

of southern Europe, their poverty and their degradation. The reason for the difference is clear. During these centuries, most of the countries of northern Europe have allowed freedom to preach the Gospel, and ~~multitudes~~ multitudes in these nations have come to know Christ as Saviour. The resulting improvement in character has shown itself in betterment of every phase of life. At the time of the ~~Reformation~~ Reformation, Spain and Italy were economically and politically ahead of the northern countries. When the work of Martin Luther reached those lands, thousands of people began to show interest in the Gospel. Then the clever and cruel Inquisition pitilessly ~~searched~~ searched out the men who believed in salvation through faith alone, destroyed them and burned their books, and in the southern half of Europe for nearly three centuries it was practically ~~impossible~~ impossible for anyone to hear the Gospel. The northern countries went ahead, and the southern ones sank into comparative degradation and poverty. Today it is these countries, where the Gospel was so long forbidden, which are most open to the entrance of Communism. The best antidote to Communism is the preaching of the Historic Christian Faith.

At this point, someone may wish to ask, did not Christianity win its way against the ~~persecutions~~ persecutions of the Roman Empire? During the first three centuries of its history, the Christian Church was frequently purged and purified by the great persecutions which the Roman emperors set afoot. It should be noticed, however, that these were sporadic and far from ~~continuous~~ continuous. Between them there were long periods in which the laws against Christianity were hardly noticed. Between the persecution of Decius and the last and greatest of all, that of ~~Diocletian~~ Diocletian, there was a period of nearly forty years in which the church was free from all restraint on the part of the law, and was