

Spain, or at a point farthest from Rome. If it was a real Reformation, one would suppose that it would have begun at the head, as Christianity did at Pagan Rome—or among the freest and simplest populations of some country farthest removed from Roman influence. Why Germany should begin it, why the first quarter of the 16th century should be the time of beginning, and why Saxony should be the first country—all these are important considerations.

Without disparaging German scholarship, it was then certainly inferior to that of France and Italy; without overrating the institutions of old Spain, they were, before the centralization, the freest in Europe. Without denying that there were pious people in Germany, it is quite certain that the Hungarians, Tyrolese, and Poles were proverbial throughout the continent for their devotion. Saxony—the State of Germany which first became Protestant—was most famous for good living. She had not as yet produced any eminent scholars, and had long ceased to contribute saints to the calendar. If it was a work of pure faith, or pure intellect, one would certainly not look first to Germany, and in Germany not first to Saxony. If it was a question of cookery or war it might be different, but it was not.

Protestantism, as I maintain, was a politician from the first. Germany, with "its anarchical constitution," was the most active field of European politics, while its emperors were elective, and in Germany the spiritual and temporal powers met in marked conjunction. The emperors of Germany, claiming the title of "Roman and Apostolic," were crowned by the hands of the Popes. This title, the first in dignity in Europe, was supposed to derive from the Holy Fathers, and to be a defective title until confirmed at Rome. (In speaking of such coronation we should always remember that it was only a ceremony, a very august ceremony, to be sure, but still far beneath the dignity, the responsibility, and the sanctity of a sacrament.)

Now, these emperors, elected by one power, and confirmed by the other, were sometimes at war with those who chose, sometimes with those who confirmed them. Generally speaking, as the Church and the world are opposed, and as the human heart since the beginning is prone to pride and to error, so the emperors came oftenest into collision with the Popes. The controversy "of the investitures"—whether the emperor had the right to invest bishops with "ring and crozier," and hold their sees to be subject