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J.B. Bury

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THE century and a half, roughly from 1050 to 1200, with which this volume is concerned, follows on a period when the disorganization and anarchy of the ninth century had barely been made good. Order had been to some extent restored; the desire for order and for peace was at any rate widespread. The opportunity for fruitful development, both in the sphere of ecclesiastical and of secular government, and also in those pursuits which especially needed peace for their prosecution, such as culture and commerce, had now arrived. We have to deal, then, with a period, on the one hand, of new movements and new ideas—the appearance of new monastic orders, a renaissance of thought and learning, the rise of towns and the expansion of commerce; on the other, of consolidation and centralization—the organization of the monarchical government of the Church, the development of monarchical institutions in the various countries of Europe, and, to give direction and solidity to the whole, the revived study of Civil and Canon Law. Finally, and most novel of all, we see Europe at once divided by the great conflict of Empire and Papacy and united by the Crusades in the holy war against the infidel. The former as well as the latter implies a conception of the unity of Western Christendom, a unity which found expression in the universal Church. For the Church alone was universal, European, international; and, as its institutions begin to take more definite form, the more deeply is this character impressed upon them...

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