

the wild waters of persecution may swell and rage, but they cannot destroy her, for her foundation is sure, her walls are strong and high, and the watchmen never slumber. How much greater the peril when the cold plague of worldliness and the poisonous mists of heresy and superstition creep in and provoke the Lord Himself to hide His face in anger!

After the age of Constantine, internal strife, error, corruption, and vain ambition threatened the life of the Church. Once and again the great mass of christians became Arians, denying the proper Diety of the Saviour. The bride of Christ marred her own beauty by meretricious adornings devised by her foes: she even decked herself with the old clothes of Heathenism. Still the Divine Truth was not allowed to perish through human error and folly. The Church still lived and laboured though lacking her early love, zeal, and simple faith.

Barbarian hordes from the north swept down upon the Roman Empire and threatened to destroy not only the old civilization—but the Church itself. But he whose voice stilled the tempest and brought the trembling disciples in safety to the shore, rode on this whirlwind and directed this storm. The rude strangers from Gaul and Germany, and far off Scythia became obedient to the faith of Christ. In consequence of the faithlessness and coldness of the Eastern Church the disciples of Mohammed were permitted to conquer those sunny lands once centres of light; and where the cross had triumphed gloriously, the crescent now proudly floated in the breeze.

In the West as in the East, the zeal of many waxed cold, and the Church did not fight the good fight of faith in that simple, heroic way, which would ensure victory. Too often she went into the battle-field encumbered in armour of man's device, leaving behind her, rusting in the armory, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the breast plate of righteousness. She sought after earthly dignities and forgot the Lord her God. She followed in the wake of monarchs and lords and right reverend prelates and popes. Sound doc-

trine did not suit her itching ears. Often, alas, was the lie of Satan accepted in place of the truth of God.

But all the while God continued true to His promise. Multitudes still loved the truth, and refused to receive upon their foreheads the mark of the beast and the number of his name. All the falling away of the Church, her weakness, and blindness and helplessness, served to render more illustrious the power of Christ, and more certain, the final triumph of His kingdom: just as the skill of the veteran General is so much the more conspicuous by reason of the formidable obstacles he overcomes on his way to victory. You cannot perhaps point to one phase or episode in the whole range of Church history which taken in connection with its antecedents and sequents has not tended to the Church's final triumph.

God mightily revived His Church with the great reformation of the Sixteenth century. The nations were convulsed, and wakened from the torpor of ages. The Bible was sought for and studied, translated and circulated. The old superstition which hung as a dark veil upon the fair face of Christianity, was destroyed beyond the power of repair. The conscience was freed: liberty to enquire, to think, to act was asserted and made good. The struggle was long and terrific; but right won the day.—Why has the Church of the Reformation "slumbered and slept?" Why has she not gone forward conquering and to conquer? Because the spirit of the world crept in once more, and the love of many waxed cold. Erastianism, worldly wise and cold, took the Church into its frosty embrace. A bitter and virulent sectarianism poisoned the life-blood of the church, setting her to doat on the "pins of the tabernacle" while the enemy thundered against the very foundations of Zion, and paving the way for that numbing Socinianism which lay like a nightmare on all the Protestant Churches during the eighteenth Century.

Still there were earnest and heroic men on the Lord's side. The Presbyterianism of Holland and Scotland and Switzerland and the kindred Punitanism of England and