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THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

IT CANNOT be too often repeated or too strongly insisted upon in our time that, however hard it may be for the modern mind to grasp, the Reformation was primarily a religious movement, a recovery of understanding of the nature and power of the Gospel. But just as Christianity at the first had to make its way in the conditioning environment of the Graeco-Roman World, so the Reformation had to submit to the political, social and cultural conditions of the sixteenth century which inevitably affected its course, though not its inner characteristic motives or its most important fruits. These conditions can be profitably studied in the person and policies of the Emperor Charles V, who is generally recognised to have been Luther's real and most worthy adversary.

Beginning as small squires with estates in what is now Switzerland, the Hapsburg family to which Charles belonged had for many generations been remarkably lucky in love. Through marriages with heiresses they had acquired the territories which make up the modern Austria, as well as other estates scattered across southern Germany to the Rhine and Alsace. To this landed power the imperial title, held by the family for three generations in the fifteenth century, added but little of value; though Frederick III was wont to boast after his election as emperor that all lands were subject to Austria.

Frederick was actually the most unfortunate of the Hapsburgs. But he had one brilliant success when he secured the betrothal of his son Maximilian to Mary, heiress of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. The Duchy of Burgundy with its capital at Dijon had been an appendage of the second son of the French king. The dukes quarrelled with the house from which they sprang and lost the territory from which they derived their title. But they gained through a series of fortunate marriages most of the lands which now compose Belgium and Holland, for which they were nominally vassals of the empire. Really they were independent princes engaged in expanding their principality southwards through Lorraine and Franche Compté. Brussels, their capital, was the scene of the most brilliant and extravagant court life in Europe, French in tone and chivalric in

character. Marriage with the heiress of Burgundy opened truly dazzling prospects for the Hapsburgs, for the Netherlands contained a galaxy of cities on the way to becoming the richest in the world, yielding royal revenues to their overlord.

Mary of Burgundy died in 1482, leaving two young children, Philip and Margaret. To his chagrin Maximilian had to return home, while a council of Burgundian nobles governed the Netherlands in the name of his son Philip. When he became emperor, however, he could do something to secure the future of his children and to advance the interests of his house. The Iberian kingdoms, Castile and Aragon, had recently been united dynastically by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and with the conquest of Granada modern Spain took shape. Ferdinand and Isabella had one son and a large number of daughters. One of the younger of these was eagerly sought by Henry VII of England for his eldest son Arthur. Catherine of Aragon was later to play a tragic part in English history as the wife of Henry VIII. The Hapsburg did rather better than the Tudor. Maximilian married his daughter Margaret to Don John, prospective heir to the Spanish crowns, while his son Philip was married to Joanna, who, after the deaths of her brother John and an elder sister, became heiress herself. Of this marriage Charles was the second child and elder son.

Charles was born at Ghent in 1500. In 1504 his mother was recalled to Spain to become Queen of Castile under the guardianship of her father, Ferdinand of Aragon. Already she had fallen into a melancholy which soon developed into insanity. In 1506 his father Philip died, so that at the age of six he became Duke of Burgundy under the regency of his aunt Margaret, who brought him up with affectionate care. His spiritual director was Adrian of Utrecht, a product of the school of Deventer, a theologian of Louvain, a man of solemn Dutch piety who, as Adrian VI, was to be the last "barbarian" (i.e. non-Italian) Pope. His powerful moral influence made its mark on his princely pupil.

In 1515 the young duke was declared of age and took over the government, entrusting all responsibility to a council of staid and representative noblemen. He himself entered into the spirit of the court life of Brussels, was practised in all the knightly arts and accustomed to every kind of extravagance in food and dress. He became a typical Netherland noble in speech and

sentiment, his ideals being those of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a late Burgundian imitation of the older military orders, in which feasting and tourneying mingled joyously with a rigorous normality and a profession of eternal enmity to infidel and heretic.

In 1516 Ferdinand of Aragon died and, though his mother was alive, Charles was proclaimed in Brussels King of Castile, King of Aragon with its dependencies (Catalonia, Valencia, Sicily and Naples), and Lord of the recently discovered American continent from Canada to Peru (the gift to Ferdinand of the Spanish Pope, Alexander VI). Recalling his aunt Margaret to her regency in the Netherlands, he set sail for Spain to take possession of his inheritance. The Spaniards proved very difficult. Castilians and Aragonese had to be treated with separately. In both kingdoms nobles and towns were at loggerheads. All resented the fact that their new king was a foreigner ignorant of their language and inclined to depend chiefly on his tried Burgundian counsellors, one of whom secured the archbishopric of Toledo, vacant by the recent death of the great Cardinal Ximenes, for a nephew who never came to Spain at all. While Charles was engaged with these troubles and haggling over subsidies from the Cortes, news came of the death of Maximilian (1519), leaving him heir to the Hapsburg possessions in Austria and Germany. This new inheritance need not have called him away from his pressing duties in Spain. But the death of Maximilian left vacant also the imperial throne and the most illustrious title in Christendom.

The imperial crown was not hereditary but elective, the electors being the Archbishops of Mainz, Cologne and Trier together with four secular princes, one of whom, the King of Bohemia, was at this time a minor. At each election the electors not only coined money in bribes but also took care to bind all candidates to do nothing to impair their powers and privileges. Thus the central power dwindled to impotence. Feudalism did not give place in Germany, as in England and France, to a unitary state but to a system of quasi-independent principalities loosely held together. The Holy Roman Empire of the German nation was the greatest hoax in history, a mirage that deceived many of the emperors, and perhaps cheated the German people, too, with fateful results. For three generations the head of the house of Hapsburg had held the imperial title, and this in itself

made it attractive to Charles. Moreover, it went back to the remote past, to Charlemagne and, beyond him, to Constantine and the Christian emperors, nay to Trajan, to Augustus and Julius Caesar. Finally it had a religious significance. The emperor was crowned by the Pope himself as Vicar of God in the temporal sphere. However impotent he might be in actual fact, his office was radiant with mystic light. He was chief prince in Christendom, its protector against all its foes. For all these reasons, and not least for the religious one, Charles was bent on securing his election and was encouraged by his newly appointed chancellor, Gattinara, an Italian imperialist of the school of Dante.

Before the death of Maximilian and before Charles had left Brussels steps had been taken in this direction, but the electors were coy. Maximilian had used all the arts of cajolery to no purpose, and urged Charles to send money and yet more money. Already it was known that Francis I of France would be a candidate and he was freely using money and heiresses in support of his cause. Kinship with the reigning emperor would avail nothing. Maximilian even specified the sums that would be required to "fix" influential persons. It would appear that the electors sold and resold their votes for enormous sums; and, in addition to what he could raise in the Netherlands and in Spain, Charles had to obtain gigantic loans from the Fuggers.

On Maximilian's death the contest was renewed. In addition to his own prodigal expenditure, Francis had the support of Pope Leo X, who had no desire to see the Hapsburg predominant in Europe, and who in any case was dependent on Francis for a number of benefits, including the security of the Medici family in Florence. But Francis was a foreigner in spite of "Franco-Gallia", and though Charles had never set foot in Germany the result of the election was never seriously in doubt. On 28th June 1519 at Frankfort Charles was unanimously elected, though one of the electors, Brandenburg, declared that he voted "out of very fear". There was no need to fear Charles, who had bound himself to guarantee the electors and princes in all their rights and possessions, not to prejudice their influence on the imperial government, to appoint no foreigners to high office and to bring in no foreign troops. If there was any fear it was fear of the German people demanding the election of the grandson of "Max", supposing him to be a true German.

On hearing of his election Charles left Spain in haste, appointing as regent his old tutor Adrian of Utrecht, a clumsy choice in the circumstances. On 23rd October 1520, in the Cathedral of Aachen, he was solemnly anointed, robed, crowned and enthroned, having taken the traditional coronation oath to preserve the ancient faith, to protect the Church, to govern justly, to care for widows and orphans, to safeguard imperial rights and to reverence the Pope as his father in God.

Ein und zwanzig Jahre alt
Und nichts für die Unsterblichkeit gethan.

Some such thought must have entered into the heart of the young emperor, only twenty years old, on his coronation day. But also there would arise the more purely religious mediaeval vision of Christendom divinely entrusted to his care. Had not Gattinara written to him immediately after his election: "Sir, God has been very merciful to you. He has raised you above all the kings and princes of Christendom to a power such as no sovereign has enjoyed since your ancestor Charlemagne. He has set you on the way to world monarchy, towards the uniting of all Christendom under a single shepherd."

To be sure Charles, though born in the purple, had as yet but little practical experience. His ideals were noble, but how would they fare under the corrupting influence of power? On his coronation day his power must have seemed vast, but in fact it was subject to severe restrictions. In the first place his dominions, while extensive and imposing, were widely scattered and communications were slow and precarious. His American empire hardly contributed to his resources. The wealth of the Indies first came to support his son and successor. The way from Spain to the Netherlands and Germany was the difficult sea passage by the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel, not to be attempted when France was hostile. Alternatively one might sail to Italy, but the Mediterranean was constantly infested by Turkish corsairs. Even then there remained the barrier of the Alps. Every such journey was not only perilous but also costly; for an emperor must travel in befitting state with an elaborate court about him. Again and again we find him delayed through lack of resources for a journey that was clamantly necessary. The Burgundian lands which he deeply loved required but little attention, for there he was well served by his regents, his aunt

Margaret, and after her death, his sister Mary. But Spain, Italy and Germany were in constant need of his personal presence, however competent and understanding his agents might be.

In the second place none of his dominions was as solidly centralised as was France or England. All in varying degrees continued to manifest the symptoms of feudal order or disorder. Burgundy was perhaps the most developed in spite of the traditional liberties of nobles, clerics and towns. The royal power in Spain was advancing, but in Germany conditions had become quite chaotic. We do not need to be admirers of absolute monarchy to realise that it was an important stage in producing order and peace on a nation-wide scale. In foreign relations its advantages are notorious. The King of France could have his armies on the move while Charles was still haggling about subsidies with the Cortes of the Spanish kingdoms, the estates of the Netherlands and of Germany, where all kinds of particularist interests proved obstructive. Had Charles been concerned with one kingdom alone possibly he might have had incentive and opportunity to develop it on absolutist lines. This was the tendency of his government of Spain, where he spent the greater part of his reign. But the Renaissance idea of monarchy had no place in his thought. As a genuinely mediaeval king he insisted on his own rights and respected those of others. Once when his native town of Ghent persistently refused a contribution to the Netherlands government he took a dreadful revenge and cancelled its ancient charter of liberties, but that was an exception. Machiavelli praised Charles's grandfather Ferdinand of Aragon as a good example of a man who gained his political ends under a cloak of religion. None could say this of Charles. His numerous political testaments have not a breath of the Machiavellian prince.

Furthermore, there was no love lost between the heterogeneous peoples over whom by inheritance he had come to rule. They differed in race, language and temperament, in institutions, history and sentiment, and not least in interests; and already national feeling was everywhere strong. Italians long groaned under the Spanish ascendancy which crushed their renaissance and cost Italy the cultural leadership of the world. Spaniards, if Castilians and Aragonese are to be given one name, were jealous of Burgundians; and both Burgundians and Germans loathed Spaniards. Up to 1543 Charles was the hope of German

nationalists. "This emperor", wrote Bucer in that year, "could do much if he would but be an emperor of the German nation and a servant of Christ." Charles certainly would have claimed to be a servant of Christ though not in Bucer's sense, but emperor of the German nation he never meant to be. Educated as a Netherlander, he retained the affectionate loyalty of the Netherlanders, touchingly expressed in the solemn scene of his abdication and farewell. He became a thorough Spaniard, inspiring a mystic loyalty in the Spanish nobility, who served him devotedly, often with scant recompense, both in Europe and in America. But he was never quite at home in Germany, and his final failure there was partly due to his bringing Spanish troops to crush the Reformation. He regarded himself as, above all, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, superior to all merely national sentiments and policies and committed to pursue only universal aims.

Three major tasks, imposed by his imperial idealism, engaged Charles throughout his reign. Of these one, the maintenance of the just peace of Christendom, was the indispensable condition for the accomplishment of the other two, viz. war against the infidel and the restoration of religious unity.

I

Essentially Charles was a man of peace, whose days had to be spent largely in warfare. From the start he was plunged into the struggle between Hapsburg and Valois. As Duke of Burgundy he was the vassal of the King of France for his territories of Flanders and Artois. He had also an hereditary claim on the duchy whence he derived his title, now annexed to the French crown. This claim he never seriously pressed, retaining it only as a bargaining counter. On the other hand, the French king had claims on the Duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples. Navarre, also, astride the Pyrenees, was a bone of contention. With such a king as Francis I, restless, ambitious and slippery, war was already in 1520 clearly inevitable and soon broke out. There was skirmishing in Navarre and on the Netherlands frontier, but the main theatre was Italy. The principal business at the Diet of Worms was to secure German support against Francis. Immediately after the Diet Charles had returned to Spain, where a serious rebellion was in progress,

and his fortunes had reached a low ebb. In this situation he jotted down his inmost thoughts. "The first thing I must aim at is peace. Peace is a beautiful thing to talk of but difficult to have, for as every one knows it cannot be had without the enemy's consent. I must make great efforts, and that too is easier said than done." Where was he to get money and an army? "I feel that time is passing and I with it. [He was not yet twenty-five.] Yet I would not like to go without performing some great action to serve as a monument to my name. . . . I have done nothing so far to cover myself with glory." Victory, of course, would achieve this. "But if peace may be had on honourable terms I will accept it, and I will not cease to work for it."

Almost immediately there ensued the brilliant and unexpected victory of the imperialist generals at Pavia and the capture of Francis himself. With him Charles negotiated the Treaty of Madrid, which to modern minds familiar with the idea of the knock-out blow must seem tolerably generous in the circumstances. Henry VIII, Charles's not too eager ally, actually proposed to be himself crowned King of France. Charles, however, sent Francis home, having given him his sister Eleonore to wife in the hope of thus securing his friendship for the future. No sooner had Francis got home than he repudiated the treaty, an incredibly dishonourable act it seemed to Charles, and remained the emperor's enemy in spite of recurrent apparent reconciliations, always ready to make political capital out of his difficulties with the German Protestants and with the Turks. Francis's son and successor took up the struggle and, abandoning the Italian will-o'-the-wisp, turned French policy to seek a more natural expansion towards the Rhine.

Though courageous and eager for military glory, Charles was in no sense a man of war. It tormented his conscience to have to demand subsidies and service from his subjects for war purposes, and to witness their sufferings when their lands became the theatres of war. The peace of Christendom was his ideal if it could be had with justice and honour. Justice and honour meant the maintenance of rights, his own but also those of others. His empire had been built up not by conquest but by inheritance, and it was his God-given duty to hand it on intact. Hereditary right was thus the natural but also the sacred foundation of universal peace. Dynasticism has an ugly sound. It is obviously

absurd and intolerable that the destinies of peoples should be determined by the marriages of their royal families. That was to be the tragedy of the Netherlands, bequeathed to Philip of Spain. But the union of England and Scotland was brought about by a dynastic marriage, with good results in some respects. And if the "ramshackle" Hapsburg Austrian Empire was felt to be intolerable in 1918 the peoples of the Danubian lands have not had much happiness since it was destroyed. To the mind of Charles the dynastic principle was the clue to European peace. Dynastic projects figure prominently in all his outlines of policy which may be naïve but are not, at all events consciously, aggressive or cynical. Here was the most hopeful means of settling claims with their threat to peace. All the peoples of Europe might come to live together as one happy family ruled by the brothers and sisters, the children and the nephews and nieces of the emperor. The Hapsburg family was rich in such possibilities. Charles had a brother Ferdinand, who, as Archduke of Austria, helped him with the government of Germany. Of his four sisters two played important rôles, Mary and Eleonore. Another, Isabella, Queen of Denmark, had a son and two valuable daughters. He himself had a son and three daughters, and his brother Ferdinand had a large family. Charles held quite peremptorily that the ladies of his family must submit all personal feelings to the interests of his policy. Eleonore had to abandon a youthful love affair and become the bride of an elderly King of Portugal, and, after his death, of Francis I of France, in the hope of converting him from enmity to friendship. England had been at least a half-hearted ally while Charles's aunt Catherine remained queen, and his last high hope was placed in the marriage of his son Philip to Mary Tudor. Doubtless it was all a vain attempt to bind the nations together with cobwebs into a world community, but it would appear that nothing stronger is available even now.

II

The second task imposed by Charles's idealism was that of leading Christendom in an attack upon the infidel. We find him dwelling often on the old dream of liberating the Holy Places from the thrall of the unbeliever, oddly mixed with the more up-to-date ambition to win immortal fame in a Holy War. But the recapture of the Holy Places seems to have been the

ultimate end of all his plans, to attain which all other projects were regarded as but means. But the dream presented itself now in the guise of an urgent and quite prosaic reality. Not only was the north coast of Africa a base of operations for a Turkish fleet that controlled the Mediterranean and was apt to descend on Charles's own lands of Spain, Sicily and Italy; but from Constantinople the Turk had conquered the Balkans and was pressing up the Danube and threatening Vienna. The crusading spirit was dead in Europe. Time after time the Popes had proclaimed a crusade and required subsidies and service from the nations. But the nations had come, justifiably, to suspect that this was simply a way of raising money for purely selfish papal objects. Leo X's crusading appeal had fallen on deaf ears. Only those immediately threatened took the matter seriously. Naturally the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, who lived in Vienna and had claims on the Hungarian crown, was eager. It was his affair. But even his nearest neighbours, the Dukes of Bavaria, left him to it, not unwilling to see him weakened. The King of France, to the horror of the world, actually entered into an alliance with the enemy of the Faith against the Christian emperor.

As became his office, Charles took very seriously the duty of leading a Christian crusade. The most terrible count in his indictment of the French king was that by his continual threat of war he made the crusade impossible and finally by his alliance with the Turk had put himself beyond the pale of Christian respectability. Perhaps Charles was the last emperor to be genuinely under the spell of the conception of Christendom, as his chancellor Gattinara was the last statesman to base his policy upon it. But even in the intervals of peace with France he accomplished very little. He left to Ferdinand with what help he could get in Germany the defence of Austria, while his own interests dictated an attack on Africa, with Constantinople as ultimate target! Actually he undertook two punitive expeditions to Africa. The first was a minor success loudly acclaimed, but the second ended in dismal and complete disaster. And crusading is heard of no more.

III

To defend the Faith and protect the Church was another accepted imperial task, but it was to confront Charles in a form for which there was no real precedent. Already before his election

Martin Luther had sounded the trumpet of protest against one of the grossest abuses of the mediaeval Church, but the controversy very early shifted away from the theologically undefined doctrine of Indulgences to the very practical problem of Church authority and papal supremacy. In 1520 Luther had written his three great Reformation treatises: *The Liberty of a Christian Man*, setting forth his Evangelical insight; *The Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, with its penetrating criticism of the sacramental system; and his *Address to the Nobility of the German Nation*, summoning them to reform abuses. Within his Netherlands dominions, while yet on his way to be crowned at Aachen, the emperor-elect had decreed a holocaust of the books of Luther, and had personally witnessed the bonfire at Louvain. But in Germany the young emperor was strange to his new surroundings and had to conciliate his new subjects. At his first Diet at Worms he found himself constrained to grant Luther a hearing, and here he made his first political pronouncement, actually a personal confession of faith. In response to Luther's "Here I stand; I can no other" he made his declaration, not unworthy to be compared with it. "Ye know that I am born of the most Christian emperors of the noble German nation, of the Catholic kings of Spain, the archdukes of Austria, the dukes of Burgundy, who were all true sons of the Roman Church, defenders of the Catholic faith, of the sacred customs, decrees and uses of its worship, who have bequeathed all this to me as my heritage, and according to whose example I have lived hitherto. Thus I am determined to hold fast all that has happened since the Council of Constance. For it is certain that a single monk must err if he stands against the opinion of all Christendom. . . . Therefore I am determined to set my kingdoms and dominions, my friends, my body, my blood, my life, my soul upon it. For it were great shame to us and to you, members of the noble German nation, if through our negligence we were to let even the appearance of heresy enter the hearts of men."

In Dr. Martin and the Emperor Charles extremes in the social scale confronted each other, the peasant's son become monk and the heir of most of the proud ruling families of Europe. But that would be an entirely irrelevant consideration. Luther no less than the emperor accepted without question the old social order. Nor is it a case of conservative face to face with progressive, or whatever is the right word. It would be hard to

decide which of the two was the more conservative and traditionalist. It is not even a case of theologian versus politician, or Church and State. The new-born Evangelical faith confronts the embodiment of the mediaeval system in one of its best representatives, and both declare themselves in their purest forms unalloyed for the moment by ulterior motives and worldly concerns. Both for Luther and for Charles this was the highest moment of their lives, and it is the tragedy of history that neither could have any real understanding of the other.

Henceforth the restoration of the unity of the Church became a major concern of the emperor, never forgotten in the midst of others of greater immediate urgency. He was no obstinate bigot bent on crushing heresy by force. That was to be a last resort from which he was long withheld by lack of means and by political expediency, but chiefly because he believed, and continued to believe in spite of repeated disappointments, that the gulf which threatened to widen might be bridged by discussion and maybe by compromise. Here he was supported by Erasmian influence among his counsellors and even in his own heart, which was not blind to the need for reform. His reference to the Council of Constance is certainly significant, even if it meant no more than that he saw himself winning glory like his predecessor Sigismund, by bringing about Church unity and reform by means of a General Council. A third reforming Council was always one of his hopes. Not till 1543 did he make up his mind, after all other expedients had failed, to attempt to crush heresy by force, though by then he regretted he had not been able to do so earlier. Victorious at first through the timidity of the Protestant princes and the treachery to his own party of Maurice of Saxony, he was finally defeated and withdrew into private life in Spain, where he passed his time in simple enjoyments and in the exercises of religion, leaving Germany to his brother Ferdinand as emperor, and Spain with the Netherlands and his Italian interests to his unattractive and bigoted son Philip. The Peace of Augsburg, 1555, with its toleration of two faiths, Roman and Lutheran, existing side by side within the empire under the principle *cuius regio eius religio*, went out in his name. But he had no part in the framing of it, and to the end he protested his disapproval.

To one power alone in Europe Charles might reasonably have looked for complete understanding and support. The

Papacy might have been presumed to share his ideals for the just peace of Christendom, the crusade against the infidel and the crushing of heresy. But the curious fact is that the successive Popes who were his contemporaries were his most troublesome opponents. Leo X used every intrigue against his election as emperor and remained always unsympathetic and pro-French. This attitude accounted for the delay in putting Luther under imperial ban, so gaining valuable time for his cause. Even Adrian VI during his brief pontificate was disappointing. Though personally and in religious policy in sympathy with Charles, he was touchy at any suggestion that he owed his elevation to the emperor's favour. And he felt it his duty to be neutral as between the emperor and the French king, a neutrality which Charles could never understand. Papal neutrality has of course puzzled others in more modern times. Clement VII was his declared enemy, and the imperial army, though not under the emperor's command nor by his orders, rather as an unpaid and mutinous host, stormed and sacked Rome and shut up the Holy Father in his own castle. Charles was correctly horrified but nevertheless made full use of the occasion. It was while Clement was under duress that the English royal divorce was in process, and Charles was able to prevent the Pope from carrying out his intention of granting Henry's wish. The revocation of the case to Rome was the signal for Henry's breach with Rome. But Paul III was the worst of all, obstinate and unyielding in the matter of Church reform, unwearied in his demands on behalf of his family, the Farnese, dissatisfied even when a grandson obtained a duchy as dowry with a beloved though illegitimate daughter of the emperor. No doubt that was hardly so brilliant an alliance as fell to the Medici when their daughter married the Dauphin of France. It is hard to determine whether these Popes are to be regarded merely as heads of princely Italian houses using their brief tenure of the Papacy for the purpose of advancing their families, or as, perhaps, Italian patriots using the French and Spaniards to neutralise each other in the hope that both might be driven out of Italy.

In spite of all this Charles remained always deferential towards the Pope. At most he would apply diplomatic pressure. He would insist on the necessity of holding a Council for the reunion and reform of the Church, and that it must meet in Germany or at least not in Italy; the very idea which the Popes,

mindful of Constance and Basel, hated and dreaded above all. The worst he is ever recorded to have said of the most treacherous and slippery action of a Pope was, " God alone knows why the Pope acted thus ". He must have been the only ruler of his time who had any respect left for the Holy See, or, at all events, for its occupants. This may be taken as the complete proof of the genuineness of his piety.

Charles may have to be written down a failure, a self-confessed failure. He was essentially a common-place man, slow, hesitant, obstinate from his very conscientiousness, unequal to the tasks which destiny assigned to him. But then they were impossible tasks. The new Europe must have slipped inevitably from the control of any representative of traditional Christendom. But he was not an ignoble failure. Morally, both as a man and as a king, he stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries, Francis I, Henry VIII or any of the Popes. Loyal and affectionate towards his family, he yet demanded from them, as indeed from himself, entire selfless devotion to what he took to be their evident mission in history. The instructions he wrote for his young son Philip when he left him to be regent in Spain in 1542 are truly touching documents. The life of a ruler wholly devoted to his duty is there described. Based upon reverence for God and love of justice, the virtues of self-control, diligence, study, conscientious attention to the details of business are inculcated. The temptations and dangers of power are underlined. The habits of courtiers and the ambitions of royal servants are described, and the need for austere and critical isolation on the part of the monarch is stressed. A certain resignation, even weariness, makes itself apparent, but there is not a tinge of cynicism or of Machiavellianism. This *Mirror of Princes* was written as he set out on his last great enterprise that was to end in defeat and abdication.

Finally one must refer to the simple, sincere and genuine piety which breathes through all his private documents. In his first public pronouncement at the Diet of Worms he had declared his whole-hearted allegiance to the Catholic tradition. But there was nothing of the fanatical Counter-Reformation about him. This is doubtless why modern Romanist historians reserve all their bouquets for his bloody son. Charles lived in a larger world. He saw the need for Church reform. It was owing to his constant pressure that the Council of Trent was at last

summoned, but he did not foresee that its attitude and decisions would close the door to all comprehension and frustrate all his hopes. If only he had been able with Luther to break through the Three Walls of clerical pretension behind which ecclesiastical corruption lay entrenched! After all, the single monk with the Gospel in his hand availed more than the mighty potentate to cleanse the Augean stables and infuse fresh life into the religion of Europe.

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