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ARTICLE I.—*Religious Endowments.*

THE legal term *mortmain* is frequently used, especially in common discourse, and sometimes in books, in a mistaken sense. It is sometimes confounded by well informed men, and even by lawyers, with another and distinct subject. Mortmain, in strict propriety, means the acquisition or holding of real estate by a corporation or body politic, having perpetual succession. The popular meaning of the word is the vesting of land or other property, either in a corporation or in individuals, in such form as that the produce or beneficial interest may become permanently applicable to religious or charitable purposes. The proper legal term descriptive of property thus situated, is Charities or Charitable Uses.

It may be useful to deduce succinctly the history of these two subjects. In so doing, perhaps, the best explanation can be given of the general principles upon which religious and charitable endowments are based in the jurisprudence of England and this country.

The prohibition to alienate in mortmain, or, in other words, to give or grant to a corporation, existed in the Roman law. Diocletian gave this rescript: Collegium, si nullo speciali pri-

which did not touch the vitals; and to which Dr. Hewit justly applies the maxim, *de minimis lex non curat*.

We will only add, that some constitution, platform, or manual, which shall be recognized by the Congregational body as a just representation of their principles, seems to us a desideratum. As to the Saybrook Platform, even the fragments of it which yet survive, are of no force out of Connecticut. The Cambridge Platform is largely obsolete. Each Congregationalist may adopt as much or as little of it as he pleases. None adopt it as a whole. There is no manual or treatise on the subject known to us, which does not contain much that would be extensively repudiated by the most respectable men of the denomination. If one wishes to know his rights, duties, and immunities, as a member or officer of a Congregational church, where is the constitution that shows them? Does one say, the Bible? All claim to abide by that. Is it usage? But this is diverse in different quarters. Besides, where is the authentic evidence what this usage is? We think the permanent unity and prosperity of the denomination will require some united declaration of its fundamental principles, to which all can be directed, when they wish to know, on authority, what Congregationalism is.

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ART. IV.—*History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Vol. Fifth. The Reformation in England.* By J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, D. D., &c., &c. New York: R. Carter & Brothers. 1853.

IN the preface to the *fourth* volume of this history, Dr. Merle states that it was his desire "to narrate also the beginnings of the English Reformation, but my volume is filled, and I am compelled to defer this subject to the next." After giving some reasons for the omission, he proceeds to say: "It is not without some portion of fear that I approach the History of the Reformation in England; it is perhaps more difficult than elsewhere. I have received communications from some of the most respectable men of the different ecclesiastical parties, who, each feeling convinced that their own point of view

is the true one, desire me to present the history in this light. I hope to execute my task with impartiality and truth. But I thought it would be advantageous to study for some time longer the principles and facts."

We need scarcely say that the public were prepared to give this long-looked-for volume a cordial welcome, for any work from the pen of D'Aubigné is sure to command readers. But, for the reasons indicated in the preceding extract, the appearance of the present volume was waited for with an unusual degree of interest by various religious parties in England and America; each being curious to see how the author would handle a subject confessedly more difficult than any other in the entire compass of the history of the Reformation. The mass of ordinary readers, we have no doubt, will find this volume not less attractive than those which have preceded it, for it is pervaded by the same kindly spirit, and has the same evangelical unction, which give such a charm to its predecessors. No one who begins its perusal will stop until he has reached the end of the book. Still, we are inclined to think, that, among those who have waited so anxiously for the publication of the work, there are some who will lay it aside, with the feeling that their expectations have not been fully answered. Considering that more than seven years have elapsed since the issue of the previous volume, and the statement made by Dr. Merle in the Preface to it, that the history of the English Reformation prior to 1530 is of comparatively little moment, we must confess that we were somewhat disappointed when we found that the narrative terminated with the fall and the death of Cardinal Wolsey. Nor are we exactly able to reconcile the large space he allows to certain political transactions, in which that remarkable man was a prominent actor, with the reasons he assigns for considering the year 1530 as the proper terminating point of the Reformation in Germany, viz: that "the work of faith then attained its apogee; that of conferences, of interims, of diplomacy, begins." Be this, however, as it may, the end of the volume leaves us at the outskirts of the field over which the author proposes to carry us; and when we think of its extent, and of the difficulties of the way, we cannot resist the fear that, at the present rate of progress, we may lose our

accomplished guide before we can reach those spots which we are especially desirous to investigate with the aid of his genius, piety, and learning.

With regard to the merits of Dr. Merle D'Aubigné as a historian, there is, we apprehend, little difference of opinion, at least among the thousands of evangelical Christians who have derived both pleasure and instruction from his fascinating pages. His first volume, published in Paris, obtained—as, indeed, might have been anticipated—a very limited circulation in France; so limited that the author was strongly tempted to abandon the enterprise on which he had entered, and was only induced to proceed with it through the earnest exhortation of Guizot. But the moment that the British and American public were made acquainted with the work, it gained immense success. Three distinct translations appeared almost simultaneously in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, while its author at once took rank among the first historical writers of the age. His History of the Reformation may be said to be not merely his *opus magnum*, but his only work, for he seems to concentrate upon it the studies and labours of many years; and while in the earlier portions of it he has drawn largely from Marheineke, yet all his volumes contain ample evidence of independent and pains-taking research. Among living historians—and our age can boast of not a few whose renown will long endure—who, in point of popularity can be compared with Dr. Merle, with the single exception of Macaulay? Both of them are perfect masters of the art of historical composition, yet their works are cast in very different moulds. The pages of Macaulay abound with pictures drawn with the most elaborate care, and with exquisite art; those of D'Aubigné, if less pictorial, are far more dramatic; they are instinct with life and action. The latter, too, like his English contemporary, possesses the rare power of producing his personages in all their individuality before the reader; his men and women move before us in the costume and mode of their day, and their features are imprinted on our mind with the distinctness of the daguerreotype.

But while Dr. Merle's dramatic power lends such a vivid interest to his historical writings, we are somewhat doubtful whether he does not occasionally carry it to an unwarrantable

excess. For example, he often brings forward the Reformers and others, conversing upon the topics of their day. We have, or seem to have, the very words, as well as the sentiments they uttered. In their case, it is a comparatively easy task for the historian to get up a dialogue such as may have occurred between the persons introduced, since the necessary materials are abundant and accessible, in the shape of letters, table-talk, examinations, and conferences. But when the men who lived a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago are presented before us occupied with the same sort of familiar discourse, though the sentiments put into their mouths may be quite consistent with the character of the speakers, we still cannot help feeling suspicious of the exact historical truthfulness of the narrative. Yet such dialogues we do find in the account of the early British churches.

These volumes abound with a class of sentences somewhat analogous to the gem-like notes with which good Matthew Henry has adorned his matchless Exposition—sentences in which the author aims to embody some grand truth of universal application in a few well chosen words, or to gather up the teachings of history on a specific subject, and to compress them into a form fitted to please the taste, and to fix itself in the reader's memory. Many of these sentences are exceedingly beautiful and striking; but in this last volume we occasionally encounter one which contains a good deal more fancy than force. Thus, in speaking of the fall of Wolsey, Dr. Merle observes: "England, by sacrificing a churchman, gave a memorable example of her inflexible opposition to the encroachments of the Papacy."—V. 489. Surely Dr. Merle must have penned these words while under the influence of that prodigious excitement into which Britain was recently thrown by the erection of the Popish bishoprics in England. Wolsey was undoubtedly a proud, ambitious, "churchman;" he was "sacrificed," and his fall was the occasion of great delight to one of the parties into which Henry's court was divided; but to speak of his overthrow as a "sacrifice" on the part of "England," by which she evinced her "inflexible opposition to the encroachments of the Papacy," is to use language more suited to the flights of poetry than the sober realities of history. Wolsey was the

victim of his own unprincipled ambition. As the historian observes, when summing up his character, "power had been his idol, and to obtain it in the State, he had sacrificed the liberties of England." For a time he was prime minister of the kingdom, with the whole power of the government in his hands, and while his conduct in the affair of the divorce no doubt helped materially to alienate Henry, yet he fell not as cardinal or churchman, but as the politician. Even his impeachment by the House of Lords did not partake of the nature of a protest against papal encroachments, for the particular acts of treason with which he was charged, were such as any prime minister might have perpetrated. Then, again, the House of Commons, to the great annoyance of the Cardinal's enemies, refused to concur with the Peers in impeaching him of high treason. In no proper sense of the words, therefore, can it be affirmed that in the overthrow of Wolsey, "England sacrificed a churchman," and manifested her "inflexible opposition to papal encroachments."

Another dictum of like character occurs as a pendicle to the account of Sir Thomas More's elevation to the chancellorship. "The less cause kings and their subjects have to fear the intrusion of clerical power into the affairs of the world, the more will they yield themselves to the vivifying influence of faith." It will be remembered that the judicial office to which More was raised upon the fall of Wolsey, was one which had been held, for a long period, chiefly by ecclesiastics, for the reason that there were few laymen capable of properly discharging its functions. That such a position is utterly incompatible with the appropriate work of a Christian minister, will be readily admitted by all who have a just conception of what that work is, and it may be that Dr. Merle in the sentence above quoted, simply intended to give expression to this sentiment. But he would find it a very difficult matter to substantiate his statement as it stands. Kings and their subjects may be and have been exempted from all fear of the intrusion of clerical power, without exhibiting the least readiness to yield to the influence of the faith. Priestly intrusion into secular affairs, unquestionably, has been productive of most disastrous results to church and state, but history teaches us that the very kings

and statesmen who were foremost in resisting priestly usurpation have been themselves equally ready to intrude into the spiritual things of the church, and to rule with a rod of iron the heritage of the Lord.

In the descriptive portions of this last volume, though they are on the whole very admirably executed, we occasionally meet with statements, which, to say the least, wear an appearance of exaggeration that may be pardoned in a tale claiming only to be "founded on fact," but which is certainly out of place in a formal history of the past. Thus in the account of Erasmus's edition of the New Testament, the publication of the work in England is represented to have produced an almost unparalleled excitement. "Never had any book produced such a sensation. It was in every hand; men struggled to procure it, read it eagerly, and would even kiss it. In every place of public resort, at fairs, and markets, at the dinner-table, and in the council chambers, in shops, and taverns, and houses of ill-fame, in churches, in the universities, in cottages, and palaces," Erasmus and the Greek Testament was the subject of discussion. From the terms employed, one might naturally conclude that this highly excited state of feeling, instead of being confined to particular localities and classes, had spread itself over the entire kingdom, so that all England was in a blaze. That the publication of a volume, which not one person in ten thousand could read, produced such an immense sensation, not only in schools and palaces, but in shops, taverns, and houses of ill-fame, is an event too improbable to be credited on the simple testimony of Erasmus, and the historian refers to no other authority in support of his statement. We do not like this tone of exaggeration, which Dr. Merle sometimes adopts, we dare say unconsciously. It is inconsistent with that rigid truthfulness at which the historian is bound to aim, and when once detected, it is apt to beget a suspicion in the mind of the thoughtful reader that the glowing pages which he at first peruses with the deepest interest, would be much less charming if they had not been so highly coloured.

The present volume contains four books, which are numbered as belonging to the general history of the Reformation. In the first we get a summary account of the introduction of

Christianity into the British Isles while under the dominion of Pagan Rome, and of the early struggles between the churches of Britain and Rome.

The early annals of the British churches, *i. e.* from the introduction of the gospel down to the period when the Papal dominion was established over the whole island, constitute a portion of church history that possesses great interest, especially for Presbyterians. Dr. Munter, a Danish divine, has written a very valuable book on this subject, our only regret being that he has not entered more fully into it. Very valuable materials were collected by Usher, Stillingfleet, and Lloyd, to which considerable additions have been made by Smith, Jamieson, Bost, and other historical students of the present day, but a full and fair history of these churches yet remains to be written. Long after the southern parts of Britain had yielded to the arts and had adopted the heresies of Rome, a vigorous struggle for the true faith was maintained in the northern division of the Island. Amid the rugged mountains of Scotland, and the green hills of the sister isle, there were multitudes of Christians who held fast their integrity. Here the light of the gospel continued to shine, in a high degree of purity, while the dark clouds of Romish superstition were rapidly spreading over the remainder of Western Europe; and here, too, the simple worship and discipline of an earlier age were observed, and, in spite of the fierce assaults of the Papacy, held their ground, until within less than two centuries of the Reformation. Dr. McCrie, the biographer of Knox, was of opinion that the early and firm hold which the Reformed doctrine obtained in the west of Scotland, was partly owing to the memory and influence of the ancient Culdees—as these early Scottish Christians were called—an influence which, like hidden leaven, continued to operate upon the minds of certain classes, long after Romanism had become the recognized religion of the kingdom. That there was a wide difference between the Culdees and the Romanizers of England in the seventh and eighth century, is put beyond dispute by the testimony of Bede. It was a difference that extended not only to articles of faith, but also to forms of government and modes of worship, and on each of these points, though they were not entirely



exempt from the errors prevalent in that age, the principles they avowed and defended with uncompromising fidelity, were essentially the same with those embodied in the symbolic books of the Reformed Church. Bede expressly declares that prelacy was totally unknown among them, and that while some ministers were styled bishops, these last neither claimed to be nor were regarded as superior in any respect to presbyters. So far were they from affecting to be lords over God's heritage, or, under Christ, supreme rulers of his Church, that they cheerfully received the directions, and obeyed the commands, of the college of presbyters, or, in other words, of the Presbytery, as their proper and divinely appointed ecclesiastical superior. Their pastors proclaimed that fundamental doctrine of the gospel—salvation by grace—and they attested their apostolic descent not only by their vigorous defence of apostolic truth and order, but also by their zealous and self-denying efforts to spread the glad tidings of salvation among the pagan tribes of their own land, and of continental Europe. Columban (who must not be confounded with Columba,) the apostle of Germany, was a Scot, and was sent forth upon his perilous, and at that day, far-distant mission, by the Presbyters of Iona—Iona! "*clarum et venerabile nomen,*" one that richly merits to be held in affectionate remembrance by Christians of whatever name, but especially by those who derive their origin, natural or ecclesiastical, from Presbyterian Scotland. It indeed seems so strange, that a rocky islet on one of the wildest parts of the coast of a country at the farthest verge of the then known world, and which had not yet emerged from barbarism, should become a favoured seat of science and religion, the centre of influences literary, ecclesiastical, and missionary, reaching even to distant nations, that many who have heard the name of the sacred spot, and possibly have made a pilgrimage to it, are disposed, it may be, to regard its story as one of the lying legends of the dark ages. But the well known and noble passage in which the great lexicographer of England, forgetting for a moment his bigoted and sturdy hatred of Scotland and the Scots, gives utterance to the feelings awakened in his soul as he gazed upon the ruins of Iona, describes facts as indubitable as any that history records.

The survey of the Saxon period is followed by a more extended notice of Wickliff and his times. "Wickliff," says Dr. Merle, "is the greatest English reformer; he was, in truth, the first reformer of Christendom. The work of the Waldenses, excellent as it was, cannot be compared to his." p. 104. The name of Wickliff, "the morning star of the Reformation," will ever be regarded as one of the most glorious in the catalogue of witnesses for Christ; but we are scarcely prepared to assent to the judgment of the historian as to his comparative merits. Unquestionably his piety and abilities were of a very high order; and by his translation of the Bible, his polemic writings, and his academic lectures, he was the means of diffusing a light in which many rejoiced for a season. The publication of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was virtually a blow aimed at the very foundation of Popery, as the Papists of that age were not slow to perceive; but, in general, his attacks were directed against the outworks of the citadel of superstition, rather than against the citadel itself. The historian himself admits as much, for in speaking of the character of Wickliff's followers, he says:—"Of the Lollards there were many who had been redeemed by Jesus Christ, but, in general, they knew not to the same extent as the Christians of the sixteenth century the quickening and justifying power of faith." The views of the Waldenses on most of the points in the gospel scheme, were clearer and more distinct, than those which obtained among the disciples of the English reformer. The protest of the former against the corruptions of Rome was pronounced with no less emphasis than that of the latter, and we therefore cannot go along with the historian in the strong statement that the work of the Waldenses "cannot be compared with that of Wickliff." Confined within the narrow limits of their Alpine valleys, by foes who would gladly have exterminated them, destitute of all political power, and with no John of Gaunt to stand between them and their bloody persecutors, it was impossible for them to make upon Italy the impression which Wickliff made upon England. And yet we know that in spite of all obstacles, they were accustomed to send forth their missionaries, two by two, who, travelling amid perpetual perils, and thus obliged to act with extreme caution,

kindled the light of life in many a family. While Wickliff lived, he enjoyed the countenance and support of powerful friends, who were allied with him, not so much from religious convictions, as for political reasons, and hence his cause, for a time, had something like fair play; but the moment that these princely patrons left the cause to stand on its own merits, it rapidly declined. Here and there a few humble, timid believers were found, who fondly cherished the memory and the teachings of the departed reformer, and who in secret places fed their faith by the perusal of that precious volume of inspiration which he had rendered accessible to them. We have no doubt that the labours of Wickliff were not without their influence in preparing the way for that triumph which the gospel, after the lapse of many long years, was destined to gain in England; but it must be owned that there was no apparent bond of connection between the reformer of the fourteenth and those of the sixteenth century.

The remainder of the volume is occupied with the history of the Reformation proper, which, as we have already mentioned, is carried down no further than to the death of Wolsey. It includes many exceedingly interesting details respecting Tyn-dale, Frith, and their fellow-labourers, in the work of translating the New Testament, and of spreading the knowledge of the gospel in England; but the personages who fill the largest space are Henry VIII. and the more prominent statesmen of the period. The history of Henry's divorce from Catherine of Arragon is given with great minuteness, and is one of the most readable portions of the book. The varying phases of this affair, as it dragged its slow length along, one while at Rome, and again at London, are depicted with elaborate care. While thus adding to the dramatic interest, and the popularity of the book, the excellent author, it seems to us, has been a little forgetful of his theory respecting the origin and character of the English Reformation.

"The English Reformation," says Dr. Merle, "has been, and still is calumniated by writers of different parties, who look upon it as nothing more than an external political transformation, and who thus ignore its spiritual nature."—*Pref.* iv. "If the Reformation in England happened necessarily to be

mixed up with the State, with the world even, it originated neither in the State nor in the world. There was much worldliness in the age of Henry VIII., passions, violence, festivities, a trial, a divorce, and some historians call that *the history of the Reformation in England*. To say that Henry VIII. was the reformer of his people, is to betray our ignorance of history. This great transformation was begun and extended by its own strength." Such is Dr. Merle's theory with regard to the causes in which the English Reformation originated, and one chief object of this volume, as he expressly declares, is to vindicate the work from the aspersions cast upon it by Romish and Protestant writers, by proving that it was pre-eminently spiritual and scriptural. We might adduce numerous other passages of precisely similar import with those already quoted. Notwithstanding these repeated and earnest protests against those who ignore the spiritual element in the English Reformation, he himself deals with a "trial and a divorce," in much the same way as that in which they would be handled by the class of writers from whom he so widely differs; that is to say, by the large space he allows to Henry's divorce, and by the elaborate minuteness with which the details of the affair are given, he virtually recognizes it as something more than a subordinate and unimportant incident in the history of the Reformation.

But without dwelling on this point, we proceed to observe that it would have been more satisfactory if the excellent author had described with greater precision the views of the English Reformation which he regards as partial, or as totally unfounded; and if he had done so, it is quite probable that our judgment respecting the nature of the work, and of the various agencies concerned in its production, would be found to be nearly or even exactly in accordance with his own. It does not, however, distinctly appear to what class of Protestant writers he refers as having calumniated the English Reformation, and as he affirms in several places, that it was more immediately and purely scriptural in its origin than that of any other country, his readers might infer that even the Nonconformists of England were among those who have done injustice to the history of the Reformation in their native land. We are

very confident that Dr. Merle himself would most earnestly disclaim such a conclusion, yet there are sentences which appear to warrant it; and we regret that he has not taken more pains to guard against the danger of misapprehension by explaining the sense in which he employs the term *Reformation*. That the Reformation in England was a mere political affair, that this great event was effected solely through the influence of a wanton and capricious tyrant, is a position which none beside papists and infidels have ever pretended to maintain. Romanism was assailed by men clothed in the panoply of God; the right of the people to possess and study the sacred volume was boldly asserted, copies of it were circulated, the revived gospel was preached in church and school, and many souls were turned from darkness to light, the sincerity of whose conversion was proved by the readiness with which they laid down their lives for the faith. These are facts beyond dispute; but the same things occurred in countries noted for their Popish bigotry, in Italy and Spain, and the question arises, Might not England's fate have been similar to theirs, if Henry VIII. had been a man of different character, or if his divorce from Catherine had never taken place?

Until Elizabeth ascended the throne, it cannot be said that the mass of the English people sympathized with the cause of Protestantism; on the contrary, there are strong reasons for believing that up to that time, if the popular mind could have found free utterance on the subject, the major part of the nation would have expressed a preference for the old religion. With some restraints upon the power of the priesthood, and some improvement in their morals, they would have been content to let things remain as they were. We argue this from the fact that no serious opposition was made to the monstrous system which Henry established, when he resolved to be the Pope in his own dominions, and to regulate the faith and worship of his people. Nor can we explain on any other supposition the readiness with which the nation submitted to Mary, notwithstanding her well-known bigoted attachment to the old faith, and the ease with which she set up the papal authority in her kingdom. We cannot believe that she would have been permitted to mount the throne so easily, and to shed

so much of the best blood of her kingdom, if the majority of her subjects had been decided Protestants. The most decided of them, as if conscious of their feebleness, fled to the continent the instant the crown was placed upon her head; while those who remained behind sought the shelter of obscurity, or became the unresisting victims of the bloody queen. Happily her reign was a short one, but if it had extended through as many years as that of her sister and successor, England might have continued until this day a faithful subject of the Apostolic See.

The little sympathy felt by the mass of the English people for the Reformation, appears in a striking light, when we compare the progress of that cause in England with its progress in Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, and even in France. In the countries last named the movement was pre-eminently a popular one. The revived gospel took such firm hold of the masses, that the Reformation triumphed in spite of the utmost efforts of kings and emperors to put it down. In each of those countries in which Romanism was supplanted by the reformed faith, the latter system of doctrine and order was received not at the dictation of the civil power, but because of the very general conviction that it was in accordance with the word of God. France, indeed, continued to be Romanist in sentiment; but up to the time of the horrible massacre which has covered the name of Charles IX. with undying infamy, papists themselves considered it doubtful on which side she would ultimately be found. Among the Protestants of France there were some of the highest nobles of the kingdom, and even princes of the blood royal; but none of these presumed to dictate to the Reformed Church what she should believe, or how she should worship God. The only recognized authority was that of Christ speaking in his word. How different the course of things in England! The light of salvation dawns upon her universities and her great metropolis. Some noble souls, illumined by its beams, seek to diffuse the word of life, and not without success, but they are few in number, they are obliged to act with extreme caution, they have no organization, while upon the higher powers in Church and State the only influence they exert is to provoke their vengeance. Meanwhile Henry, incensed at the duplicity of the Pope in the affair of his divorce,

and eager to consummate his marriage with Anne Boleyn, the beauty of his court, breaks with Rome, and assuming the powers previously exerted by his Holiness, as Supreme Head of the Church, he orders his people, under pains and penalties, to follow his example. Cranmer, Cromwell, and others, who were more or less Protestant at heart, taking advantage of Henry's indignation against Rome, and of his anxiety to get rid of Katherine, try to induce him to move a little in the direction of the gospel. The old religion of the State is slightly modified, but everything depends upon the will of the king. As Henry goes, the Church goes, and when he stops, she stops. He is succeeded by his son Edward, than whom a lovelier character never sat upon the throne of Britain. The heads of the Church, emboldened by the sincere piety of the youthful monarch, and his pliant temper, venture to take farther steps in the right direction.\* But Edward's sun goes down before it was yet noon. The bloody Mary obtains the throne, and in a moment all that had been done for the reformation of the Church is undone. Cranmer, Hooper, Ridley, and others, are sent to the stake. Popery is once more dominant in England, and such it might have remained until this day, if Mary had lived to give an heir to the throne, and to superintend his education. Her sceptre passes into the hands of Elizabeth, "that bright occidental star," as she is styled in the preface to our authorized version of the Bible; the daughter of Anne Boleyn, half Protestant, half Papist, and for some time after her accession to the throne, doubtful with which side to identify herself; but the instant she decides the question, the Church of England puts on a new type—one which has proved to be, in the main, permanent, and is as distinctive as the architecture of the age which gave it birth.

Now with these facts before us we cannot concur with the historian when he says that, "this great transformation was begun and carried on in its own strength, by the Spirit from on high," certainly in that sense of his words which they

\* There is a document preserved by Strype, drawn up by Edward himself, which at once proves his cordial sympathy with the Reformation, and warrants the inference, that if he had lived he would have laboured to bring the Church of England into a conformity with the Reformed churches abroad, in point of discipline as well as of doctrine.

seem intended to convey. If by the transformation be simply meant the spiritual renovation experienced by such men as Tyndale, Frith, and Bilney, and which they were instrumental in producing in others; or in other words, that there was a real revival of pure religion begun and carried on by the Spirit of God, through the medium of his own word, the statement is indisputably true. With that work kingly power had no concern, unless to thwart and persecute it. But most readers will be apt to understand the term as having reference to the change which passed upon the Church of England, when she threw off the papal authority, and assumed the form in which we now find her. Now, the first great decisive blow given to the Pope's power in England, was the work, not of the Church, but of Henry, and no one pretends that he was prompted to do what he did by regard for Scripture truth. In other countries, the reforming fathers refused to be satisfied with a mere modification of the old system. They sat down to discover by prayer and study, what was the mind of Christ as revealed in his word, respecting the constitution of his Church, in doctrine, polity, and worship. Whether they in all things found what they sought for, is a point which we need not decide; but this much is certain, that the voice of Christ speaking in his word was alone recognized by them as authoritative. They struggled long and hard to get their scriptural idea realized in the actual constitution of the Church. With the English Reformers in the days of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth, it was notoriously different. As the process of reforming their Church went forward, they were compelled in many matters of importance, to stifle their own convictions of what was right and proper. In framing the ritual, the polity, and to a certain extent, even the doctrinal symbols of the Church, they were not permitted to follow Scripture alone, but were forced to content themselves with the monarch's notions of what was expedient. Hence that strange compound of opposite elements which we find in the constitution of the Church of England, and which for two centuries or more has rendered her relations to her reformed sisters so equivocal. In the lapse of years the monstrous evils to which Cranmer, Hooper, Latimer, and their contemporaries submitted, as the



only way of escaping still greater ones, have come to be looked upon as positive blessings; and Anglican divines of later times have been accustomed to describe the framework of their establishment, as the perfection of beauty, and worthy to be admired by all Christendom. We are very confident that the estimable author has not the slightest sympathy with Anglicanism of this sort; but his statements, already quoted, respecting the scriptural and spiritual character of the English Reformation are so unqualified, that many of his readers may consider them as intended to apply to the whole state and condition of things, as they existed in the Church of England, after she became decidedly Protestant.

The story of Henry's divorce is told in the historian's very best style. The various incidents more or less intimately connected with it—the domestic life of Catherine, Ann Boleyn's appearance at court, the relations of Henry with Charles V. and Francis I.; Wolsey's schemes to secure for himself the Papal throne, the dealings with Rome, Cranmer's entrance into public life, the trial, fall, and death of the great cardinal—all these topics are managed with such consummate art, that this portion of the volume has all the interest of the most attractive novel. The subject merits the large space which it fills, for if we may not say that the divorce of Henry from Catherine was one of the chief causes of the English Reformation, we certainly may say that the event was productive of the most important consequences, ecclesiastical and civil. If the lawfulness of that marriage had never been questioned, it is quite improbable—speaking after the manner of men—that the relations in which England had so long stood to Rome would have been disturbed. Or, if the Pope had acted promptly when the case was brought before him, and especially if he had decided it in accordance with the known wishes of Henry, there is reason to believe that the whole power of the government would have been exerted in support of the old religion, and to put down with a strong hand the friends of reformation. It is now a well established fact, that the question of the invalidity of the marriage was first started by Wolsey, as a means of revenging himself upon Charles V. the nephew of Catherine, who had twice prevented his election to the Popedom. But after the doubt

whether Catherine was his lawful wife, or the desire for a new and younger one had taken hold of Henry's mind, the cardinal bitterly regretted what he had done. He clearly foresaw the fatal consequences of the Pope's shuffling policy, not only to himself, but to the cause of the papacy in England, and he would gladly have paid any price, if he could have induced Henry to forego his scruples, or if death had come to his help, and had conveniently carried Catherine off. But he had gone too far to go back. It was now too late for him to repair the mischief he had done to his own Church through his eager thirst for vengeance. It was a striking instance of the wicked man taken in his own snare. Looking at the event from our stand point, one cannot help being amazed that a man so able and so sagacious as Wolsey, holding as he did the highest ecclesiastical position in the kingdom, should have committed himself to a scheme so full of peril to the Papal authority in his native land. But it should not be forgotten, that the Pope had annulled many a royal marriage, without stopping to inquire with over-much scrupulosity, whether the reasons of separation were legitimate or not. Henry's own brother-in-law, Louis XII. of France, had obtained a divorce from his wife Joan—a woman of spotless reputation—simply because he had never loved her, while she, meekly submitting to her fate, retired to a convent, and at last died in the odour of sanctity. Wolsey might therefore persuade himself, with some show of reason, that the affair, however difficult, could not involve serious danger. He knew neither the kind of man nor the kind of woman with whom he had to do, long as he had been acquainted with Henry and with Catherine; he did not understand, or at least did not take into account the lustful waywardness of the one, nor the conscientious obstinacy of the other. If the Pope had promptly decided the question when it was first raised, Henry might have acquiesced in the settlement of it, whether for or against the validity of the marriage, but at a later period his love for Anne Boleyn made it absolutely necessary for the Pope to declare the connection incestuous, if he wished to retain Henry in the communion of the Roman Church. If, at any period before the fall of Wolsey, Catherine had yielded so far as to enter a convent and assume monastic vows, Popery might

have escaped the overthrow which awaited it. We recognize in these events the overruling providence of Him who can cause the furious passions, and the deep laid policy of his enemies to subserve his own glorious purposes, who taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and maketh the wrath of man to praise him.

The subject of Henry's divorce merits consideration for its moral as well as its historical bearings. Henry VII. projected the marriage in order to retain Catherine's unusually large dowry, but in his last moments the piety of the old king seems to have got the better of his avarice, and he is reported to have urged his son not to consummate it, as being contrary to the divine law. But other counsels prevailed, and for more than twenty years Henry and Catherine lived together in the most perfect harmony. The king declared, in the most solemn manner, that not a doubt had ever crossed his mind respecting the lawfulness of his marriage, until it was suggested by the French ambassador, during the negotiations for the marriage of the Princess Mary, that it might be against a law of God, from which the Pope himself could give no dispensation. Dr. Merle, we think, clearly proves that these doubts arose in the king's mind prior to his attachment to Anne Boleyn. But whatever Henry's motives may have been, whether he was actuated by scruples of conscience, or by the lusts of the flesh, the right answer to the inquiry, was his marriage incestuous or not, is no way affected by these considerations. Supposing Henry to have been perfectly sincere, and simply desirous to know what his duty was, the replies which he received from theological faculties, canonists, and other distinguished divines, Popish and Protestant, were certainly well fitted to awaken his deepest anxieties on his own account, and for the sake of his kingdom. What the judgment of the historian is on this point, does not distinctly appear. In one place he says—  
“Some evangelical Christians, who thought that Henry was troubled more by his passions than his conscience, asked how it happened that a prince who represented himself to be so disturbed by a *possible* transgression of a law of *doubtful* interpretation, could desire, after twenty years, to violate *the indisputable law which forbade the divorce.*” But when Cranmer is brought upon the stage as one of the actors in the affair, he

quotes, with apparent approval, the views of the Reformer, saying, "What says the word of God? If God says the marriage is bad, the Pope cannot make it good. When God has spoken, man must obey."

In the drama of the divorce, Anne Boleyn is of course one of the most prominent personages. Popish authors, for obvious reasons, have tried hard to blacken her character, by calumnies which her bitterest enemies did not venture to utter while she lived. That she had some sympathy with the new views, there can be no doubt, but the historian seems uncertain in what light to regard her. In some places he speaks of her as evincing the highest virtue; repelling with violence the approaches of the king; "deriving secret strength" to do this from the books she read while an inmate in the palace of Margaret of France; as the "only one who appeared calm" during the terrible sweating sickness; as praying much for Henry and for Wolsey. Elsewhere he says, "the world, with its pleasures and grandeur, were at bottom the idols of Anne Boleyn's heart." Up to the time when her misfortunes began, we can discover no decisive evidence in her conduct that she was a Christian, in the proper sense of the word. On the contrary, the eagerness with which she entered into the scheme for the divorce, before the question respecting the validity of the marriage had been decided, and the undisguised pleasure with which she received the news of the death of Catherine, of whose household she had been a member, and by whom she had been treated with much kindness, too clearly showed that her heart and life, during this part of her career, were not under the control of religious principle. Happy would it have been for her if she had steadily maintained the ground on which she stood, when, upon the first discovery of Henry's passion, she with a noble boldness said to him—"Sire, your wife I can never be, your mistress I never will be;" or if she had, at least, utterly refused to listen to his overtures until the sentence of divorce had been formally pronounced. Not a shade would then have rested upon her memory, and possibly she might have escaped her untimely end. The spirit in which she met her unhappy fate, leads us to hope that the clouds and darkness which gathered round her in the close of life, were

the means of teaching her not only the vanity of earth, but to seek the crown that fadeth not. Whatever may have been her foibles or her faults, they will be forgotten in the pity awakened by her cruel reverses, and the detestation which every generous mind will feel for all concerned in her judicial murder. No wonder that the remembrance of this murder was one of the sharpest and most galling thorns in the heart of the royal sensualist, when he himself was laid upon the bed of death.

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ART. V.—*Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews. With an Introductory Essay on Civil Society and Government.* By E. C. Wines. New York: George P. Putnam & Co., 10 Park Place. 1853. Pp. 640, 8vo.

THIS work is a copious contribution to one of the most captivating and useful departments of sacred literature. It contains a large body of information connected with history, civil government, law, and divinity, gathered from various, and to some extent, remote sources, and presented in a manner suited to engage the interest of a large class of readers.

The history of the preparation of this large and handsome volume, affords encouraging promise of the extensive circulation of the work. That history was ten years long. It began with an invitation to the author to deliver one of the lectures of a course to the Mercantile Library Association of Philadelphia. That course of lectures embraced discourses from many of the most distinguished and popular writers and speakers of the different professions in the country. For a particular reason, mentioned in the Preface, the author "was led to choose, as the theme of his discourse, Moses and his Laws." Entering in such a way on the investigation of this attractive and prolific subject, he became enamoured of the theme. He was requested by many enlightened citizens who heard his lecture, to give a series of discourses on the same subject. He re-wrote and enlarged the discussion, until at length it became an extended course of lectures. These lectures, as many of our