SHORT HISTORY OF THE MODERN CHURCH IN EUROPE A. D. 1558-1888

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Short History of the Modern Church in Europe A. D. 1558-1888 by John F. Hurst

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JOHN F. HURST

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A.D. 1558-1888

BY

JOHN F. HURST, D.D.

ADTHOR OF "SHORT HISTORY OF THE EXPORMATION"
"SHORT HISTORY OF THE BARLY CHURCH" ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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SHORT HISTORY

OF THE

MODERN CHURCH IN EUROPE.

A.D. 1558-1888.

CHAPTER L.

RECUPERATIVE MEASURES OF ROMANISM.

1. The Great Need of Action. The territorial expansion of Protestantism, combined with its rapid organization, in various confessional forms, produced great alarm in Rome. Even lands which had been supposed to be firm in their old attachments had become intensely Protestant. There was no criterion by which to determine where or when the moral revolution would cease. The differences of the German Protestants, into the two great bodies of Lutheran and Reformed, did not seriously diminish the aggressive power of the Protestants in the heart of Europe. But there was little thought taken of the propagation of the Gospel in heathen lands. Had the Protestants on the Continent adopted measures for the evangelization of heathen countries, especially the East and West Indies, they would have achieved a task which has been left. for their successors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to undertake. Even meagre beginnings would have been an expression of confidence and heroism. The Roman Catholics, in this respect, were controlled by greater wisdom. It is natural, however, that, the work of conquest being so new, the Protestant bodies should think the consolidation of their work at home their most serious work.

2. The Council of Trent. The Roman Catholics looked, first of all, to a general council as the best measure to arrest the increasing force of Protestantism. But a council was known to be always a dangerous experiment. It was never adopted except as a last resort. It never failed to have two parties—radical and conservative. Still, so serious was the issue that Paul III. called one. It met, in 1545, in Trent, a town on one of the eastern Alpine passes between Italy and Germany. The most of the delegates were Italian, and were devoted to the conservative interests of Rome. But the Spanish and French bishops favored reformatory measures. They declared that the Church must take advanced steps, and adapt itself to the new needs of the times. The pope found the council troublesome, and removed it to Bologna in 1547, and dissolved it in 1549. Pius IV., however, convoked it again in 1562, in Trent, and dissolved it in 1563. The result was the condemnation of all Protestant doctrines, and the assumption of an aggressive attitude in every country. The doctrines of purgatory, the invocation of saints, and the worship of images and relics were reaffirmed.

There was no disposition on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to withdraw from even the countries whose governments had boldly committed themselves to the Protestant faith.