

**A LECTURE ON THE
PROTESTANT
FAITH, PP. 13-69**

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A Lecture on the Protestant Faith, pp. 13-69 by Dwight H. Olmstead

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BY

DWIGHT H. OLMSTEAD.



NEW-YORK, 1874.

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INTRODUCTION.



THE following lecture, in essentially its present form, was delivered very many years ago, before the Young Men's Christian Union of New-York. The writer, although having been often requested to publish it, has until now refrained from doing so, partly in order that it might be subjected to his more mature judgment, and partly that it might await a more hospitable reception than the religious prejudices of the community have heretofore been likely to accord to it. While aware that at this late day, many of its arguments are no longer new, still, he hopes their presentation as here made, may be of service in promoting a higher form of religion than now obtains, and which he is fully persuaded will at no distant day prevail in the world.

NEW-YORK, September, 1874.

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A LECTURE
ON
THE PROTESTANT FAITH.

I.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION HOW OCCASIONED.

THE sixteenth century ushered in a period of great intellectual activity. The revival of literature, art, and science ; the brilliant maritime discoveries ; the prevailing spirit of controversy and enterprise ; but more especially the introduction of printing, whereby knowledge was disseminated, and made common to more than one nation or generation, had all given a new and remarkable impulse to human thought, distinguishing that as the most important epoch in modern history. As men began to think for themselves, their first protestation, as may well be supposed, was against the restraint

of thought and its authoritative dictation. The fears of the Vicar of Croydon were well nigh realized: "We must root out printing, or printing will root out us."

It must not be forgotten that for centuries the Roman Church had been the prominent, controlling power of Christendom. She did not spring up in a day, but was "the fruit of a long array of most learned men, distinguished colleges and councils, sanctioned by noble martyrs and numerous miracles."

So much was she, for these reasons, lifted above the common crowd, it is not surprising if to them her utterances had early the force of law, and that she, in turn, should count herself infallible.

But not content with being the spiritual head, she aspired to temporal dominion. She demanded tribute from all nations, and arrayed armed legions for her own use; she made and unmade kings; she became the umpire of trade; she dictated laws and treaties. At all Christian courts her legates took precedence, soon assuming to represent that divine right—that supreme authority—by whose sanction alone princes were then, as now, supposed to govern.