

man and a mere student of history, well enough to avoid treating the doctrinal questions, even if I were able to do so, which I am not. I propose only to consider the exterior conditions, the visible birth, parentage, and policy, of the Reform—to treat it as a temporal fact of human origin—as an insurrection of the worldly passions and purposes of men, aided, encouraged and established by an extraordinary conjunction of worldly circumstances, centering on the soil of Europe in the sixteenth century. I believe that it must forever remain inexplicable, except it is considered as a Germanic Revolution—a resurrection of barbarian pride and politics against the Divine Law and its Apostolic, Papal, Executive.

When I use the term *politics*, I use it in its best original sense. I am well aware it is capable of being degraded into the basest of trades, but I also believe it is capable of being exalted into the sublimest of sciences. Politics, the science of law, of government, of society, (next to theology, the science of salvation,) is the worthiest study of the created intellect. It is in this sense I endeavor to use it, and whoever would not be the mere mechanical repeater of the editors, or the demagogues of to-day, whoever scorns to fetch and carry things out of other men's mouths, must take up the record of the Reformation and study it for himself, if he would truly understand the central force of our modern politics.

The date of the "Reformation" is well fixed, it is the first half of the 16th Christian century. (Some give the exact year as 1517, when Professor Luther nailed his propositions against Tetzels to the gate of the great church of Wittemberg; others fix it at 1529, when the seceders from the Diet of Spire, signed the *Protest*, from which the sects are called.) It must often have struck you as worthy of inquiry, why it should have begun in the 16th century, rather than in the 14th or the 17th, or any other? Why it should have begun in Germany, and of all Germany, why first in Saxony? These are historical facts certainly of high interest, but no book that I know of in our language fully answers these three questions.

Before, however, I come to particulars of time and place, I must present the causes of the event, and I think I will be able to show you, that the shifting politics of the 15th century—the singular state of European affairs—was the natural and necessary original of Protestantism: I think I can show you that the event would have been much the same, if Luther and his friends had never