

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
RISE, PROGRESS, AND DECLINE
OF THE
REFORMATION IN POLAND;
AND OF
THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINES HAVE
EXERCISED ON THAT COUNTRY,
IN LITERARY, MORAL, AND POLITICAL RESPECTS.

BY COUNT VALERIAN KRASINSKI.

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IN TWO VOLUMES, PRICE £1. 1s.

THE history of the Reformation in Poland presents a most extraordinary event in the annals of the religious world. The Protestant cause rose in that country, during the short space of half a century, to such a degree of strength, that its final triumph appeared certain; but during the space of another half century it was entirely overthrown, and all but annihilated. This extraordinary revolution was not effected through persecution directed by a legally constituted authority, as was the case in several other countries, but it was effected in spite of the laws of the country, which guaranteed the civil as well as the religious liberty of the citizens, by the skilful and unscrupulous policy of the Jesuits. The Protestants in Poland would, however, have withstood the most formidable attacks of their declared enemies, had not their cause been weakened by the lamentable discords which divided the Lutheran from the Reformed and Bohemian churches, and particularly undermined by the



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pernicious influence of the Anti-trinitarian doctrines. These two above-mentioned circumstances may be considered as the principal causes which rendered the Protestant party in Poland an easy prey to Romanist re-action, and which produced the most fatal consequences to that country.

The object of the present work is to delineate that deplorable event, to develop its causes, and to describe the mournful consequences it produced on the country in moral, literary, and political respects. It is hoped that this melancholy picture may be not without interest to the British Protestants, particularly in the present time, as it is calculated to give an additional evidence of the numerous blessings which this country has derived from the great work of the Reformation.

The first volume has been published, and will be delivered to the Subscribers. The second volume, the publication of which has been delayed in consequence of unforeseen circumstances, will appear in March.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON THE FIRST VOLUME.

"The reader will be as much surprised by the excellent style in which this book is written, as he will be instructed by the quantity of novel information which it contains. Count Krasinski's English would not disgrace any native historian, and his learning is such as could hardly be possessed by a writer of our own country. He is conversant with languages which do not often enter into the range of acquirement of the English student, and with points of history that, to the common reader at least, are quite unfamiliar. We are very glad, for our part, to bear testimony to his merits, and to welcome and thank a foreigner who has really rendered a service to the literature of our own country.

The title to Count Krasinski's work will suffice to show that it is little suited for general discussion in the columns of a daily paper; it may find, perhaps, the notice which it deserves in other periodicals, that are more exclusively devoted to religious and historical criticism; we ourselves must be content with pointing it out to the reader as a work of which the style, the subject, and the manner of treating it, are alike praiseworthy. We do not allude to the sympathy which is likely to be created for the work on account of the nation, and the misfortunes of the author; he has, happily, in the present case a still better claim to public attention, in the service which the public has received from him."—*The Times*, 27th Nov. 1838.

"No land has drawn more largely on the sympathy of Europe than brave unhappy Poland: she is here brought before us in a new light, and one which, whether the author intended it or not, may serve as a strong beacon to England. * * * * Count Krasinski writes with the earnestness of a man who feels his subject, as we wish every man of every nation felt it; and he pleads with those who may think him too warm, to consider 'what must have been the state of feelings of one who, educated by a pious mother in the tenets of scriptural religion, and taught, from his earliest infancy to consider that religion as the only true foundation of his present and future happiness, and the love of his native land as a sacred duty, commanded by its precepts; of one who, being strongly impressed by those sentiments, was recording the overthrow of his religion, and the consequent decline and fall of his country.' We can assure him that no such apology is necessary, for the language of his work is as unobjectionable as its subject is interesting; and we trust, with him, that his dear unhappy country is being prepared for some striking manifestation of future usefulness, by the adversities by which the Lord has seen good to afflict her, after once planting his candlestick there in so remarkable a manner. The first volume only of the work has reached us; the second is in course of publication. May it be richly blessed to the promotion of our common cause, and arouse many a British heart to more lively concern for our own invaded rights, while swelling, as every British heart must do, over the multiplied wrongs of Poland." — *The Christian Lady's Magazine*, Jan. 1839.

"We have great pleasure in calling attention to this learned and valuable work. The subject of which it treats, besides being highly interesting, is one of which so little is known to general readers, that to them it will present the charm of entire novelty. The manner, also, in which Count Krasinski has handled the important facts which he lays before his readers, adds the highest value to the information that he gives. In every page his judgment and good sense, as well as his industry and learning, are conspicuous; and he has displayed a degree of candour and impartiality which, as they are high merits in any historian, are most of all commendable in a work of this kind, as, unfortunately, the history of the Church has not often been written with that calmness of temper which insures an unbiassed judgment on the merits and failings of conflicting parties. It must not, however, be supposed that the impartiality of Count Krasinski is the result of indifference to all religious and political opinions; on the contrary, his warm attachment to civil and religious liberty, and his love of the principles of the Reformation, are to be read in every page, and break out in some of the most pathetic passages of his work; but he seems to have made a covenant with his heart, to adhere religiously, not only to truth in facts, but to charity in judging of the opponents of his faith, and by following this course he has done honour to his religion, and we are persuaded he will most surely benefit the cause it is his wish to serve." — *The Aberdeen Constitutional*, Dec. 15th, 1838.

"Every Protestant who peruses the work of Count Krasinski, must feel an honest pride in seeing his tenets, not vindicated, for that they needed not, but upheld, and brought, if we may so express it, to bear upon a great and important epoch of national history. Every Protestant must feel gratified in learning, that till the axe of Romanism was laid to the trunk of Polish prosperity and independence, the people were as morally great as they were physically brave. * * * * To the Protestant, we repeat, that this work must be peculiarly acceptable. It is a full and satisfactory refutation of many popular and party asseverations, and it is cheering, in these days of religious off-failing, when some, even of those who 'sit in high places,' have not escaped the taint of sectarianism, the danger of 'doubt,'

and have been as shepherds stealthily leading their flock astray,—to see a layman and a foreigner come boldly and efficiently forward as the champion and advocate of the one pure faith, ‘holy and undefiled.’—*The Morning Post*, Dec. 17th, 1838.

“This is a work of first-rate ability and incalculable importance. As the production of a foreigner, its impressive and nervous style is wonderful. Its spirit is that of decided yet liberal opposition to Popery. Its publication is most seasonable; it shows what we have to expect in every thing which concerns national greatness, should the Jesuits, and their degrading system of superstition, ever attain the ascendancy among us. It holds out, also, a most salutary warning, as to the inevitable consequences of division in the ranks of the Protestant army, when the very citadel of our liberties is so closely besieged. It teaches, however, one lesson of more value than all the rest—it is this; if Poland, in the earlier stages of its history, and in the possession of the mere elements of civil freedom, could wage a successful war of resistance to Papal encroachment, what may not Englishmen do, with their abundance of political privileges, in opposing its pretensions? Still, that lesson is conveyed in conjunction with the warning that we have a most crafty enemy to cope with, and that he knows how to employ for his advantage the very institutions and laws framed to secure an opposite result.

* * * * * In short, this important work should be carefully studied by all Protestants alive to the dangers of the present crisis, as casting a strong reflected light on the principles and policy of a church as inimical to our civil and religious liberties as infidelity itself is subversive of truth and greatness.”—*The Watchman*, Sept. 19th, 1838.

“A work of considerable importance and merit, which we can heartily recommend to our readers.”—*Blackwood’s Magazine*.

“We must repeat, that the book before us is a valuable contribution to modern history, and that it will, if we are not mistaken, be favourably received by the public.”—*The Athenæum*.

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