

truth must be kept in custody, and that it is necessary to preserve it from the attacks of reason and conscience ; or that only through a mediating priesthood can salvation be dispensed to men; or that a particular order of rulers, call them what you like, Deacons, Presbyters, Priests, Prelates, or a Hierarchy culminating in an infallible head, is needed to constitute a Church of Christ. Against all these positions, the history of more than three centuries has pronounced a decisive verdict, one that humanity will never reverse. Truth is one, and reason and conscience are its supreme tests. Where we differ we are all wrong. Where all agree we are right. Again, each individual now knows that he can approach God directly. There is but one Mediator and He is God. Again, the ministry emanates from within the Church. Every living society puts forth such organs as it needs for the discharge of its functions. The Church as an ideally world-wide society must have this power preëminently.

These positions have all been established. Modern society is based upon them. The man who attacks them is ignored or good humoredly laughed at. The Protest of the Reformation was needed. The Protest of Isaiah was needed in his day against the very sacrifices God had appointed. The Protest of Jesus was needed in His day against the holy men who ruled the Church, who—it may be added—were as conscientious in putting Him to death as the Reformers were when they persecuted Socinus and Servetus, and as members of the Church of Rome were in their treatment of Giordano Bruno and of Galileo. But, when a Protest has done its work, continuing it is merely a cuckoo cry. It becomes us then rather to remember that the object of the Protest was not Protestantism, but the bringing forth of spiritual life in all its majesty and power. We cannot live on Protesting, we can live only on the Christ of God. The Protest having done its work, we must now aim at harmonizing individual and social rights, we must aim at forming a Protestant Catholic Church, and that as a step to the only true ideal—the reorganizing of the Church Catholic. It may take a long time to attain to this. What of that? Abraham saw Christ's day afar off—it was two thousand years off—yet none the less was he glad. The Catholic Church was a fact in the past. It will be a grander fact in the future, because the organism will be vaster, more varied, freer, wiser, more in accordance with the mind and heart of Christ, than was possible in the infancy of the race or the infancy of the Church.