

the Church's stream of tendency by this imperial recognition. Catholicity, at the expense of holiness, had been for a century the leading feature of ecclesiastical policy. Now, almost the entire pagan populace was dumped into the Church, and the small amount of holiness that remained was driven, from sheer dread of losing itself in this seething mass of rottenness, to withdraw itself to the deserts, and there to devote itself to fruitless strivings after a state of impeccability. The earnest elements of Christianity having thus become *Buddhist*, the guidance of active Christian effort was left largely to worldly-minded, half-pagan bishops. The Roman hierarchy, with its claims of absolute spiritual and absolute civil authority, was a logical result of the sacerdotalism that was already growing apace in the Nicene age: that diabolical theory, in accordance with which a certain class of men, by virtue of ordination, have the spiritual power that Christ has given to his Church, and that, too, apart from all consideration of personal character. The Church is holy; priests are representatives and the only representatives of the Church; therefore, priests, as priests, are holy, and have power to mediate between God and man. Personally, the priest may be a libertine or an unbeliever. His priestly power is not thereby affected.

Moreover, the theory, in accordance with which the end justifies the means, was early developed in the interest of the aggressive hierarchy. The well-being of the Church, now identified with external power, came to be regarded as, of necessity, the thing of supreme importance to God and man. All laws, human and divine, may and must be set aside, therefore, if the interests of the Church require it, and the hierarchy is to decide as to what the interests of the Church require. This principle already acted on for centuries was formulated by Peter Damiani about 1050, and employed with great success by Hildebrand and succeeding popes.

Armed with these principles, with these claims, with the superstitious reverence always accorded to priestcraft by ignorance, the hierarchy was free to use all possible means for its own aggrandizement, and was enabled, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, to well-nigh realize its audacious claims.

The Christian germ was almost lost in this baleful accumulation of human and satanic machinery; but it was not wholly lost, neither, indeed, could it be in accordance with Christ's promises. It was perfectly sure, sooner or later, to come forward with new vigor, to cast off this accumulation of corruption, and to go onward in its Christ-appointed mission of spiritually subduing the world.

The reformation of the Church was not inaugurated by Luther, nor