

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

to all morality. From the noble height to which the life of the human mind had attained in classical antiquity, in the centuries before Christ and the first century after Christ, it soon sank, under the rule of the papacy, to a level which, in respect of the knowledge of the truth, can only be termed barbarism. It is often protested that other aspects of mental life—poetry and architecture, scholastic learning and patristic philosophy—were richly developed in the Middle Ages. But this activity was in the service of the Church; it did not tend to the cultivation, but to the suppression, of free mental research. The exclusive preparing for an unknown eternity beyond the tomb, the contempt of nature, the withdrawal from the study of it, which are essential elements of Christianity, were urged as a sacred duty by the Roman hierarchy. It was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that a change for the better came in with the Reformation.

It is impossible for us here to describe the pitiful retrogression of culture and morality during the twelve centuries of the spiritual despotism of Rome. It is very pithily expressed in a saying of the greatest and the ablest of the Hohenzollerns; Frederick the Great condensed his judgment in the phrase that the study of history led one to think that from Constantine to the date of the Reformation the whole world was insane. L. Büchner has given us an admirable, brief description of this "period of insanity" in his work on *Religious and Scientific Systems*. The reader who desires a closer acquaintance with the subject would do well to consult the historical works of Ranke, Draper, Kolb, Svoboda, etc. The truthful description of the awful condition of the Christian Middle Ages, which is given by these and other unprejudiced historians, is confirmed by all the