

made in the seamless garment of Christ, in propagating every heresy that arose within the Church. So engrossed were they with this task that they entirely neglected their proper duties. While engaged in deciding questions of faith and discipline in the supreme court of appeal which they had set up in Constantinople, they offered but a feeble resistance to the inroads of the fierce Lombards upon the western portion of the empire. Italy groaned beneath the yoke of these barbarians, and looked with earnest entreaty to the one man who was able to deliver her. She remembered how in former days the Vicar of Christ had turned aside the terrible "Scourge of God," and now she saw the victorious Luitprand falling at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff and resigning his conquests. Was it unnatural, then, that failing the protection of their lawful rulers, the Italians should have asked the Pope to become the head of their confederacy, and that he should have thought it a duty not merely to Italy but to Christendom to accept the position? As head of the Italian league, Pope Stephen III. sought the aid of Pepin, king of the Franks, in freeing Italy from the Lombards. This aid Pepin readily lent, and when the task had been successfully accomplished, the Frankish monarch thought that the best guarantee for the permanence of his work was the establishment of the Pope as an independent temporal sovereign. Such was the beginning of that temporal power which, rising out of the political exigencies of the moment, and growing gradually in strength, enabled the Church of the Middle Ages to become the salvation of Europe. "It was this power," says Dean Milman, speaking of the Papacy, "which was most imperatively required to preserve all which was to survive out of the crumbling wreck of Roman civilization. . . . Even the perfect organization of the Christian hierarchy might in all human probability have fallen to pieces in perpetual conflict, it might have degenerated into a half secular feudal caste, with hereditary benefices more and more entirely subservient to the civil authority, a priesthood of each nation or each tribe, gradually sinking to the intellectual or religious level of the nation or tribe. On the rise of a power both controlling and conservative hung, humanly speaking, the life and death of Christianity. Providence

might have otherwise ordained; but it is impossible for a man to imagine by what other organising or consolidating force the commonwealth of the western nations could have grown up to a discordant, indeed, and conflicting league, but still a league, with that unity and conformity of manners, usages, laws, religion, which have made their rivalries, oppugnancies, and even their long ceaseless wars, on the whole to issue in the noblest, highest, most intellectual form of civilization known to man. . . . It is impossible to conceive what had been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the middle ages, without the mediæval Papacy." These words of the judicial Anglican church historian represent the opinion held by fair minded Protestants concerning the Church of the Middle Ages. They acknowledge that in order to preserve the unity and universality of the teaching entrusted to her, it was necessary that she should gain supreme control during the period of chaos consequent upon the breaking up of the Western Roman Empire, and they hail her as the mother of modern civilization. But though circumstances might force her into the position for a time, the Church had no intention of usurping the place of Cæsar. On the contrary she blessed him in the person of the most powerful and most Christian monarch of Europe. The Roman emperors had been pagans; the great Constantine bade the Christians come forth from the catacombs, but his immediate successors on the Byzantine throne were violent persecutors in the interests of heresy and schism; and it may almost be said that only on that Christmas day in the year 800, when Pope Leo III. saluted Pepin's son as "Charles Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific emperor of the Romans," was Cæsar at last baptized. It would be pleasant to say that the cordial understanding on that day arrived at between Church and State remained unbroken. But it was not so. "Rarely," says Dr. Brownson, "was there a Kaiser of the Holy Roman Empire, from Charlemange to Charles V, that respected the freedom of the Church, that allowed her to exercise her spiritual discipline without his interference; that permitted her without restraint to manage her own affairs, or that did not wage open or secret war