

period between the Apostles and the Reformers. Almost everything that has been done worth speaking of was done in that period of which we know so little.

Seeing then that the normal state of the Church, for three thousand years, was that of unity, it is clear that unity is possible. Under various political forms, the tribal, the government of judges or men of action endowed with the prophetic spirit raised up to meet emergencies, the government of kings, and the government of priests and holy men ; under various ecclesiastical forms that may be called Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Patriarchal, Papal, a large measure of unity has been preserved. One form developed into another. The Church, like every living thing, was subject to the law of evolution. It may be said that each form was, in its time, the wise, necessary and democratic choice of the members of the Church. The form to which Protestants are most opposed served in its day a most useful purpose by preserving a common and stable centre of intelligence to Europe. Grotius says that without the primacy of the Pope there would have been no means of deciding and ending controversies and of determining the faith in the Middle Ages. Melancthon owns that the monarchy of the Pope preserved a general consent of doctrine among the nations. Casaubon, Puffendorf, Luther, and other reformers give similar testimonies.

How then shall we characterize the last three centuries, the epoch in which we live? Its keynote has been Protest in favor of individual and national rights against usurpation on the part of the Church. Hence conflicts, on which both sides have erred. Both have occasionally taken extreme positions ; one side identifying Christianity with its own organization, the other side practically exalting schism into a virtue. It is now being recognized that besides individual and national, there are Ecumenical rights. It is not wise to dwell on the conflicts of the past. It is a different spirit from that of Christ, which blows up their cold ashes or decaying embers with the hot breath of temper. A passionate Jehu or a bitter Pharisee say, "come, see my zeal for the Lord," and when we decline, he calls us lukewarm, or uses coarser adjectives. Enough for us to know that the Protest has succeeded, and that Protestants can afford to be generous to those who have been beaten. Nevermore can the positions be generally held that God's