

Albigenses ; how the Huguenots found no rest from persecution, and finally were slaughtered by the wholesale, imprisoned, impoverished, and driven from France. For the better part of a century little Holland bent the utmost of her almost miraculous energies to save herself from utter destruction by the diabolical schemes of Philip II. and his Duke of Alva. And as for England, in the persons first of the Lollards and later of the Puritans, those who would have none of Rome suffered manifold afflictions from Henry VIII., Bloody Mary, Elizabeth, and the four Stuarts, for a hundred and fifty continuous years in all ; nor was the fearful stress finally over until happy 1688. Therefore, it is not at all to be counted strange that the dreary and bloody sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed no evangelistic crusades to speak of aimed at remote Africa, Asia, America, and the islands of the sea.

But besides the theological and ecclesiastical strifes which began from the Reformation, esteemed one and all by the frenzied combatants " wars of the Lord," were almost as bitter, as exhausting, and even more interminable than the clash of arms. And, indeed, the task was tremendous, full of difficulty, demanding the utmost of wisdom and skill, to separate Bible truth from Romish error, with which for more than a millennium it had become worse and worse intermingled. The trouble extended to all matters of both belief and practice. The reformers of necessity resorted to the Scriptures anew and investigated for themselves. The human mind and conscience now just set free from age-long and galling tyranny, of course were altogether unused to untrammelled exercise, and so not strangely they ran riot sometimes, and went to the other extreme of license, lawlessness, anarchy. Sects sprang up by the score, all manner of hobbies got upon their feet and performed their antics before high heaven. While some would bring the least change possible to religious beliefs and customs, others would reject to the utmost, and thus be as unlike as possible to the harlot of the Seven Hills ! But the most temperate and conservative were compelled to fashion fresh creeds and church forms. And, should ecclesiastical rule be monarchic or aristocratic, as aforesaid, or democratic rather ? And the confession, should it be of the Augsburg pattern, or of the Helvetic, or the Gallic, or the Belgic ? Which was verily nearest to God's Word, the Heidelberg, the Westminster, the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Savoy ? The spirit of war filled the air, fighting was the chief business in all realms, and hence Luther was hot against Zwingli, and both against Calvin, and all three could by no means in the least tolerate the heresies of Servetus, Arminius, and the rest. In England for long it was not only Protestant always against Catholic, but also war to the knife between the Established Church and Presbyterians, and Puritans, and Independents, and Baptists, and Quakers, etc. Nor, indeed, in the nature of things, could it be any light matter, a short and simple process, to escape altogether from the intellectual and moral night of the Dark Ages, to return fully to the truth as it is in Jesus, or for Protestantism to come thoroughly to itself, to a