

This is my unwavering conviction. Just so I believe that the capture of Christian Constantinople by the Turks was a factor that can not be estimated too highly in the working out of the divine plan of Christian liberty and enlightenment. No thanks to the Turk. No thanks *a priori* to the leaders of the Protestant revolution. We are thus, I trust, in a position to put a fair estimate upon each individual, in accordance with historical facts, and we shall not be tempted to reverence an individual for the sole reason that he sustained an important relation to a movement which has, on the whole, resulted in good.

To understand the Reformation, we must know wherein the need for reform lay. To appreciate this need we must have in mind, in broad outline at least, the course of events that led to the ecclesiastical rottenness of the sixteenth century, and that made the Protestant revolution possible.

From the close of the apostolic age onwards, Christianity, the universal and absolute religion, soon conscious of its destined universality and absoluteness, shrank not from the stupendous task of realizing this universality and vindicating this absoluteness. Though it sprang up in the midst of Judaism, Christianity was not Judaism, still less did it have in common with paganism. Paganism and Judaism alike must be transformed, must be Christianized. Ere long it is perfectly evident that Christianity is absorbing paganism and Judaism far more rapidly than it can possibly assimilate them. The stomach of Christianity, sensitive at first, vomited forth these nauseating elements in the shape of Ebionism and Gnosticism. But this power of throwing off noxious elements became gradually less and less, until finally Judaism and paganism became part and parcel of the current Christianity. Persecution, while on the one hand it retarded this process, tended, on the other hand, to foster among Christians an overweening desire for such an amount of external power and prosperity as should render persecution impossible, and should give free scope to the world-subduing religion of Christ. The mighty fabric of the Roman Empire may early have suggested to Christian thinkers the idea of a great world-wide ecclesiastical organization, as pure and beneficent as the empire was tyrannical and corrupt. When Constantine decided that his interest lay in the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the State, it was not the pure, simple, spiritual Christianity that Christ had established and that Paul had preached, whose representatives so promptly assumed the attitude of courtiers, and showed themselves at once such adepts in court intrigue. It was Christianity corrupted by two centuries of contact and conflict with heathenism and Judaism. No abrupt turn was made in