

Henry, and the title of Defender of the Faith, still retained by his successors, proves that if he did not write the defense attributed to him, it was under his auspices it was published. If right and justice ever combined to secure a system, surely the Roman system in England was founded on them; but right and justice were powerless against expediency. It became expedient that England should become independent, hence the Reformation in defiance of all so-called right. Religion had little to do in the inauguration of this great revolution, and from that time this great element of civilization became subservient to that other great idea, nationality.

In the subsequent reigns of Edward, Mary and Elizabeth, the people were dragooned from one religion to the other, as the expediencies of the sovereigns and the safety of the nation required. In Mary's reign, in order to satisfy the half-quenched prejudices of the people, and the bigotry of herself and her husband, certain men were executed, partly for treason but more from religious motives, while during the reign of Elizabeth, the whole people, manifestly against right and justice, were forcibly compelled to receive the reformed religion. But although this course of treatment was unjust, it was expedient. English independence was in jeopardy, and the fluctuating notions of the masses, at that time in religion, were not allowed to effect the safety of the State. There can be no doubt that mankind is indebted for the blessings flowing from the Reformation to the idea of complete nationality which first began to spread in the fifteenth century, and which seems to have spread and to have had as much effect on the Continent of Europe as it had in England. No nationality can be complete, so long as a large portion of its inhabitants look to a foreign temporal prince in such an important element as religion, as the supreme head—a ruler who taught them to believe that the State derived its powers from him. It was highly desirable and expedient for national safety and honor that this foreign power in England should be abolished, and hence the Reformation, not because it was right and just.