms and the Book of Isaiah:

> Arise O Lord, and judge thine own cause; remember thy reproaches with which the foolish man hath reproached thee all the day. Incline thine ear to our prayers, for wolves have arisen seeking to devour the vineyard whose wine-press thou hast trodden alone and whose care, rule and administration thou, before ascending to the Father, hast committed to Peter as the Head and thy Vicar and to his successors. The wild boar from

the fields seeks to lay it waste and a wild beast from the fields feeds upon it.

The Bull condemned forty errors culled, rather unsystematically, from Luther's writings and offered him six months in which to withdraw them or suffer the fate reserved for heretics. But the wild beast remained unmoved and was protected from a heretic's fate by the action of his temporal ruler. It was some time before it was generally realized how powerful a new religious inspiration had come into the world with the new teachings; and when these were backed up by the secular authorities, themselves gaining everywhere in strength at the expense of all others, including the ecclesiastical, a well-nigh irresistible force could be generated. In scarcely any case where the state authorities took up and established some form of the new religion in separation from Rome was Catholicism eventually restored, although Catholic minorities often managed to survive, as in England and Holland and parts of Germany, and even to expand later to much larger proportions. Conversely, where the government remained faithful to the old religion it was found possible by different combinations of force, pressure and persuasion to contain or even eliminate Protestant elements that at one time had seemed likely to prevail; examples are Poland, Bavaria, Austria, the Tyrol and the southern Netherlands, and later on Bohemia, always a difficult Roman child. Calvinism, however, could not be prevented from winning a tolerated, indeed privileged, status within Catholic France in 1598, but only to be all but destroyed later on. In the northern Netherlands, on the other hand, and in Scotland, it helped to overthrow existing régimes and establish new states. By the end of the sixteenth century the confessional map of Europe shows Catholicism pressed back towards the south and wearing more and more, though never exclusively, a Latin aspect. Yet at the same time it was well advanced upon the beginnings of a world-wide expansion in the wake of the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors in America and in other newly discovered parts of the globe, and under the close political control of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns. Soon this would be added to by French conquests in North America. More than this geographical expansion, we find, if we consider Catholicism about the year 1600, an astonishing recovery in fervour,

activity, efficiency, prestige and self-assurance from the situation seventy years earlier. Catholicism has acquired a new look, as it is in the process of again doing today.

How had this been brought about? Ultimately because there lay within what we conventionally are apt to think of as a purely 'counter' or defensive movement one of the great positive religious enthusiasms of the age, some of whose roots go back uninterruptedly to the last period of the Middle Ages—a powerful spiritual revival and proliferation of new ideals and intensities within the Catholic world. Factors such as the work of the Council of Trent, that assembly of Catholic bishops that met under papal guidance at intervals between 1545 and 1563, the influence of the Society of Jesus and other new or reformed orders and congregations, the liberation and fructification of mystical prayer with the Teresan Discalced Carmelites, all these are products as well as part-causes of this great reshaping of Catholicism. Some continental scholars today posit a distinction between the Catholic Reformation, or reform of the old Church, and the Counter-Reformation, or fight against Protestantism. This distinction, to my mind, can be overdone, and if carried too far becomes incompatible with the unity of the historical process. Internal reform of the Church was not only spurred on but was heavily influenced in its nature by the pressure of the Reformation crisis, while conversely the counter-attack on the Reformation gained increased cogency as the internal reform of Catholicism proceeded. Because of this, and as a result of general trends in the evolution of European society as a whole, the developed Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation was far from conforming to the blueprints of the fifteenth century conciliar reformers or the ideas of early sixteenth-century Catholic humanists, or indeed to any paper scheme of reform, even that presented by the two Camaldolese monks to the pope at the opening of the Fifth Lateran Council in 1513. History is strewn with lost Catholic reformations and what comes out in the end can never conform wholly to the idealisms put in; Catholicism reacts to the ideas of successive historical periods as much as, perhaps more than, it itself influences them. We can see this today.

In recent decades the history of spirituality has made great strides as a study in its own right which has added religious flesh to the all

too often bare bones that pass for ecclesiastical history. It is not easy, however, to 'break down' or analyze the elements of a spirituality or to understand the different factors which have gone to produce it. But the spirituality of the Counter-Reformation, though manifesting certain common traits as a whole, falls into different particular schools which historians of religion have distinguished as Spanish, French, Italian or Netherlandish, or associated with outstanding figures such as Ignatius Loyola, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Bérulle, Francis of Sales or Philip Neri, blossoms of different hues springing from one parent trunk.

It is a narrow selective view which sees in Counter-Reformation piety nothing more than certain exaggerated intensities of sentimentalized devotion or ascetic austerities exemplified in baroque art and decoration. There is, no doubt, some sort of relationship between some aspects of the Counter-Reformation in its high period and the baroque elements in European culture, but so there was between the early counter-reform and the austere musical purity of a Vittoria or a Palestrina. What unites the various forms of Counter-Reformation spirituality can be said, I think, to be the stress on the individual's relation to God, and the manner in which the initial impulses that produced the new life and energy of the generation of reformed ecclesiastics and laymen all sprang from the influence and example of individuals on groups whose first object was not to 'reform the Church' in the name of some high-sounding 'up-to-date' principles, but to order their own lives to the doing of God's will and the bringing of benefit to their neighbour. This double purpose of self-discipline and service to others is seen in the many Italian confraternities and 'Oratories' of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, of which the Roman Oratory of Divine Love, formed on a Genoese model, is the most widely known. From such devout circles sprang the earliest congregations of reformed and reforming pastoral priests, devoted to social, charitable and educational works—the Theatines, Somaschi, Barnabites and others, precursors of the Jesuits in some ways. Simultaneously, arising in the 1520s, the Capuchin Franciscans in the same spirit produced an extraordinarily successful and lasting revival of St. Francis's medieval ideal, where so many earlier attempts had failed.

The key-note to all this enterprise may be regarded as 'activism in Grace', the active, purposeful struggle of the human will, fortified by Divine Grace, against Sin and on behalf of the good of others. The outlook is well summed up in the title of a popular sixteenth-century Italian book of devotion, *The Spiritual Combat*, ascribed, perhaps wrongly, to the Theatine Lorenzo Scopuli. Here we have, it would seem, not merely a reaction against the Lutheran concept of Justification by Faith alone, though it is true that this doctrine, not perhaps always rightly understood by its opponents, was held to lead to a drying up of the springs of moral and charitable effort. The necessity of effort and struggle in the battle against self is emphasized by all the Counter-Reformation spiritual leaders, but it went along with an enhanced reliance upon the power of Divine Grace, Grace not found primarily as an inner personal conviction of salvation, a Lutheran mode of experience which many, especially in Spain, regarded as a kind of false and dangerous mysticism, but sought through prayer and the Sacraments. The return to the more frequent use of the Sacraments, an increased albeit controlled recourse to Confession and Holy Communion, together with a new devotion to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament are hall-marks of the Counter-Reformation and essential contributions towards modern Catholic life and piety.

But Counter-Reformation religion, though sacramental and eucharistic, was not liturgical in our contemporary use of that word. That is to say it did not stress the Church's Liturgy as a corporate action calling for everyone's active participation. Theologians might well be aware of the concept of the Mystical Body, but the practical modern conclusions for eucharistic spirituality were not yet drawn. The emphasis was on the individual rather than the congregation, just as in the reform of monastic life the systematization of private meditation came into vogue to supplement the common prayer of the older communal offices. That the Mass was a corporate action in which the laity participated actively was a dangerous idea, in view of the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, to such an extent that at some places and at some times not only the translation of the Canon but even the following of it was discouraged. But the eucharistic influence was none the less

paramount in the stress on more frequent communion and the growing practice among priests of more frequent celebration.

The doctrinal decrees of the Council of Trent, particularly those on Justification, the Sacraments and the Mass, provided the dogmatic basis for Counter-Reformation spirituality at the same time as they condemned what was considered erroneous in the new Protestant doctrines. As the basis for its teaching the Council accepted the Latin Bible of St. Jerome—the *Vulgata Editio* 'commonly used by the Church', including the apocrypha—as the only 'authentic' version for official use, and made stringent regulations concerning the interpretation and publication of biblical texts, though it refrained from any pronouncement about vernacular translations in view of the variety of opinions expressed. This same decree also saw the effective beginning of a general episcopal censorship of all religious and moral literature. But side by side with the Bible there was acknowledged as an equal authority concerning doctrine and behaviour, oral traditions coming down from the Apostles, though no attempt was made to particularize these. The precise relationship between Scripture and Traditions in the Tridentine sense is still debateable. The popes who stage-managed the three meetings at Trent all insisted, against the contrary wishes first of the Emperor Charles V and later of other potentates, that the clarification of doctrine should have precedence over reform, as the more fundamental task, despite the pressure on all sides for reform to come first. The long decree on Justification—some 6,000 words in English—promulgated in January 1547 after seven months' discussion, followed an earlier decree on Original Sin which rejected the radical Lutheran concept whereby even after Baptism the resultant condition of the soul—somewhat awkwardly called Concupiscence—was considered to be sinful in itself and not merely conducive to sin. The Justification decree established the official Counter-Reformation theological balance between Faith and Works in the economy of salvation. A very large and decisive role is ascribed to Faith, properly formed (*fides formata*), as distinguished from the Lutheran faith-as-confidence (*fides fiducialis*). The prime role of Grace is heavily stressed, but Grace can be rejected and needs free human co-operation for its full efficiency; the merit in human works,

however, is held to derive from God's acceptance of them as meritorious. The Council had also to consider the theory that had come to be known as Double Justification. This was not immediately concerned with Faith versus Works, but was an attempt to combine the dominant Catholic teaching that the justified man is made intrinsically righteous in his own self with the view that his justification is not complete without some imputation of God's righteousness to him. Such imputed righteousness was indeed the only kind that the Lutheran concept of the state of concupiscence would allow, but there were certain Catholics, chiefly Italian and German, who felt, as a result of their own spiritual experiences and of the influence of certain parts of St. Paul, that there was a strong case for the necessity of some element of imputed righteousness in the fully justified man. As a theological theory the combination of the two elements of intrinsic and imputed righteousness was first worked out by the Cologne theologian Gropper, in later life a cardinal, but as a reunion formula it failed at Ratisbon in 1541, being rejected by the more rigid Lutherans, and was pronounced insufficient at Rome despite its acceptance by Contarini. But many of the so-called 'evangelical Catholics' in Italy and elsewhere, such as Juan de Valdes, Reginald Pole, Girolamo Morone, the Augustinian General Seripando and other Italian bishops and friars influenced by Augustinian and Pauline ideas were sympathetic to it. To other Catholic reformers—Caraffa, Ghiberti, Sadoleto—it made no appeal and Double Justification was rejected at Trent, without being formally condemned, all traces of it being gradually squeezed out of the successive drafts of the Justification decree despite the efforts of Seripando. Contarini was already dead some five years and the Roman Inquisition did the rest. The once popular Italian book by a Benedictine monk, called *The Benefits of Christ's death*, which taught a near-Lutheran view of Justification but without challenging Catholic sacramentalism, was suppressed so effectively that its text was not recovered until the nineteenth century.

The rejection of the Ratisbon formula on Justification is sometimes thought of as the failure of a great chance of reconciliation. It is difficult to accept this view. Double Justification was a compromise formula, somewhat artificial, which could hardly have given general

permanent satisfaction, and it is improbable that its acceptance by the theologians could have brought together again the fast-receding worlds of Catholic and Lutheran religiosity, whose different spirits were perhaps by now the real core of the problem. The formula was silent on Good Works. Moreover, the disputants disagreed absolutely on such fundamentals as the papacy and the Eucharist, while Contarini, for all his goodwill and personal courtesy to his opponents, was bound by Roman instructions and personally was prepared to give up the whole effort rather than abandon the word Transubstantiation—not yet reconsecrated by Trent. Contarini was not a 'liberal' any more than Pole or Marcello Cervini.

What is undoubtedly true is that, with the foundation of the Roman Inquisition in 1542, a new rigorism came into the Counter-Reformation. While Charles V continued to hope for agreement in Germany and based his whole conciliar policy on this, a wave of alarm over the alleged seeping of Protestant ideas into Italy made itself felt in Rome. The prevalence of 'Catholic evangelicalism' had something to do with this, and there were some frightening apostasies, such as that of Ochino, the superior of the Capuchins. The Roman Inquisition, with nominal jurisdiction throughout the whole Church, reflected the influence of its Spanish forebear established in the late fifteenth century to deal with crypto-Jews. It differed from it, however, in several ways, principally in not being ultimately under secular control. Less severe in its earlier days than later on, it was, however, unamiable enough. It was in this atmosphere of alarm and suspicion in Italy that the Council of Trent, after infinite delays, came into being in the last days of 1545.

It was thus hardly to be expected that policies of concession in non-essentials of ritual, discipline or custom to suit varying national temperaments or to entice back those who had strayed away would commend themselves to an assembly almost entirely Italian in composition, containing practically no Germans or northerners to speak of (Pole soon retired) and even very few Frenchmen until the last sessions of 1563. Demands for radical reforms in the Roman Curia were blocked and serious Reform subordinated and postponed in effect. Yet there were many in Germany in the 1540s and for long afterwards who believed that drastic moral and disciplinary reform

measures allied with such concessions as the restoration of the Chalice to laity, the ordination of married men, the remodelling of the Liturgy with a larger use of the vernacular and the modification of the unpopular fasting laws were the only road to the salvation of what remained of Catholicism in Germany. Illusory though this view might be, it was backed up by similar French demands during the later Tridentine sessions of 1562–3 when the Calvinist movement was threatening the stability of the French Church and State. But official policy both at Rome and, consequently, at Trent went the other way. The fear of national settlements was very great, likewise the distrust of national groupings in the Council. National settlements of religion not only portended ultimate disunity in Faith but opened the door wide to the control of religion by the secular power. There was the great danger. The papacy never forgot Henry VIII. More and more, uniformity in ideas and standards was to be the Counter-Reformation watchword. This is seen in the production at Rome of the so-called Catechism of the Council of Trent, the Tridentine Index of Prohibited Books with its set categories and rules (likewise composed in Rome), the reform of missals and brevieries and the whole expanding apparatus of growing papal control after the end of the Council.

During the years of the Council, and powerfully represented at it, there came on to the stage the most genial, formative and widespread of all the influences in the Counter-Reformation Church—the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius Loyola. This company of reformed and reforming priests abandoned, in the interests of pastoral efficiency, many of the practices and asceticisms of medieval monasticism, such as rigorous fasting, liturgical functions, recitation of the daily office in common and the wearing of a special dress. The life of the Society, however, though based on a rigorous training of the individual and providing scope for every kind of personal ability, was animated by the strongest possible *esprit de corps*. Behind all lay an amalgam of the different forces that had formed the founder and which St. Ignatius had fused and focused into unity. These were the chivalry and determination of Spain, the intellectual training of Paris, pastoral experiences in the towns of northern Italy, and above all the spiritual experiences undergone at Manresa in

1522, exactly contemporaneous with Luther's sojourn in the Wartburg. On these experiences rest the famous Spiritual Exercises, the foundation of the Society's religious life and of its influence on others. St. Ignatius had not learned religion from books, save the *Imitation of Christ*, which he prized above all others, and the lives of Christ and of the saints which had been the occasion of his original conversion. The Exercises are not a book in the ordinary sense; they are detailed instructions for a carefully planned series of guided meditations and considerations on the fundamentals of a man's relationship towards God which move him towards a firm act of the will, called the Election, whereby he decides henceforward to serve God in some particular way. The Exercises are thus a systematic approach to an act of dedication which is then strengthened into unalterable permanency. We must serve God, said St. Ignatius, as if everything depended on ourselves; but we must pray as if all depended upon God. Here is, in a sense, the inspired paradox of Counter-Reformation spirituality.

The Jesuits were soon everywhere, from Sweden to the Congo and from Peru to China, for the conversion of the infidel was St. Ignatius's earliest and remained always his dearest project. But the Society soon turned its attention towards Protestantism; and at the same time its controlled and efficient fervour, directed by principles of strict obedience, enabled it to acquire an expertise in almost everything that it took up. Jesuits specialized in the revival of scholastic philosophical and theological thought that had begun in Spain, in preaching and catechizing and controversy they were a powerful modernizing influence, while they may practically be said to have invented retreats, whereby they touched all elements in society. Canisius, Bellarmine, Campion, Suarez, Petavius, such names illustrate Jesuit eminence in different fields. In the field of education, whether it was in their schools for upper-class boys which made them the mentors of the cream of society in the Latin countries and parts of Germany, or as trainers of priests in many of the new colleges or seminaries ordered to be set up in every diocese by the Council of Trent, they transmitted the cultivated classical outlook and its cultural technique while keeping it subordinate to religion and morality. Thus they made their imprint on clergy and laity alike

and the remarkable ethos of the Society has transmitted itself to numberless orders and associations in the modern Church. That some Jesuits engaged in politics cannot be denied; so did some eminent Capuchins; more were distinguished in political theory. Two roles only they refused, the acceptance of high ecclesiastical office, unless forced, and the spiritual direction of women. The structure and rules of the Society and its principles of government were novel and unique. Finally the Jesuits were from the first consciously international in spirit and personnel, and it was in this spirit that the Society offered itself to the papacy for the service of the whole Church.

In estimating the influence of the Jesuits one must not overlook that of others, such as the Capuchins, or the Oratorians deriving from St. Philip Neri in Rome and Bérulle in France. But the Jesuits had qualities of universality that were unique, and they had in addition a devotion to the papacy that was in a sense built into their structure. If the Society supported everywhere the doctrine of universal papal supremacy, the papacy itself now stood out once again as the central directive power within the Catholic Church. After 1559 there was peace in Italy and the papacy was able to consolidate its economic and territorial basis. Gradually the worst scandals and abuses in the older offices of the Curia, so bitterly complained of in the past, diminished and ceased to hold the limelight, with the coming to maturity of a new generation of clergy brought up in a better spirit of ecclesiastical propriety. Here the personal influence in Rome of St. Philip Neri was remarkable. The years after Trent saw a series of able and dedicated men on the papal throne: St. Pius V, Gregory XIII, Sixtus V, Clement VIII, Paul V, Gregory XV. Their prime task was to implement the reforms decreed by the Council of Trent in its last sessions in the second half of 1563, after Morone had been put in charge and had brought the discordant elements within the Council to an agreed compromise reform programme. The Council had found itself too much divided to make any pronouncement on papal authority, but the whole business of staging and running the Council, infinitely complex and long drawn out, had served to flex the papacy's muscles and revive its sense of authority and mission. The restoration of the pastoral efficiency of the Church's pastors, bishops

and priests alike, to which the institution of the seminaries contributed so much, was the key-note of the Tridentine reforms. It was the task now assumed by the new-model papacy, the task which inspired it and justified it. The legislation of Trent was never, of course, anything like a hundred per cent effective, but without the papacy it would never have been effective at all.

So we see Rome in the later decades of the sixteenth century sprouting and fashioning those new organs and devices of central and centralizing administration which we know today, paralleling in this the contemporaneous evolution of government in the European monarchies. More attention was paid to the appointment, wherever possible, of more suitable bishops, who paid their regular *ad limina* visits to Rome. The cardinals in Rome, so often in the Middle Ages a kind of unruly feudal baronage, were transformed into a tamed ecclesiastical bureaucracy, administering the papal power rather than challenging or claiming to share it. In the year of the Armada, Sixtus V, systematizing a practice which had been developing throughout the century, established a constitution of fifteen standing committees of cardinals, known as Congregations, to deal with the different branches of papal business—the older organs of the Curia still, however, remaining. Among the Congregations that of the Council was highly important as dealing with the interpretation and enforcement of the Tridentine programme, and in time much more. The Congregation of the Holy Office, or Inquisition, was another of special import, with a general concern for the purity of the Faith. In 1622 Gregory XV established the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith—*de Propaganda Fide*. The purpose of this was to assert papal control over missionary activities in non-European countries, especially those under the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies, where the civil power pressed heavily on ecclesiastical affairs, and it was also charged with oversight over Catholic minorities in Europe. It has given to the world the blessed word 'Propaganda'.

As part of this papal constitutional development there came into being at this time the papal Secretary of State, a trusted confidential minister close to the pope, more often than not a relative, who was a kind of prime minister and foreign secretary combined. He

corresponded, in Italian, with the various papal representatives abroad, legates, nuncios and others. The maintenance of standing diplomatic representatives called nuncios or inter-nuncios at the courts of the Catholic powers was finally organized by Gregory XIII, and is part of a practice that became normal in sixteenth-century Europe. It was urgent for Rome to have close contact with the Catholic powers, for the support of the State was everywhere vital for Catholicism, and there were many occasions of friction. The reform decrees of Trent touched at certain points or appeared to threaten the prerogatives, for example, of the Spanish and French monarchs over their churches. Relations between Rome and Catholic rulers so devoted to the Faith as Philip II of Spain could be extremely difficult, as was becoming increasingly realized, and were chronically bitter-sweet. In these circumstances, as in all the multifarious business of the Counter-Reformation, the services of the nuncios were invaluable. Able men for the most part, and brought up in the new school of ecclesiastical strictness, their importance can hardly be exaggerated.

No one man started the Counter-Reformation; but there is perhaps one man whom, to conclude, we can take as summing it up. Carlo Borromeo—St. Charles—was the nephew of Pope Pius IV. As his Secretary of State while still in his early twenties, Charles managed with skill and prudence the diplomatic correspondence concerning the last period of the Council of Trent from 1560 to 1564. Later, as Archbishop of Milan, a city that had not known a resident archbishop for half a century or more, he became the acknowledged model bishop for the whole Catholic world, zealous, efficient, ascetic, tireless, charitable, selfless, uncompromising. He celebrated frequent synods; visited assiduously the whole length and breadth of his province, which extended into remote parts of the Swiss mountains, restoring discipline and inquiring into heresy; encouraged his suffragans; promoted the foundation of colleges and seminaries, and pressed remorselessly every inch of the Church's claims against the Spanish Vice-Roy. In youth he had played the cello, enjoyed hunting and belonged to a Roman literary and humanistic circle. But in his later years austerity took over. He spent long hours in prayer, ate little and slept little—and then on straw. In the great plague of Milan of 1576–8 he did not spare himself.

Those who thought him over-extreme in his principles and practices feared his election as pope. He never attained the Tiara, but he lives in history as the 'image', as we would say today, the 'mirror', as they said then, of the saintly pastoral bishop of the post-Tridentine Catholic Church.

VI

1555: A Political Retrospect

G. R. ELTON

Nowadays it may seem obvious that Luther's protest was bound to lead to a split in the Western Church, and it takes a real effort of the imagination to realize how different things looked at the time. Even after one man's rebellion had become an independent denomination embodied in independent churches, the reformers continued to maintain that they were reforming the whole Church, while the papacy and its supporters continued to think only in terms of restoring unity. But in 1555, at the religious Peace of Augsburg which accepted the presence in Germany of both papal and Lutheran Churches, the existence of the schism was officially admitted on both sides; thereafter talk of reunion or reconquest grew more and more wistful and less and less real. In the religious wars which followed parties might proclaim ambitions to restore Christendom to one Church or finally to destroy that abomination, the bishop of Rome; but in reality they usually recognized that there could be no question of upsetting the great fact of 1555—the division of Christendom into Catholic and Protestant Churches.

What happened between 1517 and 1555 was, therefore, not so much the triumph of a new separatist faith as the general and gradual acceptance of a divided Christendom which no one had wanted. Unity was gone—even the often nominal unity of the past—although unity had been everybody's avowed aim. In part, of course, this had happened for reasons of religion. Lutheranism appealed to many Christians, but never to all; over many the Church of Rome never lost its hold. But a more decisive influence on the course of events lay in the sphere of politics, in the map of Europe and the

forces playing over it. In the main these forces centred upon the imperial position of Charles V. His rule from 1519 to his abdication in 1555 neatly coincides with these formative years of a Europe divided in religion, and his personality notably dominates them.

Charles V was manifestly the most powerful monarch of his day. He ruled Spain and her overseas conquests, the Burgundian inheritance on the middle and lower Rhine, and the family lands on the upper Rhine; after 1526 he controlled all Italy and through his brother Ferdinand he commanded the Habsburg possessions in the east—Austria, Bohemia, Hungary. His resources in men and money vastly outweighed anything that any other prince could put in the balance, even if in sixteenth-century conditions both men and money were often hard to mobilize. The attitude of so magnificent a potentate was likely to be decisive in any European problem. His attitude to the Reformation, however, was determined less by his power than by his concept of empire. This was not empire in the modern sense—the rule of a nation-state over other territories. In an age in which politics followed the lines of family, not nation, his own person and dynasty alone gave coherence to a personal empire whose diversity he made little effort to modify. Admittedly, in physical terms Spain was already the centre of his power, and in Spain ideas of Spanish predominance over outlying possessions in Italy, the Netherlands and the Americas developed even during his reign. As early as 1518, when he was seeking election to the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish estates told him that the imperial title could not possibly give him more glory than he had as King of Castile and Aragon. But this was never the way that Charles himself saw it; and the creation of a specifically Spanish empire had to await his son Philip.

Charles was born and bred a Burgundian, was linked by family ties to Germany, and took more evidently after his paternal grandfather, the striking if ineffectual Maximilian, than after his mother's father Ferdinand the Catholic, that Aragonese fox so much admired by Machiavelli. He took a long time to accustom himself to Spain or the Spaniards to himself. His education and private beliefs confirmed attitudes which are often called medieval and were certainly in some sense out of date. For Charles V believed in the old idea of the Holy

Roman Empire as the secular rule of all Christendom. He saw himself as God's deputy, charged with the maintenance of his Church, equipped with power to assist the pope's spiritual headship or even, if the pope defaulted, to coerce Christ's vicar into the proper path. To his way of thinking, the election of 1519 put him in a position quite different from that occupied by any other prince, with tasks quite different from those involved in the creation or enlargement of territorial power, the promotion of his own or his subjects' interests, or the maintenance of law and order. These normal princely activities were his also, as hereditary ruler in his various dominions; but beyond that, as emperor, he was Christendom's secular head, responsible to God for the spiritual welfare of the Church and of all Christians. In aggressive terms, this kind of empire could only mean world dominion; in humble terms, a terrible burden of duty; and while his laboriously conscientious mind nearly always regarded the splendour of empire with awe and apprehension, it is no wonder that others saw in this self-conscious revival of the name and claims of Charlemagne a threat to all other dynastic and national interests.

Since Charles, therefore, thought of himself as an emperor of the old stamp, the pope's coadjutor in the rule of the Church, it goes without saying that he could never have turned Lutheran. (Napoleon, who said he should have done, only proved his ignorance.) On the contrary, all his beliefs forced him to oppose the Reformation, and his opposition went a long way to ensure that it should never conquer the whole Church. Many Germans, Luther included, also began by misunderstanding the emperor, thinking of him as the German he never was nor could be. Charles was not concerned with nations—he ruled too many to care for any—but with universals. His attitude to the Reformation was therefore predictable: the incipient schism must be healed, either by suppressing the new heresy, or (as he came to think after 1530) by promoting a General Council of the Church which would restore unity by agreement. In the sense that the emperor, frequently though he was at odds with the pope, put his power and policy behind the preservation of the traditional Church, he may be said to have fulfilled his own idea of empire. Rome survived under the shelter of Habsburg rule and Spanish troops; which is not at all to deny that it continued to subsist also on its own

resources of spiritual vigour which noticeably revived after about 1534. The last medieval emperor, hampered at all times by the greater realism displayed all round him (not least at Rome), served the idea and practice of the Holy Roman Empire with a curious mixture of chivalry and dourness, of policy, pageantry and pride, and with that partial success which to him was failure; so that in the end he abdicated in an act full of symbolic significance and left the world to be ruled by men who had ceased to give lip service to the things he believed in. But he had saved the Church of Rome.

On the other hand, he had not managed to render it triumphant, and here the contradictions inseparable from his position played a major part. He was not only emperor but also a Habsburg; not only universal ruler but also a territorial prince. The combination of universal claims and dynastic power affected, above all, his position in Germany. Weak though the imperial authority was in its homeland, it had by no means ceased to exist; neither the princes nor the imperial cities ignored the emperor; the various attempts to set up proper organs of government, though usually futile, testified that dreams, at least, of political unity continued to exist. The imperial Diet, which later became an assembly of diplomatic representatives, still constituted a sort of national Parliament, and even the least obedient of princes preserved an atavistic belief in imperial unity. The very election of Charles V showed that the traditions of a national emperor retained force. Some princes hesitated to promote the powerful Habsburg interest; yet when it came to the push the rival candidates (Francis I of France and Henry VIII of England) were never in the running. Of course, the electors made what terms they could, extracting much useful money and some rather less useful concessions; but they found themselves quite unable to choose anyone but the late emperor's grandson, who to them was first and foremost the greatest German prince of the day.

On the face of it, this should have given Charles V, backed by his vast domestic power, a clear run in destroying Lutheranism. In practice it did nothing of the sort, because these tenuous and in a measure sentimental attachments did not reflect the real balance of power. Determined to stamp out heresy, Charles only succeeded in persuading the princes that he would try to re-establish a genuine

imperial authority in place of the nebulous overlordship to which they were ready enough to subscribe. The religious conflict polarized the multiplicity of German interests into two opposing camps, with few and wavering neutrals, and by 1531, when the Protestants formed the Schmalkaldic League, the emperor faced organized resistance. In the event, political fears and ambitions sometimes accentuated and sometimes blurred the religious divisions. Rulers like those of Hesse and Saxony discovered in religion the determination to steel themselves to war even against the emperor; while political apprehensions frightened the less determined into a sullen reluctance to back him. Though Charles was a very long time making up his mind to war, he seems to have finally decided on it after the failure of the Ratisbon Diet of 1541 which for a moment had looked like reuniting the churches. But he could attack his chief enemies only after he had detached others from their side, and these others were Protestants. Thus the war came to be fought not really over religion so much as in defence of the imperial authority. The emperor's triumph at once reunited the opposition and added to it even conservatively inclined princes. The final collapse of Charles V's reign came dramatically in the very wake of seeming victory, and the Reformation survived the defeat of its princely protectors because in the last resort the private ambitions of the German princes proved a great deal stronger than their attachment to imperial unity. The settlement of 1555 marked the triumph of neither Catholicism nor Protestantism, but of princely independence, a fact well demonstrated by its famous main principle '*cuius regio eius religio*', which empowered each ruler to dictate the religion of his territory.

The state of Germany thus helped the Reformation; Luther made a politically wise decision when, submitting to the powers that be, he presented a new source of wealth to the territorial princes eager to appropriate their churches. Yet one must beware of seeing too much policy and deliberation in all this. Luther's view of the temporal power did not adapt itself to circumstances; it was implicit in his doctrine of the Church and his notions concerning God's government for the natural creation. Not all the princes who welcomed the Reformation did so simply because it brought them

advantages; like so many of their subjects, and like men elsewhere, they were converted by Luther. But throughout this first generation of its existence the German Reformation drew strength from movements which aimed at political independence. The territorial princes were not the only ones. Even in the rebellion of the lesser nobility, the imperial knights, whose attempt at reasserting a vanished power collapsed in 1523, religious revolt was allied with political discontent; and this is more notable still in the sectarian movements among the lower orders. The readiness with which city states like those of Switzerland or the Upper Danube accepted reformed preachers and church orders demonstrated, among other things, their proudly independent politics. In the end, with few exceptions, only the princes really succeeded in exploiting the Reformation for political purposes; but that was the result of simple strength. In Germany, and in Scandinavia too, the growing power of consolidated states found support in national churches which at that particular juncture could only be reformed churches. Yet by no means all princes who could have profited deserted the old Church; everywhere the political situation not only modified the problems of religion and faith but was in turn modified by them.

Nevertheless, it is probable that, left to itself, Germany would have been conquered and reorganized by its emperor. It was not left to itself, because more than Germany was involved in Charles V's policy. For one thing, there were the Turks. Their repeated onslaughts in the east, which in 1529 carried them as far as the gates of Vienna, were a permanent and unsolved problem which at critical times distracted the Habsburgs and gave the Reformation breathing space. The emperor of all Christendom naturally regarded himself as charged with the task of repelling the infidel, and the King of Hungary's brother was bound to concern himself with Turkish invasions. In addition, Charles inherited, as King of Castile, a tradition of war with Islam, and as King of Aragon a maritime policy in the Western Mediterranean; thus he found himself involved in war at sea and expeditions to Africa. The Turkish danger was less serious than at times appeared; even their military resources were not equal to penetrating beyond Hungary, while recurrent wars with Persia farther east periodically eased the pressure on Europe. But their

presence, active or not, on the eastern and southern flanks of Charles's dominions, and their standing threat to Christendom, at all times kept the emperor from single-minded concentration on Lutheranism.

Another permanent feature of the European system was more helpful still to the new religion. Charles V might think himself Christendom's secular head; the Valois King of France thought of him only as the head of the Habsburg dynasty whose territories surrounded France, prevented her from gaining glory by conquest, and threatened her hold on frontier provinces in the Netherlands, the Alps and the Pyrenees. The Habsburg-Valois conflict began with the struggle for Italy in the 1490s and grew in the reigns of Charles V and Francis I into a European battle of giants. Charles was time and again victorious and for ever binding his adversary in treaties which were as regularly broken—yet he was never free from this contest which directly affected the progress of the Reformation because Francis found valuable allies in the disaffected princes of Germany. At home the French king suppressed heresy and Lutheranism with ferocity; abroad he allied with heretics and Muslims in order to destroy the Habsburg bloc. It is often difficult not to feel with Charles V that French policy was thoroughly irresponsible and frequently treacherous; but one can also understand Francis I's desire to break the growing stranglehold of Spanish power. Or rather, one could understand it if there were any signs that the king fought these wars in the interests of an intelligent national policy and not just for reasons of personal and dynastic pride. Still, this did not affect the outcome. Protestantism in Germany survived because Charles V was kept from its throat by the persecutor of French Protestants; In the crisis of the German Reformation, after Charles V's victory over the Schmalkaldic League, it was an alliance of German princes with the French king, bought by the surrender of imperial outposts in Lorraine, which defeated the emperor and forced him to abandon his life-long struggle.

The part played by political involvements in the survival of the Reformation is thus plain enough. Political ambitions encouraged the adoption of reformed views among certain German and Swiss territories; the imperial position of Charles V ensured a conflict in

Germany in which the preservation of princely independence came to go hand in hand with the preservation of Protestantism; the political problems of the Habsburg empire in a Europe dominated in the west by national states and threatened in the east by the Ottoman Turks prevented the emperor from achieving his ends. But politics were also transforming the Church of Rome. While it is obvious that where Protestantism established itself it allied with the secular power and produced national churches, it may be less obvious that something very similar was happening in the other camp. In fact, in this century of religious revival the power of the temporalty was everywhere elevated above that of the spiritualty. Ever since Charles VIII of France invaded Italy in 1494 the popes had been trying to maintain their independence between the threatening powers of France in the north and Spain in the south. They had played a desperate game of diplomacy, constantly changing sides and altering alliances. But the game could not succeed, and after Charles V had defeated Francis I at Pavia in 1525 and Rome had been sacked by mutinous imperial troops two years later, it was effectively over. For the rest of the century the papacy remained generally under the Habsburg thumb. The energetic popes of the Counter-Reformation at times managed to go against Spanish policy; as long as the French monarchy remained strong, diplomacy could always secure the occasional glimpse of partial freedom; imperial and Spanish control at Rome was never perfect. Nevertheless, the reign of Charles V deprived the papacy of political power and laid the foundations for that dominant influence of Spain and Spanish Christianity which marked the Counter-Reformation.

Even more notably, perhaps, something like national churches were created even in countries that remained attached to Rome. In both France and Spain, and in the lesser Catholic countries too, the secular ruler put an end to his own clergy's independence. Spain's Church had been in many ways distinct, almost separatist and reformed long before Rome reformed itself, ever since the days of Cardinal Torquemada in the fifteenth century. France extracted concessions from a hard-pressed pope in the Bologna Concordat of 1516 which effectively guaranteed the king's control over the French Church. These facts are widely recognized; indeed, I think too much

is often made of them. The papacy did not lose very much by these arrangements; the losers were the bishops and lesser clergy whose fate their liege-lord and their spiritual father agreed, in forced harmony, to decide between themselves. As later developments showed in both countries, the apparent nationalization of the Roman Church had meaning only while kings remained strong and religion a matter of state. For a while these near-national churches and the Protestant schism pushed the papacy into the political shadows; but in those nations which had not left its spiritual fold it proved capable of recovering much even of its political power.

What a crown might achieve, and how politics could react upon religion, were points most strikingly demonstrated in England. Despite the presence of small groups of dissentients—old Lollards and new Lutherans—no country (certainly not Italy) seemed more soundly orthodox; no dynasty had proved more respectful to Rome than the Tudors. Yet the pope's authority had hardly been called in doubt before it was altogether removed. Between 1532 and 1534, Parliament passed one statute after another, confirming the transfer of headship in the Church to the king; in the four years 1536 to 1540 some eight hundred institutions of monks, nuns and friars were dissolved; a national Church appeared, fundamentally different from what had gone before even though the detailed organization—the hierarchy, the church courts, much doctrine—altered little. Even under the conservative Henry VIII, however, services in English replaced the Latin mass and the Bible was made accessible to the people. Borne on the wings (three wings) of lay anticlericalism, national pride and royal policy—none of them in themselves Protestant—reformed ideas spread rapidly. Under Edward VI the Church of England went Protestant, and the alliance between reformed preachers and the gentry who had acquired the secularized church lands proved strong enough to survive the reaction towards Rome under Mary Tudor. In our year 1555 the country seemed to have returned to the old religion, but the ease with which Elizabeth brought back Protestantism in 1559 indicates that her sister had never really stood much chance of undoing the work of the previous twenty-five years.

The English Reformation certainly owed something to the

spiritual needs of the people, to the intellectual and religious questings of certain among the clergy, to the inspiration and example of religious reform both in the domestic past and the foreign present. But that it took its origin in a political revolution, only the wilfully blind would deny. To Henry VIII the break with Rome meant the completion of his unquestioned rule as well as the achievement of his first divorce; to the architect of the revolution, his minister Thomas Cromwell, it meant the chance of rebuilding the State on a basis of national sovereignty and lay government; doctrine and belief were secondary matters.

This revolution in Church and State rested on old ambitions as well as new. It revived the idea of God's Church on earth as territorially segmented, its government committed to king-bishops directly appointed by God, an idea long superseded by the rise of papal monarchy. But it also embodied most completely among contemporary churches the final emancipation of the laity from ecclesiastical control. Only most completely: the same thing was, as already suggested, seen in varying degrees all over Europe. England's is the best case-history because there politics gave the initial push; reform in faith came next, and last of all that reform in manners and standards so long demanded by the best spirits who had sought it for centuries either within or outside the Roman obedience. Tendencies apparent all over Europe are here seen most clearly, just because the religious upheaval, with its confusions, ensued upon the clear-cut political reconstruction. What rendered England peculiar in Europe was not her national Church but that Church's constitutionalist basis: the partnership between king and Parliament which the revolutions's guiding spirits deliberately made the foundation of its success.

Even today, it is far from easy to assess fairly the interplay of political and religious motives and influences which between them established the Protestant Reformation and dictated its course and character. There are still those who cannot accept that a religious and spiritual outburst should, in fact, have involved all sorts of secular concerns and might never have survived but for the accidents of the political situation. Others, more crassly, would maintain that all this upheaval had behind it only secular pressure—dynastic

or personal ambition, economic forces. The truth is a good deal subtler than this. Politics have been the subject of this essay; but this does not mean that I would ignore the explosive religious situation or the search for salvation, which unquestionably suffered some distortion and coarsening from the effects of purely political concerns. Yet after all, if religion found itself much affected by politics, it is also sadly true that the stubborn passions of self-righteous faiths in their turn did much to prevent rational solutions of political and social problems. The revival of religion revived intolerance; and the search for salvation sharpened the violence of politics and the cruelty of man.

VII

The Reformation and Social Revolution

H. G. KOENIGSBERGER

From the time of the great peasants' revolts of the fourteenth century social revolution became a part of European life. From England to Bohemia, and from Italy to Denmark, peasants rose against their lords in the country and artisans went on strike and rioted against their patrician employers in the towns. It did not, of course, happen all the time, or everywhere at once. Many provinces and towns remained peaceful for generations or, like Venice, never suffered any social upheavals at all. But a bad harvest in the country, a new tax, a sudden rise in the price of bread or a winter of unemployment in the towns—such an event was always liable to cause an outburst of popular fury. Such outbursts, directed against the lords' *chateaux* or the patricians' town halls, were usually purely local. Their aims, where they were formulated at all, were limited and practical: the abolition of a tax or a *corvée*, that is, a labour service on the lord's estate; the raising of wage rates or the participation of the craft guilds in the government of the town.

There were times, however, when such movements spread over wider areas and when they aimed at much more fundamental changes in social relationships and political structure. Examples are the English peasants' revolt of 1381 and the Hussite wars of Bohemia and central Europe in the first half of the fifteenth century. In both cases a certain type of religious teaching and propaganda transformed local rebellions into national, or even international, revolutionary movements. Popular preachers interpreted the theological

speculations of university dons from Oxford and Prague in fiery sermons or crude slogans. The crudest and most effective of these was the famous couplet:

> When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?

It translated easily into other Germanic languages and spread over much of central Europe.

Respectable contemporaries, that is, those who believed in the social *status quo*, were appalled by the effectiveness of this fusion of social and religious aims; but they were not surprised by it. Indeed, even in the sixteenth century, few men, outside Italy, thought of social and political matters in purely secular terms. The social order was held to be divinely ordained and political authority was derived from God. Rebellion was not only a treasonable but an impious act. Conversely, social movements were likely to acquire a religious tinge. This was not so much a matter of finding a moral justification for rebellion—though such a motive often played its part—as a way of thinking about relations between man and man. At the same time movements which started with a purely religious appeal tended very rapidly to acquire social or political overtones. This was also generally recognized in the sixteenth century. A Venetian ambassador to France, one of the coolest of contemporary political observers, wrote that experience had always shown that changes in religion led to changes in the State, that is, to political revolutions. This was certainly true of the Reformation in Germany, as Dr. Elton has shown;[1] but in Germany the Reformation also coincided with a number of previously quite independent social movements. The result was a series of particularly violent social and political explosions. These are the events I shall be discussing in this chapter.

By sixteenth-century standards Germany was a prosperous country. In the countryside the ravages of the Black Death of the fourteenth century had been made good. German towns grew rich from the transit trade between Italy and the Netherlands. German craftsmen led the rest of Europe in metal- and woodwork and were beginning to catch up on the Italian and western European lead in

[1] Above, pp. 76–77.

textiles. German silver mines, in Saxony and the Tyrol, were flooding Europe with silver coin. German engineers were mining and German capitalists were financing and exploiting Hungarian copper. German merchant bankers and mine-owners were the richest in Europe, and were already beginning to tap the wealth of Spain and its rapidly expanding overseas empire. But, politically and socially, Germany was the most unstable country in Europe.

Dr. Elton has written of the division of Germany into hundreds of large and small political units over whom the central government of the emperor held little more than nominal sway.[2] But the authority of all these princes, bishops and imperial cities was itself often ill defined. Territorially, their states presented a jigsaw puzzle of disconnected units and enclaves. Politically, they had for centuries acquired, or usurped, their rights and prerogatives as occasion arose. By the early sixteenth century the princes were busy trying to round off their territories and to extend their authority. They began to build up their own civil service. They introduced Roman law in place of local custom and common law. They arrogated to their courts village and seigneurial jurisdiction. They strove to incorporate the smaller autonomous towns into their territory. Above all, they attempted to impose new taxes.

For a generation before the Reformation this policy had produced chronic unrest, especially in the German-speaking Alpine countries. Local peasant communities rose against their local princes, especially against ecclesiastical princes—the prince-bishops and prince-abbots who had been foremost in pursuing the new policy of reducing their peasant vassals to subjects. The peasants' aims varied locally and from time to time. But, in general, they demanded a return to the old law, their village self-government and the abolition of new taxes. Opposition to more purely seigneurial rights, the imposition of additional labour services or the burdens of serfdom, were rarer though not unknown. All these demands were limited and practical. Quite frequently the lords and princes had to grant them, or an arbitrator arranged a compromise. Just as frequently, however, the princes returned to the attack. In consequence, the revolts continued.

There was, however, another tradition of peasant movements,

[2] Above, pp. 75–77.

one which the authorities, from the very beginning, viewed with much greater alarm. These were the religious movements based on an old chiliastic tradition, that is, the attempt to set up the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth which was to precede the Day of Judgement. From Professor Norman Cohn's book, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, we now know a great deal about this chiliastic tradition in central Europe and its extraordinary tenacity. It had never died out in Germany and it mingled with the egalitarian religious traditions which the Hussites had taken from Wycliff and the English peasants' revolt and which they introduced into Germany in the fifteenth century. Such ideas found a particularly fertile soil in south-west Germany, where political fragmentation had gone farthest and where quite small lords were setting themselves up as princes and adding taxes to ever-increasing manorial burdens. On the upper Rhine there appeared a movement called the *Bundschuh*, or the peasant's laced boot. Unlike the other peasants' risings in southern Germany, which had been local, secular and conservative in aim, the *Bundschuh* was a highly organized movement, covering a large area. It appealed not to traditional but to divine law, with the aim of overthrowing the existing social order and setting up a popular religious peasant society directly under the emperor.

The leader of the *Bundschuh*, Joss Fritz, could never manage to keep his organization and plans secret, for his supporters gave themselves away in the confessional. The authorities always had sufficient time to take effective counter-measures. But Fritz himself always escaped and, all over southern Germany, the authorities remained nervous of the continued appearance of the *Bundschuh* emblem and the *Bundschuh* slogans. From about the year 1515, or a little earlier, the two types of peasant movement, the secular and the religious, began to coalesce. Growing population pressure was causing an ever-increasing division of peasant land and a good deal of rural unemployment. Here was the chief recruiting-ground for the *Landsknechts*, the famous German mercenary troops of the time. Their employment was notoriously irregular and the large number of paid-off soldiers in the villages added a further explosive element to an already unstable situation.

From the beginning of the century food prices had been gradually

rising, owing to increasing population and to the inflationary effects of silver mining in Germany. In 1516–17 bad harvests caused them to soar to hitherto unheard-of heights. Joss Fritz's revolutionary propaganda found more support than ever before, and the *Bundschuh* conspiracy of 1517 was the most widespread and dangerous so far. What was particularly alarming was the spread of the unrest to many of the towns. High bread prices were a traditional, almost respectable, cause for rioting in the towns. Moreover, like the peasants, the artisans and small traders of the towns suffered from the imposition of new taxes and the encroachments of princely authority on their traditional rights.

Thus Germany was already in a state of incipient social revolution at the moment when Luther, to satisfy the demands of his own conscience, broke with the established Church. Only someone of Luther's own naïve singleness of mind could imagine that his inflammatory attacks on one of the great pillars of the established order would not be interpreted as an attack on the whole social order, or on that part of it which it suited different interests, from princes to peasants, to attack. Indeed, if this had not been so, Luther's Reformation could not possibly have been as successful as it actually was.

The first to interpret Luther's writings as a signal for revolution were, however, not the peasants but the imperial knights. The knights were a very varied social group of noble landowners who had thrived during the centuries of imperial impotence and political chaos in southern Germany. But from the beginning of the sixteenth century they had come under increasing pressure from the princes who taxed their peasants and encroached on their rights of jurisdiction and the profits they derived from their seigneurial courts. Rising prices ate into the value of their income from rents, and when they tried to raise rents they added to the already dangerous peasant unrest. Many who had the opportunity took service with the princes. Others clung fiercely to their old independence. To them, Luther's pamphlet addressed to the German nobility seemed a clarion call against the hated power of the princes and the Church. In 1523 Franz von Sickingen, a former imperial general, led the knights against their arch-enemy, the Archbishop of Trier. Among

Sickingen's followers the traditional greed and bellicosity of the robber baron mingled with half-baked plans for a political and religious regeneration of the empire. The burghers of Trier failed to share this knightly enthusiasm and remained loyal to their archbishop. Sickingen had to raise the siege and soon the archbishop's professional mercenary army blew up Sickingen's castles and scattered his followers.

The peasant risings which began a year later were a very different matter. There is little evidence that their immediate cause was economic distress. Prices were high, in some areas, but do not seem to have approached the famine level of 1517. But there was a feeling of unease and impending catastrophe in the air. The astrologers were predicting great disasters for 1524 and 1525. Local unrest had never entirely ceased since 1517. In many places the peasants refused to pay the tithes to their clergy; it was their most immediate reaction to Luther's teachings. The peasant movement itself started in the Black Forest, close to the Swiss cantons with their infectious anti-princely and anti-noble traditions. In Zürich and Basle, moreover, Zwingli and his friends had already overthrown the authority of the old Church.

Soon the movement spread through the whole of southern Germany, excepting only Bavaria. It spread by example and by propaganda. The example was the rising of the peasants in a neighbouring area with their traditional demands for the return to the old law and the abolition of specific grievances. In detail these demands varied from locality to locality, as they had always done. Much of the propaganda, however, was of a more general and, often, religious character. Luther's little tract on *The Freedom of a Christian Man* was interpreted—misinterpreted, so Luther thought—as an attack on all serfdom. Divine law, as the peasants saw it, and the old traditional law were often sufficiently close to intermingle in their minds and in their demands. Thus, the appeal to divine law generalized local grievances and was the reason for the widespread adoption by different peasant bands of the famous Twelve Articles as the basis of their demands. The Twelve Articles were drafted by Sebastian Lotzer, a tanner from the Swabian town of Memmingen. They demanded the free election of ministers by their congregations. The

ministers were to preach the gospel plainly and without additions. They were to be paid by the 'great', or grain, tithe. The 'small', or cattle, tithe was to be abolished. Serfdom and all duties arising from it were contrary to divine law. So was the nobles' appropriation of hunting, fishing and forest rights. Rents and services were not to be arbitrarily increased and justice was to be exercised equally and according to the old law. Widows and orphans were not to be unjustly harried by death duties. If any of these demands could be shown to be contrary to God's word, Lotzer concluded, they would be dropped.

The Twelve Articles and other sets of peasants' demands are remarkable mainly for their moderation and conservatism. The peasants' leaders and their allies in the towns were often substantial and respectable men. Most of them did not, like Joss Fritz, want to overthrow the existing social order. They wanted their traditional rights, and Luther and Zwingli seemed to have made their demands even more respectable by apparently giving them the sanction of Scripture. The princes of the Church, it was widely believed, had kept the true word of God from the common man, and they had done this from pride. The peasants plundered and burnt monasteries and castles; but on only one occasion did they massacre the defenders of a castle, Weinsberg, after they had surrendered. The massacres of the Peasants' War were nearly all perpetrated by the other side.

In the first months of the risings the majority of lords, abbots and princes were too terrified to resist and made agreements with the peasant leaders, accepting their demands. The imperial government, as usual, was helpless. But soon the greater princes recovered their nerve. The Swabian League, a military alliance of princes and large towns in southern Germany, raised an effective professional army. The peasants for their part were accustomed to bearing arms. They were led by unemployed professional soldiers. They captured artillery in the towns and castles they took. But the peasant bands were undisciplined. They had no cavalry. They had no military leader who could stand up to the experienced generals of the Swabian League. Worst of all, the peasant bands of the different areas did not co-operate. The largest of the peasant armies made a treaty with the enemy and dispersed. Most of the other bands tried to fight. But the

peasants usually broke ranks at the first charge of the *Landsknecht* regiments and the League's cavalry then cut them down by the thousand. By the summer of 1525 all resistance had virtually ceased. Only the Tyrolese peasants threw up an effective leader, Michael Gaismair, who won a pitched battle and held out for another year.

The peasants had counted on Luther's support for their demands. They had misunderstood him. The princes, after the initial shock, certainly did not misunderstand him. Many were badly shaken by the revolt. Luther's own prince, the elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, had wondered whether it was not God's will that now the peasants should rule. Luther would have none of this. Himself the son of peasants, he had sympathized with their grievances; but he condemned their actions. In May 1525 he published a pamphlet *Against the Murderous and Thieving Hordes of Peasants*. They had committed three mortal sins, Luther wrote. They had broken the obedience they had sworn to authority; they had committed rebellion, riot and murder; and finally they had forced other Christians to commit similar sins. There was, he thundered, 'nothing more poisonous, obnoxious and devilish than a rebellious man'. He had to be killed like a mad dog. The princes had been given the sword and must now use it. 'So wondrous are the times now', Luther concluded, 'that a prince can attain to heaven through bloodshed where others have attained it through prayer.' If Luther's appreciation of divine judgement was correct, many of the princes must have earned their crowns of glory. Their *Landsknechts*, during the battles, and their hangmen, after the fighting was over, slaughtered some hundred thousand peasants.

Luther's own experience of the Peasants' War was in Thuringia. This province had a long history of millennial movements. It now produced the greatest of its chiliastic prophets and the most interesting figure of the Peasants' War, Thomas Müntzer. Müntzer had moved from a position close to Luther's to one of the bitterest hostility to the reformer. The kingdom of God, now close at hand, was for the elect only, those who had experienced the 'living' or 'spiritual' Christ within themselves and who had suffered his cross in their own afflictions of body and spirit. After the princes had failed him, Müntzer came to identify the elect with the poor. As a preacher,

first in the new mining town of Zwickau, and then in the decaying town of Mühlhausen, he built up a tremendous personal prestige among unemployed miners and the poorer artisans. Though the peasants' demands in Thuringia showed only faint traces of Müntzer's millennial and egalitarian visions, there is no doubt of his influence among the rebels. The princes who marched their army against the Thuringian peasants, encamped at Frankenhausen, recognized this when they offered the peasants their lives if they handed over Müntzer and his disciples. Müntzer persuaded the peasants otherwise. God had promised him the victory for the elect. Müntzer himself would catch the cannon balls of the ungodly in the sleeves of his cloak. But at the very first salvo the peasants fled. Some five thousand perished in the rout and its aftermath of massacre and executions, Müntzer among them.

Since Engels, writing about the Peasants' War, elevated Müntzer into a hero of the class struggle, Müntzer's beliefs and his political role have been hotly debated by Marxist and anti-Marxist historians. The debate is based largely on an anachronistic contrast between religious and political beliefs. Müntzer certainly thought primarily in religious terms; but he did not separate these from their social and political consequences. Nor, for that matter, did his opponents.

Much more important than this modern historiographical shadow boxing was Müntzer's influence on the development of sixteenth-century Anabaptism. The Anabaptist movement included a variety of beliefs; but in general, Anabaptists were agreed in holding that they alone constituted the elect of God, and that for them all external authority whether of Church or State was irrelevant and did not apply. These ideas spread rapidly among the lower classes of Switzerland and Germany after the Peasants' War, primarily in a pacific form: the Anabaptists preached non-resistance and suffered martyrdom by the thousand. But Müntzer's appeal to violence for the setting up of the kingdom of the elect on earth could not be forgotten; and alongside the peaceful majority of Anabaptists there appeared also a revolutionary Anabaptist movement with its focus in Holland and north-western Germany. Economic distress seems to have played a much greater part in this movement than in the Peasants' War of 1524–5. Wages had not kept up with rising prices

during the first decades of the sixteenth century. In the early 1530s bad harvests caused bread prices to rise, often twice as high as in the famine year of 1517. Warfare in the Baltic and the closing of the passage of the Sound to Dutch shipping prevented the import of Polish and Prussian grain into Holland and caused widespread unemployment in the Dutch shipping and textile towns. In these conditions the revolutionary wing of the Anabaptists, led by the Haarlem baker, Jan Matthys, made rapid converts. As so often in the sixteenth century, the social and religious protests intermingled.

Matthys's chance to set up his kingdom of God came not, however, in Holland, where public authority was too firmly established, but in the north-west German cathedral town of Münster. Here the gilds had forced the town Council to hand over the churches to Lutheran preachers. In February 1534 the Anabaptists won control of the Council. Matthys himself now arrived and, together with his disciple Jan Bockelson, known as John of Leyden, he soon dominated the town.

The revolution in Münster ran the classic course of revolutions. Quite rapidly the moderates were driven out by the extremists. When the Bishop of Münster gathered forces to besiege the city, Matthys set up the revolutionary dictatorship of the elect, that is, his own party, over the rest of the citizens. After his death in a sortie, his successor, John of Leyden, made the dictatorship even more effective and arbitrary. He introduced community of property and, some time later, polygamy; it would be hard to say which of these two measures caused greater scandal in respectable society, both Catholic and Protestant. Within Münster opposition was stifled by draconian laws and frequent executions. John had himself proclaimed king and, significantly, came to rely more and more on his own countrymen, the Dutch, to hold in check the German majority of the citizens.

In 1536, when John of Leyden had become the bishop's prisoner, he was interviewed by Lutheran divines. These worthies were less concerned to find out his views than to impress him with their own learning and orthodoxy. But their report makes it clear that John stuck to his view that God showed men his will through images. The Anabaptist kingdom of Münster had been such an image of the

millennial kingdom foretold by the prophets. John had believed that it would last until the second coming of Christ.

In fact, Münster had held out for over a year, while both the hunger and the terror inside the city grew apace, until the bishop's troops finally captured it in June 1535. John had sent his preachers out to obtain support. In Holland thousands answered the call, only to be intercepted on their way and massacred by the troops of the Netherlands Government. An Anabaptist attempt to capture Amsterdam failed equally; but it increased still further the authorities' fear of the Anabaptists. The executions of Anabaptists in the Netherlands and in north-western Germany more than matched John of Leyden's terror against his opponents. In Münster the bishop's power and the catholic religion were restored.

The kingdom of Münster was the last of the German revolutions of the sixteenth century. They had all failed, and the reasons for this failure are not far to seek. The social and religious beliefs animating these movements were too narrow. They appealed only to the peasants and the artisans of the towns. Only a handful of nobles and patrician burghers took an active part in the movements, and none of them became a leader of the first rank. The knights had had their fling before the peasants struck. When the peasants plundered their castles and burnt the monasteries the knights found themselves, inevitably, on the side of authority. Left to themselves, the peasants and artisans proved incapable of providing their movements with capable leaders or of creating an adequate organization. The German historian, Günther Franz, has suggested a reason for this failure. For centuries the most talented children of the peasants and artisans had tended to enter the priesthood. Both as persons and as parents they were lost to their own class. In its immediate application to the problem of leadership in the social revolutions of the sixteenth century, this theory cannot be proved; but it seems at least plausible.

Much more formidable revolutionary movements than the German ones appeared in western Europe during the second half of the sixteenth century. These were based on a religious faith, Calvinism, which was respectable in a way that the egalitarian millenarianism of Müntzer and the Anabaptists could never be. Calvin did not preach the overthrow of established authority. Still

less did he preach those Anabaptist doctrines of community of property which were abhorrent to respectable people, who thought nothing of picking up cheaply scraps of church property for themselves. But Calvin did allow resistance to established authority for the sake of true religion, provided it was led by those who themselves enjoyed some legitimate authority such as peers of the realm or an assembly of estates. At the same time the Calvinist preachers could rouse artisans and unemployed workers as effectively as the militant Anabaptists. With such a varied appeal and on the basis of the Calvinist church organization, the French Huguenots and the Netherlands Sea Beggars could build up effective revolutionary political parties. They included members of all classes, from artisans and fishermen to knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece and French princes of the blood. In financial and military resources, in organizational talent and in political leadership the Sea Beggars and the Huguenots and, in Scotland, John Knox's 'Brethren' and the Lords of the Congregation, were the equals of the governments they opposed. They could and did achieve successful political and religious revolutions. Yet, in the end, even those revolutions left the social structure of their countries essentially intact. The day for a successful democratic and egalitarian revolution had not yet come.

VIII

The Search for Compromise in England and France

JOEL HURSTFIELD

In the spring of 1559 all Europe was at peace. But it was no more than the unquiet peace of an exhausted continent. On the imperial throne of the Habsburgs there was a new ruler, Ferdinand I, with no taste for the ideological warfare which had torn central Europe for so long. In Spain his nephew, the young Philip II, heir to a large empire and an empty treasury, displayed for the time being that prudent hesitancy which his country so badly needed. In France, Henry II, less prudent but more impoverished than his Spanish neighbour, came to see that, if discretion was not the better part of valour, it was undoubtedly the less expensive. In England, Elizabeth Tudor, newly ascended to the throne, inherited from her sister Mary a humiliating struggle with France, from which she extricated herself with such dignity as the disasters would allow. The Peace of Câteau-Cambrésis, signed in March 1559, came as the reluctant peace after a fruitless war.

But to two groups of people the prospects of peace were unwelcome. The Council of Trent had given inspiration to the forces of the Counter-Reformation and in particular to the Society of Jesus, a body of men of unswerving devotion to the cause of restoring Europe to the Catholic faith. On the other side stood the Calvinists whose unquestioning belief in the righteousness of their cause was matched by the Jesuits' own. By 1559, indeed, there was already one place in Europe where the Calvinists could show total victory. In Geneva they had built, sturdily and to last, an impregnable powerhouse

for their movement, impregnable alike to the arms and to the ideas of their critics. But the Jesuits and the Calvinists were exceptional. The rulers of Europe had, for the time being, lost the appetite and the resources for a righteous war. This is how a contemporary Englishman saw the condition of his country just before the peace:

> The Queen poor. The realm exhausted. The nobility poor and decayed. Want of good captains and soldiers. The people out of order. Justice not executed. All things dear. Excess in meat, drink and apparel. Division among ourselves. Wars with France and Scotland. The French king bestriding the realm, having one foot in Calais and the other in Scotland. Steadfast enmity but no steadfast friendship abroad.[1]

The French king might indeed menace the realm. But it was a hollow gesture, for he had long since run out of cash. Like the Queen of England, he stood in desperate need of peace.

But I should not like to convey the impression that it was solely for economic considerations that the European monarchies—somewhat late in the day—began to discover the virtues of peace. They had other, more urgent reasons. At home, and especially in France and the Netherlands, they were faced with grave threats of religious dissent. And they saw, beyond these threats, larger troubles still. The Church was under assault; and any assault which began with the Church might finish up with the State. They did not have to wait for James VI of Scotland to tell them that no bishop might also mean no king. So, for a time, the kings stopped making war on each other in order to come to grips with their own subjects, on the apparent principle that—like charity—religious persecution should begin at home.

In Germany the unquiet peace lasted on for more than half a century. In Spain the strait-jacket was drawn with increasing tightness round its diverse and gifted peoples, and it held them fast for centuries. But in Philip II's provinces in the Netherlands the repressed discontents blazed into religious and political warfare, whose end their king would not live to see. Soon, too, France would experience

[1] 'The Distresses of the Commonwealth', cited in H. Gee, *The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, (1902), p. 211.

a whole generation of civil war, while her 'auld ally', Scotland, would know war, rebellion and minority rule through troubled decades of an uncontrollable church and a disorderly baronage. Whether the young Elizabeth looked to the north or the south, or later, across St. George's Channel, to Ireland, she saw before her eyes the devastation that entrenched religious faction could bring. It was an uninviting prospect and she had no stomach for it.

One of the most interesting questions of modern history is why, when the French and ourselves are faced with similar internal problems, we so often reach precisely opposite solutions. We who look back from the standpoint of the twentieth century can see that there were only two possible solutions to the problem of religious dissent, from whichever source dissent might come, Protestant or Catholic. One way was to wipe out the heretics—by judicial murder or slaughter on the battlefield—so that they could not pollute the souls of the righteous. That way was tried, but with only limited success. The second solution was toleration, that is, compromise with the dissident. Of this, we can see the beginnings in the second half of the sixteenth century. I want, therefore, to consider two examples, England and France, where compromise was sought by utterly different methods and with utterly different results. I believe that these methods and results left their permanent mark upon western Europe in succeeding centuries, and therefore upon the whole civilized world.

If we had been alive in 1559 we should, like most people in England, have been unable to say for certain which side of the ideological fence England would finally settle. The Queen herself had given clear evidence of her Protestantism, but nothing to indicate that she was heavily committed, or wanted to be. She judged that England had seen enough of religious extremism. In any case, her throne was insecure, the religious affiliations of her people uncertain. Our textbooks like to tell us that, at the time of her accession, half England was Protestant, the other half Catholic. This statement is based upon no reliable evidence whatsoever. We are still hard at work trying to estimate English religious commitment at that time; but, in our present state of knowledge, we can at most give an impressionistic picture of the religious contours of the

Elizabethan nation. We know that London had strong Protestant elements; so did East Anglia. There was a good deal of Protestantism in the West Country, too, but the western rising of 1549 had shown also the power of the Catholic tradition. The Midlands and Wales were patchy, but the North of England leaned much more to the older faith than to the new. Catholicism was very strong indeed in Lancashire, as it still is. In short, Protestantism and Catholicism were found side by side in the same village, and sometimes even in the same family.

In 1559 it was still conceivable that Elizabeth might gradually work her way back to some version of the Catholic faith of her sister, but without its passion—or its persecution. There was also another prospect. If Elizabeth's reign were as short as her sister's—it might have been shorter if she had died when she caught smallpox in 1562—then Mary, Queen of Scots, the strongest claimant to the throne, would have come in and turned England Catholic again; or alternatively, a hostile England might have been sucked into a bloody civil war. But Elizabeth lived: and the nation stayed Protestant and at peace. Elizabethan Anglicanism was established because it was politically and ecclesiastically acceptable to the new ministers and the parliamentarians who moved into power with the new monarch. But Anglicanism survived because—in spite of the zeal of some of its leaders—it became identified with the stability and survival of the Elizabethan State.

In France it was the reverse. Like other countries in Europe, France had, earlier in the century, been exposed to the infection of Protestant reform. This had been checked, partly because the King of France was generally hostile to it. For, if the Protestant Reformation, as in England, meant the national control of the Church—that is really what Henry VIII wanted—then in France it had already come; and without a reformation. For by his concordat with the pope in 1516, Francis I gained virtual supremacy over the Church without, as it were, having to fight for it. Henry VIII gained his will with the pope as his enemy, Francis I with the pope as his friend. In France, therefore, the Reformation stopped short in its tracks. But if for the time being both parties, king and pope, seemed to gain from the agreement, in the longer run both parties lost. For the morale of

the Church continued to decline. The bankrupt and worldly outlook of the upper hierarchy found its expression in pluralism, nepotism, greed, ruthless ambition and corruption. The lower clergy displayed abundant signs of poverty, illiteracy and moral degradation: Milton's harsh description of the English Church in the middle of the seventeenth century would have applied better to the French Church of the middle of the sixteenth—'the hungry sheep look up and are not fed'. No wonder if some of the flock turned hopefully towards the Swiss mountains, where new shepherds were eagerly preparing to come to them from Calvin's Geneva.

If the Church was the loser, the French Crown was not the gainer, for the shadow of disrepute which hung over the Church helped still further to darken the fame of the Crown. Not that it needed much help in this respect. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Valois dynasty entered its final period of decay and dissolution. Henry II, who had made the peace of Câteau-Cambrésis in 1559, died in the same year as the result of a wound in a tournament. He was succeeded in turn by three of his sons: Francis II, who died in 1560: Charles IX, whose sense of guilt over the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's day left him a physical and moral wreck, and who died two years after the event in 1574: and finally Henry III, who combined high thinking with low living in just about equal proportions and was assassinated in 1589. As a result, Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot and the first of the new dynasty of Bourbon, succeeded, but only after defeating the Catholics—and being converted to their faith.

The political contrasts between England and France are therefore fundamental. From 1558 until the end of the century England was governed by a single monarch—a woman, but one who, by the middle years of her life, had developed a powerful grasp upon political realities. France during the same period was governed—if that is the appropriate word—by five kings, two dynasties and an alien woman regent—the Italian-born queen mother, Catherine de Medici—caught up in the toils of her family, her adopted nation, and the unassuageable savagery of a religious war.

France in 1559 was Catholic, England Protestant. But the established religion in both countries was under fire: in France from

the Calvinists, that is the Huguenots, in England from both the Catholics *and* a vigorous and determined body of Protestants who came to regard the established Church as no more than the Catholic wolf in the protestant sheep's clothing. Elizabeth therefore was faced with two oppositions; but I believe that this proved a blessing in disguise. We think of Elizabeth as favouring the *via media*, as indeed she did. But it is as well to remember that she was, in fact, forced into the middle of the road. Thus she was forced to compromise from the start: to give her settlement breadth rather than depth. Its doctrines so far as possible must be inclusive rather than exclusive; ambiguous rather than precise. If, like the peace of God, certain elements of it passed all understanding, at least it *was* the peace of God.

In France there was no peace. Catherine de Medici, like Elizabeth, favoured a middling course, but the nation was more deeply divided than in England and a larger part of the nation had its emotions too profoundly engaged to welcome moderation and compromise.

Ultimately a middle group, the *politiques*, did emerge. Sickened by bloodshed, and in despair over the future of France, they pleaded that men should stop fighting over dogma and unite to save the nation. 'Let us do away with these diabolical terms,' cried one of the greatest of them, l'Hôpital, 'the names of parties, factions, seditions: Lutherans, Huguenots and Papists. Let us revert to the name of Christians.'[2] He pleaded in vain; the *politiques* at first commanded too few resources to have any effect, but when they came to power at the end of the century in the person of Henry IV the price of peace was a heavy one: political autocracy at the centre and an unworkable system of Protestant fortresses in the provinces.

The Anglican settlement, largely as we know it today, was carried through by the two Acts of Parliament of 1559 and the Thirty-nine Articles of 1563. The Act of Supremacy restored the organization of the Church to that of Henry VIII's day, but soothed some tender consciences by describing the Queen as supreme governor rather than supreme head. The Act of Uniformity established the Prayer Book of England, but this time it assimilated the continental doctrine of Edward VI's day, far more Protestant than

[2] Cited in J. W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth century* (1928), p. 295.

the Anglican-Catholic amalgam of Henry VIII. The same emphasis is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles. We know now, thanks to the work of Sir John Neale, that Elizabeth was pressed towards a more Protestant settlement than she thought desirable or politic. So far, her grasp on the parliamentary machine was neither secure enough nor experienced enough to stand against a vigorous minority which knew what it wanted.

But, however much she yielded, there were some who believed that she had not yielded enough in expurgating Catholicism from the Church settlement. She must do more; and their convictions were strengthened by sporadic Catholic plotting, by the coming of Catholic missionaries in the 1570s and by the Spanish Armada of 1588. But I do not believe that, at any time, the Catholics constituted a grave enough political threat to put England's safety or peace in danger. I am aware that this opinion runs counter to the views of some historians and many contemporaries. But I would cite as evidence against them the belief and policies of Queen Elizabeth herself. She treated the Jesuit missionaries as traitors, but their Catholic followers—so far as was possible—as loyal Englishmen. More important still, as evidence, is the refusal of the overwhelming majority of the Catholics to take part in any adventures which could embarrass the Government during the Armada crisis of 1588 or the succession crisis at the end of the reign. It was only a lunatic outpost of men who thought, in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, to undo the work of half a century; but it was the aspirations of the plotters—not the Houses of Parliament—that were blown sky high.

Looking back over the centuries we can see all this clearly enough. But, at the time, to many Englishmen the danger seemed very real. And to many Calvinists the danger lay within the Church itself. For to them it was no more than a mere caricature of the true faith which they had seen erected before their eyes in Geneva. In the pulpit, in convocation, in Parliament, in the pamphlet presses, they strove without sleeping to *purify* the Church of its popish relics—hence the name Puritan, which came to be applied to them from the 1560s onwards. Never in doubt as to the purity of their ideals, they hammered remorselessly at the established system. And since the Queen used the bishops to enforce her system, the bishops drew the

fiercest fire of the Puritans, of which the *Martin Marprelate Tracts* were the most notorious expressions. Here is a polite example:

> Those that are petty popes and petty antichrists, ought not to be maintained in any Christian commonwealth. But every Lord Bishop in England, as for illsample, John of Canterbury, John of London, John of Exeter, John of Rochester, Thomas of Winchester. The Bishop of Lincoln, of Worcester, of Peterborough, and to be brief, all the Bishops of England, Wales, and Ireland, are petty popes, and petty antichrists . . . Therefore our Lord Bishops what sayest thou man? *our Lord Bishops*, (I say) as John of Canterbury, Thomas of Winchester (I will spare John of London for this time, for it may be he is at bowls, and it is pity to trouble my good brother, lest he should swear too bad) my reverend prelate of Lichfield, with the rest of that swinish rabble, are petty antichrists, petty popes, proud prelates, intolerable withstanders of reformation, enemies of the gospel, and most covetous wretched priests.[3]

It was said by contemporaries that Elizabeth was more tolerant of Catholic nonconformity than of Protestant. This was not true. She disliked and distrusted both. But while the Catholic threat—the attack from without—was parried, she was faced by a graver threat from the Puritans, for their attack came from within. It was thereby the stronger and more dangerous. The Puritans remained faithful to the slogans of the Protestant Reformation of a generation before and bitterly attacked the lost leaders whom prosperity had tamed and corrupted, the compromisers who, for some personal or national interest, would prove unfaithful to the cause of international Protestantism, which must be restlessly on the march. There could be no real peace until the whole Christian world was Protestant.

So, by the middle years of the reign, alarming evidence began to come in of the stubborn and corrosive hostility of a hard-core opposition within the Anglican Church. Because the Puritans claimed to be the only true Protestants and could cite the inflexible doctrine of their Scriptures, they rapidly took the shape of a doctrinaire and irresponsible political nuisance. They could prick the consciences of the Queen's ministers and sap the establishment from

[3] *The Marprelate Tracts, 1588, 1589*, ed. W. Pierce (1911), pp. 23–24.

within. They could advocate war against the Catholic nations like Spain when the Queen hoped against hope for peaceful co-existence. And, if the Queen herself deserted the cause which had brought her to power, then the Puritans turned their eyes abroad where the true faith might still flourish among England's neighbours, in Scotland, the Netherlands, Geneva, perhaps France.

Perhaps France? Here indeed the Huguenots in opposition were more powerful, more numerous than were the Puritans in England, and they had more direct access to the fountain-head of their purified faith. Ministers, propagandists and—in spite of Calvin's views to the contrary—arms and ammunition came from Geneva. They travelled across the obscure mountain paths of the Alps, paths largely unknown to the foreigner, but passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation to be used again by the French resistance during the Second World War of our own day.

But if the Huguenots put their trust in the God of Geneva, they also put their trust in princes, the high provincial nobility of France including the greatest, Navarre, Coligny and others. Great cities, too, Dijon, La Rochelle, Montpellier became Huguenot fortresses, while large sections of the overtaxed peasantry saw in the movement some prospect of relief from the heavy burdens of the Valois kings. But, quite apart from their powerful economic, social and political grievances, many of the Huguenots had deep religious convictions and they had a scroll of martyrs far longer than the combined list of Catholic and Protestant martyrs of England for the whole of the sixteenth century. But the French Catholics also had their long scroll of martyrs, and, above all, they had Paris, impregnable to famine, war and rebellion. It was the very sincerity of these men on both sides, and the irrepressible political ambitions of some of their leaders, which dragged the nation on from plot to murderous vendetta to civil war. In the end eight civil wars were fought for the soul—and for the throne—of France. Henry III, the last Valois king, was murdered in 1589. In 1593 the Huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre, became the Catholic King Henry IV; and by the Edict of Nantes of 1598 the Huguenots were guaranteed the practice of their faith and were allowed troops to defend it.

The Edict of Nantes is a significant event in French history, and

is regarded by some as a major step towards toleration. It is difficult to share this view. It was, in fact, a treaty of peace signed after a war of exhaustion. It was exacted by force and sustained by force. And where the force was not enough, as was to be seen at La Rochelle in 1628, then the guarantees collapsed along with the fortresses. Then, before the end of the century, Louis XIV felt strong enough to sweep away the Edict itself. But far more important in French history than the Edict of Nantes is the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's day in 1572, a generation before the Edict.

What precisely caused that terrible series of events we still do not wholly know. The Huguenots had entered Paris to celebrate an act of reconciliation, a royal marriage of the King's sister to Henry of Navarre. In the midst of the festivities a personal attack was made on the Huguenot leader, Coligny. Perhaps because the situation was so inflammable, perhaps because Catherine de Medici was herself involved and lost her nerve, perhaps because some men prepared the holocaust, a private attack soon took the form of a massive assault upon the lives of all the Huguenots within reach. Thousands died in Paris, thousands more in the provinces. But the papal rejoicing was premature; and Cardinal Orsini's advice to the King to keep his promise that not a single Huguenot should be left alive in France proved impracticable. Protestant resistance was not extinguished but scorched its way across two more decades of French history; and the division in France became an unbridgeable chasm. By force France was divided and only by force could France be reunited. We have an old proverb, l'Hôpital told the French Estates General in 1560, 'one faith, one law, one king.'[4] Old proverb it may have been, but it seemed the only contemporary solution to the horrors of civil war. Too much liberty, it would seem, had brought confusion, chaos and war. It was time to have done with it. France was only waiting for a Richelieu, a Mazarin and a Louis XIV to destroy what was left of self-government in France. *One king, one law, one faith.*

In the event the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's day was a turning-point in English history, too. 'I think that no Christian since the heathen time,' wrote the Earl of Leicester, 'has heard of the like; and the more horrible is it that it seems it is done with the consent of that

[4] Cited in J. R. Major, *The Estates General of 1560* (1951), p. 78.

Prince who had given his faith and laid his honour in pledge for the contrary before.'[5] At first it intensified the hostility to the Catholics and helped justify the more severe legislation of the following decade. But perhaps it had another effect also, more subtle yet more profound. It gave to Englishmen the vicarious experience of seeing what could happen if men believed not only that their faith was uniquely true, but that it was right to draw the sword to wipe out those of another faith. Because the Massacre was an object-lesson in the high price of intolerance it left behind a memorable argument for the unsanctified virtues of toleration.

Every nation creates a religious system in the likeness of its own political image. It is by comparing the English with the French settlement that we gain a most instructive insight into the history and temperament of the two nations. The English compromise, like the English constitution, was an unwritten one. It gave no guarantee to the dissident: it remained harsh to their leaders, Catholic and Protestant alike. But it assumed that most men did not feel intensely about the technicalities of their faith, and that even those who did would not let it jeopardize their loyalty to the nation. It left behind, in practice, a State Church with a multitude of loose ends which, from that day to this, have never been tied together. But its weakness was also its strength: it gave men room to breathe.

In the formal sense, there was far less toleration in England than in France after the Edict of Nantes. But informally, there was a good deal of toleration in England, especially where religious dissent did not carry with it the threat of political opposition. Perhaps we hear the authentic voice of Elizabethan Anglicanism most clearly in the pages of Richard Hooker and his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. And he surely expressed the national mood when he said that a good deal in religious controversy was over *adiaphora*, things of no fundamental significance, and, therefore, not worth fighting over.

For the French it was another story. As the civil war intensified in its wanton extravagance of human life, some men sickened of the whole business and sought a way out. In the despair of anarchy, many must have echoed the call of the Scots jurist, William Barclay, then

[5] E. Lodge, *Illustrations of British History*, 1838, i, p. 548.

living in France. To him the suffering inflicted by the worst of tyrants could never equal that produced by a single year of insurrection. However evil the fruits of misgovernment might be they were always less than the results of anarchy. And for Jean Bodin, a leader of the *politiques* and one of the greatest intellects of his age, the roots of the national disorder lay in the combination of strong religious convictions with a weak monarchy. So what was needed, in his view, was a weakening of religious intensity and the strengthening of the Crown.

Other men thought likewise, but without Bodin's breadth and skill. So after half a century of chaos the way was paved for Bourbon autocracy, for Louis XIV and—because his system did not endure either—for its ultimate collapse in the renewed chaos of the French Revolution of 1789. Can one escape the feeling that, in the instability of their later history, the French were the heirs of the struggle which tore the nation asunder in the last decades of the Valois monarchy?

In England there was no peace treaty between warring sects. Instead the Church of the late sixteenth century represented a compromise of many doctrines. Like all compromises it aroused the zeal of few. But the true zealots were only a small hostile minority. That was as well. Europe had seen enough of the zealots; and many in England, as well as in Europe, were for a period ready to serve time present and wait for the fulfilment of their faith in time eternal. All this is in sharp contrast with the logical settlement of the Edict of Nantes, which, for all its logic, collapsed in less than ninety years. The pragmatic compromise of the English, with all its faults, had the sturdy capacity to survive the attentions of Archbishop Whitgift, Archbishop Laud, the Puritans, the first four Stuarts and Oliver Cromwell all put together.

IX

The Divisions Harden

C. V. WEDGWOOD

Was the question of the Reformation in England settled by 1603 when Queen Elizabeth died? Was it settled for the other nations of western Europe? Luther had been dead for more than half a century. There had been three generations of knotted argument, wars, martyrdoms, massacres—justification enough for Francis Bacon's comment:

> Surely this is to bring down the Holy Ghost, instead of the likeness of a dove, in the shape of a vulture or raven; and to set out of the bark of a Christian church a flag of a bark of pirates and assassins.[1]

Another Englishman, that great Anglican Richard Hooker, to whose work Professor Hurstfield has referred elsewhere in this volume, writing at the close of the troubled sixteenth century, breathed a spirit of reconciliation and compromise over England. On the mainland of Europe it appeared that rulers and churchmen of different faiths were content, or at least resigned, to accept co-existence with one another. The princes of the numerous German states were, since the Peace of Augsburg, free to impose their own religion on their subjects, so that Roman Catholic and Lutheran states existed together (and within a few years Calvinist states also) within the loose framework of the Holy Roman Empire and under the suzerainty of a Roman Catholic Emperor. In France the Huguenots had, by the Edict of Nantes, gained the right to practise their religion, a right further secured by military and territorial

[1] Francis Bacon, 'Of Unity in Religion', in *Essays*, ed. A. W. Pollard, 1900, p. 8.

concessions. Though the dominions of the King of Spain remained closed to Protestant influences, the hereditary lands of their Habsburg cousins in Austria, Hungary and Bohemia were infiltrated with Protestantism, and in 1609 the Protestants of Bohemia secured a guarantee of toleration. Such arrangements made it look as though, after a long period of struggle, diversity of religion and coexistence would be henceforward accepted.

But what in fact happened in the seventeenth century—that century which we see, in the perspective of time, as the beginning of the modern world: the scientific age, the century of Galileo and Newton? Contrary to what might have been expected, religious passions blazed up afresh. One after another settlements which had seemed to promise peace were violently overthrown. Thus in England the armed forces of Puritanism for a time destroyed the Anglican settlement and sent both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the King to the scaffold. In France the Huguenots were attacked and gradually deprived of their special privileges, until in 1685 the Edict of Nantes was withdrawn and thousands were compelled either to change their religion or to go into exile. In central Europe, in 1618, more than a century after Luther had nailed up his theses at Wittenberg, the Thirty Years War began. It started as a Protestant rising in Bohemia, and developed into the bloodiest and the most bitter of the wars stemming from the Reformation. It was also the last. When it came to an end, at the exhausted Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Protestantism had suffered heavy losses. It had been suppressed in Bohemia, in all the Austrian domains and in large areas of south Germany.

But how important was the religious element in the conflicts which mark the second century after the Reformation? It is true, as indeed it had been in the earlier stages of the story, that princes and governments of the same religion were by no means always on the same side. The dynastic rivalry between the ruling families of France and Spain in this century, as in the previous one, prevented united action on the part of the Roman Catholic powers.

Statesmen living at the time would often assert that the religious aspirations of their opponents were nothing but a cover for political ambition or economic greed. Their own religious motives, on the

other hand, were wholly sincere. Thus, for instance, Father Joseph, the pious adviser of Cardinal Richelieu in France, was convinced that the King of Spain and the Habsburg dynasty in general only upheld the Roman Catholic cause so that, under the pretext of religion, they could increase their own power. To take an example from the other side: the revolt of the Presbyterian Covenanters in Scotland against King Charles I was described by his authoritarian minister Strafford in these terms:

> This is not a war of piety for Christ's sake, but a war of liberty for their own unbridled inordinate lust and ambition, such as threw Lucifer forth of heaven.[2]

Nothing in history is harder to establish than motive, and religious fervour had never been the only motive in the disputes arising from the Reformation. It is none the less apparent that beliefs, sincerely held, played a part which was never negligible and was sometimes significant. With some individual protagonists religious zeal was undoubtedly the dominant force, although it was rarely free from an admixture of other elements. The renewed violent wave of religious conflict which swept over Europe in the seventeenth century arose, in great part, from the material rivalry of growing nation states, but national and dynastic antagonism were heightened and inspired among Catholics by the crusading spirit of the Counter-Reformation, and among Protestants by the influence of Calvin and his followers.

The idea of a powerful centralized nation state, usually, though not always, a monarchy, had developed fast in the sixteenth century. It continued to do so in the seventeenth, and reached its most formidable expression in the France of Richelieu and later of Louis XIV. A religion therefore which challenged the authority of the ruler or was potentially hostile to the interests of the State was bound to become an object of persecution. Calvinism, the most dynamic of the Protestant creeds, presented an obvious challenge to the secular State and particularly to monarchy because it aimed at a theocracy and the rule of God's elect.

[2] Cited in C. V. Wedgwood, *Thomas Wentworth: a Revaluation*, 1961 p. 251.

The persecution of the Huguenots in France, of the Puritans in England, and of the Presbyterians in Scotland was the logical expression of the centralizing policy of the Crown. But the religious motive cannot be discounted. Richelieu thought it a principal duty of a sovereign to re-convert his heretical subjects to the true faith, and the genuine piety of Louis XIV under the austere influence of Madame de Maintenon was undoubtedly a factor in the ultimate repeal of the Edict of Nantes. The devotion of Charles I to the Church of England is, of course, unquestionable.

On the other hand, the resistance aroused in the Puritans by persecution in Scotland and England undoubtedly gained much of its force from the religious fervour which transfigured and accompanied the more worldly motives of these rebels. The Covenanting movement in Scotland began as a protest against episcopal government and the Anglican liturgy, but in its earliest form it was by no means a purely religious protest. National pride, resentment against the English, the fear of the nobles that the spoils of the Reformation might be taken from them, and personal ambition for power: all these things played a part. But the history of the movement is remarkable for the emergence of a dominant rigidly religious group; these men, rather than compromise with their consciences, excluded potential allies, purged the military command and so narrowed the range of their supporters as to bring inevitable disaster to their cause. There was more faith than self-interest here.

In England the motives behind what used to be called the Puritan revolution were more complex. We know it as a constitutional struggle between Parliament and the Crown. The desire of the gentry in Parliament to extend their political power, to maintain and improve their economic position and to establish their freedom of action against the authority of the Crown—these things have become evident in the light of modern research. But we must not leave out of account the organic links between the English struggle and the religious war which was raging in Europe. Calvinist doctrine captured a high proportion of the English gentry in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, so that Puritanism became the religion of the opposition to the Crown. The situation was made more acute after the outbreak of the Thirty Years War by the foreign policy of

James I and Charles I, who—apart from a short interlude—aligned themselves with the Spanish-Austrian Habsburg, that is with the militant Roman Catholic party in Europe: this meant, of course, with the traditional enemy, the Spaniard, whose sea power was still a block to English maritime and colonial expansion. Religious and economic objections to the King's policy thus reinforced each other.

The position was further complicated by the favour shown by the King to the Arminian clergy in the Anglican church. Arminius was a Dutch reformer whose lenient views on predestination, election and Grace had been declared heretical by the Synod of Dort in 1619. The Synod of Dort was for orthodox Calvinists what the Council of Trent was for Roman Catholics: hence educated Puritans in England were dismayed at the encouragement of Arminian influence in the Anglican church. But what perturbed educated and uneducated alike was not so much the doctrine of Arminius as the ritual which his Anglican followers reintroduced into worship. Candles, vestments, genuflections—they took these for popery.

A king who encouraged these unwelcome elements in the Church and also maintained an alliance with Roman Catholic Spain could hardly fail to provoke opposition, some of it sincerely religious. After all, fellow Protestants in Europe were suffering heavy reverses in the 1620s and 1630s. Bohemia was lost, the Rhineland occupied by Spanish troops; destitute Protestant refugees were familiar figures in England. Such things provoked righteous indignation against the King's policy.

Turning from England to Europe we find an equal confusion of motives. The Bohemian revolt of 1618, which began the Thirty Years War, was partly religious, partly nationalist, and partly the work of an ambitious faction among the nobility. In putting down the revolt and suppressing all forms of Protestantism in his hereditary dominions the Habsburg emperor Ferdinand II consolidated his power. He also found it convenient to pay his supporters and the commanders of his army by grants of Bohemian land. An enlightening comparison can be made between the expropriation of the Protestant Bohemians by Ferdinand and of the Catholic Irish by Oliver Cromwell for similar reasons. But, although Ferdinand had strong secular motives for his attack on Protestantism, he was also

acting in accordance with a solemn vow which he had made in his youth at the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto, to extirpate heresy in his lands.

Much of the literature and many private letters and diaries of this period bear witness to a deep and far-reaching renewal of religious faith. Among extremists, both Catholic and Protestant, there are even signs of a renascent hope that, through a Holy War, Christendom may be united in one faith once again. A French ambassador in Scotland in 1643 reported the opinions of the Covenanters in these words:

> They say openly they will push their fortune as far as France . . . they are convinced that they would beat all the princes in Christendom . . . General Leslie lately in a large meeting of nobles said: Consider what a glorious thing it would be before God and man, if we managed to drive the papists out of England and follow them to France . . . and plant *nolens volens* our religion in Paris and thence go to Rome, drive out anti-Christ and burn the town that disseminates superstition.[3]

Of course, this was ridiculous boasting, but it was not isolated. The same idea occurs, for instance, in Andrew Marvell's *Horatian Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland*:

> What may not then our Isle presume
> While Victory his Crest does plume!
> What may not others fear
> If thus he crown each Year!
> A Caesar he ere long to Gaul,
> To Italy an Hannibal,
> And to all States not free
> Shall clymacterick be![4]

On the Roman Catholic side it certainly looked at one time as though the reconquest of Europe for the Church might be achieved. In 1629 the imperial armies of Ferdinand II reached the Baltic and the extinction of Protestantism in northern Europe seemed almost a possibility.

[3] *Diplomatic Correspondence of Jean de Montereul*, ed. J. G. Fotheringham for the Scottish History Society (Edinburgh, 1899), II, pp. 550, 556.

[4] *Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1952), I, pp. 89–90.

What prevented the work of the Counter-Reformation from going farther was, once again, the rivalry between the two leading Roman Catholic powers, France and Spain. Dr. Elton has described in a previous chapter the way in which the Habsburg-Valois conflict favoured the spread of the Reformation up to 1555. Nearly a century later the basic pattern is unchanged. The Habsburg still ruled over the Spanish-Austrian combine, and the dynastic jealousy of the Valois in France had been inherited by their successors, the Bourbon. When Austrian Habsburg armies, sweeping up from south Germany and Bohemia, reached the Baltic, when Spanish Habsburg armies were on the Rhine, it was high time for France to act. And so Cardinal Richelieu subsidized Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant King of Sweden, to invade Germany and turn the tide of war. After his death at the Battle of Lützen in 1632 the Protestant cause came to rely more and more on French money and French troops. Just as the Valois-Habsburg rivalry had favoured the spread of the Reformation, now Bourbon-Habsburg rivalry checked the further advance of the Counter-Reformation.

In the face of the renewed Roman Catholic attack there had been some movements towards unity among Protestants. But these came mostly from preachers and thinkers and were not reflected in the views of Lutheran or Calvinistic rulers. For more than forty years, from 1630 onwards, the sad figure of John Dury flits through Protestant courts and assemblies. Himself a Calvinist, he longed for a union of the Protestant churches and worked for it vainly all his life. Time and again, in private letters and public statements, he urged on rulers and theologians the need for mutual trust:

> Let our aim be . . . to purge our heart from a design to serve the interests of one side, mainly to cross another. For he that looks upon his brother with the eye of a party, has put out the eye of a Christian . . . He that doth not confide in his neighbours, doth hinder them to confide in him, and he that doth fear others, doth beget in them causes of fear against himself . . . For if I cannot bring my spirit to trust my neighbour, how can I expect that his spirit should be brought to trust me?[5]

[5] John Dury, *A Peacemaker without Partiality*, 1648, pp. 1–3.

Dury aimed at *union*: he did not aim at toleration, and he did not believe in it. In a closely wrought argument, published in 1644, he rejected the plea of the English Independents to a separate existence and form of organization:

> The liberty whereunto we are called in Christ, doth not give occasion to singularity, or permission to break the bonds of spiritual unity; which by the allowance of a public toleration of different Church Government may be occasioned.[6]

Toleration was still in the middle years of the seventeenth century regarded with dismay even by moderate men. The ideal of union, by which different but not dissimilar beliefs could find room in a single church—this had been Hooker's ideal. It was also John Dury's. Union and conciliation were good, but toleration was bad because it led to licentious excesses. There had been the frenzied outburst of the Anabaptists at Münster in the previous century which had frightened Protestants as much as, or even more than, Catholics. It was generally felt that if religion was not in some way controlled there would be no end to ignorant self-appointed prophets teaching blasphemous and immoral doctrines. Amsterdam, where a large measure of freedom was permitted, was notorious for the number of sects which had sprung up, and jocose references were often made to their 'Amsterdamnable opinions'.

During the Civil War in England, when government censorship was relaxed, preachers of all kinds multiplied, and some valuable ideas took root, and have survived to this day. The Baptists were the most widespread of the numerous Independent groups. Scores of prophets and preachers appeared during this period of religious anarchy; George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, was to prove in the end the most remarkable and the most influential. Many were, however, merely ignorant and hysterical ranters, condemned, not without justification, by the more sober Anglicans and Puritans alike:

> These kind of vermin swarm like caterpillars,
> And hold conventicles in barns and cellars,
> Some preach or prate in woods, in fields, in stables,

[6] John Dury, *An Epistolary Discourse*, 1644, p. 22.

In hollow trees, in tubs, on tops of tables,
To the expense of many a tallow taper
They toss the holy scripture into vapour . . .
I write of separatists and schismatics
Of shallow-pated, hair-brained heretics . . .
Whom neither law nor sense can curb or bridle,
Who ne'er are well employed, nor never idle.[7]

Toleration it was widely believed would only encourage such people. The desire for it came therefore in the first place only from the 'separatists and schismatics' themselves. Roger Williams, for instance, left England for greater liberty in New England, but withdrew from the more rigid Calvinism of Massachusetts to found his own colony in Rhode Island. In his famous attack on what he called the 'Bloody Tenet of Persecution' published in 1644 he asserted that it was consonant with the spirit of Christianity to tolerate pagans, Jews and Turks as well as all kinds of Christians. His ideas combined a wide vision with practical sense:

> An enforced uniformity of religion throughout a nation or civil state confounds the civil and religious, and denies the principles of Christianity and civility . . . The permission of other consciences and worships than a state professeth, only can, according to God, procure a firm and lasting peace; good assurance being taken, according to the wisdom of the civil state, for uniformity of civil obedience from all sorts.[8]

Roger Williams put his finger on a critical point. If civil obedience could be assured, there ought to be no difficulty in tolerating purely religious opinions. The unsolved problem was that so many religious opinions still at this date involved political action that could endanger the State. As long as religion was a pretext for war between nations, so long differences of religion within the State might cut across national loyalties.

Meanwhile it was still strongly felt that certain opinions were so blasphemous as to constitute a moral danger to society. Four years after Roger Williams published his appeal for toleration the English

[7] John Taylor, *A Swarme of Sectaries*, 1641, pp. 7, 17.
[8] Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution*, 1644, p. 3.

Parliament, with a Presbyterian majority, promulgated an 'ordinance for the punishing of blasphemous heresies' which made the teaching of atheism or of disbelief in the Trinity a capital offence. It is perhaps fair to point out that only the *teaching* of such doctrine, not just the belief in itself, was a crime; and no one, in fact, suffered death under this retrograde measure.

The idea of toleration grew slowly, and usually under the pressure of personal disaster. Thus after the annihilating defeat of the Scottish Covenanters, at the Restoration of Charles II, Samuel Rutherford, one of the most rigid of their leaders, could bring himself to say that perhaps their cause had failed through a lack of the spirit of love.

> Our work in public was too much in sequestration of estates, fining and imprisoning, more than in a compassionate mournfulness of spirit towards those whom we saw to oppose the work. In our assemblies we were more upon citations and suspensions from benefices, than spiritually to persuade and work upon the conscience with the meekness and gentleness of Christ . . . It had been better had there been more days of humiliation and fasting . . . and if the meekness and gentleness of our Master had got so much place in our hearts that we might have waited on gainsayers and parties contrary minded; and we might have driven gently as our master Christ, who loves not to overdrive but carries the lambs in his bosom.[9]

Something of the same kind had been said by Jeremy Taylor in 1650 from the Anglican side of the barrier in the days of their persecution.

> I have lived to see religion painted upon banners and thrust out of churches, and God to be worshipped not as he is, the Father of our Lord Jesus . . . but rather as the Lord of Hosts, which title he was pleased to lay aside when the kingdom of the Gospel was preached by the Prince of Peace.[10]

Yet in England with the Restoration of Charles II the triumph of the Anglican Church was marked by a fresh outburst of persecution

[9] Samuel Rutherford, *A Testimony* (Lanark, 1739), p. 6.

[10] Jeremy Taylor, 'Epistle Dedicatory', in *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living*, 1650.

of the Nonconformist sects. The motives behind this were now frankly political, and after the deposition of James II the Toleration Act of 1689 gave to the English Nonconformists the right to practise their religion unmolested. It should, however, be remembered that this was not an absolute toleration, because the State Church defended itself against any political danger from the Nonconformists by excluding them from the universities and from all public offices. Such a solution, which, in effect, turned all non-Anglicans into second-class citizens, would have been unthinkable and quite unacceptable to the Puritans of an earlier age. But generations of persecution made relief in any form welcome, and the enormous expansion of English commerce and industry which was just beginning gave the Nonconformists the outlet that they needed for their energies and talents.

But toleration, often of a tacit, illegal kind, came most often through a lowering of the religious temperature. Thus Huguenots who had not gone into exile continued in eighteenth-century France to exercise their religion privately and discreetly; and were only at intervals the object of persecution. The same thing can be said of Roman Catholics in England. New speculations, other than those of religion, were beginning to occupy the minds of men. The tide of intellectual fashion had ebbed away from theology. Descartes, in regions of thought the most influential mind of the century, had said that questions concerning God and the soul 'ought to be demonstrated by philosophical rather than theological argument'. This was to remove the problem into a calmer sphere. The more ardent spirits and the best minds were turning above all towards natural philosophy and the exploration of the universe. The dispute about religion ceased to be of vital importance. The ordinary man by the end of the seventeenth century no longer had much interest in theological argument and denunciation. His point of view could perhaps be summed up in the words of the poet Dryden:

> Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
> The things we *must* believe, are *few*, and *plain* . . .
> 'Tis some Relief, that points not clearly known,
> Without much hazard may be let alone:
> And, after hearing what our Church can say,

If still our Reason runs another way,
That private Reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by Disputes the publick Peace disturb.
For points obscure are of small use to learn:
But *Common quiet* is *Mankind's concern*.[11]

[11] 'Religio Laici', in *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. James Kinsley (Oxford, 1958), I, p. 322.

Books for Further Reading

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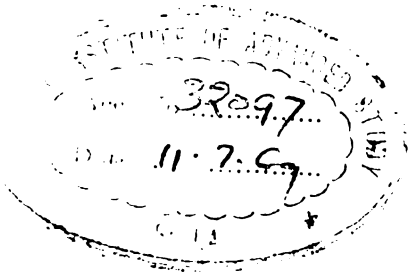

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