

The Italian Renaissance and Popes of Avignon

place in the life and art of Italy as well as France long before the fifteenth century.

The Catholic Church has during no century prohibited free inquiry on questions that pertain to science, art and letters, and the expression of her life as represented in art and literature is but the reflection of that beauty which emanates from the source of all beauty—God.

It is not only unjust to the Catholic Church, but it betrays as well a superficial knowledge of the basis and genesis of Christian art to maintain that all great poetry, painting, architecture, sculpture and music had first soil in the wilderness of the world rather than within the sanctuary of God. So it is that certain historians, for example, turn their faces in every direction seeking causes for the great awakening of life and art in Italy during the fifteenth century, but are absolutely blind to the light and influence which streameth from the centre and headship of Christianity.

These historians would fain have us believe that the Popes of the Renaissance set their faces like flint against the revival of letters—that they feared it would emancipate the human intellect from the power of the Church. Indeed, as has been elsewhere pointed out, Putnam, in his work dealing with the making of books during the medieval centuries, states in two paragraphs, in almost successive pages, that the