

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

REVIEW QUESTIONS.—(a) How early did the apostasy begin? (b) When were church and state first united? (c) When was the Papacy fully set up? (d) What was its character? and how long did it continue a persecuting power? (e) What caused its persecuting power to cease?

1. By what great movement was the influence of the Papacy over the nations weakened? *Ans.—*By the great Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

2. In what country and under what servant of God was the Reformation most prominent? *Ans.—*In Germany, under Martin Luther. See Note.

3. On what two great principles was the Reformation based?

Ans.— The principles contained in the celebrated protest [at the Diet of Spires] on the 19th of April, 1529, constitute the *very essence of Protestantism*. Now this protest *opposes two abuses of man* in matters of faith; the first is the *intrusion* of the *civil magistrate*; and the *second*, the *arbitrary authority* of the *church*. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the *power of conscience above the magistrate*, and the *authority of the word of God above the visible church*. In the first place, it *rejects the civil power in divine things*, and says, with the prophets and apostles, ‘*We must obey God rather than man.*’ In the presence of the

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crown of Charles the Fifth [civil authority] it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes further; it lays down the principle that all *human teaching* should be subordinate to the *oracles of God.*" — *D' Aubigne, Hist. Ref., book 13, chap. 6.*

4. What was the language of the protest as regards the faith of others?

Ans.—"We form no judgment on that which concerns you, most dear lords; and we are content to pray God daily that He will bring us all to unity of faith in truth, charity, and holiness, through Jesus Christ, our throne of grace, and our only Mediator."— *Id., Protest of Spires, par. 8.*

5. How, in their view, was the commandment of God and their soul's salvation affected by numbers?

Ans.—"It concerns the glory of God and the salvation of our souls, and that in such matters we ought to have regard, above all, to the commandment of God, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, each of us rendering Him account for himself; without caring the least in the world about majority or minority."— *Id., Protest of Spires, par. 7.*

6. What did Luther say as regards the matter of force in religion?

Ans.—"I have made it my earnest prayer that the German princes would oppose the Romans by the wisdom of their counsel, *not by the sword.*"— *Id., book 7, par. 40.* Luther asked only protection for himself equally with all others.

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7. What does a Protestant authority say of the Protestant standard?

Ans.— "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Nor is it of any account in the estimation of the genuine Protestant how early a doctrine originated if it is not found in the Bible. He learns from the New Testament itself that there were errors in the times of the apostles, and that their pens were frequently employed in combating those errors . . . The consistent and true hearted Protestant, standing upon this rock, 'the Bible and the Bible only,' can admit no doctrine upon the authority of tradition; . . . he who receives a single doctrine on the mere authority of tradition, let him be called by what name he will, by so doing, steps down from the Protestant rock, passes over the line which separates Protestantism from popery, and can give no valid reason why he should not receive all the earlier doctrines and ceremonies of Romanism, upon the same authority."— *Dowling's History of Romanism, book 2, chap. 1.*

8. What further testimony does the historian bear as to the basis of true Protestantism?

Ans.— "The Reformation was accomplished in the name of a spiritual principle. It had proclaimed for its teacher the word of God; for salvation - faith; for king - Jesus Christ; for arms - the Holy Ghost; and had by these very means rejected all worldly elements. Rome had been established by the law of a carnal commandment; the Reformation, by

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the power of an endless life." —D' Aubigne's History of Reformation, book 14, par. 1.

9. What power alone could it bring to bear upon rulers and people?

Ans.— "Thus one of the greatest tasks of the sixteenth century was to restore the spiritual element to its rights. The gospel of the Reformers had nothing to do with the world and with politics. While the Roman hierarchy had become a matter of diplomacy and a court intrigue, the Reformation was destined to exercise no other influence over princes and people than that which proceeds from the gospel of peace."—*Id.*, par. 3.

10. Was the principle of the separation of church and state a gospel principle? Mark 12:17.

11. What did Jesus say with reference to the use of carnal means for the promotion of the gospel? Matt. 26:52.

12. By what means only was His cause to be advanced? Zech. 4:6.

13. Why could not the kingdom of God be carried forward by carnal means? John 18:36.

14. Why is it impossible for carnal men and means to enforce the law of God? Rom. 7:14.

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15. In what realm does the real Christian warfare exist? 2 Cor. 10:5.

16. What weapons, then, are to be used? Verses 3, 4; Eph. 6:13-17.

17. What, therefore, is the duty of the servant of Christ with respect to others? 2 Cor. 5:11, 20.

18. What rebuke did Christ give to those who demanded of Him, and who themselves assumed, magisterial power? Luke 12:13, 14; 9:52-55.

19. In short, therefore, what is the object of Christ and his church? Luke 9:56.

20. Does the gospel condemn those even who do not believe in Christ? John 12:47.

21. What is the attitude of Christians toward rulers? 1 Tim. 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-17.

22. Yet when human laws conflict with God's law, what is the Christian's duty? Acts 4:19; 5:29.

23. On what, therefore, were the principles of the Protestant Reformation based? See Rev. 14:6.

24. If these principles had been followed, what would have been the result? John 17:21-23.

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NOTE

THE Reformation was not confined to Germany. It permeated all Europe, aroused the wrath of the Papacy, and brought upon the Christians greater persecution. Reaction from this persecution came when France was depopulated of its best souls, when all Europe was torn, distracted, and weakened, when the mystery of iniquity was revealed in its wickedness. The refuge for the oppressed of all was opened in an unknown part of the world – America. "The earth helped the woman." Rev. 12:16. In 1776 Maria Therese, empress of Austria, issued a decree that all Christians should be tolerated. Shortly after this (A.D. 1798) the persecuting power of the Papacy was taken away.