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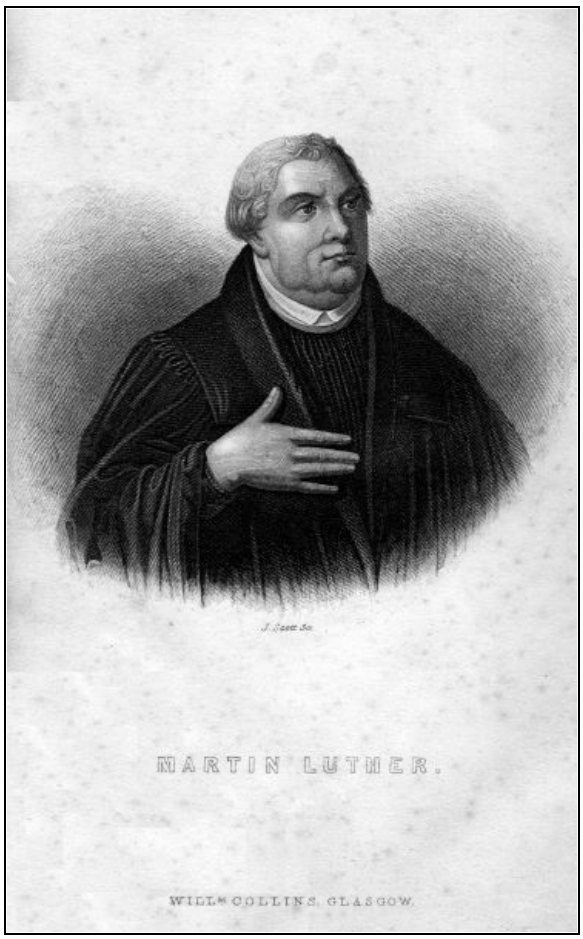

MARTIN LUTHER.
WILL^{M} COLLINS, GLASGOW.

HISTORY

OF

THE REFORMATION

IN THE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ, D.D.

J'appelle accessoire, l'estat des affaires de ceste vie caduque et transitoire. J'appelle principal, le gouvernement spirituel auquel reluit souverainement la providence de Dieu.—Theodore De Beze.

By *accessory* I mean the state of affairs in this fading and transitory life. By principal I mean the spiritual government in which the providence of God is sovereignly displayed.

A NEW TRANSLATION:

(CONTAINING THE AUTHOR'S LAST IMPROVEMENTS,)

BY HENRY BEVERIDGE, ESQ. ADVOCATE.

VOLUME FIRST.

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TRANSLATOR'S ADVERTISEMENT.

D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation is so well known and so highly appreciated as to make it not only unnecessary, but almost presumptuous, for a mere Translator to say any thing in commendation of it. The public feeling unquestionably is, that of the works which have recently appeared, it is one of the most talented, interesting, important, and seasonable. The mere lapse of time, aided by the active misrepresentations of the Romish party, had begun to make an impression in some degree unfavourable to the principles of the Reformation. This admirable work has again placed these principles in their true light. By its vivid display of what Rome was and did, it has impressively reminded us of what she still is, and is prepared to do. Her great boast is, that she has never changed. If so, she longs to return to her former course, and will return to it the first moment that circumstances enable her to do so. Being thus warned, our duty is plain. We must prepare for the combat; and of all preparations, none promises to be more effectual than that of thoroughly embuing the public mind with the facts so graphically delineated, and the principles so luminously and forcibly expounded in this work of D'Aubigné.

But, it may be asked, Has not this purpose been effected already, or at least may it not be effected without the instrumentality of a new translation?

To this question the Translator answers, *First*, The form of the present translation and the price at which it is published place the work within the reach of thousands to whom it might otherwise be a sealed book. *Second*, While this Translation is the cheapest in existence, it is also the only one which can, in strict truth, be regarded as genuine. The edition from which this translation is made was published in 1842. The date would have been of little consequence if the work had continued the same; but the fact is, that the edition of 1842 is not a reprint, but a complete revision of the one which preceded it. Numerous passages of considerable length and great importance have been introduced, while others which had, on a careful examination, been deemed redundant or inaccurate, have been expunged. Surely, after all the pains which the

distinguished author has expended on the improvement of his work, it is scarcely doing justice either to him or to the English reader to leave his improvements unknown. In another respect the present Translation exclusively contains what is conceived to be a very decided improvement. All the Notes, the meaning of which is not given in the Text, have been literally translated. It seemed somewhat absurd while translating French for the benefit of the English reader, to be at the same time presenting him with a large number of passages of untranslated Latin.

While the work has been printed in a form to which the most fastidious cannot object, it has been issued at a price which makes it accessible to all. The result, it is hoped, will be, that D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation will obtain a circulation somewhat adequate to its merits, and by its introduction into every family become what it well deserves to be—a household book.

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PREFACE TO THE LAST EDITION.

[1]

My purpose is not to write the history of a party, but that of one of the greatest revolutions which has taken place among men—the history of a mighty impulse which was given to the world three centuries ago, and the influence of which is still, in our day, every where perceived. The history of the Reformation is different from the history of Protestantism. In the former, every thing bears testimony to a revival of human nature, to a transformation, social and religious, emanating from God. In the latter are too often seen a remarkable degeneracy from primitive principles, party intrigue, a sectarian spirit, and the impress of petty private feelings. The history of Protestantism might interest none but Protestants; the history of the Reformation is for all Christians, or rather all men.

The historian has a choice in the field in which he is to labour. He may describe the great events which change the face of a people, or the face of the world; or he may narrate the calm and progressive course, whether of a nation, the Church, or mankind, which usually follows great social changes. Both fields of history are highly important; but the preference, in point of interest, seems due to those epochs which, under the name of Revolutions, introduce a nation or society at large to a new era and a new life.

Such a transformation I have attempted to describe with very humble powers, hoping that the beauty of the subject will compensate for my want of ability. In styling it a *Revolution*, I give it a name which in our day is in discredit with many, who almost confound it with *revolt*. This is a mistake. A revolution is a change which takes place in the world's affairs. It is something new

evolved (*revolvo*) from the bosom of humanity; and, indeed, before the end of the last century, the term was oftener used in a good than a bad sense. They spoke of "a happy," a "marvellous" revolution. The Reformation being a re-establishment of the principles of primitive Christianity, is [2] the opposite of a revolt. For that which behoved to revive it was a regenerating—for that which must always subsist, a conservative movement. Christianity and the Reformation, while establishing the grand principle that all souls are equal in the sight of God, and overthrowing the usurpations of a haughty priesthood, which presumed to place itself between the Creator and his creature, lay it down as a fundamental principle of social order, that all power is of God, and cry aloud to all, "Love your brethren, fear God, honour the king."

The Reformation differs essentially from the revolutions of antiquity, and from the greater part of those of modern times. In these, political changes are in question, and the object is to establish or overthrow the ascendancy of one, or it may be of many. The love of truth, of holiness, and eternity, was the simple, yet powerful, spring by which our Reformation was effected. It marks a step which human nature has taken in advance. In fact, if man, instead of pursuing only material, temporal, earthly interests, proposes to himself a higher aim, aspiring to immaterial and immortal blessings, he advances and makes progress. The Reformation is one of the brightest days of this glorious advance. It is a pledge that the new struggle, which is now being decided, will terminate in favour of truth, with a triumph still more pure, spiritual, and splendid.

Christianity and the Reformation are the two greatest revolutions on record. Unlike the different political movements of which we read, they took place not in one nation merely, but in several nations, and their effects must be felt to the end of the world.

Christianity and the Reformation are the same revolution, effected at different times, and under different circumstances. They vary in secondary features, but are identical in their primary and principal lineaments. The one is a repetition of the other. The one ended the old, the other began the new world; the middle ages lie between. The one gave birth to the other, and if, in some respects, the daughter bears marks of inferiority, she on the other hand has her own peculiar properties.

One of these is the rapidity of her action. The great revolutions which have issued in the fall of a monarchy, and the change of a whole political system, or which have thrown the human mind on a new course of development, were slowly and gradually prepared. The old power had long been undermined, and its principal buttresses had one after another disappeared. It was so on the introduction of Christianity. But the Reformation is seen, at the first glance, to present a different aspect. The Church of Rome appears, under Leo X, in all its power and glory. A monk speaks, and [3] over the half of Europe this power and glory crumble away, thus reminding us of the words in which the Son of God announces his second advent: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matth., xxiv, 27.)

This rapidity is inexplicable to those who see, in this great event, only a *reform*, and regard it as simply an act of criticism, which consisted in making a choice among doctrines, discarding some, retaining others, and arranging those retained, so as to form them into a new system.

How could a whole nation, how could several nations, have so quickly performed an operation so laborious? How could this critical examination have kindled that fire of enthusiasm which is essential to great, and, above all, to rapid revolutions? The Reformation, as its history will show, was altogether different. It was a new effusion of the life which Christianity brought into the world. It was the triumph of the greatest of doctrines, that which animates those who embrace it with the purest and strongest enthusiasm—the doctrine of faith, the doctrine of grace. Had the Reformation been what many Catholics and many Protestants in our day imagine,—had it been that negative system of negative reason, which childishly rejects whatever displeases it, and loses sight of the great ideas and great truths of Christianity, it had never passed the narrow limits of an academy, a cloister, or a cell. It had nothing in common with what is generally understood by Protestantism. Far from being a worn-out, emaciated body, it rose up like a man of might and fire.

Two considerations explain the rapidity and the extent of this revolution. The one must be sought in God, the other among men. The impulse was given by a mighty and invisible hand, and the change effected was a Divine work. This is the conclusion at which an impartial and attentive observer, who stops not at the surface, necessarily arrives. But the historian's task is not finished; for God works by second causes. A variety of circumstances, many of them unperceived, gradually prepared men for the great transformation of the sixteenth century, and, accordingly, the human mind was ripe when the hour of its emancipation pealed.

The task of the historian is to combine these two great elements in the picture which he presents, and this has been attempted in the present history. We shall be easily understood, when we come to trace the second causes which contributed to the Reformation, but some perhaps will not [4] understand us so well, and will even be tempted to tax us with superstition, when we attribute the accomplishment of the work to God. The idea, however, is particularly dear to us. This history, as indicated by the inscription on its title-page, places in front and over its head the simple and prolific principle, GOD IN HISTORY. But this principle being generally neglected, and sometimes disputed, it seems necessary to expound our views with regard to it, and thereby justify the method which we have seen it proper to adopt.

History cannot, in our day, be that lifeless series of events which the greater part of previous historians deemed it sufficient to enumerate. It is now understood that in history as in man are

two elements, matter and spirit. Our great historians, unable to satisfy themselves with a detail of facts, constituting only a barren chronicle, have sought for a principle of life to animate the materials of past ages.

Some have borrowed this principle from art, aiming at vivid, faithful, and graphic description, and endeavouring to make their narrative live with the life of the events themselves.

Others have applied to philosophy for the spirit which should give fruit to their labours. To facts they have united speculative views, instructive lessons, political and philosophical truths, enlivening their narrative by the language which they have made it speak, and the ideas which it has enabled them to suggest.

Both methods doubtless are good, and should be employed within certain limits. But there is another source to which, above all others, it is necessary to apply for the spirit and life of the past —I mean Religion. History should be made to live with its own proper life. God is this life. God must be acknowledged—God proclaimed—in history. The history of the world should purport to be annals of the government of the Supreme King.

I have descended into the field to which the narratives of our historians invited me, and there seen the actions of men and of states in energetic development and violent collision: of the clang of arms, I have heard more than I can tell; but no where have I been shown the majestic form of the Judge who sits umpire of the combat.

And yet in all the movements of nations, there is a living principle which emanates from God. God is present on the vast stage on which the generations of men successively appear. True! He is there a God invisible; but if the profane multitude pass carelessly by, because He is concealed, profound intellects, spirits which feel a longing for the principle of their existence, seek him with so much the more earnestness, and are not satisfied until they are prostrated before Him. And [5]
their enquiries are magnificently rewarded. For, from the heights which they must reach in order to meet with God, the history of the world, instead of exhibiting to them, as to the ignorant crowd, a confused chaos, is seen like a majestic temple, on which the invisible hand of God himself is at work, and which, from humanity, as the rock on which it is founded, is rising up to his glory.

Shall we not see God in those great phenomena, those great personages, those great states, which rise, and suddenly, so to speak, spring from the dust of the earth, giving to human life a new impulse, form, and destiny? Shall not we see Him in those great heroes who start up in society, at particular epochs, displaying an activity and a power beyond the ordinary limits of man, and around whom individuals and nations come without hesitation, and group themselves as around a higher and mysterious nature? Who flung forward into space those comets of gigantic form and fiery tail, which only appear at long intervals, shedding on the superstitious herd of mortals either plenty and gladness, or pestilence and terror? Who, if not God?... Alexander seeks his origin in the abodes of Divinity; and in the most irreligious age there is no great renown which strives not to connect itself in some way with heaven.

And do not those revolutions, which cast down dynasties, or even whole kingdoms into the dust; those huge wrecks which we fall in with in the midst of the sands; those majestic ruins which the field of humanity presents, do not those cry loud enough, God in History? Gibbon, sitting amid the wrecks of the Capitol, and contemplating the venerable ruins, acknowledges the intervention of a higher power. He sees, he feels it, and in vain would turn away from it. This spectre of a mysterious power reappears behind each ruin, and he conceives the idea of describing its influence in the history of the disorganisation, the decline and fall of this Roman power, which had subjugated the nations. This powerful hand, which a man of distinguished genius, one, however, who had not bent the knee before Jesus Christ, perceives athwart scattered fragments of the tomb of Romulus, reliefs of Marcus Aurelius, busts of Cicero and Virgil, statues of Cæsar and Augustus, trophies of Trajan, and steeds of Pompey, shall not we discover amid all ruins, and recognise as the hand of our God?

Strange! this interposition of God in human affairs, which even Pagans had recognised, men reared amid the grand ideas of Christianity treat as superstition.

The name which Grecian antiquity gave to the Sovereign God, shows us that it had received [6]
primitive revelations of this great truth of a God, the source of history, and of the life of nations. It called him *Zeus*,[1] that is to say, He who gives *life* to all that lives, to individuals and nations. To his altars kings and subjects come to take their oaths, and from his mysterious inspirations Minos and other legislators pretend to have received their laws. Nay more, this great truth is figured by one of the most beautiful myths of Pagan antiquity. Even Mythology might teach the sages of our day. This is a fact which it may be worth while to establish; perhaps there are individuals who will oppose fewer prejudices to the lessons of Paganism than to those of Christianity. This Zeus, then, this Sovereign God, this Eternal Spirit, the principle of life, is father of Clio, the Muse of History, whose mother is Mnemosyne or Memory. Thus, according to antiquity, history unites a celestial to a terrestrial nature. She is daughter of God and man. But, alas! the short-sighted wisdom of our boasted days is far below those heights of Pagan wisdom. History has been robbed of her divine parent, and now an illegitimate child, a bold adventurer, she roams the world, not well knowing whence she comes, or whither she goes.

But this divinity of Pagan antiquity is only a dim reflection, a flickering shadow of the Eternal Jehovah. The true God whom the Hebrews worship, sees meet to imprint it on the minds of all

nations that he reigns perpetually on the earth, and for this purpose gives, if I may so express it, a bodily form to this reign in the midst of Israel. A visible Theocracy behoved for once to exist on the earth, that it might incessantly recall the invisible Theocracy which will govern the world for ever.

And what lustre does not the great truth—God in History—receive from the Christian Dispensation? Who is Jesus Christ, if he be not God in History? It was the discovery of Jesus Christ that gave John Müller, the prince of modern historians, his knowledge of history. "The Gospel," he says, "is the fulfilment of all hopes, the finishing point of all philosophy, the explanation of all revolutions, the key to all the apparent contradictions of the physical and moral world; in short, life and immortality. Ever since I knew the Saviour, I see all things clearly; with him there is no difficulty which I cannot solve."[2]

So speaks this great historian; and, in truth, is not the fact of God's appearance in human nature the key-stone of the arch, the mysterious knot which binds up all the things of earth, and attaches them to heaven? There is a birth of God in the history of the world, and shall God not be in history? Jesus Christ is the true God in the history of men. The very meanness of his appearance proves it. When man wishes to erect a shade or shelter on the earth, you may expect preparations, materials, scaffolding, workmen, tools, trenches, rubbish. But God, when he is pleased to do it, takes the smallest seed, which a new-born babe could have clasped in its feeble hand, deposits it in the bosom of the earth, and, from this grain, at first imperceptible, produces the immense tree under which the families of the earth recline. To do great things by imperceptible means is the law of God. [7]

In Jesus Christ this law receives its most magnificent fulfilment. Of Christianity, which has now taken possession of the portals of nations, which is, at this moment, reigning or wandering over all the tribes of the earth from the rising to the setting sun, and which incredulous philosophy herself is obliged to acknowledge as the spiritual and social law of the world—of this Christianity, (the greatest thing under the vault of heaven, nay, in the boundless immensity of Creation,) what was the commencement? An infant born in the smallest town of the most despised nation of the earth—an infant whose mother had not what the poorest and most wretched female in any one of our cities has, a room for birth—an infant born in a stable and laid in a manger!... There, O God, I behold and I adore Thee!

The Reformation knew this law of God, and felt she had a call to accomplish it. The idea that God is in history was often brought forward by the Reformers. In particular, we find it on one occasion expressed by Luther, under one of those grotesque and familiar, yet not undignified figures which he was fond of employing in order to be understood by the people. "The world," said he one day at table among his friends; "the world is a vast and magnificent game at cards, consisting of emperors, kings, and princes. For several ages the pope has beaten the emperors, princes, and kings, who stooped and fell under him. Then our Lord God came and dealt the cards, taking to himself the smallest, [Luther,] and with it has beaten the pope, who beat the kings of the earth.... God used it as his ace. 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree,' says Mary." (Luke, i, 52.)

The period whose history I am desirous to trace, is important with reference to the present time. Man, on feeling his weakness, is usually disposed to seek for aid in the institutions which he sees existing around him, or in devices, the offspring of his own imagination. The history of the Reformation shows that nothing new is done with what is old, and that if, according to our Saviour's expression, there must be new vessels for new wine, there must also be new wine for new vessels. It directs man to God, the sole actor in history—to that divine Word—always ancient, from the eternity of the truths which it contains—always new, by the regenerating influence which it exerts, which three centuries ago purified society, restoring faith in God to those whom superstition had enfeebled; and which, at all epochs in the world's history, is the source from which salvation proceeds. [8]

It is singular to see a great number of individuals under the agitation produced by a vague longing for some fixed belief, actually applying to old Catholicism. In one sense, the movement is natural. Religion being so little known, they imagine the only place to find it is where they see it painted, in large characters, on a banner, which age makes respectable. We say not that every kind of Catholicism is incapable of giving man what he wants. Our belief is, that a distinction should be carefully drawn between Catholicism and the Papacy. The Papacy we hold to be an erroneous and destructive system; but we are far from confounding Catholicism with it. How many respectable men, how many true Christians has not the Catholic Church contained! What immense services did not Catholicism render to existing states on their first formation, at a time when it was still strongly impregnated with the Gospel, and when the Papacy was only sketched above it in faint outline! But we are far away from those times. In our day an attempt is made to yoke Catholicism to the Papacy; and if catholic Christian truths are presented, they are little else than baits to allure men into the nets of the hierarchy. There is nothing to be expected from that quarter. Has the papacy abandoned one of its practices, its doctrines, its pretensions? Will not this religion, which other ages were unable to bear, be still less tolerable to ours? What revival was ever seen to emanate from Rome? Is it from the Papal hierarchy, all engrossed by earthly passions, that the spirit of faith, hope, and charity, which alone will save us, can proceed? Is it an effete system, which has no life for itself, which is everywhere struggling with death, and exists only by aid borrowed from without, that will give life to others, and animate Christian society with the heavenly breath for which it sighs?

Or will this void in heart and soul, which some of our contemporaries begin to feel, dispose others of them to apply to the new Protestantism which has in several places supplanted the principal doctrines taught in the days of the Apostles and Reformers? A great vagueness of [9] doctrine reigns in many of those Reformed Churches whose original members gave their blood as a seal of the living faith which animated them. Men of distinguished talents, alive to all that is beautiful in creation, have fallen into singular aberrations. A general faith in the divinity of the Gospel is the only standard which they are willing to follow. But what is this Gospel? This is the essential question; and yet all are silent on it, or, rather, each speaks in his own way. What avails it to know that in the midst of the people stands a vessel placed there by God in order to cure them, if none care for its contents, if none endeavour to appropriate them? This system cannot fill up the existing void. While the faith of the Apostles and Reformers is now in all quarters displaying its activity and power in the conversion of the world, this vague system does nothing, gives no light, no life.

But let us not be without hope. Does not Roman Catholicism confess the great doctrines of Christianity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creator, Saviour, and Sanctifier, the Truth? Does not vague Protestantism hold in its hand the Book of Life, which is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness?" And how many upright spirits, honourable in the eyes of men, and pleasing in the sight of God, are found among the followers of these two systems! How shall we not love them?—how shall we not ardently desire their complete emancipation from the elements of the world? Charity is of vast extent; she takes the most opposite opinions into her embrace, that she may bring them to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Already there are signs which show that these two extreme opinions are in course of approximating to Jesus Christ, who is the centre of truth. Are there not some Roman Catholic churches in which the reading of the Scriptures is recommended and practised? And, in regard to Protestant rationalism, how great the advance which it has already made! It did not originate in the Reformation, for the history of this great revolution will prove that it was a time of faith; but may we not hope that it is tending towards it? May not the force of truth reach it through the Word of God, and, reaching, transform it? Even now it gives signs of religious sentiment, inadequate, no doubt, but still forming an approach towards sound doctrine, and giving hopes of decisive progress.

Both Protestantism and old Catholicism are in themselves out of the question, and off the field; and it must be from some other source that the men of our day are to derive a saving power. There must be something which comes not of man, but of God. "Give me," said Archimedes, "a [10] point outside the world, and I will lift it from its poles." True Christianity is this point outside the world. It lifts the human heart from the double pivot of egotism and sensuality, and will one day lift the whole world from its evil course, and make it turn on a new axis of righteousness and peace.

Whenever religion is in question, three objects engage the attention—God, man, and the priest. There can only be three religions on the earth, according as God, man, or the priest, is the author and head. By the religion of the priest, I mean that which is invented by the priest for the glory of the priest, and is ruled over by a sacerdotal caste. By the religion of man, I mean those systems, those various opinions which human reason forms, and which, created by man under disease, are, in consequence, utterly devoid of power to cure him. By the religion of God, I mean the truth as God himself has given it, having for its end and result the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Hierarchism, or the religion of the priest, Christianity, or the religion of God, rationalism, or the religion of man, are the three systems which in our days share Christendom among them. There is no safety either for man or for society in hierarchism and rationalism. Christianity alone will give life to the world; but, unhappily, of the three dominant systems it is not the one which counts the greatest number of followers.

Followers, however, it has. Christianity is doing its work of regeneration among many Catholics in Germany, and, doubtless, in other countries also. In our opinion, it is accomplishing it more purely and efficaciously among the evangelical Christians in Switzerland, France, Great Britain, the United States, etc. Blessed be God, the revivals, individual or social, which the Gospel produces, are no longer in our day rare events, for which we must search in ancient annals!

What I design to write, is a general history of the Reformation. I purpose to follow its course among the different nations, and to show that the same truths have everywhere produced the same results; at the same time, pointing out the diversities occasioned by differences of national character. And, first, it is in Germany especially that we find the primitive type of reform. There it presents the most regular development, there, above all, it bears the character of a revolution not limited to this or that people, but embracing the whole world. The Reformation in Germany is the fundamental history of reform. It is the great planet; the other Reformations are secondary [11] planets, which turn with it, lighted by the same sun, and adapted to the same system, but still having a separate existence, each shedding a different light, and always possessing a peculiar beauty. To the Reformation of the sixteenth century we may apply the words of St. Paul, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." (1 Cor., xv, 41.) The Swiss Reformation took place at the same time with that of Germany, and independently of it, and presented, more especially at an after period, some of the grand features which characterise the German Reformation. The Reformation in England has very special claims on our attention, from the powerful influence

which the Church of that kingdom is now exercising over the whole world. But recollections of family and of flight, the thought of battles, sufferings, and exile endured for the cause of the Reformation in France, give it, in my eyes, a peculiar attraction. Considered in itself, and also in the date of its commencement, it presents beauties of its own.

I believe that the Reformation is a work of God; this must have been already seen. Still, I hope to be impartial in tracing its history. Of the principal Roman Catholic actors in this great drama—for example, of Leo X, Albert of Magdeburg, Charles V, and Doctor Eck—I believe I have spoken more favourably than the greater part of historians have done. On the other hand, I have not sought to hide the faults and failings of the Reformers.

Since the winter of 1831-32, I have delivered public lectures on the period of the Reformation, and I then published my opening Address.[3] These lectures have served as a preparative for the work which I now offer to the public.

This history has been drawn from sources made familiar to me by long residence in Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, and by the study, in the original tongues, of documents relating to the religious history of Great Britain, and some other countries besides. These sources are indicated by notes throughout the work, and therefore require not to be mentioned here.

I could have wished to authenticate the different parts of my narrative by numerous original notes, but found that, if long and frequent, they might interrupt the course of the narrative in a manner disagreeable to the reader. I have, therefore, confined myself to certain passages which seemed fitted to make him more thoroughly acquainted with subject.

I address this history to those who love to see past events simply as they were, and not by the help of the magic mirror of genius, which magnifies and gilds, but sometimes also diminishes and distorts them. Neither the philosophy of the eighteenth, nor the romance of the nineteenth century, will furnish my opinions or my colours. I write the history of the Reformation in its own spirit. Principles, it has been said, have no modesty. Their nature is to rule, and they doggedly insist on the privilege. If they meet in their path with other principles which dispute their ascendancy, they give battle instantly; for a principle never rests till it has conquered. Nor can it be otherwise. To reign is its life; if it reigns not, it dies. Hence, while declaring that I am not able, and that I have no wish to rival other historians of the Reformation, I make a reservation in favour of the principles on which this history rests, and fearlessly maintain their superiority. [12]

I cannot help thinking that as yet no history of the memorable epoch which I am about to describe exists in French. When I commenced my work, I saw no indication that the blank was to be filled up. This circumstance alone could have induced me to undertake the work, and I here bring it forward as my excuse. The blank exists still; and I pray Him from whom every good gift "cometh down" to grant that this humble attempt may not be without benefit to some of its readers.

J. H. M. D'AUBIGNÉ.

Eaux-Vives, near Geneva.

HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. [13]

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

STATE OF MATTERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

Christianity—Two distinguishing Principles—Formation of the Papacy—First encroachments—Influence of Rome—Co-operation of Bishops and Factions—External Unity of the Church—Internal Unity of the Church—Primacy of St. Peter—Patriarchates—Co-operation of Princes—Influence of the Barbarians—Rome invokes the Franks—Secular Power—Pepin and Charlemagne—The Decretals—Disorders of

Rome—The Emperor the Pope's Liege Lord—Hildebrand—His character—Celibacy —Struggle with the Emperor—Emancipation of the Pope—Hildebrand's Successors —The Crusades—The Church—Corruption of Doctrine.

The enfeebled world was rocking on its base when Christianity appeared. National religions which had sufficed for the fathers, could no longer satisfy the children. The new generation could not be moulded in the ancient forms. The gods of all nations transported to Rome, had there lost their oracles, as the nations had there lost their liberty. Brought face to face in the Capitol, they had mutually destroyed each other, and their divinity had disappeared. A great void had been made in the religion of the world.

A kind of deism, destitute of spirit and life, kept floating, for some time, over the abyss in which the vigorous superstitions of the ancients were engulfed. But, like all negative beliefs, it was unable to build. Narrow national distinctions fell with the gods, and the nations melted down into one another. In Europe, Asia, and Africa, there was now only one empire, and the human race began to feel its universality and its unity.

Then the Word was made flesh. [14]

God appeared among men, and as a man, "to save that which was lost." In Jesus of Nazareth "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

This is the greatest event in the annals of the world. Ancient times had prepared it,—new times flow from it. It is their centre, their bond, and their unity.

Thenceforth all the popular superstitions were without meaning, and the slender remains which they had saved from the great shipwreck of infidelity sank before the Majestic Sun of eternal truth.

The Son of man lived thirty-three years here below, curing the sick, instructing sinners, having no place where to lay his head, yet displaying, in the depth of this humiliation, a grandeur, a holiness, a power, and divinity, which the world had never known. He suffered, died, rose again, and ascended to heaven. His disciples, beginning at Jerusalem, traversed the empire and the world, everywhere proclaiming their Master "the Author of eternal salvation." From the heart of a nation, which stood aloof from all nations, came forth a mercy which invited and embraced all. A great number of Asiatics, Greeks, and Romans, till then led by priests to the feet of dumb idols, believed the Word which suddenly illumined the earth "like a sunbeam," as Eusebius expresses it. [4] A breath of life began to move over this vast field of death. A new people, a holy nation, was formed among men, and the astonished world beheld, in the disciples of the Galilean, a purity, a self-denial, a charity, a heroism, of which it had lost even the idea.

Two principles, in particular, distinguished the new religion from all the human systems which it drove before it. The one related to the ministers of worship, the other to doctrine.

The ministers of Paganism were in a manner the gods whom those human religions worshipped. The priests of Egypt, Gaul, Scythia, Germany, Britain, and Hindostan, led the people so long, at least, as the eyes of the people were unopened. Jesus Christ, no doubt, established a ministry, but he did not found a particular priesthood. He dethroned the living idols of the nations, destroyed a proud hierarchy, took from man what man had taken from God, and brought the soul again into immediate contact with the divine source of truth, proclaiming himself sole Master and sole Mediator.—"One is your Master, even Christ," said he; "and all ye are brethren." (Matt., xxiii, 8.)

In regard to doctrine, human religions had taught that salvation was of man. The religions of the [15] earth had framed an earthly religion. They had told man that heaven would be given him as a hire—they had fixed its price, and what a price! The religion of God taught that salvation came from God, was a gift from heaven, the result of an amnesty, of an act of grace by the Sovereign. "God," it is said, "has given eternal life."

It is true, Christianity cannot be summed up under these two heads, but they seem to rule the subject, especially where history is concerned; and as we cannot possibly trace the opposition between truth and error, in all points, we must select those of them which are most prominent.

Such, then, were two of the constituent principles of the religion which at that time took possession of the empire, and of the world. *With* them we are within the true land-marks of Christianity—*out of* them Christianity disappears. On the preservation or the loss of them depended its greatness or its fall. They are intimately connected; for it is impossible to exalt the priests of the church, or the works of believers, without lowering Jesus Christ in his double capacity of Mediator and Redeemer. The one of these principles should rule the history of religion, the other should rule its doctrine. Originally, both were paramount; let us see how they were lost. We begin with the destinies of the former.

The Church was at first a society of brethren, under the guidance of brethren. They were all taught of God, and each was entitled to come to the Divine fountain of light, and draw for himself. (John, vi, 45.) The Epistles, which then decided great questions of doctrine, were not inscribed with the pompous name of a single man—a head. The Holy Scriptures inform us, that the words were simply these, "The apostles, elders, and brethren, to our brethren." (Acts, xv, 23.)

But even the writings of the apostles intimate, that from the midst of these brethren a power would rise and subvert this simple and primitive order. (2 Thess., ii, 2.)

Let us contemplate the formation, and follow the development of this power—a power foreign to the Church.

Paul of Tarsus, one of the greatest apostles of the new religion, had arrived at Rome, the capital of the empire and of the world, preaching the salvation which comes from God. A church was formed beside the throne of the Cæsars. Founded by this apostle, it consisted at first of some converted Jews, some Greeks, and some citizens of Rome. For a long time it shone like a pure light on a mountain top. Its faith was everywhere spoken of; but at length it fell away from its [16] primitive condition. It was by small beginnings that the two Romes paved their way to the usurped dominion of the world.

The first pastors or bishops of Rome early engaged in the conversion of the villages and towns around the city. The necessity which the bishops and pastors of the Campagna di Roma felt of recurring in cases of difficulty to an enlightened guide, and the gratitude which they owed to the Church of the metropolis, led them to remain in close union with it. What has always been seen in analogous circumstances was seen here; this natural union soon degenerated into dependence. The superiority which the neighbouring churches had freely yielded, the bishops of Rome regarded as a right. The encroachments of power form one large part of history, while the resistance of those whose rights were invaded forms the other. Ecclesiastical power could not escape the intoxication which prompts all those who are raised to aim at rising still higher. It yielded to this law of humanity and nature.

Nevertheless, the supremacy of the Roman bishop was at this time limited to oversight of the churches within the territory civilly subject to the prefect of Rome.[5] But the rank which this city of the Emperors held in the world, presented to the ambition of its first pastor a larger destiny. The respect paid in the second century to the different bishops of Christendom was proportioned to the rank of the city in which they resided. Now Rome was the greatest, the richest, and the most powerful city in the world. It was the seat of Empire,—the mother of nations; "All the inhabitants of the earth belong to it," says Julian;[6] and Claudian proclaims it "the fountain of law."[7]

If Rome is queen of the cities of the world, why should not its pastor be the king of bishops? Why should not the Roman Church be the mother of Christendom? Why should not the nations be her children, and her authority their sovereign law? It was easy for the ambitious heart of man to reason in this way. Ambitious Rome did so.

Thus Pagan Rome, when she fell, sent the proud titles which her invincible sword had conquered from the nations of the earth to the humble minister of the God of peace seated amidst her ruins.

The bishops in the different quarters of the empire, led away by the charm which Rome had for [17] ages exercised over all nations, followed the example of the Campagna di Roma, and lent a hand to this work of usurpation. They took pleasure in paying to the Bishop of Rome somewhat of the honour which belonged to the Queen city of the world. At first there was no dependence implied in this honour. They treated the Roman pastor as equal does equal;[8] but usurped powers grow like avalanches. What was at first mere brotherly advice soon became, in the mouth of the Pontiff, obligatory command. In his eyes a first place among equals was a throne.

The Western bishops favoured the designs of the pastors of Rome, either from jealousy of the Eastern bishops or because they preferred the supremacy of a pope to the domination of a temporal power.

On the other hand, the theological factions which rent the East sought, each in its turn, to gain the favour of Rome, anticipating their triumph from the support of the principal Church of the West.

Rome carefully registered these requests, these mediations, and smiled when she saw the nations throwing themselves into her arms. She let slip no occasion of increasing and extending her power. Praise, flattery, extravagant compliments, consultation by other churches, all became, in her eyes, and in her hands, titles and evidents of her authority. Such is man upon the throne; incense intoxicates him, and his head turns. What he has he regards as a motive to strive for more.

The doctrine of the Church, and of the necessity of her external unity, which began to prevail so early as the third century, favoured the pretensions of Rome. The primary idea of the Church is, that it is the assembly of the saints, (1 Cor., i, 2,) the assembly of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. (Heb., xii, 23.) Still, however, the Church of the Lord is not merely internal and invisible. It must manifest itself outwardly, and it was with a view to this manifestation that the Lord instituted the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. The Church considered as external, has characteristics different from those which distinguish her as the Church invisible. The internal Church, which is the body of Christ, is necessarily and perpetually one. The visible Church, doubtless, has part in this unity, but considered in herself, multiplicity is a characteristic attributed to her in the Scriptures of the New Testament. While they speak to us of a Church of [18] God,[9] they mention, when speaking of the Church, as externally manifested, "the Churches of Galatia," "the Churches of Macedonia," "the Churches of Judea," "all the Churches of the Saints." [10] These different Churches, unquestionably, may to a certain extent cultivate external union; but though this tie be wanting, they lose none of the essential qualities of the Church of Christ. In primitive times, the great tie which united the members of the Church was the living faith of the

heart, by which all held of Christ as their common Head.

Various circumstances early contributed to originate and develop the idea of the necessity of an external unity. Men accustomed to the ties and political forms of an earthly country, transferred some of their views and customs to the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ. Persecution, powerless to destroy, or even to shake this new society, drew its attention more upon itself, and caused it to assume the form of a more compact incorporation. To the error which sprung up in deistical schools, or among sects, was opposed the one universal truth received from the Apostles, and preserved in the Church. This was well, so long as the invisible and spiritual Church was one with the visible and external Church. But a serious divorce soon took place; the form and the life separated from each other. The semblance of an identical and external organisation was gradually substituted for the internal and spiritual unity which forms the essence of genuine religion. The precious perfume of faith was left out, and then men prostrated themselves before the empty vase which had contained it. The faith of the heart no longer uniting the members of the Church, another tie was sought, and they were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, ceremonies, and canons. The living Church having gradually retired into the hidden sanctuary of some solitary souls, the external Church was put in its place, and declared to be, with all its forms, of divine institution. Salvation, no longer welling up from the henceforth hidden Word, it was maintained that it was transmitted by means of the forms which had been devised, and that no man could possess it if he did not receive it through this channel. None, it was said, can, by his own faith, attain to eternal life. Christ communicated to the Apostles, and the Apostles communicated to the Bishops, the unction of the Holy Spirit; and this Spirit exists nowhere but in that order! Originally, whosoever had the Spirit of Jesus Christ was a member of the Church, but the terms were now reversed, and it was maintained [19] that none but members of the Church received the Spirit of Jesus Christ.[11]

In proportion as these ideas gained ground, the distinction between clergy and people became more marked. The salvation of souls no longer depended solely on faith in Christ, but also, and more especially, on union with the Church. The representatives and heads of the Church obtained a part of the confidence due only to Jesus Christ, and in fact became mediators for the flock. The idea of the universal priesthood of Christians accordingly disappeared step by step; the servants of the Church of Christ were likened to the priests under the Old Dispensation; and those who separated from the bishop were put in the same class with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. From an individual priesthood, such as was then formed in the Church, to a sovereign priesthood, such as Rome now claims, the step was easy.

In fact, as soon as the error as to the necessity of a visible unity of the Church was established, a new error was seen to arise, viz., that of the necessity of an external representative of this unity.

Although we nowhere find in the gospel any traces of a pre-eminence in St. Peter over the other apostles; although the very idea of primacy is opposed to the fraternal relations which united the disciples, and even to the spirit of the gospel dispensation, which, on the contrary, calls upon all the children of the Father to be servants one to another, recognising one only teacher, and one only chief; and although Jesus Christ sharply rebuked his disciples, as often as ambitious ideas of pre-eminence arose in their carnal hearts, men invented, and by means of passages of Scripture ill understood, supported a primacy in St. Peter, and then in this apostle, and his pretended successors at Rome, saluted the visible representatives of visible unity—the heads of the Church!

The patriarchal constitution also contributed to the rise of the Roman Papacy. So early as the three first centuries, the churches of metropolitan towns had enjoyed particular respect. The Council of Nice, in its Sixth Canon, singled out three cities, whose churches had, according to it, an ancient authority over those of the surrounding provinces; these were Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch. The political origin of this distinction is betrayed by the very name which was at first given to the bishop of these cities. He was called Exarch, in the same way as the civil governor. [20] [12] At a later period, the more ecclesiastical name of Patriarch was given to him. This name occurs for the first time in the Council of Constantinople, but in a different sense from that which it received at a later period; for it was only a short time before the Council of Chalcedon, that it was applied exclusively to the great metropolitans. The second ecumenical Council created a new patriarchate, that of Constantinople itself, the new Rome, the second capital of the empire. The Church of Byzantium, so long in obscurity, enjoyed the same privileges, and was put by the Council of Chalcedon in the same rank as the Church of Rome. Rome then shared the patriarchate with these three churches; but when the invasion of Mahomet annihilated the sees of Alexandria and Antioch—when the see of Constantinople decayed, and later, even separated from the west, Rome remained alone, and circumstances rallied all around her see, which from that time remained without a rival.

New accomplices, the most powerful of all accomplices, came also to her aid. Ignorance and superstition seized upon the Church, and gave her up to Rome with a bandage on her eyes, and chains on her hands. Still this slavery was not completed without opposition. Often did the voice of the churches protest their independence: This bold voice was heard especially in proconsular Africa and the East.[13]

But Rome found new allies to stifle the cry of the Churches. Princes, whom tempestuous times often caused to totter on the throne, offered her their support if she would in return support them. They offered her spiritual authority, provided she would reinstate them in secular power. They gave her a cheap bargain of souls, in the hope that she would help them to a cheap bargain of their enemies. The hierarchical power which was rising, and the imperial power which was [21]

declining, thus supported each other, and, by this alliance, hastened their double destiny.

Here Rome could not be a loser. An edict of Theodosius II, and of Valentinian III, proclaimed the bishop of Rome "Rector of the whole Church."[14] Justinian issued a similar edict. These decrees did not contain all that the popes pretended to see in them; but in those times of ignorance it was easy for them to give prevalence to the interpretation which was most in their favour. The power of the emperors in Italy becoming always more precarious, the Bishops of Rome failed not to avail themselves of the circumstance to shake off their dependence.

But energetic promoters of the Papal power had by this time emerged from the forests of the North. The barbarians, who had invaded the West, and there fixed their abode, after intoxicating themselves with blood and rapine, behoved to lower their fierce sword before the intellectual, power which they encountered. Altogether new to Christianity, ignorant of the spiritual nature of the Church, and requiring in religion a certain external show, they prostrated themselves, half savages, and half Pagans, before the High Priest of Rome. With them the West was at his feet. First, the Vandals, then the Ostrogoths, a little later the Burgundians, afterwards the Visigoths, lastly, the Lombards and Anglo-Saxons, came to do obeisance to the Roman Pontiff. It was the robust shoulders of the sons of the idolatrous North which finished the work of placing a pastor of the banks of the Tiber on the supreme throne of Christendom.

These things took place in the West at the beginning of the seventh century, precisely at the same period when the power of Mahomet, ready also to seize on a portion of the globe, was rising in the East.

From that time the evil ceases not to grow. In the eighth century we see the Bishops of Rome with one hand repulsing the Greek Emperors, their lawful sovereigns, and seeking to chase them from Italy, while, with the other, they caress the Mayors of France, and ask this new power, which is beginning to rise in the West, for a share in the wrecks of the empire. Between the East, which she repels, and the West, which she invites, Rome establishes her usurped authority. She rears her throne between two revolts. Frightened at the cry of the Arabs, who, become masters of Spain, vaunt that they will soon arrive in Italy by the passes of the Pyrennees and the Alps, and proclaim the name of Mahomet on the seven hills—amazed at the audacious Astolphus, who, at [22] the head of his Lombards, sends forth his lion-roar, and brandishes his sword before the gates of the eternal city, threatening massacre to every Roman,[15]—Rome, on the brink of ruin, looks around in terror, and throws herself into the arms of the Franks. The usurper Pepin asks a pretended sanction to his new royalty; the Papacy gives it to him, and gets him in return to declare himself the defender of the "Republic of God." Pepin wrests from the Lombards what they had wrested from the emperor; but, instead of restoring it to him, he deposits the keys of the towns which he has conquered on the altar of St. Peter, and, swearing with uplifted hand, declares that it was not for a man he took up arms, but to obtain the forgiveness of his sins from God, and do homage to St. Peter for his conquests.

Charlemagne appears. The first time, he goes up to the Cathedral of St. Peter devoutly kissing the steps. When he presents himself a second time, it is as master of all the kingdoms which formed the empire of the West, and of Rome herself.

Leo III deems it his duty to give the title to him who already has the power, and, in the year 800, at the feast of Noel, places on the head of the son of Pepin the crown of the Emperor of Rome.[16] From that time the pope belongs to the empire of the Franks, and his relations with the East are ended. He detaches himself from a rotten tree which is about to fall, in order to engraft himself on a vigorous wild stock. Among the Germanic races, to which he devotes himself, a destiny awaits him to which he had never ventured to aspire.

Charlemagne bequeathed to his feeble successors only the wrecks of his empire. In the ninth century civil power being everywhere weakened by disunion, Rome perceived that now was the moment for her to lift her head. When could the Church better make herself independent of the State than at this period of decline, when the crown which Charles wore was broken, and its fragments lay scattered on the soil of his ancient empire?

At this time the spurious Decretals of Isidore appeared. In this collection of pretended decrees of the popes, the most ancient bishops, the contemporaries of Tacitus and Quintilian, spoke the barbarous Latin of the ninth century. The customs and constitutions of the Franks were gravely [23] attributed to the Romans of the time of the emperors; popes quoted the Bible in the Latin translation of St. Jerome, who lived one, two, or three centuries after them; and Victor, Bishop of Rome, in the year 192, wrote to Theophilus, who was Archbishop of Alexandria, in 395. The impostor, who had forged this collection, strove to make out that all the bishops derived their authority from the Bishop of Rome, who derived his immediately from Jesus Christ. Not only did he record all the successive conquests of the pontiffs, but he, moreover, carried them back to the remotest periods. The popes were not ashamed to avail themselves of this despicable invention. As early as 865, Nicholas I selected it as his armour[17] to combat princes and bishops. This shameless forgery was for ages the arsenal of Rome.

Nevertheless, the vices and crimes of the pontiffs were for some time to suspend the effects of the Decretals. The Papacy celebrates its admission to the table of kings, by shameful libations. It proceeds to intoxicate itself, and its head turns amidst the debauch. It is about this time that tradition places upon the Papal throne a damsel named Joan, who had fled to Rome with her lover, and, being taken in labour, betrayed her sex in the middle of a solemn procession. But let

us not unnecessarily aggravate the disgrace of the Court of the Roman Pontiffs. Abandoned females did reign in Rome at this period. A throne, which pretended to exalt itself above the majesty of kings, grovelled in the mire of vice. Theodora and Marozia, at will, installed and deposed the pretended Masters of the Church of Christ, and placed upon the throne of Peter their paramours, their sons, and their grandsons. These scandalous proceedings, which are but too true, perhaps, gave rise to the tradition of Popess Joan.

Rome becomes a vast theatre of disorder, on which the most powerful families in Italy contend for ascendancy—the Counts of Tuscany usually proving victorious. In 1033, this house dares to place upon the pontifical throne, under the name of Benedict the Ninth, a young boy brought up in debauchery. This child of twelve, when pope, continues his ineffable turpitude.[18] A faction elects Sylvester in his stead, and at length Pope Benedict, with a conscience loaded with [24] adultery, and a hand dyed with the blood of murders,[19] sells the popedom to an ecclesiastic of Rome.

The Emperors of Germany, indignant at so many disorders, cleansed Rome with the sword. The empire, exercising its rights of superiority, drew the triple crown out of the mire into which it had fallen, and saved the degraded popedom by giving it decent men for heads. Henry III, in 1046, deposed three popes, and his finger, adorned with the ring of the Roman Patricians, pointed out the bishop to whom the keys of the confession of St. Peter were to be remitted. Four popes, all Germans, and nominated by the emperor, succeeded each other. When the pontiff of Rome died, deputies from that Church appeared at the imperial court, like the envoys from other dioceses, to request a new bishop. The emperor was even glad to see the pope reforming abuses, strengthening the Church, holding councils, inducting and deposing prelates, in spite of foreign monarchs; the Papacy, by these pretensions, only exalted the power of the emperor, its liege lord. But there was great danger in allowing such games to be played. The strength which the popes were thus resuming, by degrees, might be turned, all at once, against the emperor himself. When the viper recovered, it might sting the bosom which warmed it. This was what actually happened.

Here a new epoch in the Papacy begins. It starts up from its humiliation, and soon has the princes of the earth at its feet. To exalt it is to exalt the Church, is to aggrandise religion, is to secure to the mind its victory over the flesh, and to God his triumph over the world. These are its maxims, and in these ambition finds its profit, fanaticism its excuse.

The whole of this new tendency is personified in one man,—Hildebrand.

Hildebrand, by turns unduly extolled or unjustly stigmatised, is the personification of the Roman pontificate in its power and glory. He is one of those master spirits of history, which contain in them an entire order of new things, similar to those presented in other spheres by Charlemagne, Luther, and Napoleon.

Leo IX took up this monk in passing through Clugny, and carried him to Rome. From that time Hildebrand was the soul of the popedom, until he became the popedom itself. He governed the [25] Church in the name of several pontiffs before his own reign under that of Gregory VII. One great idea took possession of this great genius. He wishes to found a visible theocracy of which the pope, as vicar of Jesus Christ, will be head. The remembrance of the ancient universal dominion of Pagan Rome haunts his imagination, and animates his zeal. He wishes to restore to Papal Rome all that the Rome of the Emperors had lost. "What Marius and Cæsar," said his flatterers, "could not do by torrents of blood, thou performest by a word."

Gregory VII was not led by the Spirit of the Lord. To this Spirit of truth, humility, and meekness, he was a stranger. He sacrificed what he knew to be true, when he judged it necessary to his designs. In particular, he did so in the affair of Berenger. But a spirit far superior to that of the common run of pontiffs, a deep conviction of the justice of his cause, undoubtedly did animate him. Bold, ambitious, and inflexible in his designs, he was, at the same time, dexterous and supple in the employment of means to ensure their success.

His first labour was to embody the militia of the Church, for he behoved to make himself strong before he attacked the empire. A Council held at Rome cut off pastors from their families, and obliged them to belong entirely to the hierarchy. The law of celibacy, conceived and executed under popes who were themselves monks, changed the clergy into a kind of monastic order. Gregory VII pretended to have over all the bishops and priests of Christendom the same power which an abbot of Clugny had over the order over which he presided. The legates of Hildebrand, comparing themselves to the proconsuls of ancient Rome, traversed the provinces to deprive pastors of their lawful wives, and if need were, the pope himself stirred up the populace against married ministers.[20]

But Gregory's main purpose was to shake Rome free of the empire. This bold design he never would have ventured to conceive, had not the dissensions which troubled the minority of Henry IV, and the revolt of the German princes, favoured its execution. The pope was then like one of the grandees of the empire. Making common cause with the other great vassals, he forms a party in the aristocratic interest, and then forbids all ecclesiastics, under pain of excommunication, to receive investiture to their benefices from the Emperor. He breaks the ancient ties which unite [26] churches and their pastors to the authority of the prince, but it is to yoke all of them to the pontifical throne. His aim is by a powerful hand to enchain priests, kings, and people, and make the pope a universal monarch. It is Rome alone that every priest must fear, in Rome alone that he must hope. The kingdoms and princedoms of the earth are his domain, and all kings must tremble

before the thunder of the Jupiter of modern Rome. Woe to him who resists! Subjects are loosed from their oath of allegiance, the whole country is smitten with interdict, all worship ceases, the churches are shut, and their bells are mute; the sacraments are no longer administered, and the word of malediction reaches even to the dead, to whom the earth, at the bidding of a haughty pontiff, refuses the peace of the tomb.

The pope, who had been subject from the earliest days of his existence, first to the Roman Emperors, then to the Frank Emperors, and, lastly to the German Emperors, was now emancipated, and walked, for the first time, their equal, if not, indeed, their master. Gregory VII was, however, humbled in his turn; Rome was taken, and Hildebrand obliged to flee. He died at Salerno, saying, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore die I in exile."[21] Words thus uttered at the portals of the grave who will presume to charge with hypocrisy?

The successors of Gregory, like soldiers who arrive after a great victory, threw themselves, as conquerors, on the subjugated churches. Spain, rescued from Islamism, Prussia, delivered from idols, fell into the hands of the crowned priest. The crusades, which were undertaken at his bidding, every where widened and increased his authority. Those pious pilgrims, who had thought they saw saints and angels guiding their armies, and who, after humbly entering the walls of Jerusalem barefoot, burned the Jews in their synagogue, and, with the blood of thousands of Saracens, deluged the spots to which they had come, seeking the sacred footsteps of the Prince of Peace, carried the name of pope into the East, where it had ceased to be known from the time when he abandoned the supremacy of the Greeks for that of the Franks.

On the other hand, what the armies of the Roman republic and of the empire had not been able to do, the power of the Church accomplished. The Germans brought to the feet of a bishop the tribute which their ancestors had refused to the most powerful generals. Their princes, on becoming emperors, thought they had received a crown from the popes, but the popes had given [27] them a yoke. The kingdoms of Christendom, previously subjected to the spiritual power of Rome, now became its tributaries and serfs.

Thus every thing in the Church is changed.

At first it was a community of brethren, and now an absolute monarchy is established in its bosom. All Christians were priests of the living God, (1 Peter, ii, 9,) with humble pastors for their guides; but a proud head has risen up in the midst of these pastors, a mysterious mouth utters language full of haughtiness, a hand of iron constrains all men, both small and great, rich and poor, bond and slave, to take the stamp of its power. The holy and primitive equality of souls before God is lost, and Christendom, at the bidding of a man, is divided into two unequal camps—in the one, a caste of priests who dare to usurp the name of Church, and pretend to be invested in the eyes of the Lord with high privileges—in the other, servile herds reduced to blind and passive submission, a people gagged and swaddled, and given over to a proud caste. Every tribe, language, and nation of Christendom, fall under the domination of this spiritual king, who has received power to conquer.

CHAP. II.

Grace—Dead Faith—Works—Unity and Duality—Pelagianism—Salvation at the hands of Priests—Penances—Flagellations—Indulgences—Works of Supererogation—Purgatory—Taxation—Jubilee—The Papacy and Christianity—State of Christendom.

But, along with the principle which should rule the history of Christianity was one which should rule its doctrine. The grand idea of Christianity was the idea of grace, pardon, amnesty, and the gift of eternal life. This idea supposed in man an estrangement from God, and an impossibility on his part to reenter into communion with a Being of infinite holiness. The opposition between true and false doctrine cannot, it is true, be entirely summed up in the question of salvation by faith, and salvation by works. Still it is its most prominent feature, or rather, salvation considered as coming from man is the creating principle of all error and all abuse. The excesses produced by this fundamental error led to the Reformation, and the profession of a contrary principle achieved [28] it. This feature must stand prominently out in an introduction to the history of the Reformation. Salvation by grace, then, is the second characteristic which essentially distinguished the religion of God from all human religions. What had become of it? Had the Church kept this great and primordial idea as a precious deposit? Let us follow its history.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem, Asia, Greece, and Rome, in the days of the first emperors, heard the glad tidings, "By grace are ye saved through faith—it is the gift of God." (Ephes., ii, 8.) At this voice of peace—at this gospel—at this powerful word—many guilty souls believing were brought near to Him who is the source of peace, and numerous Christian churches were formed in the midst of the corrupt generation then existing.

But a great misapprehension soon arose as to the nature of saving faith. Faith, according to St. Paul, is the means by which the whole being of the believer—his intellect, his heart, and his will—enter into possession of the salvation which the incarnation of the Son of God has purchased for

him. Jesus Christ is apprehended by faith, and thenceforth becomes every thing for man, and in man. He imparts a divine life to human nature; and man thus renewed, disengaged from the power of selfishness and sin, has new affections, and does new works. Faith (says Theology, in order to express these ideas) is the subjective appropriation of the objective work of Christ. If faith is not an appropriation of salvation, it is nothing; the whole Christian economy is disturbed, the sources of new life are sealed up, and Christianity is overturned at its base.

Such was the actual result. The practical view being gradually forgotten, faith soon became nothing more than what it still is to many—an act of the understanding—a simple submission to superior authority.

This first error necessarily led to a second. Faith being stripped of its practical character, could not possibly be said to save alone. Works no longer coming after it, behoved to be placed beside it, and the doctrine that man is justified by faith and by works gained a footing in the Church. To the Christian unity, which includes under the same principle justification and works, grace and law, doctrine and duty, succeeded the sad duality, which makes religion and morality to be quite distinct,—a fatal error, which separates things that cannot live unless united, and which, putting the soul on one side, and the body on the other, causes death. The words of the apostle, echoing through all ages, are, "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal., iii, 3.) [29]

Another great error arose to disturb the doctrine of grace. This was Pelagianism. Pelagius maintained that human nature is not fallen—that there is no hereditary corruption—and that man, having received the power of doing good, has only to will it in order to perform it.[22] If goodness consists in certain external actions, Pelagius is right. But if we look to the motives from which those external actions proceed, we find in every part of man selfishness, forgetfulness of God, pollution, and powerlessness. The Pelagian doctrine, driven back from the Church by Augustine, when it advanced with open front, soon presented a side view in the shape of semi-Pelagianism, and under the mask of Augustinian formulæ. This heresy spread over Christendom with astonishing rapidity. The danger of the system appeared, above all, in this—by placing goodness, not within, but without, it caused a great value to be set on external works, on legal observances, and acts of penance. The more of these men did, the holier they were; they won heaven by them, and individuals were soon seen (a very astonishing circumstance, certainly) who went farther in holiness than was required. Pelagianism, at the same time that it corrupted doctrine, strengthened the hierarchy; with the same hand with which it lowered grace it elevated the Church; for grace is of God, and the Church is of man.

The deeper our conviction that the whole world is guilty before God, the more will we cleave to Jesus Christ as the only source of grace. With such a view, how can we place the Church on a level with him, since she is nothing but the whole body of persons subject to the same natural misery? But, so soon as we attribute to man a holiness of his own, all is changed, and ecclesiastics and monks become the most natural medium of receiving the grace of God. This was what happened after Pelagius. Salvation, taken out of the hands of God, fell into the hands of priests, who put themselves in the Lord's place. Souls thirsting for pardon behoved no longer to look towards heaven, but towards the Church, and, above all, towards its pretended head. To blinded minds, the Pontiff of Rome was instead of God. Hence the greatness of the popes and indescribable abuses. The evil went farther still. Pelagianism, in maintaining that man may attain perfect sanctification, pretended, likewise, that the merits of saints and martyrs might be applied to the Church. A particular virtue was even ascribed to their intercession. They were addressed in prayer, their aid was invoked in all the trials of life, and a real idolatry supplanted the adoration of the true and living God. [30]

Pelagianism, at the same time, multiplied rites and ceremonies. Man imagining that he could, and that he ought, by good works, to render himself worthy of grace, saw nothing better fitted to merit it than outward worship. The law of ceremonies becoming endlessly complicated, was soon held equal at least to the moral law, and thus the conscience of Christians was burdened anew with a yoke which had been declared intolerable in the times of the apostles. (Acts, xv, 10.)

But what most of all deformed Christianity was the system of penance which rose out of Pelagianism. Penance at first consisted in certain public signs of repentance, which the Church required of those whom she had excluded for scandal, and who were desirous of being again received into her bosom.

By degrees, penance was extended to all sins, even the most secret, and was considered as a kind of chastisement to which it was necessary to submit, in order to acquire the pardon of God through the absolution of priests.

Ecclesiastical penance was thus confounded with Christian repentance, without which there cannot be either justification or sanctification.

Instead of expecting pardon from Christ only by faith, it was expected chiefly from the Church by works of penance.

Great importance was attached to the outward marks of repentance, tears, fastings, and macerations, while the internal renewal of the heart, which alone constitutes true conversion, was forgotten.

As confession and works of penance are easier than the extirpation of sin, and the abandonment

of vice, many ceased to struggle against the lusts of the flesh, deeming it better to supply their place by means of certain macerations.

Works of penance substituted in lieu of the salvation of God kept multiplying in the Church from the days of Tertullian in the third century. The thing now deemed necessary was to fast, go barefoot, and wear no linen, etc., or to quit house and home for distant lands, or, better still, to renounce the world and embrace the monastic state!

To all this were added, in the eleventh century, voluntary flagellations. These, at a later period, became a real mania in Italy, which at that time was violently agitated. Nobles and peasants, young and old, even children of five, go two and two by hundreds, thousands, and tens of [31] thousands, through villages, towns and cities, with an apron tied round their waist, (their only clothing,) and visit the churches in procession in the dead of winter. Armed with a whip, they flagellate themselves without mercy, and the streets resound with cries and groans, such as to force tears from those who hear them.

Still long before the evil had reached this height, men felt the oppression of the priests and sighed for deliverance. The priests themselves had perceived, that if they did not apply a remedy, their usurped power would be lost, and, therefore, they invented the system of barter, so well known under the name of Indulgences. What they said was this:—"You penitents are not able to fulfil the tasks which are enjoined you? Well, then, we, priests of God, and your pastors, will take the heavy burden on ourselves. For a fast of seven weeks," says Regino, Abbot of Prum, "there will be paid by a rich man twentypence, by one less so tenpence, by the poor threepence, and so in like proportion for other things."[23] Bold voices were raised against this traffic, but in vain.

The pope soon discovered the advantages which he might draw from these indulgences. In the thirteenth century, Alexander Hales, the irrefragable doctor, invented a doctrine well fitted to secure this vast resource to the Papacy, and a bull of Clement VII declared it an article of faith. Jesus Christ, it was said, did far more than was necessary to reconcile God to men; for that a single drop of his blood would have sufficed; but he shed much blood in order to found a treasury for his church, a treasury which even eternity should not be able to exhaust. The supererogatory merits of the saints, i. e. the value of the works which they did beyond their obligation, served also to augment this treasury, the custody and administration of which have been intrusted to Christ's vicar upon earth, who applies to each sinner for the faults committed after baptism these merits of Jesus Christ and the saints according to the measure and quantity which his sins render necessary. Who will venture to attack a practice whose origin is so holy?

This inconceivable traffic soon extends, and becomes more complex. The philosophers of Alexandria speak of a fire in which souls are to be made pure. This philosophical opinion, which several ancient doctors had adopted, Rome declared to be a doctrine of the Church. The pope, by [32] a bull, annexed purgatory to his domain. He decreed that man should there expiate what he might not be able to expiate here below, but that indulgences could deliver souls from that intermediate state in which their sins must otherwise detain them. This dogma is expounded by Thomas Aquinas in his famous theological Summa. Nothing was spared to fill the mind with terror. The torments which the purifying fire inflicts on those who become its victims were painted in dreadful colours. Even at the present day, in many Catholic countries, we see pictures exhibited in churches, or in the public streets, in which poor souls in the midst of burning flames are calling in agony for relief. Who could refuse the redemption money which, on falling into the treasury of Rome, was to ransom the soul from such sufferings?

In order to give regularity to this traffic, there was shortly after drawn up (probably by John XXII,) the famous and scandalous taxation of indulgences, of which there have been more than forty editions.

Ears the least delicate would be offended were we to repeat all the horrible things contained in it.

Incest will cost, if it is not known, five groschen, if known, six; so much will be paid for murder, so much for infanticide, adultery, perjury, house-breaking, etc. "Shame upon Rome," exclaims Claudius Esperse, a Roman theologian, and we add, Shame upon human nature! for we cannot reproach Rome with anything which does not recoil upon man himself. Rome is humanity magnified in some of its evil propensities. We say this for the sake of truth, and we also say it for the sake of justice.

Boniface VIII, the boldest and most ambitious of the popes after Gregory VII, outstripped all his predecessors.

In the year 1300 he published a bull, by which he announced to the Church, that every hundred years all persons repairing to Rome would there obtain a plenary indulgence. Crowds flocked from Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, France, Spain, Germany, Hungary, and all quarters. Old men of sixty and seventy set out, and there was counted at Rome in one month to the number of two hundred thousand pilgrims. All these strangers bringing rich offerings, the pope and the Romans saw their treasury filled.

Roman avarice soon fixed each jubilee at fifty years, next at thirty-three, and at last at twenty-five. Then for the greater convenience of buyers, and the greater profit of sellers, the jubilee and its indulgences were transported from Rome to all parts of Christendom. There was no occasion to leave home. What others had gone to seek beyond the Alps, each might purchase at his own [33]

door.

The evil could not go farther.

Then the Reformer arose.

We formerly saw what became of the principle which should rule the history of Christianity, and we have now seen what became of that which should rule its doctrine; both were lost.

To establish a mediating caste between man and God, and insist that the salvation which God gives shall be purchased by works, penances, and money, is the Papacy.

To give to all by Jesus Christ without a human mediator, and without that power, which is called the Church, free access to the great gift of eternal life, which God bestows on man, is Christianity and the Reformation.

The Papacy is an immense wall raised between man and God by the labour of ages. Whosoever would pass it must lay his account with paying or suffering. And yet will it not be passed?

The Reformation is the power which threw down this wall, restored Christ to man, and levelled the path by which he may come to his Creator.

The Papacy interposes the Church between God and man. Christianity and the Reformation make them meet face to face. The Papacy separates—the Gospel unites them.

Having thus traced the history of the decay and extinction of the two great principles which distinguish the religion of God from all the religions of man, let us attend to some of the results of this vast alteration.

First, however, let us pay some tribute of respect to this Church of the middle ages which succeeded that of the Apostles and Fathers, and preceded that of the Reformers. The Church, although decayed, and always more and more enslaved, still was the Church, that is to say, still remained the most powerful friend that man possessed. Her hands, though tied, could still bless. During those ages, great servants of Jesus Christ, men, who in essential doctrines were true Protestants, shed a benign light, and in the most humble convent or the most obscure parish, were found poor monks and poor priests to solace deep griefs. The Catholic Church was not the Papacy. The latter acted the part of oppressor, the former that of the oppressed. The Reformation, which declared war on the one came to deliver the other. And yet, truth to tell, the Papacy itself was sometimes, in the hands of God, who brings good out of evil, a necessary counterpoise to the power and ambition of princes.

CHAP. III.

[34]

Religion—Relics—Easter Merriment—Manners—Corruption—Dissorderly Lives of Priests, Bishops, and Popes—A Priest's Family—Education—Ignorance—Ciceronians.

Let us now attend to the State of the Church before the Reformation.

The people of Christendom no longer expecting the gratuitous gift of eternal life from the true and living God, it was necessary, in order to obtain it, to have recourse to all the methods which a superstitious, timid, and frightened conscience could invent. Heaven is full of saints and mediators who can solicit the favour. Earth is full of pious works, sacrifices, observances, and ceremonies, which can merit it. Such is the picture of the religion of this period, as drawn by one who was long a monk, and afterwards a fellow-worker with Luther.

Myconius says, "The sufferings and merits of Christ were as a vain tale, or as the Fables of Homer. Not a word was said of the faith by which the righteousness of the Saviour, and the inheritance of eternal life, are secured. Christ was a severe judge, ready to condemn all who did not recur to the intercession of saints, or the indulgences of popes. Instead of him there figured as intercessors, first the Virgin Mary, like the Diana of Paganism, and after her saints, of whom the popes were continually enlarging the catalogue. These mediators gave the benefit of their prayers only to those who had deserved well of the orders founded by them. For this it was necessary to do not what God commands in his word, but a great number of works which monks and priests had devised, and which brought in large sums of money. These were, Ave-Marias, prayers of St. Ursula, and St. Bridget. It was necessary to chant and cry night and day. There were as many places of pilgrimage as there were mountains, forests, or valleys. But these toils might be bought off with money. Money, therefore, and every thing that had any value, chickens, geese, ducks, eggs, wax, straw, butter, and cheese, were brought to the convents and to the priests. Then chants resounded, and bells were rung, perfumes filled the sanctuary, and sacrifices were offered; kitchens were stuffed, glasses rattled, and masses winding up threw a cover over all these pious works. The bishops did not preach, but they consecrated priests, bells, [35] monks, churches, chapels, images, books, cemeteries, all these things yielding large returns. Bones, arms, and feet, were presented in gold and silver boxes. They were given out to be kissed

during mass, and this too yielded a large profit."

"All these folks maintained, that the pope being in the place of God, (2 Thess., ii, 4,) could not be deceived, and they would not hear of any thing to the contrary."[24]

In the Church of All Saints at Wittemberg were shown a piece of Noah's Ark, a small portion of soot from the furnace of the Three Young Men, a bit of the manger in which our Saviour was laid, hair from the beard of the great Christopher, and nineteen thousand other relics of greater or less value. At Schaffhausen was shown the breath of St. Joseph, which Nicodemus had received into his glove. In Wurtemberg, a vender of indulgences was seen selling his wares, and having his head adorned with a large feather, plucked from the wing of the archangel Michael.[25] But there was no occasion to go to a distance in quest of these precious treasures. Persons with hired relics travelled the country, and hawked them about, as has since been done with the Holy Scriptures. The faithful, having them thus brought to their houses, were spared the trouble and expence of pilgrimage. Relics were exhibited with great ceremony in the churches, while those travelling hawkers paid a fixed sum to the owners, and also gave them so much per centage on their returns. The kingdom of heaven had thus disappeared, and men, to supply its place on the earth, had opened a disgraceful traffic.

In this way, a profane spirit had invaded religion, and the most sacred seasons of the Church, those which, most forcibly and powerfully invited the faithful to self-examination and love, were dishonoured by buffoonery and mere heathen blasphemies. The "Easter Drolleries" held an important place in the acts of the Church. As the festival of the resurrection required to be celebrated with joy, every thing that could excite the laughter of the hearers was sought out, and thrust into sermons. One preacher imitated the note of the cuckoo, while another hissed like a goose. One dragged forward to the altar a layman in a cassock; a second told the most indecent stories; a third related the adventures of the Apostle Peter, among others, how, in a tavern, he cheated the host by not paying his score.[26] The inferior clergy took advantage of the occasion to turn their superiors into ridicule. The churches were thus turned into stages, and the priests into [36] mountebanks.

If such was the state of religion, what must that of morals have been? It is true, and equity requires we should not forget, that, at this time, corruption was not universal. Even when the Reformation took place, much piety, righteousness, and religious vigour, were brought to light. Of this, the mere sovereignty of God was the cause; but still, how can it be denied, that He had previously deposited the germs of this new life in the bosom of the Church? In our own day, were all the immoralities and abominations which are committed in a single country brought together, the mass of corruption would undoubtedly fill us with alarm. Still it is true, that, at this period, evil presented itself in a form, and with a universality, which it has never had since. In particular, the abomination of desolation was seen standing in the holy place, to an extent which has not been permitted since the period of the Reformation.

With faith morality had decayed. The glad tidings of eternal life is the power of God for the regeneration of man. But take away the salvation which God gives, and you take away purity of heart and life. This was proved by the event.

The doctrine and the sale of indulgences operated on an ignorant people as a powerful stimulus to evil. It is no doubt true, that, according to the doctrine of the Church, indulgences were of use only to those who promised to amend, and actually kept their promise. But what was to be expected of a doctrine which had been invented with a view to the profit which it might be made to yield? The venders of indulgences, the better to dispose of their wares, were naturally disposed to present them in the most winning and seductive form. Even the learned were not too well informed on the subject, while the only thing seen by the multitude was, that indulgences gave them permission to sin. The merchants were in no haste to disabuse them of an error so greatly in favour of the trade.

In those ages of darkness, what disorders and crimes must have prevailed when impunity could be purchased with money! What ground could there be for fear when a trifling contribution to build a church procured exemption from punishment in the world to come! What hope of renovation, when all direct communication between men and their God had ceased—when, estranged from him, their spirit and life, they moved to and fro among frivolous ceremonies and crude observances in an atmosphere of death!

The priests were the first to yield to the corrupting influence. In wishing to raise, they had [37] lowered themselves. They had tried to steal from God a ray of his glory, that they might place it in their own bosom; but, instead of this, had only placed in it some of the leaven of corruption, stolen from the Evil one. The annals of the period teem with scandalous stories. In many places people were pleased to see their priest keeping a mistress, in the hope that it might secure their wives from seduction.[27] How humbling the scene which the house of such a priest must have presented! The unhappy man maintained the woman and the children she might have borne him, out of tithes and alms.[28] His conscience upbraided him. He blushed before his people, his servants, and his God. The woman fearing, that, in the event of the priest's death, she might become destitute, sometimes made provision beforehand, and played the thief in her own house. Her honour was gone, and her children were a living accusation against her. Objects of universal contempt, both parties rushed into quarrelling and dissipation. Such was the home of a priest!... In these fearful scenes, the people read a lesson of which they were not slow to avail themselves.

[29]

The rural districts became the theatre of numerous excesses. The places where priests resided were often the abodes of dissoluteness. Corneille Adrian at Bruges,[30] and Abbot Trinkler at Cappel,[31] imitated the manners of the East, and had their harems. Priests associating with low company, frequented taverns and played at dice, crowning their orgies with quarrels and blasphemy.[32] The Council of Schaffhausen issued an order forbidding priests to dance in public except at marriages, or to carry more than one kind of weapon. They, moreover, ordered that such priests as were found in houses of bad fame should be stript of their cassocks.[33] In the archbishopric of Mayence, they leapt the walls at night, and then shouted and revelled in all sorts of debauchery within taverns and inns. Doors and locks were not secure from their attacks.[34] In several places, each priest was liable to the bishop in a certain tax for the female he kept, and for every child she bore him. One day, a German bishop, who was attending a great festival, openly declared that in a single year, the number of priests who had been brought before him for this purpose amounted to eleven thousand. This account is given by Erasmus.[35]

Among the higher orders of the priesthood, the corruption was equally great. The dignitaries of [38]
the Church preferred the turmoil of camps to chanting at the altar, and to take lance in hand, and reduce those around them to obedience, was one of the first qualities of a bishop. Baldwin of Tours, who was constantly warring with his vassals and neighbours, razed their castles, built others of his own, and thought of nothing but enlarging his territory. It is told of a certain bishop of Eichstadt, that when he sat in his court, he had a coat-of-mail under his gown, and a large sword in his hand. One of his sayings was, that in fair fight he was not afraid of five Bavarians.[36] The bishops and the inhabitants of the towns where they resided were perpetually at war. The burghers demanded freedom, while the priests insisted on absolute obedience. When the latter proved victorious, they punished revolt, and satiated their vengeance with numbers of victims; but the flame of insurrection burst forth at the very moment when they imagined they had suppressed it. And what a spectacle was presented by the pontifical throne at the period immediately preceding the Reformation! To say the truth, even Rome was not often witness to such infamy.

Roderigo Borgia, after he had lived with a lady of Rome, continued the same illegitimate intercourse with her daughter, Rosa Vanozza, and had five children by her. This man, a cardinal and an archbishop, was living at Rome with Vanozza, and other females besides, frequenting churches and hospitals, when the pontifical chair became vacant by the death of Innocent VIII. Borgia secured it by buying each cardinal for a regular price. Four mules loaded with gold publicly entered the palace of Cardinal Sforza, the most influential among them. Borgia became Pope under the name of Alexander VI, and was delighted at having thus reached the pinnacle of pleasure.

On his coronation-day, he appointed his son Cæsar, a youth of ferocious temper and dissolute habits, Archbishop of Valentia and Bishop of Pampeluna. Then, when his daughter Lucretia was married, he celebrated the occasion in the Vatican with fêtes which were attended by his mistress, Julia Bella, and enlivened by comedies and obscene songs. "All the ecclesiastics," says a historian,[37] "had mistresses, and all the convents of the capital were houses of bad fame." Cæsar Borgia espoused the faction of the Guelphs, and when, by their assistance, he had destroyed the Ghibelins, he turned round upon the Guelphs, and, in like manner, destroyed them. [39]
But he was unwilling that any should share the spoil with him, and, therefore, after Alexander had, in 1497, made his eldest son Duke of Benevento, the Duke disappeared. George Schiavoni, a dealer in wood on the banks of the Tiber, one night saw a dead body thrown into the river, but said nothing; such occurrences were common. The dead body proved to be that of the Duke, who had been murdered by his brother Cæsar.[38] Nor was this enough. Having taken offence at his brother-in-law, he made him be stabbed on the stair of the pontifical palace. The wounded man, covered with blood, was carried to his apartment, where he was constantly watched by his wife and sister, who, dreading Cæsar's poison, prepared his food with their own hands. Alexander placed sentinels at his door, but Cæsar laughed at their precautions, and as the pope was going to see his son-in-law, Cæsar said to him, "What is not done at dinner will be done at supper." In short, he one day forced his way into the room, drove out the wife and sister, and calling in his executioner, Michilotto, the only person to whom he showed any confidence, looked on while his brother-in-law was strangled.[39] Alexander had a favourite, named Peroto. The pope's partiality for him offended the young Duke. He pursued him, and Peroto, taking refuge under the pontifical mantle, clasped the pope in his arms. Cæsar stabbed him, and the blood of his victim sprung into the pontiffs face.[40] "The pope," adds a contemporary witness to these scenes, "loves his son the Duke, and is much afraid of him." Cæsar was the handsomest and most powerful man of his age. He fought with six wild bulls, and despatched them with ease. Every morning at Rome persons were found who had been assassinated during the night, while poison carried off those whom the sword could not reach. Men dared not to move or breathe in Rome, every one trembling till his own turn should arrive. Cæsar Borgia was the hero of crime. The spot of earth where iniquity attained this dreadful height was the pontifical throne. When once man has given himself over to the powers of darkness, the higher the station he pretends to occupy in the sight of God, the deeper he sinks into the abysses of hell. The dissolute fêtes which were given in the pontifical palace by the pope, his son Cæsar, and his daughter Lucretia, cannot be described, or even thought of, without horror. The impure groves of antiquity, perhaps, never saw the like. Historians have accused Alexander and Lucretia of incest, but the proof seems defective. The [40]

pope had prepared poison for a rich cardinal, in a small box of comfits which were to be served after a sumptuous repast. The cardinal being put on his guard, bribed the steward, and the poisoned box was placed before Alexander, who ate of it and died.[41] The whole city ran to see the dead viper, and could not get enough of the sight.[42]

Such was the man who occupied the pontifical see at the beginning of the century in which the Reformation commenced.

The clergy having thus brought religion and themselves into disrepute, a powerful voice might well exclaim, "The ecclesiastical state is opposed to God and to his glory. The people well know this, and but too well do they show it, by the many songs, proverbs, and jests, against priests, which are current among the lower classes, and by all those caricatures of monks and priests which we see on all the walls, and even on playing cards. Every man feels disgust when he sees or when he hears of an ecclesiastic." These are Luther's words.[43]

The evil had spread through all ranks. A spirit of error had been sent to men, corruption of manners kept pace with corruption of faith, and a mystery of iniquity lay like an incubus on the enslaved Church of Jesus Christ.

There was another consequence which necessarily resulted from the oblivion into which the fundamental doctrine of the gospel had fallen. Ignorance was the companion of corruption. The priests having taken into their own hands the distribution of a salvation which belongs only to God, deemed this a sufficient title to the respect of the people. What occasion had they to study sacred literature? Their business was not to expound the Scriptures, but to give diplomas of indulgence—a ministry which called not for the laborious acquisition of extensive knowledge.

In the rural districts, says Wimpheling, the persons selected for preachers were miserable creatures, who had been previously raised from beggary, cast-off cooks, musicians, huntsmen, grooms, and still worse.[44]

The higher clergy were often sunk in deep ignorance. A Bishop of Dunfeld congratulated himself that he had never learned either Greek or Hebrew, while the monks contended that all heresies sprung out of these languages, and especially out of the Greek. "The New Testament," said one of them, "is a book full of briers and serpents. "The Greek," continued he, "is a new language [41] recently invented, and of it we ought specially to beware. As to Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that all who learn it, that very instant become Jews." We quote from Heresbach, a friend of Erasmus, and a respectable writer. Thomas Linacer, a learned and celebrated ecclesiastic, had never read the New Testament. In the last days of his life, (in 1524,) he caused a copy of it to be brought, but immediately dashed it from him with an oath, because, on opening it, he had lighted on these words, "I say unto you, Swear not at all." Now he was a great swearer. "Either this is not the gospel," said he, "or we are not Christians."[45] Even the Theological Faculty of Paris did not hesitate at this time to say, in presence of the Parliament, "It is all over with religion if the study of Greek and Hebrew is allowed." If, among ecclesiastics, there were a scattered few who had made some attainments, it was not in sacred literature. The Ciceronians of Italy affected great contempt for the Bible because of its style. Men calling themselves priests of the Church of Jesus Christ, translated the writings of holy men inspired by the Spirit of God into the style of Virgil and Horace, in order to adapt them to the ears of good society. Cardinal Bembo, instead of *the Holy Spirit*, wrote *the breath of the heavenly zephyr*; instead of to *forgive sins*,—to *bend the manes and the Sovereign God*; and instead of *Christ the Son of God,—Minerva sprung from the forehead of Jupiter*. Having one day found the respectable Sadolet engaged in translating the Epistle to the Romans, he said to him, "Leave off this child's play; such trifling ill becomes a man of gravity."[46]

Such are some of the consequences of the system under which Christendom then groaned. Our picture, undoubtedly, proves both the corruption of the Church and the necessity of a Reformation; and it was this we proposed in sketching it. The vital doctrines of Christianity had almost entirely disappeared, and with them the light and life which constitute the essence of genuine religion. The strength of the Church had been wasted, and its body, enfeebled and exhausted, lay stretched almost without life, over the whole extent which the Roman empire had occupied.

CHAP. IV. [42]

Imperishable nature of Christianity—Two Laws of God—Apparent Power of Rome—Hidden Opposition—Decay—Threefold Opposition—Kings and Subjects—The Pope judged in Italy—Discoveries by Kings and Subjects—Frederick the Wise—His Moderation—His Anticipation.

The evils which then afflicted Christendom, viz., superstition, infidelity, ignorance, vain speculation, and corruption of manners—all natural fruits of the human heart—were not new upon the earth. Often had they figured in the history of states. In the East, especially, various

religions which had had their day of glory, but had become enervated, had been attacked by them, and, yielding to the assault, had fallen under it, never again to rise. Is Christianity to experience the same fate? Will she be destroyed like these ancient popular religions? Will the blow which gave them death be strong enough to deprive her of life? Is there nothing that can save her? Will those hostile powers that now oppress her, and which have already overthrown so many other forms of worship, be able to seat themselves without opposition on the ruins of the Church of Jesus Christ?

No! There is in Christianity what there was not in any of those popular religions. It does not, like them, present certain abstract ideas, interwoven with traditions and fables, destined to fall, sooner or later, under the attacks of human reason. It contains pure truth, founded on facts capable of standing the scrutiny of every upright and enlightened mind. Christianity does not aim merely at exciting certain vague religious sentiments, which, when they have once lost their charm, cannot be again revived. Its end is to satisfy, and it, in fact, does satisfy, all the religious wants of human nature, whatever the degree of refinement to which it may have attained. It is not the work of man, whose labours fade and are effaced; it is the work of God, who sustains what he creates; and the pledge of its duration is the promise of its divine Head.

It is impossible that human nature can ever rise so high as to look down on Christianity, or if, for a time, human nature do think herself able to dispense with it, it soon appears with renewed youth and life, as alone fit for curing souls. Degenerate nations then return with new ardour to those ancient, simple, and powerful truths, which, in the hour of their infatuation, they had turned from with disdain.

Christianity, in fact, displayed in the sixteenth century the same regenerating power which it had [43]
exerted in the first. After fifteen centuries the same truths produced the same results. In the days of the Reformation, as in those of Paul and Peter, the Gospel, with invincible force, overthrew the mightiest obstacles. Its sovereign power was manifested from north to south among nations differing most widely from each other in manners, character, and intellectual development. Then, as in the days of Stephen and James, it lighted up the fire of enthusiasm and devotedness in nations which seemed almost extinguished, and exalted them even to the height of martyrdom.

How was this revival of the Church and of the world accomplished?

The observer might then have seen the operation of two laws by which God governs the world at all times.

First, as He has ages to act in, he begins his preparations leisurely, and long before the event which He designs to accomplish.

Then, when the time is come, he produces the greatest results by the smallest means. It is thus he acts in nature and in history. When he wishes an immense tree to grow, he deposits a little grain in the earth; and, when he wishes to renew his Church, he employs the humblest instrument to accomplish what emperors and all the learned and eminent in the Church were unable to perform. By and by we will search for and we will discover this little seed which a Divine hand deposited in the earth in the days of the Reformation; but at present, let us endeavour to ascertain the various means by which God prepared this great event.

At the period when the Reformation was ready to burst forth, Rome appeared to be in peace and safety. One would even have said that nothing could disturb her triumph after the great victories which she had gained. General Councils—those Upper and Lower Houses of Catholicity—had been subdued. The Vaudois and the Hussites had been suppressed. No University, with the exception, perhaps, of that of Paris, which sometimes raised its voice when its kings gave the signal, doubted the infallibility of the oracles of Rome. Each seemed to have accepted his alloted share in her power. The higher clergy deemed it better to give a distant chief the tenth part of their revenues, and quietly consume the other nine, than to hazard all for an independence which would cost much and yield little. The lower clergy, decoyed by the perspective of rich benefices, which ambition made them fancy and discover in the distance, were willing, by a little slavery, to realise the flattering hopes which they entertained. Besides, they were almost everywhere so [44]
oppressed by the chiefs of the hierarchy, that they could scarcely struggle under their powerful grasp, far less rise boldly and hold up their heads. The people knelt before the Roman altar, and kings themselves, though they began in secret to despise the Bishop of Rome, durst not venture to attack his power with a hand which the age would have deemed sacrilegious.

But opposition, if it seemed externally to have slackened, or even ceased, when the Reformation burst forth, had more inward strength. A nearer view of the edifice will disclose to us more than one symptom which presaged its downfall. General Councils, though vanquished, had diffused their principles throughout the Church, and carried division into the enemy's camp. The defenders of the hierarchy were divided into two parties, viz., those who maintained the system of absolute Papal domination, on the principles of Hildebrand, and those who were desirous of a constitutional Papal government, offering guarantees and giving liberty to the churches.

Nor was this the whole. Faith in the infallibility of the Roman bishop was greatly shaken among all parties; and, if no voice was raised in opposition to it, it was because every one rather desired anxiously to retain the little faith in it which he still had. The least shock was dreaded, because it might overturn the edifice. Christendom held in its breath; but it was to prevent a disaster by which its own existence might have been endangered. From the moment when man trembles at the thought of abandoning a long venerated belief, it has lost its influence over him, and even the

appearance of respect which he may be desirous to keep up will not be long maintained. The Reformation had been gradually prepared in three different worlds—the political, the ecclesiastical, and the literary. Political bodies, private Christians, and theologians, the literary and the learned, all contributed to the revolution of the sixteenth century. Let us take a survey of this triple opposition, concluding with the literary class, though, at the period immediately preceding the revolution, it was perhaps the most powerful of all.

First, among political bodies, Rome had lost much of its ancient credit. Of this the Church herself was the primary cause; for, properly speaking, it was not the errors and superstitions which she had introduced into Christianity that gave the fatal blow. Before Christendom could have been able to condemn her on this account, it must have stood higher than the Church, in respect of intellectual and religious development. But there was a class of things which the laity well [45] understood, and it was by these they judged the Church. She had become of the "earth, earthy." The sacerdotal empire, which tyrannised over the nations, existed solely by the illusions of its subjects; and having a halo for its crown, had forgotten its nature, and left heaven, with his spheres of light and glory, to plunge into the vulgar interests of burghers and princes. Though representing those who are born of the Spirit, the priests had exchanged the Spirit for the flesh. They had abandoned the treasures of knowledge, and the spiritual power of the Word, for the brute force and tinkling of the age.

The thing happened naturally enough. At first the Church pretended that her object was to defend spiritual order. But in order to protect it from the opposition and assaults of the people, she had resorted to earthly means, to vulgar weapons, which a false prudence had induced her to take up. When the Church had once begun to handle such weapons, her spirituality was at an end. Her arm could not become temporal without rendering her heart temporal also. The appearance presented soon became the reverse of what it had been at the outset. At first she had thought proper to employ the earth in defending heaven; now she employed heaven to defend the earth. Theocratic forms became in her hands merely a mean of accomplishing worldly interests. The offerings which the people laid at the feet of the sovereign pontiff of Christendom were expended in maintaining the luxury of his court and the soldiers of his armies. His spiritual power served him as a ladder on which to climb, and then put the kings and nations of the earth under his feet. The charm broke, and the power of the Church was lost as soon as the men of the world could say, "She is become as one of us."

The great were the first to examine the titles of this imaginary power.[47] This examination might, perhaps, have been sufficient to overthrow Rome; but, happily for her, the education of princes was everywhere in the hands of her adepts. These inspired their august pupils with sentiments of veneration for the Roman pontiff. The rulers of the people grew up within the sanctuary, and princes of ordinary capacity could never entirely quit it. Several even had no other ambition than to be found in it at the hour of death. They preferred to die under a cassock rather than a crown.

Italy, that apple of discord in Europe, perhaps contributed most to open the eyes of kings. Having occasion to communicate with popes on matters which concerned the temporal prince of the [46] States of the Church, and not the Bishop of bishops, they were greatly astonished when they saw them ready to sacrifice rights which appertained to the pontiff, in order to secure certain advantages to the prince. They discovered that these pretended organs of truth had recourse to all the petty wiles of politics, to deceit, dissimulation, and perjury.[48] Then, at length, the bandage, which education had tied upon the eyes of princes, fell off. Then wily Ferdinand of Arragon tried stratagem against stratagem. Then the impetuous Louis XII caused a medal to be struck with this inscription, "Perdam Babylonis nomen."[49] And honest Maximilian of Austria, grieved to the heart on learning the treachery of Leo X, declared openly, "Henceforth this pope, too, is to me nothing better than a villain; now I can say that throughout my life not one pope has kept faith with me, or been true to his word. If it please God, I hope that this one will be the last." [50]

Kings and states began, moreover, to feel impatient under the heavy burden which the popes imposed on them, and to demand that Rome should free them from contributions and annats which wasted their resources. Already had France opposed Rome with the pragmatic sanction, and the heads of the empire claimed to share in it. In 1511 the emperor took part in the Council of Pisa, and had even at one time an idea of seizing the popedom for himself. But, among the rulers of the people none were so useful to the Reformation as the prince in whose states it was to commence.

Of all the Electors of that period, the most powerful was Frederick of Saxony, surnamed the Wise. Having succeeded, in 1487, to the hereditary states of his family, he had received the electoral dignity from the emperor, and in 1493 undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he was dubbed "Knight of the Holy Sepulchre." His power and influence, his riches and liberality, raised him above all his equals. God chose him to be the tree under whose shelter the seed of truth might be able to push forth its first blade, without being uprooted by storms from without. [51]

No man was better fitted for this noble service. Frederick possessed the general esteem, and, in particular, had the entire confidence of the emperor, whom he even represented in his absence. [47] His wisdom consisted not in the dexterous arts of a wily politician, but in an enlightened and foreseeing prudence, the first maxim of which was never to offer violence, from interested motives, to the laws of honour and religion.

At the same time, he felt in his heart the power of the word of God. One day when Staupitz, the Vicar-General, was with him, the conversation turned upon those who entertained the people with vain declamation. "All discourses," said the Elector, "which are filled only with subtleties and human traditions, are wondrously cold, nerveless, and feeble. It is impossible to advance one subtlety which another subtlety cannot destroy. The Holy Scriptures alone are clothed with such power and majesty, that, destroying all our learned logical contrivances, they press us home, and constrain us to exclaim, 'Never man so spake.'" Staupitz having signified that he was entirely of this opinion, the Elector shook him cordially by the hand, and said, "Promise me that you will always think so."*

Frederick was just the prince required at the outset of the Reformation. Too much feebleness on the part of its friends might have allowed it to be strangled, while too much haste might have caused the storm, which at the very first began with hollow murmuring sound to gather against it, to burst too soon. Frederick was moderate but strong. He had that Christian virtue which God always requires in those who would adore his ways—he waited upon God. He put in practice the wise counsel of Gamaliel, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it." Acts, v, 38, 39. "Matters," said this prince to Spengler of Nuremberg, one of the most enlightened men of his time; "matters are come to such a point, that there is nothing more which men can do in them; God alone must act. To His mighty hand, therefore, we commit these great events, which are too difficult for us." Providence made an admirable choice in selecting such a prince to protect his work in its infancy.

CHAP. V.

[48]

The People—The Empire—Providential Preparations—Impulse of the Reformation—Peace—Middle Classes—National Character—Yoke of the Pope—State of the Empire—Opposition to Rome—The Burghers—Switzerland—Valour—Liberty—Small Cantons—Italy—Obstacles to Reform—Spain—Obstacles—Portugal—France—Preparations—Hopes Deceived—Netherlands—England—Scotland—The North—Russia—Poland—Bohemia—Hungary.

The discoveries made by kings had gradually extended to their subjects. The wise began to habituate themselves to the idea that the Bishop of Rome was only a man, and sometimes even a very bad man. They had a suspicion that he was no holier than the bishops, whose reputation was very equivocal. The licentiousness of the popes roused the indignation of Christendom, and hatred of the Roman name rankled in the heart of the nations.[52]

Numerous causes concurred in facilitating the deliverance of the different countries of the West. Let us glance at these countries.

The empire was a confederation of different states, with an emperor at their head, each state having supreme authority within its own territory. The Imperial Diet, composed of all the princes or sovereign states, legislated for the whole Germanic body. It belonged to the emperor to ratify the laws, decrees, or resolutions of the assembly, and to see them applied and carried into execution, while the seven most powerful princes under the title of Electors, had the disposal of the imperial crown.

The north of Germany, inhabited chiefly by the ancient Saxon race, had acquired the greatest degree of freedom. The emperor, incessantly attacked by the Turks in his hereditary possessions, was obliged to court those princes and bold nations whose aid was then necessary to him. Free towns in the north, west, and south of the empire, had, by their trade, their manufactures, and exertions of every description, risen to a high degree of prosperity, and thereby of independence, but the powerful house of Austria, then invested with the imperial crown, held the greater part of the southern states of Germany under its control, and closely watched their movements. It was preparing to extend its dominion over the whole empire, and even beyond it, when the Reformation interposed a mighty barrier to its encroachments, and saved the independence of [49] Europe.

As Judea, when Christianity arose, was in the centre of the ancient world, so Germany was in the centre of Christendom, looking at once toward the Netherlands, England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Denmark, and all the North. It was in the heart of Europe that the principle of life was to be developed, and the beatings of this heart were to circulate through all the arteries of the body the noble blood which was to give animation to all its members.

The particular constitution which the empire had received conformably to the dispensation of Providence, favoured the propagation of new ideas. Had Germany been a monarchy properly so called, like France or England, the arbitrary will of the monarch might have been able long to arrest the progress of the gospel. But it was a confederation. Truth attacked in one state might be received with favour in another.

The internal peace which Maximilian had just secured for the empire was not less favourable to the Reformation. For a long time the numerous members of the Germanic body had taken

pleasure in tearing each other. Nought had been seen but trouble and discord, war incessantly renewed, neighbour against neighbour, town against town, and noble against noble. Maximilian had given a solid basis to public order, by erecting the Imperial Chamber, with power to decide in all questions between different states. The inhabitants of Germany, after all their troubles and disquietudes, saw the commencement of a new era of security and repose. Nevertheless, when Luther appeared, Germany still presented to the observing eye that kind of motion which agitates the sea after long protracted storms. The calm was uncertain. More than one example of this will be seen as we proceed. By giving an entirely new impulse to the Germanic nations, the Reformation put an end for ever to all the former causes of agitation. Destroying the system of barbarism, which had till then been paramount, it put Europe in possession of a new system.

Christianity had, at the same time, exercised a peculiar influence on Germany. The middle classes had made rapid improvement. Throughout the different quarters of the empire, and more especially in the free towns, were numerous institutions well fitted to improve the great mass of the population. In these arts flourished. The burghers, devoting themselves in security to the calm toils and sweet relations of social life, became more and more accessible to knowledge, and [50] in this way were continually acquiring new influence and authority. The foundation of the Reformation in Germany was not to be laid by magistrates, who must often shape their conduct according to political exigencies, nor by nobles fired with the love of military glory, nor by a greedy and ambitious clergy, working religion for profit, as if it were their exclusive property. The task was reserved for the citizens, the commonalty, the great body of the people.

The national character of the Germans was specially fitted to adapt itself to a religious Reformation. No spurious civilisation had enervated it. The precious seed, which the fear of God deposits in the bosom of a people, had not been thrown to the winds. Ancient manners yet existed, displaying themselves in that integrity and fidelity, that love of labour, that perseverance, that serious temper, which is still to be seen, and gives presage of greater success to the gospel, than the jeering levity, or boorish temper of some other European nations.

The people of Germany were indebted to Rome for the great instrument of modern civilisation, viz., faith, polish, learning, laws, all save their courage and their arms, had come from the sacerdotal city, and, in consequence, Germany had ever after been in close alliance with the Papacy. The one was a kind of spiritual conquest by the other, and we all know to what purposes Rome has invariably applied her conquests. Nations which were in possession of faith and civilisation before a Roman pontiff existed, always maintained in regard to him, a greater measure of independence. Still the more thorough the subjugation of the German, the more powerful will the reaction be when the period of awakening shall arrive. When Germany does open her eyes, she will indignantly break loose from the chains which have so long held her captive. The bondage she has had to endure will make her more sensible of her need of deliverance; and freedom, and bold champions of the truth, will come forth from this house of hard labour and bondage, in which all her people have, for ages, been confined.

There was, at that time, in Germany, what the politicians of our days call a "see-saw system." When the emperor was of a resolute character, his power increased; when, on the contrary, he was of a feeble character, the influence and power of the princes and electors were enlarged. Never had these felt themselves stronger in regard to their chief than in the time of Maximilian, at the period of the Reformation; and as he took part against it, it is easy to understand how [51] favourable the circumstance of his comparative weakness must have been to the propagation of the gospel.

Moreover, Germany was tired of what the Romans derisively styled "the patience of the Germans." They had indeed, shown much patience from the days of Louis of Bavaria, when the emperors laid down their arms, and the tiara was placed, without opposition, above the crown of the Cæsars.

The contest, however, had done little more than change its place, by descending several steps. The same struggles which the emperors and popes had exhibited to the world were soon renewed on a smaller scale, in all the towns of Germany, between the bishops and the magistrates. The burghers took up the sword which the emperors had allowed to drop from their hands. As early as 1329 the burghers of Frankfort on the Oder had intrepidly withstood all their ecclesiastical superiors. Excommunicated for having continued faithful to the Margrave Louis, they had been left for twenty-eight years without mass, baptism, marriage, or Christian burial; and, when the monks and priests made their re-entry, they laughed at it as a comedy or farce,—sad symptoms, doubtless, but symptoms of which the clergy were the cause. At the period of the Reformation this opposition between the magistrates and ecclesiastics had increased. The privileges of the former, and the temporal pretensions of the latter, were constantly causing jostling and collision between the two bodies.

But burgomasters, councillors, and secretaries of towns, were not the only persons among whom Rome and the clergy found opponents. Wrath was at the same time fermenting among the people, and broke out as early as 1502, when the peasantry, indignant at the grinding yoke of their ecclesiastical sovereigns, entered into a combination which goes under the name of the Shoe-Alliance.

Thus everywhere, both in the upper and lower regions of society, a grumbling sound was heard, —a precursor of the thunder which was soon to burst. Germany seemed ripe for the work which the sixteenth century had received as its task. Providence, which moves leisurely, had every thing

prepared, and the very passions which God condemns were to be overruled by his mighty hand for the accomplishment of his designs.

Let us see how other nations were situated.

Thirteen small republics, placed with their confederates in the centre of Europe among mountains, forming, as it were, its citadel, contained a brave and simple people. Who would have gone to those obscure valleys in quest of persons who, with the sons of Germany, might be the [52] deliverers of the Church? Who would have thought that petty unknown towns, just emerging from barbarism, hid behind inaccessible mountains, at the extremity of nameless lakes, would, in point of Christianity, take precedence of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome? Nevertheless, it so pleased Him who wills that one spot of earth be watered with dew, and that another spot on which the rain has not descended shall remain parched, (Amos.)

There were other circumstances besides which might have been expected to throw numerous obstacles in the way of the Reformation among the Helvetic Republics. If, in a monarchy, the impediments of power were to be dreaded, the thing to be feared in a democracy was the precipitation of the people.

But Switzerland had also had its preparations. It was a wild but noble tree, which had been preserved in the bosom of the valleys, in order that a valuable fruit might one day be engrafted on it. Providence had diffused among this new people principles of independence and freedom, destined to display their full power whenever the signal for contest with Rome should be given. The pope had given the Swiss the title of Protectors of the Liberty of the Church; but they seem to have taken the honourable appellation in a very different sense from the pontiff. If their soldiers guarded the pope in the vicinity of the ancient Capitol, their citizens, in the bosom of the Alps, carefully guarded their religious liberties against the assaults of the pope and the clergy. Ecclesiastics were forbidden to apply to a foreign jurisdiction. The "Letter of the Priests" (Pfaffenbrief, 1370) was an energetic protestation of Swiss liberty against the abuses and power of the clergy. Amongst these states, Zurich was distinguished for its courageous opposition to the pretensions of Rome. Geneva, at the other extremity of Switzerland, was at war with its bishop. These two towns particularly signalised themselves in the great struggle which we have undertaken to describe.

But if the Swiss towns, accessible to every kind of improvement, were among the first to fall in with the movement of reform, it was otherwise with the inhabitants of the mountains. The light had not yet travelled so far. These cantons, the founders of Swiss freedom, proud of the part which they had performed in the great struggle for independence, were not readily disposed to imitate their younger brethren of the plains. Why change the faith with which they had chased Austria, and which had by its altars consecrated all the scenes of their triumph? Their priests [53] were the only enlightened guides to whom they could have recourse. Their worship and their festivals gave a turn to the monotony of their tranquil life, and pleasantly broke the silence of their peaceful retreats. They remained impervious to religious innovation.

On crossing the Alps, we find ourselves in that Italy which was in the eyes of the majority the Holy Land of Christendom. Whence should Europe have expected the good of the Church if not from Italy, if not from Rome? Might not the power which by turns raised so many different characters to the pontifical chair, one day place in it a pontiff who would become an instrument of blessing to the heritage of the Lord? Or if pontiffs were to be despaired of, were there not bishops and councils, who might reform the Church? Nothing good comes out of Nazareth; but out of Jerusalem, out of Rome!... Such might be the thoughts of men, but God thought otherwise. He said, "Let him who is filthy, be filthy still," (Rev., xxii,) and abandoned Italy to her iniquities. This land of ancient glory was alternately a prey to intestine wars and foreign invasion. The wiles of politics, the violence of faction, the turmoil of war, seemed to have sole sway, and to banish far away both the gospel and its peace.

Besides, Italy, broken, dismembered, and without unity, seemed little fitted to receive a common impulse. Each frontier was a new barrier where truth was arrested.

And if the truth was to come from the North, how could the Italians, with a taste so refined, and a society in their eyes so exquisite, condescend to receive any thing at the hands of barbarous Germans? Were men who admired the cadence of a sonnet more than the majesty and simplicity of the Scriptures, a propitious soil for the seed of the divine word? But be this as it may, in regard to Italy, Rome was still to continue Rome. Not only did the temporal power of the popes dispose the different Italian factions to purchase their alliance and favour at any price, but in addition to this, the universal ascendancy of Rome presented various attractions to the avarice and vanity of the ultramontane states. The moment that the question of emancipating the rest of the world from Rome should be raised, Italy would again become Italy; domestic quarrels would not prevail to the advantage of a foreign system. Attacks on the head of the Peninsular family would at once revive affections and common interests which had long been in abeyance.

The Reformation had therefore little chance in that quarter. And yet there did exist, beyond the mountains, individuals who had been prepared to receive the gospel light, and Italy was not [54] entirely disinherited.

Spain had what Italy had not—a grave, noble, and religiously-disposed people. At all times has it numbered men of piety and learning among its clergy, while it was distant enough from Rome to be able easily to shake off the yoke. There are few nations where one might have more

reasonably hoped for a revival of that primitive Christianity which Spain perhaps received from St. Paul himself. And yet Spain did not raise her head among the nations. She was destined to fulfil the declaration of Divine wisdom, "The first shall be last." Various circumstances led to this sad result.

Spain, in consequence of its isolated position, and its distance from Germany, must have felt only slight shocks of the great earthquake which so violently heaved the empire. It was moreover, engrossed with treasures very different from those which the word of God then offered to the nations. The new world eclipsed the eternal world. A land altogether new, and apparently silver and gold, inflamed all imaginations. An ardent desire for riches left no room in a Spanish heart for nobler thoughts. A powerful clergy, with scaffolds and treasures at its disposal, ruled the Peninsula. The Spaniard willingly yielded a servile obedience to his priests, who, disburdening him of the prior claims of spiritual occupation, left him free to follow his passions, and to run the way of riches, discoveries, and new continents. Victorious over the Moors, Spain had, at the expence of her noblest blood, pulled down the crescent from the walls of Grenada, and many other cities, and, in its place, planted the cross of Jesus Christ. This great zeal for Christianity, which seemed to give bright hopes, turned against the truth. Why should Catholic Spain, which had vanquished infidelity, not oppose heresy? How should those who had chased Mahomet from their lovely country allow Luther to penetrate into it? Their kings did even more. They fitted out fleets against the Reformation, and in their eagerness to vanquish it, went to seek it in Holland and England. But these attacks aggrandised the nations against which they were directed, and their power soon crushed Spain. In this way, these Catholic regions lost, through the Reformation, even that temporal prosperity which was the primary cause of their rejection of the spiritual liberty of the gospel. Nevertheless, it was a brave and generous people that dwelt beyond the Pyrenees. Several of their noble sons with the same ardour, but with more light than those who had shed their blood in Moorish dungeons, came to lay their life, as an offering, on the faggot piles of the Inquisition.

It was nearly the same with Portugal as with Spain. Emmanuel the Happy gave it an age of gold, [55]
which must have unfitted it for the self-denial which the gospel demands. The Portuguese, rushing into the recently discovered routes to the East Indies and Brazil, turned their backs on Europe and the Reformation.

Few nations might have been thought more disposed than France to receive the gospel. Almost all the intellectual and spiritual life of the middle ages centred in her. One would have said that the paths were already beaten for a great manifestation of the truth. Men who were the most opposed to each other, and who had the greatest influence on the French people, felt that they had some affinity with the Reformation. St. Bernard had given an example of that heart-felt faith, that inward piety, which is the finest feature of the Reformation, while Abelard had introduced into the study of theology that reasoning principle, which, incapable of establishing truth, is powerful in destroying falsehood. Numerous heretics, so called, had rekindled the flames of the word of God in the French provinces. The University of Paris had withstood the Church to the face, and not feared to combat her. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Clemangis and the Gersons had spoken out boldly. The pragmatic sanction had been a great act of independence, and promised to prove the palladium of the Gallican liberties. The French nobility, so numerous and so jealous of their precedence, and who, at this period, had just seen their privileges gradually suppressed to the extension of the influence of the crown, must have felt favourably disposed towards a religious revolution, the effect of which might be to restore a portion of the independence which they had lost. The people, lively, intelligent and open to generous emotions, were accessible to the truth in a degree as great, if not greater, than any other people. The Reformation might have promised to be, in this nation, the birth that was to crown the long travail of many ages. But the Church of France, which seemed for so many generations to have been rushing in the same direction, turned suddenly round at the moment of the Reformation, and took quite a contrary direction. Such was the will of Him who guides nations and their rulers. The prince who then sat in the chariot and held the reins, and who, as a lover of letters, might have been thought likely to be the first to second reform, threw his people into another course. The symptoms of several centuries proved fallacious, and the impulse given to France struck and spent itself on the ambition and fanaticism of its kings. The Valois took the
place which she ought to have occupied. Perhaps, if she had received the gospel, she would have [56]
become too powerful. God was pleased to take the feeblest nations, nations that as yet were not, to make them the depositaries of his truth. France, after having been almost reformed, ultimately found herself again become Roman Catholic. The sword of princes thrown into the scale, made it incline towards Rome. Alas! another sword, that of the reformed themselves, completed the ruin of the Reformation. Hands habituated to the sword, unlearned to pray. It is by the blood of its confessors, and not by that of its enemies, that the gospel triumphs.

At this time the Netherlands was one of the most flourishing countries in Europe. It contained an industrious population, enlightened by the numerous relations which it maintained with the different quarters of the world, full of courage, and zealous to excess for its independence, its privileges, and its freedom. Placed on the threshold of Germany, it must have been one of the first to hear the sound of the Reformation. Two parties, quite distinct from each other, occupied these provinces. The more Southern one was surfeited with wealth, and submitted. How could all those manufactures, carried to the highest perfection—how could that boundless traffic by land and sea—how could Bruges, the great entrepot of the trade of the North—how could Antwerp, that queen of commercial cities, accommodate themselves to a long and sanguinary struggle for points of faith? On the contrary, the northern provinces defended by their sands, the sea, and

their inland waters, and still more, by the simplicity of their manners, and their determination to lose all sooner than the gospel, not only saved their franchises, their privileges, and their faith, but also conquered their independence, and a glorious national character.

England scarcely seemed to promise what she has since performed. Repulsed from the Continent, where she had so long been obstinately bent on conquering France, she began to throw her eye towards the ocean, as the domain which was to be the true scene of her conquests, and which was reserved for her inheritance. Twice converted to Christianity, once under the ancient Britons, and the second time under the Anglo-Saxons, she very devoutly paid to Rome the annual tribute of St. Peter. But she was reserved for high destinies. Mistress of the ocean, and present at once in all the different quarters of the globe, she, with the nations that were to spring from her, was one day to be the hand of God in shedding the seeds of life over the remotest islands and the largest continents. Already several circumstances gave a presentiment of her destiny. Bright [57] lights had shone in the British Isles, and some glimmerings still remained. A multitude of foreigners, artists, merchants, and mechanics, arriving from the Netherlands, Germany, and other countries, filled their cities and their sea-ports. The new religious ideas must have been conveyed easily and rapidly. In fine, the reigning monarch was an eccentric prince, who, possessed of some knowledge and great courage, was every moment changing his projects and ideas, and turning from side to side, according to the direction in which his violent passions blew. It was possible that one of the inconsistencies of Henry VIII might prove favourable to the Reformation.

Scotland was at this time agitated by factions. A king five years old, a queen regent, ambitious nobles, and an influential clergy, kept this bold nation in constant turmoil. It was, nevertheless, one day to hold a first place among those that received the Reformation.

The three kingdoms of the North, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, were united under a common sceptre. These rude and warlike nations seemed to have little in common with the doctrine of love and peace. And yet, by their very energy, they were, perhaps, more disposed than the people of the South to receive the evangelical doctrine in its power. But, the descendants of warriors and pirates, they brought, it would seem, too warlike a character to the Protestant cause; at a later period, their sword defended it with heroism.

Russia, retired at the extremity of Europe, had few relations with other states, and belonged, moreover, to the Greek communion. The Reformation effected in the Western exerted little or no influence on the Eastern Church.

Poland seemed well prepared for a reform. The vicinity of the Christians of Bohemia and Moravia had disposed it to receive, while the vicinity of Germany must have rapidly communicated, the evangelical impulse. So early as 1500, the nobility of Poland Proper had demanded the cup for the laity, appealing to the usage of the primitive Church. The liberty enjoyed by its towns, and the independence of its nobles, made it a safe asylum for Christians persecuted in their own country, and the truth which they brought thither was received with joy by a great number of its inhabitants. In our days, however, it is one of the countries which has the smallest number of confessors.

The flame of reformation, which had long gleamed in Bohemia, had been almost extinguished in blood. Nevertheless, precious remains which had escaped the carnage, still survived to see the [58] day of which John Huss had a presentiment.

Hungary had been torn by intestine wars under the government of princes without character and without experience, and who had at last yoked the fate of their people to Austria, by giving this powerful House a place among the heirs of the crown.

Such was the state of Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which was destined to produce so mighty a transformation in Christian society.

CHAP. VI.

Roman Theology—Remains of Life—Justification by Faith—Witnesses for the Truth—Claude—The Mystics—The Vaudois—Valdo—Wickliffe—Huss—Prediction—Protestantism before the Reformation—Arnoldi—Utenheim—Martin—New Witnesses in the Church—Thomas Conecte—The Cardinal of Crayn—Institoris—Savonarola—Justification by Faith—John Vitraire—John Laillier—John of Wessalia—John of Goch—John Wessel—Protestantism before the Reformation—The Bohemian Brethren—Prophecy of Proles—Prophecy of the Franciscan of Isenach—Third Preparative—Literature.

Having pointed out the state of nations and princes, we now proceed to the preparation for Reform, as existing in Theology and in the Church.

The singular system of Theology which had been established in the Church must have powerfully contributed to open the eyes of the rising generation. Made for an age of darkness, as if such an

age had been to exist for ever, it seemed destined to become obsolete and defective in all its parts as soon as the age should have improved. Such was the actual result. The popes had from time to time made various additions to Christian doctrine. They had changed or taken away whatever did not accord with their hierarchy, while any thing not contrary to their system was allowed to remain till further orders. This system contained true doctrines, such as redemption, and the influence of the Holy Spirit; and these an able theologian, if any such then existed, might have employed to combat and overthrow all the rest. The pure gold, mingled with the worthless lead in the treasury of the Vatican, made it easy to detect the imposition. It is true, that when any bold opponent called attention to it, the fanner of Rome immediately threw out the pure grain. [59] But these very proceedings only increased the confusion.

This confusion was unbounded, and the pretended unity was only a heap of disunion. At Rome there were doctrines of the Court, and doctrines of the Church. The faith of the metropolis differed from the faith of the provinces; while in the provinces, again, the variation was endless. There was a faith for princes, a faith for the people, and a faith for religious orders. Opinions were classed as belonging to such a convent, such a district, such a doctor, such a monk.

Truth, in order to pass peacefully through the time when Rome would have crushed her with an iron sceptre, had done, like the insect which with its threads forms the chrysalis in which it shuts itself up during the cold season. And strange enough, the instruments which divine truth had employed for the purpose were the so much decried schoolmen. These industrious artisans of thought had employed themselves in unravelling all theological ideas, and out of the numerous threads had made a veil under which the ablest of their contemporaries must have found it difficult to recognise the truth in its original purity. It seems a sad thing, that an insect full of life, and sometimes glowing with the most brilliant colours, should enclose itself, apparently without life, in its dark cocoon; and yet it is the shroud that saves it. It was the same with truth. Had the selfish and sinister policy of Rome, in the days of her ascendancy, met the truth in naked simplicity, she would have destroyed, or at least tried to destroy it, but disguised as it was, by the theologians of the time, under subtleties and endless distinctions, the popes either saw it not, or thought that, in such a state, it could not do them harm. They accordingly patronised both the workmen and their work. But spring might come, and then forgotten truth might lift her head, and throw aside her shroud. In her seeming tomb, having acquired new strength, she might now again prove victorious over Rome and all its errors. This spring arrived. At the moment when the absurd trappings of the schoolmen were falling off under the attack of skilful hands, and amid the jeers of the new generation, truth made her escape, and came forth all young and beautiful.

But not merely did the writings of the schoolmen bear powerful testimony in favour of truth. Christianity had everywhere imparted a portion of her own life to the life of the people. The Church of Christ was like a building which had fallen into ruin; in digging among its foundations, a portion of the solid rock on stitutions, which dated from the pure times of the Church, were still [60] existing, and could not fail to suggest to many minds evangelical ideas utterly at variance with the prevailing superstitions. Moreover, the inspired writers and ancient doctors of the Church, whose writings were extant in many libraries, occasionally sent forth a solitary voice; and may we not hope that this voice was listened to in silence by more than one attentive ear? Let us not doubt, (and how sweet the thought!) Christians had many brothers and many sisters in those monasteries, in which we are too ready to see nothing but hypocrisy and dissoluteness.

The Church had fallen in consequence of having lost the grand doctrine of Justification by faith in the Saviour; and hence, before she could rise, it was necessary that this doctrine should be restored. As soon as it was re-established in Christendom, all the errors and observances which had been introduced, all that multitude of saints, pious works, penances, masses, indulgences, etc., behoved to disappear. As soon as the one Mediator and his one sacrifice were recognised, all other mediators and other sacrifices were done away. "This article of justification," says one whom we may regard as divinely illumined on the subject,[53] "is that which creates the Church, nourishes, builds up, preserves, and defends her. No man can teach well in the Church, or successively resist an adversary, unless he hold fast by this truth. This," adds the writer from whom we quote, "is the heel which bruises the Serpent's head."

God, who was preparing his work, raised up during the revolution of ages a long series of witnesses to the truth. But the truth to which those noble men bore testimony, they knew not with sufficient clearness, or at least were unable to expound with sufficient distinctness. Incapable of accomplishing the work, they were just what they should have been in order to prepare it. We must add, however, that if they were not ready for the work, the work was not ready for them. The measure was not yet filled up. Ages had not accomplished their destined course, and the need of a true remedy was not generally felt.

No sooner had Rome usurped power than a powerful opposition was formed against her,—an opposition which extended across the middle ages.

In the ninth century, Archbishop Claude of Turin, and in the twelfth century, Peter of Bruges, his disciple Henry, and Arnold of Brescia, in France and in Italy endeavour to establish the worship of God in spirit and in truth. Generally, however, in searching for this worship, they confine it too [61] much to the exclusion of images and external observances.

The Mystics, who have existed in almost all ages, seeking in silence for holiness of heart, purity of life, and tranquil communion with God, cast looks of sadness and dismay on the desolation of the Church. Carefully abstaining from the scholastic brawls and useless discussions under which

true piety had been buried, they endeavoured to withdraw men from the vain mechanism of external worship, and from the mire and glare of ceremonies, that they might lead them to the internal repose enjoyed by the soul which seeks all its happiness in God. This they could not do without coming at every point into collision with accredited opinions, and without unveiling the sores of the Church. Still they had no clear view of the doctrine of justification by faith.

The Vaudois, far superior to the Mystics in purity of doctrine, form a long chain of witnesses to the truth. Men enjoying more freedom than the rest of the Church, appear to have inhabited the heights of the Alps in Piedmont from ancient times; and their numbers were increased, and their doctrine purified, by the followers of Valdo. From their mountain tops the Vaudois, during a long series of ages, protest against the superstitions of Rome.[54] "They contend for the living hope which they have in God through Christ, for regeneration, and inward renewal by faith, hope, and charity, for the merits of Jesus Christ, and the all-sufficiency of his righteousness and grace."[55]

Still, however, this primary truth of a sinner's justification, this capital doctrine, which ought to have risen from the midst of their doctrines, like Mont Blanc from the bosom of the Alps, has not due prominence in their system. Its top is not high enough.

In 1170, Peter Vaud, or Valdo, a rich merchant of Lyons, sells all his goods and gives to the poor. He, as well as his friends, seem to have had it in view practically to realise the perfection of primitive Christianity. He, accordingly, begins in like manner with the branches, and not the root. Nevertheless, his word is powerful, because of his appeal to Scripture, and shakes the Roman hierarchy to its very foundations.

In 1360, Wickliffe appears in England, and appeals from the pope to the word of God, but the real internal sore of the Church is, in his eyes, only one of the numerous symptoms of disease.

John Huss lifts his voice in Bohemia, a century before Luther lifts his in Saxony. He seems to [62] penetrate farther than his predecessors into the essence of Christian truth. He asks Christ to give him grace to glory only in his cross, and in the inestimable weight of his sufferings, but his attention is directed less against the errors of the Roman Church, than the scandalous lives of its clergy. He was, however, if we may so speak, the John Baptist of the Reformation. The flames of his martyrdom kindled a fire in the Church, which threw immense light on the surrounding darkness, and the rays of which were not to be so easily extinguished.

John Huss did more; prophetic words came forth from the depth of his dungeon. He had a presentiment, that the true Reformation of the Church was at hand. So early as the period when chased from Prague, he had been forced to wander in the plains of Bohemia, where his steps were followed by an immense crowd of eager hearers, he had exclaimed, "The wicked have begun to lay perfidious nets for the Bohemian goose;[56] but if even the goose, which is only a domestic fowl, a peaceful bird, and which never takes a lofty flight into the air, has, however, broken their toils, other birds of loftier wing will break them with much greater force. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will send eagles and falcons, with piercing eye."[57] The Reformers fulfilled this prediction.

And after the venerable priest had been summoned before the Council of Constance, after he had been thrown into prison, the chapel of Bethlehem, where he had proclaimed the Gospel and the future triumphs of Jesus Christ, occupied him more than his defence. One night, the holy martyr thought he saw, in the depth of his dungeon, the features of Jesus Christ, which he had caused to be painted on the walls of his study, effaced by the pope and the bishops. The dream distresses him, but next day he sees several painters employed in restoring the pictures in greater number and splendour. Their task finished, the painters, surrounded by a great multitude, exclaim, "Now, let popes and bishops come, they never shall efface them more." John Huss adds, "Many people in Bethlehem rejoiced, and I among them." "Think of your defence, rather than of dreams," said his faithful Friend, Chevalier de Chlum, to whom he had communicated the dream. "I am not a dreamer," replied Huss; "but this I hold for certain—the image of Christ will never be effaced. They wished to destroy it, but it will be painted anew in men's hearts by far abler preachers than I. The nation which loves Jesus Christ will rejoice; and I, awaking among the dead, and, so to [63] speak, rising again from the tomb, will thrill with joy."[58]

A century elapsed, and the torch of the Gospel, rekindled by the Reformers, did, in fact, illumine several nations which rejoiced in its light.

But in those ages, a word of life is heard not only among those whom Rome regards as its adversaries; Catholicity itself—let us say it for our comfort—contains in its bosom numerous witnesses to the truth. The primitive edifice has been consumed; but a noble fire is slumbering under its ashes, and we see it from time to time throwing out brilliant sparks.

It is an error to suppose that, up to the Reformation, Christianity existed only under the Roman Catholic form, and that, at that period only, a part of that church assumed the form of Protestantism.

Among the doctors who preceded the sixteenth century, a great number, doubtless, inclined to the system which the Council of Trent proclaimed in 1562, but several also inclined to the doctrines professed at Augsburgh in 1530 by the Protestants; the majority, perhaps, vibrated between the two.

Anselm of Canterbury lays down the doctrines of the incarnation and expiation as of the essence

of Christianity.[59] And in a treatise in which he teaches how to die, he says to the dying person, "Look only to the merits of Jesus Christ." St. Bernard with powerful voice proclaims the mystery of redemption. "If my fault comes from another," says he, "why should not my righteousness also be derived? Certainly, it is far better for me to have it given me, than to have it innate."[60] Several schoolmen, and after them chancellor Gerson, forcibly attack the errors and abuses of the Church.

But, above all, let us think of the thousands of obscure individuals unknown to the world, who, however, possessed the true life of Christ.

A monk named Arnoldi, daily in his quiet cell utters this fervent exclamation, "O Jesus Christ my Lord! I believe that thou alone art my redemption and my righteousness."[61]

Christopher of Utenheim, a pious bishop of Bâsle, causes his name to be written on a picture painted on glass, and surrounds it with this inscription, that he may have it always under his eye, [64] "The cross of Christ is my hope; I seek grace, and not works."[62]

Friar Martin, a poor Carthusian, wrote a touching confession, in which he says, "O most loving God! I know there is no other way in which I can be saved and satisfy thy justice, than by the merit, the spotless passion, and death of thy well-beloved Son. Kind Jesus! All my salvation is in thy hands. Thou canst not turn the arms of thy love away from me, for they created, shaped, and ransomed me. In great mercy, and in an ineffable manner, thou hast engraved my name with an iron pen on thy side, thy hands, and thy feet," etc. Then the good Carthusian places his confession in a wooden box, and deposits the box in a hole which he had made in the wall of his cell.[63]

The piety of Friar Martin would never have been known had not the box been found, 21st December, 1776, in taking down an old tenement which had formed part of the Carthusian Convent at Bâsle.

But this touching faith these holy men had only for themselves, and knew not how to communicate to others. Living in retreat, they might more or less say, as in the writing which Friar Martin put into his box, "Et si hæc prædicta confiteri non possim lingua, confiteor tamen corde et scripto." "And these things aforesaid, if I cannot confess with the tongue, I, however, confess with the heart and in writing." The word of truth was in the sanctuary of some pious souls, but, to use a Scripture expression, it had not "free course" in the world. Still, if the doctrine of salvation was not always confessed aloud, there were some in the very bosom of the Church of Rome who, at least, feared not to declare openly against the abuses which dishonoured it.

Scarcely had the Councils of Constance and Bâsle, which condemned Huss and his followers, been held, than the noble series of witnesses against Rome, to which we have been pointing, again appears with greater lustre. Men of a noble spirit, revolting at the abominations of the Papacy, rise up like the prophets under the Old Testament, like them sending forth a voice of thunder, and with a similar fate. Their blood reddens the scaffold, and their ashes are thrown to the wind.

Thomas Conecte, a Carmelite, appears in Flanders, and declares, "that abominations are done at Rome, that the Church has need of reformation, and that, in the service of God, one must not fear [65] the excommunications of the pope."[64] Flanders listens with enthusiasm, but Rome burns him in 1432, and his contemporaries exclaim that God has exalted him to heaven.[65]

André, Archbishop of Crayn, and a Cardinal, being at Rome as the ambassador of the emperor, is amazed when he sees that the holiness of the pope, in which he had devoutly believed, is only a fable; and in his simplicity he addresses evangelical representations to Sextus IV. He is answered with mockery and persecution. Then (1482) he wishes a new Council to be assembled at Bâsle. "The whole Church," exclaims he, "is shaken by divisions, heresies, sins, vices, iniquities, errors, and innumerable evils, so much so, that it is on the eve of being swallowed up by the devouring abyss of condemnation.[66] This is my only reason for proposing a General Council for the Reformation of the Catholic faith, and the amendment of manners." The Archbishop of Bâsle was thrown into the prison of that town, and there died. Henry Institoris, the inquisitor, who first moved against him, used these remarkable words, "The whole world is crying out and demanding a council; but no human power can reform the Church by means of a Council. The Almighty will find another method, which is now unknown to us, though it is at the door; and, by this method the Church will be brought back to its primitive condition."[67] This remarkable prophecy, pronounced by an inquisitor, at the very period of Luther's birth, is the finest apology for the Reformation.

The Dominican, Jerome Savonarola, shortly after he had entered the order at Bologna in 1475, devotes himself to constant prayer, fasting, and macerations, and exclaims, "O thou who art good, in thy goodness teach me thy righteousness."[68] Translated to Florence in 1489, he preaches with effect; his voice is thrilling, his features animated, his action beautifully attractive. "The Church," exclaims he, "must be renewed." And he professes the grand principle which alone can restore life to it. "God," says he, "forgives man his sin, and justifies him in the way of mercy. For every justified person existing on the earth, there has been an act of compassion in heaven; [66] for no man is saved by his works. None can glory in themselves; and if in the presence of God, the question were put to all the righteous, 'Have you been saved by your own strength?' they would

all with one voice exclaim, 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory.' Wherefore, O God, I seek thy mercy, and I bring thee not my own righteousness: the moment thou justifiest me by grace, thy righteousness belongs to me; for grace is the righteousness of God. So long, O man, as thou believest not, thou art, because of sin, deprived of grace. O God, save me by thy righteousness, that is, by thy Son, who alone was found righteous among men."[69] Thus the great and holy doctrine of justification by faith gladdens the heart of Savonarola. In vain do the prelates of the Church oppose him;[70] he knew that the oracles of God are superior to the visible church, and that he must preach them with her, without her, or in spite of her.—"Fly far from Babylon," exclaims he. It is Rome he thus designates. Rome soon answers him in her own way. In 1497 the infamous Alexander launches a brief at him, and in 1498 torture and faggot do their work on the Reformer.

A Franciscan, named John Vitraire, of Tournay, whose monastic spirit seems not of a very elevated description, nevertheless, declaims forcibly against the corruption of the Church. "It were better for a man," says he,[71] "to cut his child's throat than put it into a religion not reformed. If your curate, or any other priest, keep women in his house, you ought to go and drag the women by force, or in any other way, pell-mell, out of the house. There are some persons who say prayers to the Virgin Mary, in order that, at the hour of death, they may see the Virgin Mary. Thou shalt see the devil, and not the Virgin Mary." The monk was ordered to retract, and he did so in 1498.

John Laillier, a Doctor of Sorbonne, declares, in 1484, against the tyrannical domination of the hierarchy. "All ecclesiastics," says he, "have received equal power from Christ. The Roman Church is not the head of other churches. You ought to keep the commandments of God and the Apostles; and, in regard to the command of all the bishops and other lords of the Church, care no more for it than you would for a straw; they have destroyed the Church by their tricks.[72] The priests of the Eastern Church sin not in marrying; and, believe me, neither shall we in the [67]
Western Church if we marry. Since St. Sylvester the Church of Rome has been, not a church of Christ, but a church of State and money. We are no more bound to believe the legends of the saints than the Chronicles of France."

John of Wessalia, a doctor of theology at Erfurt, a man of great spirit and intellect, attacks the errors on which the hierarchy rests, and proclaims the holy Scriptures to be the only source of faith. "It is not religion" (that is, the monastic state) "that saves us," says he to some monks, "but the grace of God. God has from all eternity kept a book in which he has entered all his elect. Whosoever is not entered there will not, through eternity; and whosoever is, will never see his name erased. It is solely by the grace of God that the elect are saved. He whom God is pleased to save, by giving him grace, will be saved, though all the priests in the world were to condemn and excommunicate him. And he whom God sees meet to condemn, though these should all wish to save him, will be made to feel his condemnation.[73] How audacious in the successors of the apostles to order, not what Christ has prescribed in his holy books, but what they themselves devised, when carried away, as they now are, by a thirst for money, or a rage for power. I despise the pope, the Church, and the Councils, and I extol Jesus Christ." Wessalia, who had gradually arrived at those convictions, boldly announces them from the pulpit, and enters into communication with deputies from the Hussites. Feeble, bent with age, and wasted by disease, the courageous old man, with tottering step, appears before the Inquisition, and, in 1482, dies in its dungeons.

About the same time, John de Goch, prior at Malines, extolled Christian liberty as the soul of all the virtues. He charged the received doctrine with Pelagianism, and surnamed Thomas Aquinas the "Prince of Error." "Canonical Scripture alone," said he, "deserves full faith, and has an irrefragable authority. The writings of the ancient fathers are of authority only in so far as they are conformable to canonical truth.—There is truth in the common byword, 'What a monk dares undertake, Satan would blush to think.'"

But the most remarkable of the forerunners of the Reformation was undoubtedly John Wessel, surnamed "The Light of the World," a man full of courage and love for the truth, who taught [68]
theology successively at Cologne, Louvain, Paris, Heidelberg, and Gröningen. Luther said of him, "Had I read his works sooner, it might have been said, Luther has drawn everything from Wessel; so much do his spirit and mine accord."[74] "St. Paul and St. James," says Wessel, "say different but not contrary things. Both hold that the just live by faith, but a faith which works by love. He who understanding the gospel believes, desires, hopes, confides in the good news, and loves Him who justifies and blesses him, gives himself entirely to Him whom he loves, and attributes nothing to himself, knowing that in himself he has nothing.[75] The sheep should distinguish between the things on which they feed, and avoid a hurtful food, though it should be offered by the shepherd. The people ought to follow their shepherds to the pastures, but when they lead them to what is not pasture, they are no more shepherds; and because they are not in their duty, the flock is no longer bound to obey them. Nothing is more effectual in destroying the Church than a corrupt clergy. All Christians, even the meanest and simplest, are bound to resist those who destroy the Church.[76] The commands of prelates and doctors ought to be performed only in the manner prescribed by St. Paul, (1 Thess., v, 21;) namely, in so far as, sitting in the chair of Moses, they speak according to Moses. We are the servants of God, and not of the pope, according as it is said, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' The Holy Spirit has reserved to himself to foster, quicken, preserve, and enlarge the unity of the Church, and not abandoned it to the Roman Pontiff, who often gives himself no concern about the

matter. Even sex does not hinder a woman, if she is faithful and prudent, and has love shed abroad in her heart, from feeling, judging, approving, and concluding, by a judgment which God ratifies."

Thus, as the Reformation approaches, the voices which proclaim the truth are multiplied. One would say the Church is bent on demonstrating that the Reformation had an existence before Luther. Protestantism was born into the Church, the very day that the germ of the Papacy appeared in it, just as in the political world conservative principles began to exist the very moment that the despotism of the great or the disorders of the factious showed open front. Protestantism was even sometimes stronger than the Papacy in the ages preceding the Reformation. What had Rome to oppose to all these witnesses for the truth at the moment when [69] their voice was heard through all the earth?

But this was not all. The Reformation existed not in the teachers only; it existed also among the people. The doctrines of Wickliffe, proceeding from Oxford, had spread over Christendom, and had preserved adherents in Bavaria, Swabia, Franconia, and Prussia. In Bohemia, from the bosom of discord and war, ultimately came forth a peaceful Christian community, which resembled the primitive Church, and bore lively testimony to the great principle of Evangelical opposition, viz., "That Christ himself, not Peter and his successor, is the rock on which the Church is built." Belonging equally to the German and Slavonian races, these simple Christians had missionaries among the different nations who spoke their tongues, that they might without noise gain adherents to their opinions. At Rostoch, which had been twice visited by them, Nicolas Kuss began in 1511 to preach publicly against the pope.[77]

It is important to attend to this state of things. When wisdom from above will with loud voice deliver her instructions, there will everywhere be intellects and hearts to receive it. When the sower, who has never ceased to walk over the Church, will come forth for a new and extensive sowing, the earth will be ready to receive the grain. When the trumpet, which the Angel of the covenant has never ceased to blow, will cause it to sound louder and louder, many will make ready for battle.

The Church already feels that the hour of battle is approaching. If, during the last century, more than one philosopher gave intimation of the revolution with which it was to close, can we be astonished, that, at the end of the fifteenth century, several doctors foresaw the impending Reformation which was to renovate the Church?[78]

André Prolés, provincial of the Augustins, who, for more than half a century, presided over this body, and with unshaken courage maintained the doctrines of Augustine within his order, when assembled with his friars in the Convent of Himmelspforte, near Wernigerode, often stopped during the reading of the word of God, and addressing the listening monks, said to them "Brethren, you hear the testimony of holy Scripture. It declares, that by grace we are what we are—that by it alone we have all that we have. Whence, then, so much darkness, and so many horrible superstitions?... Oh! brethren, Christianity has need of a great and bold reformation, and [70] I already see its approach." Then the monks exclaimed, "Why don't you yourself begin this reformation, and oppose all their errors?" "You see, my brethren," replied the old provincial, "that I am weighed down with years, and feeble in body, and possess not the knowledge, talent, and eloquence, which so important a matter requires. But God will raise up a hero, who, by his age, his strength, his talents, his knowledge, his genius, and eloquence, will occupy the first rank. He will begin the reformation, he will oppose error, and God will give him such courage that he will dare to resist the great."[79] An old monk of Himmelspforte, who had often heard these words, related them to Flacius. In the very order of which Prolés was provincial, the Christian hero thus announced by him was to appear.

In the Franciscan Convent at Isenach, in Thuringia, was a monk named John Hilten. He was a careful student of the Prophet Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John; he even wrote a Commentary on these Books, and censured the most crying abuses of monastic life. The enraged monks threw him into prison. His advanced age, and the filthiness of his dungeon, bringing on a dangerous illness, he asked for the friar superintendant, who had no sooner arrived, than, without listening to the prisoner, he began to give vent to his rage, and to rebuke him harshly for his doctrine, which (adds the chronicle) was at variance with the monk's kitchen. The Franciscan, forgetting his illness, and fetching a deep sigh, exclaims, "I calmly submit to your injustice for the love of Christ; for I have done nothing to shake the monastic state, and have only censured its most notorious abuses. *But*," continued he, (this is the account given by Melancthon in his *Apology for the Confession of Augsburg*,) "*another will come in the year of the Lord one thousand five hundred and sixteen; he will destroy you, and you will not be able to resist him.*"[80] John Hilten, who had announced the end of the world in the year 1651, was not so much mistaken in the year in which the future Reformer was to appear. He was born not long after at a short distance from Hilten's dungeon, commenced his studies in the same town where the monk was prisoner, and publicly engaged in the Reformation only a year later than the Franciscan had mentioned.

CHAP. VII.

Letters—Revival—Remembrance of Antiquity in Italy—Influence of the Humanists—Christianity of Dante—Valla—Infidelity in Italy—Platonic Philosophy—Rise of Literature in Germany—Youth in Schools—Printing—Character of German Literature—Literati and Schoolmen—A New World—Reuchlin—Reuchlin in Italy—His Works—His Influence in Germany—Mystics—Struggle with the Dominicans.

Thus princes and people, the living members of the Church, and the theologians, laboured, each in their sphere, to prepare the work which the sixteenth century was about to carry into effect. But there was another auxiliary which was to lend its aid to the Reformation,—I mean Literature.

The human mind was expanding—a circumstance which must of itself have led to its emancipation. If a small seed fall close to an old wall, as it grows into a tree it will push down the wall.

The Pontiff of Rome had become tutor to the nations, and his superior intelligence had made the task easy to him. He had long kept them in a state of minority, but resistance now broke forth on all sides. This venerable tutelage, which had been primarily established by the principles of eternal life, and of civilisation which Rome had imparted to barbarous nations, could no longer be exercised without opposition. A formidable adversary had met her in the face, and was prepared to control her. The natural tendency of the human mind to expand, to investigate, and acquire knowledge, had given birth to this new power. Man opened his eyes, and at every step questioned the proceedings of that long respected guide under whose direction, while blindfolded, he had moved on without saying a word. In regard to the nations of new Europe, the age of infancy had passed away, and that of manhood had begun. To the childlike simplicity, which believed everything, had succeeded a spirit of curiosity, an intellect not to be satisfied without sifting everything to the utmost. It was asked for what end God had spoken to the world, and whether men had a right to station themselves as mediators between God and their brethren.

There was only one thing which could have saved the Church, and this was to raise herself still higher above the people. To keep on a level with them was not enough. But so far from this, she was even found to be far beneath them, having begun to descend at the same time that they began to rise. At the period when mankind began to ascend to the regions of intellect, the [72] priesthood was grovelling below among earthly pursuits and worldly interests. This phenomenon has repeatedly appeared in history. The wings of the eaglet were full fledged, and what hand was high enough to prevent it from taking its flight?

The human mind made its first start in Italy.

Scholasticism and romantic poetry had at no time reigned unopposed. Italy never entirely lost the remembrance of antiquity; and this remembrance having been strongly awakened towards the end of the middle ages, soon gave the mind a new impulse.

Even in the fourteenth century, Dante and Petrarch restored the honour of the ancient Roman poets, at the same time that the former gave the most powerful popes a place in his hell, and the latter boldly protested for the primitive constitution of the Church. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, John of Ravenna taught Latin literature with applause at Padua and Florence, while Chrysoloras, at Florence and Pavia, interpreted the beautiful writers of Greece.

While in Europe light was thus coming forth from the prisons in which it had been confined, the East was sending new beams to the West. The standard of the Osmanlis, planted in 1453 on the walls of Constantinople, had put the learned to flight. They had, in consequence, transported the literature of Greece into Italy, where the torch of the ancients rekindled minds which had lain smothered for so many ages. George of Trebisond, Argyropolos, Bessarion, Lascaris, Chalcondylas, and many others, inspired the West with their love of Greece and its noblest productions. The patriotic feelings of the Italians were thus stimulated, and a great number of learned men appeared in Italy. Of these, the most illustrious were Gasparino, Aretin, Poggio, and Valla, who strove to restore the honour of Roman antiquity, and place it on a footing with that of Greece. In this way, a great flood of light had appeared, and Rome could not but suffer by it.

The passion for antiquity, which took possession of the *Humanists*, had a great effect in weakening the attachment to the Church in minds of the highest order; for "no man can serve two masters." At the same time, the studies in which the learned were engaged put them in possession of a new class of instruments, which were unknown to the schoolmen, and by means of which they could test and decide upon the lessons of the Church. Finding that beauties which charmed them in classical authors existed in profusion in the Bible, and not in the works of theologians, the *Humanists* were quite prepared to give the Bible precedence before the Doctors. [73] By reforming taste, they prepared a reformation in faith.

The Literati, it is true, loudly protested that their pursuits were not at variance with the belief of the Church; but yet they had assailed the schoolmen long before the Reformers began to do it, and played off their wit on these barbarians—those "Teutons who living, lived not."[81] Some even proclaimed doctrines of the gospel, and assailed Rome in the objects of her dearest affection. Already Dante, while adhering to many Roman dogmas, had proclaimed the power of faith in terms similar to those which the first Reformers employed. "It is true faith," he said, "that makes us citizens of heaven.[82] Faith, according to the gospel doctrine, is the principle of life; it is the

feeble spark which, spreading always wider and wider, at length becomes a living flame, and shines within us like a star in heaven. Without faith, no good works, no honesty of life, can give us aid. How great soever our sins may be, the arms of divine grace are greater still, and wide enough to embrace whatever turns towards God.[83] The soul is not lost by the anathema of the pontiffs; and eternal love can always reach it, so long as there remains one bloom of hope.[84] From God, from God alone, through faith our justice comes." And speaking of the Church, Dante exclaims, "O my bark! how ill loaded thou art! O Constantine! what mighty evil was engendered, I will not say by thy conversion, but by that offering which the rich father then received from thee!"

At a later period, Laurentius Valla, applying the study of antiquity to the opinions of the Church, denies the authenticity of the correspondence between Christ and King Abgarus, rejects the tradition as to the origin of the Apostles' Creed, and saps the foundation of the pretended inheritance which the popes held of Constantine.[85]

Still, however, the great light which the study of antiquity threw out in the fifteenth century, was fitted only to destroy, and not to build up. The honour of saving the Church could not be given either to Homer or Virgil. The revival of letters, sciences, and arts did not found the Reformation. The Paganism of the poets, on reappearing in Italy, rather strengthened the Paganism of the [74]
heart. The scepticism of the school of Aristotle, and a contempt of everything not connected with philology, took possession of many of the Literati, and engendered an infidelity which, while it affected submission to the Church, in reality attacked the most important truths of religion. Peter Pomponatius, the most famous representative of this impious tendency, taught at Bologna and Padua, that the immortality of the soul and providence are only philosophical problems.[86] John Francis Pica, nephew of Pica de la Mirandôla, tells of a pope who did not believe a God,[87] and of another who, having confessed to one of his friends, that he did not believe in the immortality of the soul, appeared one night after his death to the same friend, and said to him, "Ah! the eternal fire that consumes me, makes me but too sensible of the immortality of that soul, which, according to the view I held, was to die with the body." This reminds us of the celebrated words which Leo X is alleged to have said to his Secretary Bembo, "All ages know well enough of what advantage this fable about Christ has been to us and ours."[88]... Frivolous superstitions were attacked, but their place was supplied by infidelity, with its disdainful sneering laugh. To laugh at things, however sacred, was fashionable, and a proof of wit; and if any value was set on religion, it was merely as a mean of governing the people. "I have a fear," exclaimed Erasmus in 1516, "and it is, that, with the study of ancient literature, ancient Paganism will re-appear."

It is true that then, as after the sarcasms of the age of Augustus, and as in our own times, after those of the last century, a new Platonic philosophy sprung up and attacked that irrational incredulity, seeking, like the philosophy of the present day, to inspire some respect for Christianity, and restore the religious sentiment to the heart. The Medici at Florence favoured these efforts of the Platonics. But no philosophical religion will regenerate the Church and the world. Proud, disdaining the preaching of the cross, and pretending to see nothing in Christian doctrines but figures and symbols, which the majority of men cannot comprehend, it may bewilder itself in a mystical enthusiasm, but will always prove powerless, either to reform or to save.

What then must have happened, had not true Christianity re-appeared in the world, and had not faith filled the hearts of men anew with its power and its holiness? The Reformation saved [75]
religion, and with it society, and, therefore, if the Church of Rome had had the glory of God and the good of the people at heart, it would have welcomed the Reformation with delight. But what were such things as these to Leo X?

However, a torch could not be lighted in Italy without sending its beams beyond the Alps. The affairs of the Church established a constant intercourse between the Italian Peninsula and the other parts of Christendom, and the *barbarians* being thus soon made to feel the superiority and pride of the Italians, began to blush for the imperfection of their language and their style. Some young noblemen, a Dalberg, a Langen, a Spiegelberg, inflamed with an eager desire of knowledge, passed over into Italy, and on their return to Germany, brought back learning, grammar, and the classics, now so eagerly sought after, and communicated them to their friends.[89] Shortly after, Rodolph Agricola, a man of distinguished genius, appeared, and was held in as high veneration for his learning and genius, as if he had lived in the age of Augustus or Pericles. The ardour of his mind, and the fatigues of the school, wore him out in a few years; but not till noble disciples had been trained, through intimate intercourse with him, to carry their master's fire all over Germany. Often, when assembled around him, they had together deplored the darkness of the Church, and asked why Paul so often repeats that men are justified by faith and not by works.[90]

Around the feet of these new teachers soon gathered rustic youths, who lived by alms and studied without books, and who, divided into sections of priests of Bacchus, arquebusiers, and many more besides, moved in disorderly bands from town to town, and school to school. No matter; these strange bands were the commencement of a literary public. The masterpieces of antiquity began gradually to issue from the presses of Germany, supplanting the schoolmen; and the art of printing, discovered at Mayence in 1440, multiplied the energetic voices which remonstrated against the corruption of the Church, and those voices, not less energetic, which invited the human mind into new paths.

The study of ancient literature had, in Germany, very different effects from those which it had in Italy and France. Her study was combined with faith. In the new literary culture, Germany turned her attention to the advantage which religion might derive from it. What had produced in some a [76] kind of intellectual refinement, of a captious and sterile nature, penetrated the whole life of others, warmed their hearts, and prepared them for a better light. The first restorers of letters in France were characterised by levity, and often even by immorality of conduct. In Germany, their successors, animated by a spirit of gravity, zealously devoted themselves to the investigation of truth. Italy offering her incense to profane literature and science, saw an infidel opposition arise. Germany, occupied with a profound theology, and turned inwardly upon herself, saw the rise of an opposition based on faith. The one sapped the foundations of the Church, and the other repaired them. Within the empire was formed a remarkable union of free, learned, and noble-minded men, among whom princes were conspicuous, who endeavoured to render science useful to religion. Some brought to their studies the humble faith of children, while others brought an enlightened and penetrating intellect, disposed, perhaps, to exceed the bounds of legitimate freedom and criticism; both, however, contributed to clear the pavement of the temple from the obstructions produced by so many superstitions.

The monkish theologians perceived their danger, and began to clamour against the very studies which they had tolerated in Italy and France, because in those countries they had gone hand in hand with levity and dissoluteness. They entered into a conspiracy to oppose the study of language and science, because they had caught a glimpse of faith following in their rear. A monk was putting some one on his guard against the heresies of Erasmus. "In what," it was asked, "do they consist?" He confessed that he had not read the work of which he was speaking, but one thing he knew, viz., that Erasmus had written in too good Latin.

The disciples of literature, and the scholastic theologians, soon came to an open rupture. The latter were in dismay when they saw the movement which was taking place in the domain of intellect, and thought that immobility and darkness were the best safeguards of the Church. Their object in contending against the revival of letters was to save Rome, but they helped to ruin it. Here Rome had much at stake. Forgetting herself for an instant under the pontificate of Leo X, she abandoned her old friends, and clasped her young adversaries in her arms. The papacy and letters formed an intimacy which seemed destined to break up the ancient alliance between monasticism and the hierarchy. At the first glance the popes perceived not that what they had taken for a whip was a sword capable of inflicting a mortal wound. In the same way, during the [77] last century, princes were seen receiving at their court political and philosophic systems, which, if carried into full effect, would have overturned their thrones. The alliance was not of long duration. Literature advanced without troubling itself about the injury which it might do to the power of its patron. The monks and schoolmen were aware that to abandon the pope was just to abandon themselves; and the pope, notwithstanding of the passing patronage which he gave to the fine arts, was not the less active when he saw the danger, in adopting measures, how much opposed soever they might be to the spirit of the time.

The universities defended themselves as they best could against the invasion of new light. Cologne expelled Rhagius; Leipsic, Celtes; Rostoch, Herman von dem Busch. Still the new doctors, and with them the ancient classics, gradually and often even by the aid of princes, made good their footing in these public schools. Societies of grammarians and poets were soon established in spite of the schoolmen, and every thing, even to the name of the Literati, behoved to be converted into Latin and Greek; for how could the friends of Sophocles and Virgil have such names as Krachenberger or Schwarzerd? At the same time, a spirit of independence breathed in all the universities. Students were no longer seen in schoolboy fashion, with their books under their arms, walking sagely and demurely with downcast eye behind their masters. The petulance of a Martial and an Ovid had passed into the new disciples of the Muses. It was transport to them to hear the sarcasms which fell in torrents on the dialectical theologians, and the heads of the literary movement were sometimes accused of favouring, and even of exciting, the disorderly proceedings of the students.

Thus a new world, emerging out of antiquity, was formed in the very heart of the world of the middle ages. The two parties could not avoid coming to blows, and the struggle was at hand. It began with the greatest champion of literature, with an old man on the eve of finishing his peaceful career.

To secure the triumph of truth, the first thing necessary was to bring forth the weapons by which she was to conquer, from the arsenals where they had lain buried for ages. These weapons were the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It was necessary to revive in Christendom a love and study of sacred literature, both Greek and Hebrew. John Reuchlin was the individual whom divine Providence selected for this purpose.

A very fine boy's voice was remarked in the choir of the church of Pforzheim, and attracted the [78] attention of the Margrave of Baden. It was that of John Reuchlin, a young boy of agreeable manners and a lively disposition, son of an honest burgher of the place. The Margrave soon took him entirely under his protection, and in 1473 made choice of him to accompany his son Frederick to the University of Paris.

The son of the bailiff of Pforzheim arrived with the prince, his heart exuberant with joy at being admitted to this school, the most celebrated of all the West. Here he found the Spartan Hermonymos and John Wessel, surnamed "The Light of the World," and had an opportunity of engaging under skilful masters in the study of Greek and Hebrew, which had not then a single

professor in Germany, and of which he was one day to be the restorer in the country of the Reformation. The poor young German made copies of the poems of Homer, and the speeches of Isocrates, for wealthy students, and in this way gained the means of continuing his studies and buying books.

But what he hears from the mouth of Wessel is of a different nature, and makes a deep impression on his mind. "The popes may be mistaken. All human satisfactions are blasphemy against Christ, who has perfectly reconciled and justified the human race. To God alone belongs the power of giving full absolution. There is no necessity for confessing our sins to a priest. There is no purgatory, at least if it be not God himself, who is a devouring fire, and purges away every defilement." Reuchlin, when scarcely twenty, teaches Philosophy, Greek, and Latin, at Bâsle, and a German (a thing then regarded as a wonder) is heard speaking Greek.

The partizans of Rome begin to feel uneasy on seeing noble spirits at work among these ancient treasures. "The Romans," says Reuchlin, "are making mouths and raising an outcry, pretending that all these literary labours are hostile to Roman piety, inasmuch as the Greeks are schismatics. Oh! what toils and sufferings must be endured to bring Germany back to wisdom and knowledge!"

Shortly afterward, Eberhard of Wurtemberg invited Reuchlin to Tubingen, that he might be the ornament of this rising university, and in 1483 took him with him into Italy. At Florence his companions and friends were Chalcondylas, Aurispa, and John Pica de Mirandola. At Rome, when Eberhard received a solemn audience of the pope, surrounded by his cardinals, Reuchlin delivered an address in such pure and elegant Latin, that the assembly, who expected nothing of the kind from a barbarous German, were filled with the greatest astonishment, while the pope [79] exclaimed, "Assuredly this man deserves to take his place beside the best orators of France and Italy."

Ten years later Reuchlin was obliged to take refuge in Heidelberg, at the court of the Elector Philip, to escape the vengeance of Eberhard's successor. Philip, in concert with John of Dalberg, Bishop of Worms, his friend and chancellor, exerted himself to spread the light which was beginning to peep forth from all parts of Germany. Dalberg had founded a library, to which all the learned had free access, and Reuchlin, in this new sphere, made great efforts to remove the barbarism of his countrymen.

Having been sent to Rome by the elector in 1498, on an important mission, he availed himself of all the time and all the money he could spare to make new progress in Hebrew, under the learned Israelite, Abdias Sphorne, and purchased all the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts which he could find, with the view of employing them as so many torches to increase the light which was beginning to dawn in his native country.

Argyropolos, a distinguished Greek, was at this time in the metropolis explaining the ancient marvels of the literature of his country to a numerous audience. The learned ambassador repairs with his suite to the hall where the teacher was lecturing, and, after bowing to him, deplores the misery of Greece, expiring under the blows of the Ottomans. The astonished Hellenist asks the German, "Who are you? Do you understand Greek?" Reuchlin replies, "I am a German, and know something of your tongue." At the request of Argyropolos he reads and explains a passage of Thucydides, which the professor had at the moment before him. Then Argyropolos, filled with astonishment and grief, exclaims, "Alas! Alas! Greece, oppressed and obliged to flee, has gone and hid herself beyond the Alps!"

Thus the sons of rude Germany, and those of ancient learned Greece, met in the palaces of Rome, and the East and West shook hands in this rendezvous of the world—the one pouring into the lap of the other those intellectual treasures which had with difficulty been saved from the barbarism of the Ottomans. God, when his designs require it, employs some great catastrophe to break down the barrier, and instantly bring together those who seemed to be for ever parted.

Reuchlin, on his return to Germany, was able to go back to Wurtemberg, and proceeded, at this time especially, to execute those works which proved so useful to Luther and the Reformation. This individual, who, as Count Palatine, held an eminent station in the empire, and who as a [80] philosopher, contributed to humble Aristotle and exalt Plato—made a Latin Dictionary, which supplanted those of the Schoolmen—composed a Greek Grammar, which greatly facilitated the study of that language—translated and expounded the penitential Psalms—corrected the Vulgate, and was the first in Germany (this constitutes his highest merit and glory) who published a Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary. By this work Reuchlin opened the long sealed books of the Old Testament, and reared "a monument," as he himself expresses it, "more durable than brass."

It was not merely by his writings, but also by his life, that Reuchlin sought to advance the reign of truth. Tall in stature, of commanding appearance, and affable address, he instantly gained the confidence of all with whom he had any intercourse. His thirst for knowledge was equalled only by his zeal in communicating it. He spared neither money nor labour to introduce the editions of the classics into Germany as they issued from the presses of Italy; and in this way the son of a bailiff did more to enlighten his countrymen than rich municipalities or powerful princes. His influence over youth was great; and, in this respect, who can calculate how much the Reformation owes to him? We will give only one example. His cousin, a young man named Schwarzerd, son of an artisan, who had acquired celebrity as an armourer, came to lodge with his sister, Elizabeth, in order to study under his direction. Reuchlin, delighted at the genius and application of his young pupil, adopted him. Advice, presents of books, examples, nothing, in

short, he spared to make his relative useful to the Church and to his country. He rejoiced to see his work prospering under his eye; and, thinking the name Schwarzerd too barbarous, translated it into Greek, and named the young student Melancthon. It was Luther's illustrious friend.

But grammatical studies did not satisfy Reuchlin. Like his masters, the Jewish doctors, he began to study the hidden meaning of the Word; "God," said he, "is a Spirit, the Word is a breath,—man breathes, God is the Word. The names which he has given himself are an echo of eternity."[91] Like the Cabalists, he hoped to "pass from symbol to symbol, from form to form, till he arrived at the last and purest of all forms—that which regulates the power of the Spirit."[92]

While Reuchlin was bewildering himself in these quiet and abstruse researches, the enmity of the Schoolmen forced him suddenly, and much against his will, into a fierce war, which was one of [81] the preludes of the Reformation.

There was at Cologne a baptized Rabbin, named Pfefferkorn, who was intimately connected with the inquisitor Hochstraten. This man and the Dominicans solicited and procured from the emperor, Maximilian, (it may have been with good intentions,) an order, in virtue of which the Jews were to bring all their Hebrew books (the Bible excepted) to the town-house of the place where they resided. There the books were to be burned. The motive alleged was, that they were full of blasphemies against Jesus Christ. It must be confessed that they were, at least, full of absurdities, and that the Jews themselves would not have lost much by the intended execution.

The emperor desired Reuchlin to give his opinion of the books. The learned doctor expressly singled out all the books which were written against Christianity, leaving them to their destined fate, but he tried to save the others. "The best method of converting the Israelites," added he, "would be to establish two Hebrew professors in each University, who might teach theologians to read the Bible in Hebrew, and thus refute the Jewish doctors." The Jews, in consequence of this advice, obtained restitution of their books.

The proselytes and the inquisitors, like hungry ravens which see their prey escape, sent forth cries of fury. Picking out different passages from the writings of Reuchlin, and perverting their meaning, they denounced the author as a heretic, accused him of a secret inclination to Judaism, and threatened him with the fetters of the Inquisition. Reuchlin was at first taken by surprise; but these men always becoming more and more arrogant, and prescribing dishonourable terms, he, in 1513, published a "Defence against his Detractors of Cologne," in which he painted the whole party in vivid colours.

The Dominicans vowed vengeance, and hoped, by an act of authority, to re-establish their tottering power. Hochstraten, at Mayence, drew up a charge against Reuchlin, and the learned works of this learned man were condemned to the flames. The Innovators, the masters and disciples of the new school, feeling that they were all attacked in the person of Reuchlin, rose as one man. Times were changed,—Germany and literature were very different from Spain and the Inquisition.

The great literary movement had created a public opinion. Even the dignified clergy were somewhat influenced by it. Reuchlin appeals to Leo X, and that pope, who had no great liking for [82] ignorant monks and fanatics, remits the whole affair to the Bishop of Spires, who declares Reuchlin innocent, and condemns the monks in the expences of process. The Dominicans, those props of the papacy, filled with rage, recur to the infallible decision of Rome, and Leo, not knowing how to act between the two hostile powers, issues a mandate superseding the process.

The union of letters with faith forms one of the characteristic features of the Reformation, and distinguishes it, both from the introduction of Christianity, and the religious revival of the present day. The Christians, who were contemporary with the Apostles, had the refinement of their age against them, and, with some few exceptions, it is the same now; but the majority of literary men were with the Reformers. Even public opinion was favourable to them. The work thereby gained in extent, but perhaps it lost in depth.

Luther, sensible of all that Reuchlin had done, wrote to him shortly after his victory over the Dominicans, "The Lord has acted through you, in order that the light of Holy Scripture may again begin to shine in this Germany, where, for many ages, alas! it was not only smothered, but almost extinguished."[93]

CHAP. VIII.

Erasmus—Erasmus a Canon—At Paris—His Genius—His Reputation—His Influence—Popular Attack—Praise of Folly—Tatters—Church People—Saints—Folly and the Popes—Attack on Science—Principle—The Greek New Testament—His Profession of Faith—His Writings and Influence—His Failings—A Reform without Shocks—Was it possible—The Church without Reform—His timidity—His Indecision—Erasmus loses himself with all Parties.

But a man had now appeared, who regarded it as the great business of his life to attack the

scholasticism of the universities and convents, and was the great writer of the opposition at the commencement of the sixteenth century.

Reuchlin was not twelve years old when this first genius of the age was born. A man of great vivacity and talent, by name Gerard, a native of Gouda, in the Netherlands, loved a physician's daughter, named Marguerite. The principles of Christianity did not regulate his life, or at least [83] passion silenced them. His parents, and nine brothers, would have constrained him to embrace the monastic state. He fled, leaving the object of his affection about to become a mother, and repaired to Rome. Frail Marguerite gave birth to a son. Gerard heard nothing of it, and some time after having received intimation from his parents, that the object of his affection was no more, he, in a paroxysm of grief, turned priest, and consecrated himself for ever to the service of God. On his return to Holland, she was still alive! Marguerite would not marry another, and Gerard, remaining faithful to his sacerdotal vows, their affection became concentrated on their little son. His mother had tended him with the greatest care, and his father, after his return, sent him to school, though he was only four years of age. He was not thirteen, when his teacher, Sinthemius, of Deventer, clasping him rapturously in his arms, exclaimed, "This child will reach the highest pinnacles of science." It was Erasmus of Rotterdam.[94]

About this time his mother died, and his father, broken-hearted, was not long in following her to the grave.

Young Erasmus, left alone in the world, showed the greatest aversion to become a monk, a state of life which his guardians were for compelling him to adopt, but to which, from the circumstances of his birth, he may be said to have been always opposed. Ultimately he was prevailed upon to enter a convent of canons regular, but he had no sooner done it than he felt, as it were, borne down by the weight of his vows. Recovering a little liberty, he is soon seen, first at the Court of the Archbishop of Cambray, and afterwards at the University of Paris, where he prosecuted his studies in extreme poverty, but with the most indefatigable diligence. As soon as he could procure any money, he employed the first part of it in the purchase of Greek books, and the remainder in the purchase of clothes. Often did the poor Dutchman make fruitless application to his guardians, and to this probably it was owing, that, in after life, one of his greatest pleasures was to give assistance to poor students. Engaged without intermission in the pursuit of truth and knowledge, he gave a reluctant attendance on scholastic disputes, and revolted from the study of theology, afraid that he might discover some errors in it, and be, in consequence, denounced as a heretic.

It was at this time Erasmus began to feel his strength. By the study of the ancients, he acquired a [84] perspicuity and an elegance of style, which placed him far above the most distinguished Literati of Paris. His employment as a teacher procured him powerful friends, while the works which he published attracted general admiration and applause. He well knew how to please the public, and shaking off the last remnants of the school and the cloister, devoted himself entirely to literature, displaying in all his writings those ingenious observations, and that correct, lively, and enlightened spirit, which at once amuse and instruct.

The laborious habits which he acquired at this period he retained through life. Even in his journeys, which were usually made on horseback, he was never idle. He composed while he was rambling across the fields, and, on arriving at his inn, committed his thoughts to writing. It was in this way, while travelling from Italy to England, he composed his Praise of Folly.[95]

Erasmus, early in life, acquired a high reputation among the learned, but the enraged monks owed him a grudge, and vowed vengeance. He was much courted by princes, and was inexhaustible in finding excuses to evade their invitations, liking better to gain his livelihood in correcting books with the printer Frobenius, than to live surrounded by luxury and honour, at the magnificent courts of Charles V, Henry VIII, and Francis I, or to encircle his head with the Cardinal's hat which was offered him.[96]

He taught in Oxford from 1509 to 1516, and then left it for Bâsle, where he fixed his residence in 1521.

What was his influence on the Reformation?

It has been overrated by some and underrated by others. Erasmus never was, and never could have been, a Reformer, but he paved the way for others. Not only did he diffuse among his contemporaries a love of science, and a spirit of research and examination, which led others much farther than he went himself, but he was also able, through the protection of distinguished prelates and mighty princes, to expose the vices of the Church, and lash them with the most cutting satire.

Erasmus, in fact, attacked monks and abuses in two ways. First, there was his popular attack. That little fair-haired man, whose peering blue eyes keenly observed whatever came before him, and on whose lips a somewhat sarcastic smile was always playing, though timid and embarrassed [85] in his step, and apparently so feeble that a breath of air might have thrown him down, was constantly pouring out elegant and biting sarcasms against the theology and superstition of his age. His natural character and the events of his life had made this habitual to him. Even in writings where nothing of the kind was to have been expected, his sarcastic humour is ever breaking out, and, as with needle points, impaling those schoolmen and ignorant monks against whom he had declared war. There are many features of resemblance between Erasmus and Voltaire. Previous authors had given a popular turn to that element of folly which mingles with all

the thoughts and all the actions of human life. Erasmus took up the idea, and personifying Folly, introduces her under the name of Moria, daughter of Plutus, born in the Fortunate Islands, nursed on intoxication and impertinence, and swaying the sceptre of a mighty empire. Giving a description of it, she paints, in succession, all the states of the world which belong to her, dwelling, especially, on church folks, who refuse to own her kindness, although she loads them with her favours. She directs her jibes and jests against the labyrinth of dialectics, in which the theologians wander bewildered, and the grotesque syllogisms by which they pretend to support the Church. She also unveils the disorders, the ignorance, the impurity, and absurd conduct of the monks.

"They are all mine," says she, "those people who have no greater delight than to relate miracles, or hear monstrous lies, and who employ them to dissipate the ennui of others, and, at the same time, to fill their own purses, (I allude, particularly, to priests and preachers.) Near them are those who have adopted the foolish, yet pleasing persuasion, that if they cast a look at a bit of wood or a picture representing Polyphemus or Christopher, they will, at least, outlive that day."—"Alas! what follies," continues Moria, "follies at which even I myself can scarcely help blushing! Do we not see each country laying claim to its particular *saint*? Each misery has its saint and its candle. This one relieves you in toothache, that one gives assistance at childbirth, a third restores your stolen goods, a fourth saves you in shipwreck, and a fifth keeps watch over your flocks. Some of these are all-powerful in many things at once. This is particularly the case with the Virgin, the mother of God, to whom the vulgar attribute almost more than to her Son.[97] In the midst of all these follies, if some odious sage arise, and, giving a counternote, exclaim, (as [86] in truth he may,) 'You will not perish miserably if you live as Christians.[98] You will redeem your sins, if to the money which you give you add hatred of the sins themselves, tears, vigils, prayers, fastings, and a thorough change in your mode of life. Yon saint will befriend you if you imitate his life.'—If some sage, I say, charitably duns such words into their ears, Oh! of what felicity does he not deprive their souls, and into what trouble, what despondency, does he not plunge them! The mind of man is so constituted that imposture has a much stronger hold upon it than truth.[99] If there is any saint more fabulous than another, for instance, a St. George, a St. Christopher, or a St. Barbara, you will see them adored with much greater devotion than St. Peter, St. Paul, or Christ himself."[100]

Folly, however, does not stop here; she applies her lash to the bishops themselves, "who run more after gold than after souls, and think they have done enough when they make a theatrical display of themselves, as Holy Fathers, to whom adoration is due, and when they bless or anathematise." The daughter of "the Fortunate Isles" has the hardihood even to attack the Court of Rome, and the pope himself, who, spending his time in diversion, leaves Peter and Paul to perform his duty. "Are there," says she, "more formidable enemies of the Church than those impious pontiffs, who, by their silence, allow Jesus Christ to be destroyed, who bind him by their mercenary laws, falsify him by their forced interpretations, and strangle him by their pestilential life?"[101]

Holbein appended to the Praise of Folly, most grotesque engravings, among which the pope figures with his triple crown. Never, perhaps, was a work so well adapted to the wants of a particular period. It is impossible to describe the impression which it produced throughout Christendom. Twenty-seven editions were published in the lifetime of Erasmus; it was translated into all languages, and served more than any other to confirm the age in its antisacerdotal tendency.

But to this attack by popular sarcasm, Erasmus added the attack of science and erudition. The study of Greek and Latin literature had opened up a new prospect to the modern genius which began to be awakened in Europe. Erasmus entered with all his heart into the idea of the Italians, [87] that the school of the ancients was that in which the sciences ought to be studied, that, abandoning the inadequate and absurd books which had hitherto been used, it was necessary to go to Strabo for geography, to Hippocrates for medicine, to Plato for philosophy, to Ovid for mythology, and to Pliny for natural history. But he took a farther step, the step of a giant, destined to lead to the discovery of a new world, of more importance to humanity than that which Columbus had just added to the old world. Following out his principle, Erasmus insisted that men should no longer study theology in Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, but go and learn it from the Fathers of the Church, and, above all, from the New Testament. He showed that it was not even necessary to keep close to the Vulgate, which swarmed with faults, and he rendered an immense service to truth, by publishing his critical edition of the Greek text of the New Testament, a text as little known in the West as if it never had existed. This edition appeared at Bâsle in 1516, the year before the Reformation. Erasmus thus did for the New Testament what Reuchlin had done for the Old. Theologians were thenceforth able to read the word of God in the original tongues, and at a later period to recognise the purity of doctrine taught by the Reformers.

"I wish," said Erasmus on publishing his New Testament, "to bring to its level that frigid, wordy, disputatious thing, termed Theology. Would to God the Christian world may derive advantage from the work, proportioned to the pain and toil which it has cost." The wish was accomplished. It was in vain for the monks to exclaim, "He is trying to correct the Holy Spirit." The new Testament of Erasmus sent forth a living light. His paraphrases on the Epistles and Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John; his editions of Cyprian and Jerome; his translations of Origen, Athanasius, and Chrysostom; his "True Theology;"[102] his "Preacher;"[103] his Commentaries on several of the Psalms, contributed greatly to spread a taste for the word of God and pure theology. The

effect of his labours even went farther than his intentions. Reuchlin and Erasmus restored the Bible to the learned; Luther restored it to the people. We have not yet described all that Erasmus did. When he restored the Bible, he called attention to its contents. "The highest aim of the revival of philosophical studies," said he, "should be to give a knowledge of the pure and simple Christianity of the Bible." An admirable sentiment! Would to God the organs of philosophy, in our [88] day, were as well acquainted with their calling! "I am firmly resolved," continued he, "to die studying the Scriptures; it is my joy and my peace."[104] "The sum of all Christian philosophy," he elsewhere says, "is reduced to this: To place all our hope in God, who through grace without our merits, gives us everything by Jesus Christ: To know that we are ransomed by the death of his Son: To die to worldly lusts, and walk conformably to his doctrine and his example, not only doing no injury to any, but, on the contrary, doing good to all: To bear trials patiently, in the hope of future recompence: in fine, to claim no credit to ourselves because of our virtues, but give thanks to God for all our faculties, and all our works. These are the feelings which ought to pervade the whole man, until they have become a second nature."[105]

Then raising his voice against the great mass of ecclesiastical injunctions, regarding dress, fasts, feast-days, vows, marriage, and confessions, by which the people were oppressed, and the priest was enriched, Erasmus exclaims, "In churches, the interpretation of the gospel is scarcely thought of.[106] The better part of sermons must meet the wishes of the commissaries of indulgences. The holy doctrine of Christ must be suppressed, or interpreted contrary to its meaning, and for their profit. Cure is now hopeless, unless Christ himself turn the hearts of kings and pontiffs, and awaken them to enquire after true piety."

The works of Erasmus rapidly succeeded each other. He laboured incessantly, and his writings were read just as they came from his pen. That spirit, that native life, that rich, refined, sparkling and bold intellect, which, without restraint, poured out its treasures before his contemporaries, carried away and entranced vast numbers of readers, who eagerly devoured the works of the philosopher of Rotterdam. In this way he soon became the most influential man in Christendom, and saw pensions and crowns raining down upon him from all quarters.

When we contemplate the great revolution, which, at a later period, renewed the Church, it is impossible not to own that Erasmus was used by many as a kind of bridge, over which they passed. Many who would have taken alarm at evangelical truths, if presented in all their force and purity, yielded to the charm of his writings, and ultimately figured among the most zealous [89] promoters of the Reformation.

But the very circumstance of his being good in preparing, prevented him from being good at performing. "Erasmus knows very well how to expose error," says Luther, "but he knows not how to teach the truth." The gospel was not the fire which warmed and sustained his life, the centre around which his activity radiated. He was, first of all, a learned, and, in the second place only, a Christian man. He was too much under the influence of vanity to have a decided influence on his age. He anxiously calculated the effect which every step he took might have on his reputation, and there was nothing he liked so much to talk of as himself and his fame. "The pope," wrote he to an intimate friend with puerile vanity, at the period when he became the declared opponent of Luther, "the pope has sent me a letter full of kindness and expressions of respect. His secretary solemnly vows that the like was never heard of, and that it was written word for word at the pope's own dictation."

Erasmus and Luther are the representatives of two great ideas on the subject of reform, and of two great parties of their own age, and of all ages. The one is composed of men, whose leading characteristic is a prudential timidity; the other of men of courage and resolution. These two parties were, at this period, personified in these two distinguished heads. The men of prudence thought that the cultivation of theological science might lead gradually, and without disruption, to the reformation of the Church. The men of action thought that the diffusion of more correct ideas among the learned would not put a stop to the superstitions of the people, and that the correction of particular abuses was of little avail, unless the whole life of the Church were renewed.

"A disadvantageous peace," said Erasmus, "is far better than the justest war."[107] He thought (and how many Erasmuses have been and still are in the world?) that a Reformation which shook the Church might run a risk of overturning it; and he was therefore terrified when, on looking forward, he saw the passions of men excited, saw evil everywhere mingling itself with any little good that could be accomplished, existing institutions destroyed in the absence of others to supply their place, and the vessel of the Church leaking in every part, and at length engulfed amid the storm. "Those who bring the sea into new lagoons," said he, "are often deceived in the [90] result; the formidable element, once introduced, does not take the direction which they wished to give it, but rushes where it pleases, and causes great devastation.[108] "Be this as it may," continued he, "let disturbances be by all means avoided. Better put up with wicked princes than by innovations enthrone evil."[109]

But the courageous among his contemporaries were prepared with their answer. History had clearly enough demonstrated, that a frank exposition of the truth, and a mortal struggle with falsehood, could alone secure the victory. Had temporising and politic artifices been resorted to, the wiles of the papal court would have extinguished the light in its first glimmerings. Had not all sorts of mild methods been tried for ages? Had not Council been held after Council, with the view of reforming the Church? Yet all had been useless. Why pretend to repeat an experiment that had

so often failed?

No doubt a fundamental reform might be effected without disruption. But when did anything great and good make its appearance among men without causing agitation? This fear of seeing evil mingle with good, if legitimate, would arrest the noblest and holiest enterprises. We must not fear the evil which may be heaved up in the course of great agitation, but be strong in combating and destroying it.

Besides, is there not an entire difference between the commotion which human passions produces and that which emanates from the Spirit of God? The one shakes society, the other consolidates it. How erroneous to imagine, like Erasmus, that in the state in which Christianity then was, with that mixture of opposite elements, truth and falsehood, life and death, violent shocks might still be prevented! As well might you try to shut the crater of Vesuvius, when the angry elements are actually at war in its bosom! The middle ages had seen more than one violent commotion in an atmosphere less loaded with storms than at the period of the Reformation. The thing wanted at such a time is not to arrest and suppress, but to direct and guide.

If the Reformation had not burst forth, who can tell the fearful ruin by which its place might have been supplied? Society, a prey to a thousand elements of destruction, and destitute of regenerating and conservative elements, would have been dreadfully convulsed. Assuredly it [91] would not have been a reform to the taste of Erasmus, or such an one as many moderate but timid men in our day dream of, that would then have overtaken society. The people, devoid of that light and piety which the Reformation carried down into the humblest ranks, giving themselves up to the violence of their passions, and to a restless spirit of revolt, would have burst forth like a wild beast broken loose from its chain, after having been goaded to madness.

The Reformation was nothing but an interposition of the Spirit of God among men, a setting of the world in order by the hand of God. No doubt, it might stir up the fermenting elements which lie hidden in the human heart; but God was there to overrule them. Evangelical doctrine, heavenly truth, penetrating the masses of the population, destroyed what deserved to perish, but, at the same time, gave new strength to all that deserved to remain. The Reformation exerted itself in building up, and it is mere prejudice to allege that it destroyed. "The ploughshare, too," it has been truly said, in speaking of the Reformation, "might think it hurts the earth, because it cuts it asunder, whereas it only makes it productive."

The great principle of Erasmus was, "Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself." The principle is good, and Luther acted on it. But when the enemies of the light strive to extinguish it, or to force the flambeau out of the hand which carries it is it necessary, from a love of peace, to let them do so? ought not the wicked to be resisted?

Erasmus was deficient in courage. Now, courage is indispensable, whether it be to effect a Reformation, or to storm a town. There was much timidity in his character. From a boy the very name of death made him tremble. He was excessively anxious about his health, and would grudge no sacrifice in order to escape from a place where some contagious malady prevailed. His love of the comforts of life was greater even than his vanity, and hence his rejection, on more than one occasion, of the most brilliant offers.

Accordingly, he made no pretensions to the character of a Reformer. "If the corruptions of the Court of Rome demand some great and prompt remedy," said he, "it is no affair of mine, or of those like me."[110] He had not the strong faith which animated Luther. While the latter was always prepared to yield up his life for the truth, Erasmus candidly declared, "Others may aspire to martyrdom; as for me, I deem not myself worthy of the honour. Were some tumult to arise, I [92] fear I would play the part of Peter."[111]

Erasmus, by his writings and his sayings, had done more than any other man to prepare the Reformation; but, when he saw the tempest, which he himself had raised, actually come, he trembled. He would have given anything to bring back the calm of other days, even though accompanied with its dense fogs. It was no longer time. The embankment had burst, and it was impossible to arrest the flood which was destined at once to purify and fertilise the world. Erasmus was powerful as an instrument of God, but when he ceased to be so, he was nothing.

Ultimately, Erasmus knew not for which party to declare. He was not pleased with any, and he had his fears of all. "It is dangerous to speak," said he, "and it is dangerous to be silent." In all great religious movements we meet with those irresolute characters, which, though respectable in some points of view, do injury to the truth, and, in wishing not to displease any, displease all.

What would become of the truth did not God raise up bolder champions to defend it? The following is the advice which Erasmus gave to Viglius Zuichem, (afterwards President of the Supreme Court at Brussels,) as to the manner in which he ought to conduct himself towards the sectaries—(this was the name by which he had already begun to designate the Reformers)—"My friendship for you makes me desirous that you should keep far aloof from the contagion of the sects, and not furnish them with any pretext for saying, 'Zuichem is ours.' If you approve their doctrine, at least disguise it, and, above all, do not enter into discussion with them. A lawyer should finesse with these people as a dying man once did with the devil. The devil asked him, 'What believest thou?' The dying man, afraid that if he made a confession of his faith, he might be surprised into some heresy, replied, 'What the Church believes.' The devil rejoined, 'What does the Church believe?' The man again replied, 'What I believe.' The devil, once more, 'And what dost thou believe?'—'What the Church believes.'"[112] Duke George of Saxony, a mortal enemy of

Luther, receiving an equivocal answer from Erasmus to a question which he had put to him, said, "My dear Erasmus, wash the fur for me, and do not merely wet it." Secundus Curio, in one of his works, describes two heavens—the Papistical and the Christian heaven. He does not find Erasmus in either, but discovers him moving constantly between them in endless circles.

[93] Such was Erasmus. He wanted that internal liberty which makes a man truly free. How different he would have been if he had abandoned himself, and sacrificed all for truth! But after trying to effect some reforms with the approbation of the Church, and for Rome deserting the Reformation when he saw the two to be incompatible, he lost himself with all parties. On the one hand, his palinodes could not suppress the rage of the fanatical partisans of the Papacy. They felt the mischief which he had done them, and they did not forgive it. Impetuous monks poured out reproaches on him from the pulpit,—calling him a second Lucian,—a fox, which had laid waste the vineyard of the Lord. A doctor of Constance had the portrait of Erasmus hung up in his study, that he might have it in his power at any moment to spit in his face. On the other hand, Erasmus, by deserting the standard of the gospel, deprived himself of the affection and esteem of the noblest men of the period in which he lived, and must, doubtless, have forfeited those heavenly consolations which God sheds in the hearts of those who conduct themselves as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. At least we have some indication of this in his bitter tears—his painful vigils, and troubled sleep—his disrelish for his food—his disgust with the study of the muses, once his only solace—his wrinkled brow—his pallid cheek—his sad and sunken eye—his hatred of a life to which he applies the epithet of cruel—and those longings for death which he unbosoms to his friends.[113] Poor Erasmus!

The enemies of Erasmus went, we think, somewhat beyond the truth when they exclaimed, on Luther's appearance, "Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther has hatched it."[114]

CHAP. IX.

[94]

The nobles—Different Motives—Hütten—Literary League—Letters of some Obscure Men—Their Effect—Luther's Opinion—Hütten at Brussels—His Letters—Seckingen—War—His Death—Cronberg—Hans Sachs—General Fermentation.

The same symptoms of regeneration, which we have seen among princes, bishops, and the learned, existed among the men of the world, among nobles, knights, and warriors. The German nobility performed an important part in the Reformation. Several of the most illustrious sons of Germany entered into close alliance with the Literati, and inflamed with an ardent, sometimes even an excessive zeal, laboured to deliver their countrymen from the yoke of Rome.

Various causes must have contributed to procure friends for the Reformation among the ranks of the nobility. Some, by their attendance at the universities, had been warmed with the same flame that animated the learned. Others, whose education had trained them to generous feelings, had their minds predisposed in favour of the beautiful doctrines of the gospel. To several, the Reformation seemed to present something of a chivalrous character, which fascinated them, and bore them along in its train. Lastly, it must be acknowledged, that not a few had a grudge at the clergy, who had powerfully contributed in the reign of Maximilian, to deprive the nobles of their ancient independence, and bring them under subjection to their sovereigns. They, in their enthusiasm, considered the Reformation as the prelude of a great political renovation. They thought they saw the empire emerging from this crisis with new splendour, and hailed the better state, brilliant with the purest glory, which was on the eve of being established in the world by chivalrous swords, not less than by the word of God.

Ulrich de Hütten,[115] who, on account of his philippics against the Papacy, has been surnamed the Demosthenes of Germany, forms, as it were, the link which united the chevaliers and men of letters. He distinguished himself by his writings, as much as by his sword. Descended from an [95] ancient family in Franconia, he was sent at eleven years of age, to the Convent of Foulda, with the view of his becoming a monk. But Ulrich, who had no inclination for this state, ran off from the convent when he was sixteen, and repaired to the University of Cologne, where he devoted himself to the study of languages. Afterwards leading an unsettled life, he was in the ranks as a common soldier at the siege of Padua, in 1513, saw Rome in all its disorder, and there sharpened the arrows which he afterwards shot at her.

On his return to Germany, Hütten wrote a pamphlet against Rome, entitled "The Roman Trinity," in which he unveils all the disorders of that court, and shows the necessity of pulling down her tyranny by main force. A traveller named Vadiscus, who figures prominently in the piece, says, "There are three things which are usually brought back from Rome,—a sore conscience, a disordered stomach, and an empty purse. There are three things which Rome does not believe,—the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and hell. There are three things in which Rome carries on a trade,—the grace of Christ, ecclesiastical benefices, and women." The publication of this work obliged Hütten to quit the court of the Archbishop of Mayence, where he was residing when he composed it.

The affair of Reuchlin with the Dominicans was the signal which brought forward all the literati,

magistrates, and nobles, who were opposed to the monks. The defeat of the inquisitors, who, it was said, had only saved themselves from a regular and absolute sentence of condemnation by money and intrigue, gave encouragement to all their adversaries. Counsellors of the empire, and magistrates of the most considerable towns—Pirckheimer of Nuremberg, Peutinger of Augsburg, Stuss of Cologne, distinguished preachers, such as Capito and Œcolampadius, doctors of medicine, historians, all the literati, orators, and poets, at the head of whom, Ulrich de Hütten was conspicuous, formed the *army of Reuchlinists*, of whom a list was even published.[116] The most remarkable production of this league was the famous popular satire, entitled, "Letters of some Obscure Men." This production was principally written by Hütten, and one of his university friends, Crotus Robianus, but it is difficult to say with which of the two the idea originated, if, indeed, it was not with the learned printer, Angst. It is even doubtful if Hütten had any hand in the first part of the work. Several *Humanists*, who had met in the fortress of Ebernbourg, appear [96] to have contributed to the second part. It is a picture in bold characters, a caricature sometimes coarsely painted, but full of truth and vigour, a striking likeness in colours of fire. The effect was immense. Monks, who are adversaries of Reuchlin, and the supposed authors of the letters, discourse on the affairs of the time, and on theological subjects after their own manner, and in their barbarous Latin. They address to their correspondent, Ortuin Gratius, professor at Cologne, and friend of Pfefferkorn, the silliest and most useless questions. They give the most amusing proof of the excessive ignorance and incredulity, their superstition, their low and vulgar spirit, their coarse gluttony in making a god of their belly, and, at the same time, their pride, their fanatical and persecuting zeal. They inform him of several of their droll adventures, their escapes, their dissoluteness, and a variety of scandals in the lives of Hochstraten, Pfefferkorn, and other leaders of their party. The tone of these letters, sometimes hypocritical and sometimes childish, gives them a very comic effect, and yet the whole is so natural, that the Dominicans and Franciscans of England received the work with high approbation, believing that it really was composed on the principles of their order, and in defence of it. A prior of Brabant, in his credulous simplicity, purchased a great number of copies, and presented them to the most distinguished among the Dominicans. The monks, irritated more and more, applied to the pope for a stringent bull against all who should dare to read these epistles, but Leo X refused to grant it. They were accordingly obliged to put up with the general laugh, and gulp down their rage. No work gave a stronger blow to these pillars of Papism. But it was not by jesting and satire that the gospel was to triumph. Had this course been persisted in; had the Reformers, instead of attacking the Reformation with the weapons of God, had recourse to the jeering spirit of the world, the cause had been lost. Luther loudly condemned these satires. A friend having sent him one of them, entitled, "*The Tenor of the Supplication of Pasquin*," he wrote in answer, "The foolish things you sent me appear to be written by a mind which is under no control. I submitted them to a meeting of friends, and they have all given the same opinion."[117] And speaking of the same work, he writes to another of his correspondents, "This Supplication appears to me to be by the same hand as the *Letters of some Obscure Men*. I approve of his wishes, but I approve not of his [97] work, for he does not refrain from injury and insult."[118] This sentence is severe, but it shows what kind of spirit was in Luther, and how superior he was to his contemporaries. It must be added, however, that he was not at all times observant of these wise maxims.

Ulrich having been obliged to renounce the protection of the Archbishop of Mayence, applied for that of Charles V, who had at this time quarrelled with the pope, and accordingly repaired to Brussels, where Charles was holding his court. But so far from obtaining anything, he learned that the pope had required the emperor to send him to Rome bound hand and foot. The inquisitor, Hochstraten, Reuchlin's persecutor, was one of those whom Rome had charged to pursue him. Ulrich, indignant that such a demand should have been made to the emperor, quitted Brabant. When a short way from Brussels, he met Hochstraten on the highroad. The inquisitor, frightened out of his wits, falls on his knees, and commends his soul to God and the saints. "No," said the knight, "I will not soil my sword with such blood as yours!" and giving him several strokes with the flat of his sword, allowed him to depart.

Hütten took refuge in the castle of Ebernbourg, where Francis de Seckingen offered an asylum to all who were persecuted by the Ultramontanists. It was here that his ardent zeal for the emancipation of his country dictated the remarkable letters which he addressed to Charles V, Frederick Elector of Saxony, Albert Archbishop of Mayence, and the princes and nobles, and which entitle him to a place among the most distinguished authors. Here too, he composed all those works[119] which, being read and comprehended by the people, inspired Germany with a hatred of Rome and a love of freedom. Devoted to the cause of the Reformers, his object was to induce the nobility to take up arms in favour of the gospel, and fall with the sword on that Rome which Luther only wished to destroy by the Word, and by the invincible force of truth.

Still, amid all this fondness for war, we are pleased at finding tenderness and delicacy of sentiment in Hütten. On the death of his parents, though he was the eldest son, he gave up all the family property to his brothers, and prayed them not to write him or send him any money, lest, notwithstanding their innocence, they might be brought into trouble by his enemies, and fall into the ditch along with him.

If the truth cannot own Hütten for one of her children, (for her companions are ever holiness of [98] life and purity of heart,) she will, at least, make honourable mention of him, as one of the most readoubtable adversaries of error.

A similar testimony may be borne to François de Seckingen, his illustrious friend and patron. This noble chevalier, whom several of his contemporaries deemed worthy of the imperial crown, holds

first place among the warriors who were the antagonists of Rome. While delighting in the noise of arms, he had an ardent love of science, and a high veneration for its professors. When at the head of an army which threatened Wurtemberg, he gave orders, in the event of Stuttgard being taken by assault, to spare the property and house of the celebrated scholar, John Reuchlin. He afterwards invited him to his camp, and, embracing him, offered to assist him in his quarrel with the monks of Cologne. For a long time chivalry had gloried in despising literature, but this period presents us with a different spectacle. Under the massy cuirass of the Seckingens and Hüttens, we perceive the intellectual movement which is beginning to be everywhere felt. The first fruits which the Reformation gives to the world are warriors enamoured with the arts of peace.

Hütten, who, on his return from Brussels, had taken refuge in the castle of Seckingen, invited the valorous knight to study the evangelical doctrine, and made him acquainted with the foundations on which it rests. "And is there any one," exclaimed Seckingen in astonishment, "who dares to overturn such an edifice? Who could do it?"

Several individuals, who afterwards became celebrated as Reformers, found an asylum in this castle; among others, Martin Bucer, Aquila, Schwebel, and Œcolampadius, so that Hütten justly styled Ebernbourg "the hotel of the just." Œcolampadius had to preach daily in the castle, but the warriors there assembled began to weary hearing so much of the meek virtues of Christianity, and the sermons of Œcolampadius, though he laboured to shorten them, seemed too long. They, indeed, repaired to the church almost every day, but, for the most part, only to hear the blessing and offer a short prayer. Hence Œcolampadius exclaimed, "Alas! the Word is here sown on stony ground."

Seckingen, longing to serve the cause of truth in his own way, declared war on the Archbishop of Treves, "in order," as he said, "to open a door for the gospel." In vain did Luther, who had by this time appeared, endeavour to dissuade him; he attacked Treves with five thousand knights and a thousand common soldiers, but the bold archbishop, aided by the Elector Palatine and the [99] Landgrave of Hesse, forced him to retreat. The following spring, the allied princes attacked him in his castle of Landstein. After a bloody assault, Seckingen, having been mortally wounded, was forced to surrender. The three princes, accordingly, make their way into the fortress, and, after searching through it, at last find the indomitable knight on his death-bed, in a subterraneous vault.

He stretches out his hand to the Elector Palatine, without seeming to pay any attention to the other princes, who overwhelm him with questions and reproaches: "Leave me at rest," said he to them; "I am now preparing to answer a mightier than you!..." When Luther heard of his death he exclaimed, "The Lord is just, yet wonderful! It is not with the sword that he means to propagate the gospel!"

Such was the sad end of a warrior, who, as emperor or elector, might, perhaps, have raised Germany to high renown, but who, confined within a limited circle, wasted the great powers with which he was endowed. It was not in the tumultuous spirit of these warriors that Divine truth, which had come down from heaven, was to take up her abode. Theirs were not the weapons by which she was to conquer; God, in annihilating the mad projects of Seckingen, gave a new illustration of the saying of St. Paul, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God."

Another chevalier, Harmut of Cronberg, a friend of Hütten and Seckingen, appears to have had more wisdom and more knowledge of the truth. He wrote with great moderation to Leo X, beseeching him to give up his temporal power to its rightful possessor, viz., the emperor. Addressing his dependants like a father, he endeavoured to make them comprehend the doctrines of the gospel, and exhorted them to faith, obedience, and confidence in Jesus Christ, "who," added he, "is the sovereign Lord of all." He resigned a pension of two hundred ducats into the hands of the emperor, "because he was unwilling," as he expressed it, "to continue in the service of one who lent his ear to the enemies of the truth." I have somewhere met with a beautiful saying of his, which seems to place him far above Hütten and Seckingen. "The Holy Spirit, our heavenly Teacher, is able, when he pleases, to teach us more of the faith of Christ in one hour than we could learn in ten years at the University of Paris."

Those who look for the friends of reformation only on the steps of thrones,[120] or in cathedrals and academies, and maintain that no such friends exist among the people, are under a serious [100] mistake. God, while preparing the heart of the wise and powerful, was also preparing, in retirement, many simple and humble-minded men, who were one day to become obedient to the Word. The history of the period gives evidence of the fermentation which was then going on among the humbler classes. The popular literature, previous to the Reformation, had a tendency directly opposed to the spirit which was prevalent in the Church. In the "Eulenspiegel," a celebrated popular poetical collection of the period, the laugh is incessantly kept up at priests, beasts, and gluttons, who keep full-stocked cellars, fine horses, and well-lined pantries. In the "Renard Reinecke," the households of priests, with their little children, play an important part. Another popular writer thunders with all his might against those ministers of Christ who ride splendid horses, but won't fight the infidels; and John Rosenblut, in one of his carnival games, brings the Grand Turk upon the stage, to preach a seasonable sermon to all the states of Christendom.

It was unquestionably in the bowels of the people that the Reformation, which was soon to break out, was fermenting. Not only from this class were youths seen coming forth, who were

afterwards to occupy the first stations in the Church, but even individuals, who continued all their lives to labour in the humblest professions, contributed powerfully to the great awakening of Christendom. It may be proper to give some traits in the life of one of them.

On the 5th November 1494, a tailor of Nuremberg, by name Hans Sachs, had a son born to him. The son, named Hans (John) like his father, after having received some schooling, was apprenticed to a shoemaker. Young Hans availed himself of the liberty of thought, which this humble profession afforded, to penetrate into the higher world, in which his soul delighted. Songs, after they ceased in the castles of chivalry, seem to have sought, and to have found, an asylum among the burghers of the joyous cities of Germany. A singing-school was held in the Church of Nuremberg. The performances which took place there, and in which young Hans was accustomed to join, opened his heart to religious impressions, and helped to awaken a taste for poetry and music. The genius of the youth could not long brook confinement within the walls of his workshop. He wished to see with his own eyes that world of which he had read so much, and been told so many stories by his comrades, and which his imagination peopled with wonders. In 1511 he bundles up his effects, and sets out in the direction of the South. The young traveller, falling in with gay comrades, students roaming the country, and many dangerous temptations [101] soon feels a serious struggle within. The lusts of the world and his pious resolutions war with each other. Trembling for the result, he takes flight, and, in 1513, hides himself in the little town of Wels in Austria, where he lives in retirement, devoting himself to the study of the fine arts. The emperor, Maximilian, happens to pass through the town with a brilliant suite, and the young poet is quite fascinated with the splendour of the court. The prince receives him into his hunting train, and Hans once more forgets himself, under the noisy vaults of the palace of Insprüch. But his conscience again sounds the alarm, and the young huntsman, immediately throwing aside his brilliant uniform, takes his departure, and arrives at Schwatz near Munich. There, in 1514, at the age of twenty, he composed his first hymn, "In Honour of God," setting it to a remarkable air. It was received with great applause. In the course of his journeys, he was witness to many sad proofs of the abuses under which religion groaned.

On his return to Nuremberg, Hans commences business, marries, and becomes the father of a family. When the Reformation breaks out he turns a listening ear. He cordially welcomes the Holy Scripture, which had already endeared itself to him as a poet, and he no longer searches it for images and hymns, but for the light of truth. To this truth he consecrates his lyre. From a humble stall in front of one of the gates of the imperial city of Nuremberg, come forth notes which re-echo over Germany, and everywhere excite a deep interest in the great revolution which is going forward. The spiritual songs of Hans Sachs, and his Bible turned into verse, greatly aided the work. Indeed, it would be difficult to say which of the two did most for it—the elector of Saxony, vicegerent of the empire, or the shoemaker of Nuremberg.

Thus, then, there was something in all classes which announced a Reformation. On all sides signs appeared, and events pressed forward threatening to overthrow the work of ages of darkness, and introduce men to a period in which "all things were to become new." The hierarchical form, which several ages had been employed in stamping upon the world, was on the eve of being effaced. The light which had just been discovered had, with inconceivable rapidity, introduced a number of new ideas into all countries, and all classes of society gave signs of new life. "O age!" exclaims Hütten, "studies flourish, and minds awake: Mere life is joy!"... The human intellect, which had been slumbering for so many generations, seemed desirous, by its activity, to redeem [102] the time which it had lost. To have left it in idleness, without nourishment, or to have given it no better food than that which had long maintained its languid existence, would have been to mistake the nature of man. The human mind having at length perceived what it was, and what it ought to be, looked boldly at these two states, and scanned the immense abyss which lay between them. Great princes were on the throne, the ancient colossus of Rome was tottering under its own weight, and the old spirit of chivalry was taking leave of the earth to make way for a new spirit, which breathed at once on the sanctuaries of knowledge, and on the dwellings of the poor. The printed Word had taken wing, and been carried, as the wind does certain seeds, to the most distant regions. The discovery of the two Indies had enlarged the world.... Every thing announced that a great revolution was at hand.

But whence will the blow come which is to strike down the ancient edifice, that a new edifice may arise out of its ruins? Nobody could say. Who had more wisdom than Frederick? More science than Reuchlin? More talent than Erasmus? More spirit and versatility than Hütten? More valour than Seckingen? More virtue than Cronberg? And yet, neither Frederick, nor Reuchlin, nor Erasmus, nor Seckingen, nor Hütten, nor Cronberg.... Learned men, princes, warriors, the Church herself, had sapped some of the foundations: but there they had stopped. The powerful hand which God had designed to employ was nowhere to be seen.

All, however, felt that it must soon make its appearance, while some even pretended to have seen indications of it in the stars. One class, seeing the miserable state of religion predicted the near approach of Antichrist. Another class, on the contrary, predicted a speedy Reformation. The world was waiting.... Luther appeared.

BOOK SECOND. [103]

CHAP. I.

YOUTH, CONVERSION, AND FIRST LABOURS OF LUTHER.

1483-1517.

Luther's Descent—His Parents—His Birth—Poverty—The Paternal Roof—Strict Discipline—First Lessons—The School of Magdebourg—Wretchedness—Isenach—The Shunammite—The House of Cotta—The Arts—Remembrance of those Times—His Studies—Trebonius—The University.

All was ready. God takes ages to prepare his work, but when the hour is come, accomplishes it by the feeblest instruments. To do great things by small means, is the law of God. This law, which appears in every department of nature, is found also in history. God took the Reformers of the Church, where he had taken the Apostles. He selected them from that humble class which, without containing the meanest of the people, is scarcely the length of citizenship. Every thing must manifest to the world that the work is not of man, but of God. The Reformer Zuinglius comes forth from the hut of a shepherd of the Alps, Melancthon, the Theologian of the Reformation, from the workshop of an armourer, and Luther from the cottage of a poor miner.

The first stage in a man's life, that in which he is formed and moulded under the hand of God, is always important, and was so especially in the case of Luther. There, even at that period, the whole Reformation existed. The different phases of that great work succeeded each other in the soul of him who was the instrument of accomplishing it, before it was actually accomplished. The knowledge of the Reformation which took place in Luther's heart is the only key to the Reformation of the Church. We must study the particular work, if we would attain to a knowledge of the general work. Those who neglect the one will never know more than the form and exterior [104] of the other. They may acquire a knowledge of certain events and certain results, but the intrinsic nature of the revival they cannot know, because the living principle which formed the soul of it, is hidden from them. Let us then study the Reformation in Luther, before studying it in events which changed the face of Christendom.

In the village of Mora, towards the forests of Thuringia, and not far from the spot where Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, began to proclaim the gospel, there existed, and, undoubtedly, had existed for ages, an ancient and numerous family of the name of Luther.[121] The eldest son, as usual with the peasantry of Thuringia, always succeeded to the house and the paternal plot, while the younger members of the family set out in quest of a livelihood. John Luther having married Margaret Lindemann, daughter of an inhabitant of Neustadt, in the bishopric of Warzburg, the married couple removed from the plains of Isenach, and fixed their residence in the little town of Eisleben, in Saxony, in order to gain their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Seckendorff relates, on the testimony of Robhan, superintendant of Isenach in 1601, that Luther's mother, thinking she was still far from her time, had gone to the fair of Eisleben, and there, unexpectedly, gave birth to a son. Notwithstanding of the credit due to such a man as Seckendorff, this account appears not to be correct. In fact, none of the older biographers of Luther make any mention of it. Besides, Mora is more than twenty-four leagues distant from Eisleben, and persons in the circumstances in which Luther's mother then was seldom are disposed to take such long journeys *to go to the fair*. In fine, the account seems quite at variance with Luther's own statement.[122]

John Luther was an upright, straightforward, hard-working man, with a firmness of character bordering on obstinacy. Of a more cultivated mind than usual with persons of his class, he was a great reader. Books were then rare. But he never let pass any opportunity of procuring them. They were his relaxation in the intervals of repose from hard and long-continued labour. Margaret possessed the virtues which adorn honest and pious women. She was remarked, in particular, for her modesty, her fear of God, and her spirit of prayer. The mothers of the place [105] regarded her as a model whom they ought to imitate.[123]

It is not exactly known how long this couple had been fixed at Eisleben, when, on the 10th November, an hour before midnight, Margaret gave birth to a son. Melancthon often questioned the mother of his friend as to the period of his birth. "I remember the day and the hour very well," would she reply; "but for the year, I am not certain of it." Luther's brother, James, an honest and upright man, has stated, that, in the opinion of all the family, Martin was born in the year of Christ 1483, on the 10th November, being St. Martin's eve.[124] The first thought of the pious parents was to take the infant which God had given them, and dedicate it to God in holy baptism. On the following day, which happened to be a Tuesday, the father, with gratitude and

joy, carried his son to St. Peter's church, where he received the seal of his dedication to the Lord. He was named Martin in honour of the day.

Young Martin was not six months old when his parents quitted Eisleben for Mansfeld, which is only five leagues distant. The mines of Mansfeld were then much famed, and John Luther, a labouring man, feeling that he might perhaps be called to rear a numerous family, hoped he might there more easily gain a livelihood. It was in this town that the intellect and powers of young Luther received their first development; here his activity began to be displayed, and his disposition to be manifested by what he said and did. The plains of Mansfeld, the banks of the Wipper, were the scenes of his first sports with his playmates.

The commencement of their residence at Mansfeld was attended with painful privations to honest John and his wife; for they lived some time in great poverty. "My parents," says the Reformer, "were very poor. My father was a poor wood-cutter, and my mother often carried his wood on her back to procure subsistence for us children. The toil they endured for us was severe, even to blood." The example of parents whom he respected, and the habits in which they trained him, early accustomed Luther to exertion and frugality. Often, doubtless, he accompanied his mother to the wood, and made up his little faggot also.

Promises are given to the just man's labour, and John Luther experienced the reality of them. Having become somewhat more easy in his circumstances, he established two smelting furnaces [106] at Mansfeld. Around these furnaces young Martin grew up; and the return which they yielded enabled his father, at a later period, to provide for his studies. "The spiritual founder of Christendom," says worthy Mathesius, "was to come forth from a family of miners, an image of what God purposed, when he employed him to cleanse the sons of Levi, and purify them in his furnaces like gold."[125] Universally respected for his integrity, his blameless life, and good sense, John Luther was made a counsellor of Mansfeld, the capital of the county of that name. Too great wretchedness might have weighed down the spirit of the child, but the easy circumstances of the paternal roof expanded his heart, and elevated his character.

John availed himself of his new situation to cultivate the society which he preferred. He set great value on educated men, and often invited the clergymen and teachers of the place to his table. His house presented an example of one of those societies of simple citizens which did honour to Germany at the commencement of the sixteenth century, and, as a mirror, reflected the numerous images which succeeded each other on the troubled stage of that time. It was not lost on the child. The sight of men to whom so much respect was shown in his father's house must, doubtless, on more than one occasion, have awakened in young Martin's heart an ambitious desire one day to become a school-master or a man of learning.

As soon as he was of an age to receive some instruction, his parents sought to give him the knowledge and inspire him with the fear of God, and train him in Christian virtues. Their utmost care was devoted to his primary domestic education.[126] This, however, was not the sole object of their tender solicitude.

His father, desirous of seeing him acquire the elements of knowledge for which he himself had so much esteem, invoked the Divine blessing on his head, and sent him to school. As Martin was still a very little boy, his father or Nicolas Emler, a young man of Mansfeld, often carried him in their arms to the house of George Emilius, and went again to fetch him. Emler afterwards married one of Luther's sisters.

The piety of the parents, their activity and strict virtue, gave a happy impulse to the boy, making him of a grave and attentive spirit. The system of education which then prevailed employed fear [107] and punishment as its leading stimulants. Margaret, though sometimes approving the too strict discipline of her husband, often opened her maternal arms to Martin, to console him in his tears. She herself occasionally carried to excess that precept of Divine wisdom, which says, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son." The impetuous temper of the child often led to frequent reproof and correction. "My parents," says Luther, in after life, "treated me harshly, and made me very timid. My mother one day chastised me about a filbert till the blood came. They believed with all their heart they were doing right, but they could not discriminate between dispositions, though this is necessary in order to know when and how punishments should be inflicted."[127]

The poor child's treatment at school was not less severe. His master one morning beat him fifteen times in succession. "It is necessary," said Luther, when mentioning the fact, "it is necessary to chastise children; but it is necessary, at the same time, to love them." With such an education, Luther early learned to despise the allurements of a sensual life. "He who is to become great must begin with little,"[128] justly remarks one of his earliest biographers; "and if children are brought up with too much delicacy and tenderness, it does them harm all the rest of their life."

Martin learned something at school. He was taught the heads of the Catechism, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, hymns, forms of prayer, and the *Donat*. This last was a Latin grammar, composed in the fourth century by Donatus, St. Jerome's master; and having been improved in the eleventh century by a French monk, named Remigius, was long in high repute as a school-book. He moreover conned the Ciseo-Janus, a very singular almanac, composed in the tenth or eleventh century. In short, he learned all that was taught in the Latin school of Mansfeld.

But the child seems not to have been brought to God. The only religious sentiment which could

be discovered in him was that of fear. Whenever he heard Jesus Christ mentioned he grew pale with terror; for the Saviour had been represented to him as an angry Judge. This servile fear, so foreign to genuine religion, perhaps predisposed him for the glad tidings of the gospel, and for [108] the joy which he afterwards experienced when he became acquainted with him who is meek and lowly in heart.

John Luther longed to make his son a learned man. The new light, which began to radiate in all directions, penetrated even the cottage of the miner of Mansfield, and there awakened ambitious thoughts. The remarkable disposition, and persevering application of his son, inspired John with the most brilliant hopes. Accordingly, in 1497, when Martin had completed his fourteenth year, his father resolved to part with him, and send him to a school of the Franciscans at Magdebourg. Margaret behoved, of course, to consent, and Martin prepared to quit the paternal roof.

Magdebourg was like a new world to Martin. Amid numerous privations, (for he had scarcely the means of subsistence,) he read and attended lectures; André Prolés, provincial of the Augustine Order, was then preaching with great fervour on the necessity of reforming religion and the Church. He, however, was not the person who deposited in the young man's soul the first germ of those ideas which afterwards expanded in it.

This period was a kind of severe apprenticeship to Luther. Launched upon the world at fourteen, without friend or patron, he trembled in presence of his masters, and, during the hours of recreation, painfully begged his food with children as poor as himself. "I and my comrades," says he, "begged a little food for our subsistence. One day, at the season when the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, we were in a body scouring the neighbouring villages, going from house to house, and, in four parts, singing the ordinary hymns on the Babe at Bethlehem. We stopped before a peasant's cottage, which stood by itself at the extremity of a village. The peasant, hearing us singing our Christmas carols, came out with some provisions which he meant to give us, and asked, in a gruff voice, and a harsh tone, 'Where are you, boys?' His tones frightened us, and we took to our heels. We had no cause for fear; for the peasant was sincere in his offer of assistance: but our hearts were, no doubt, made timid by the menaces and tyranny with which masters at this period oppressed their scholars; hence the sudden fright which seized us. At last, however, the peasant still continuing to call us, we stopped, laid aside our fear, and, running up to him, received the food which he intended for us." "In the same way," adds Luther, "are we wont to tremble and flee when our conscience is guilty and alarmed. Then we are afraid even of the assistance which is offered to us, and of those who are friendly to us, and would do us all [109] sorts of kindness."[129]

A year had scarcely passed, when John and Margaret, on being made aware of the difficulties which their son had in living in Magdebourg, sent him to Isenach, where there was a celebrated school, and they had a number of relations.[130] They had other children; and though their circumstances had improved, they were unable to maintain their son in a strange town. The forges and late hours of John Luther did no more than keep the family at Mansfield. It was hoped that Martin would find a livelihood more easily at Isenach, but he was not more successful. His relations in the town did not trouble themselves about him. Perhaps their own poverty made them unable to give him any assistance.

When the scholar felt the gnawings of hunger he had no resource but to do as at Magdebourg,—to join his fellow-students, and sing with them before the houses for a morsel of bread. This custom of the time of Luther has been preserved, even to our day, in several towns of Germany, where the voices of the boys sometimes produce a most harmonious chant. Instead of bread, poor modest Martin often received only hard words. Then, overcome with sadness, he shed many tears in secret, unable to think of the future without trembling.

One day, in particular, he had been repulsed from three houses, and was preparing, without having broken his fast, to return to his lodging, when, on arriving at St. George's Square, he halted, and, absorbed in gloomy thoughts, stood motionless before the house of an honest burgher.

Will it be necessary, from want of bread, to give up study, and go and work with his father in the mines of Mansfeld? Suddenly a door opens, and a female is seen on the threshold,—it was the wife of Conrad Cotta, the daughter of the burgomaster of Ilefeld.[131] Her name was Ursula. The Chronicles of Isenach call her "the pious Shunammite," in allusion to her who so earnestly pressed the prophet Elisha to eat bread with her. Previous to this the Christian Shunammite had more than once observed young Martin in the assemblies of the faithful, and been touched by the sweetness of his voice, and his devout behaviour.[132] She had just heard the harsh language addressed to the poor scholar, and seeing him in sadness before her door, she came to his [110] assistance, beckoned him to enter, and set food before him to appease his hunger.

Conrad approved of the benevolence of his wife, and was even so much pleased with the society of young Luther, that some days after he took him home to his house. From this moment his studies were secure. He will not be obliged to return to the mines of Mansfeld, and bury the talent with which God has entrusted him. When he no longer knew what was to become of him God opened to him the heart and the home of a Christian family. This event helped to give him that confidence in God which in after life the strongest tempests could not shake.

In the house of Cotta, Luther was introduced to a mode of life very different from that which he had hitherto known. He there led an easy existence, exempt from want and care. His mind

became more serene, his disposition more lively, and his heart more open. His whole being expanded to the mild rays of charity, and began to beat with life, joy, and happiness. His prayers were more ardent, and his thirst for knowledge more intense. He made rapid progress.

To literature and science he added the charms of art. Those who are designed by God to act upon their contemporaries are themselves, in the first instance, seized and carried along by all the tendencies of their age. Luther learned to play on the flute and the lute. The latter instrument he often accompanied with his fine counter voice, thus enlivening his heart in moments of sadness. He took pleasure also in employing his notes to testify his gratitude to his adopted mother, who was very fond of music. His own love of it continued to old age, and both the words and the music of some of the finest anthems which Germany possesses are his composition. Some have even been translated into our language.

Happy time for the young man! Luther always remembered it with emotion. Many years after, a son of Conrad having come to study at Wittemberg, when the poor scholar of Isenach had become the doctor of his age, he gladly received him at his table and under his roof. He wished to pay back to the son part of what he had received from the parents. It was while thinking of the Christian woman who gave him food when all besides repulsed him, that he gave utterance to this fine expression, "Earth has nothing gentler than the female heart in which piety dwells."

Luther was never ashamed of the days when, pressed by hunger, he was under the necessity of begging for his studies and his maintenance. So far from this, he, on the contrary, reflected with [111] gratitude on the great poverty of his youth. He regarded it as one of the means which God had employed to make him what he afterwards became, and he felt thankful for it. The poor youths who were obliged to follow the same course touched his heart. "Do not," said he, "despise the boys who sing before your houses, and ask 'panem propter Deum,' bread for the love of God; I have done it myself. It is true that at a later period, my father, with great love and kindness, kept me at the University of Erfurt, maintaining me by the sweat of his brow; still I once was a poor beggar. And now by means of my pen, I am come thus far, that I would not change situations with the Grand Turk himself. Nay, more, were all the goods of the world piled up one above another, I would not take them in exchange for what I have. And yet, I should not be where I am, if I had not been at school and learned to write." Thus, in these first humble beginnings this great man traced the origin of his fame. He fears not to remind us that that voice whose accents made the empire and the world to tremble, had once begged a morsel of bread in the streets of a poor city. The Christian takes pleasure in such recollections, as reminding him that it is in God he must glory.

The strength of his intellect, and the liveliness of his imagination, soon enabled him to outstrip all his fellow-students.[133] His progress was particularly rapid in ancient languages, eloquence, and poetry. He wrote essays and made verses. Lively, complaisant, and what is called good-hearted, he was a great favourite with his masters and his comrades.

Among the professors, he attached himself particularly to John Trebonius, a learned man of pleasing manners, who showed youth those attentions which are so well fitted to encourage them. Martin had remarked, that when Trebonius entered the class, he took off his hat, and bowed to the students;—great condescension in those pedantic times! This had pleased the young man, and made him feel that he was not a mere cipher. The respect of the master had made the pupil rise in his own estimation. The colleagues of Trebonius, who had not the same custom of taking off their hats, having one day expressed their astonishment at his extreme condescension, he replied, (and the reply made no less impression on young Luther,) "Among these youths are men whom God will one day make burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates; and though you do not yet see them with their badges of office, it is right, however, to show them [112] respect." No doubt, the young student listened with pleasure to these words, and even then, perhaps, saw himself with a doctor's cap on his head.

CHAP. II.

Scholasticism and the Classics—Luther's Piety—Discovery—The Bible—Sickness—Master of Arts—Conscience—Death of Alexis—Thunderstorm—Providence—Adieus—Entrance into a Convent.

Luther had attained his eighteenth year. He had tasted the pleasures of literature, and burning with eagerness to learn, he sighed after a university, and longed to repair to one of those fountains of science, at which he might quench his thirst for knowledge.[134] His father wished him to study law, and already saw him filling an honourable station among his fellow-citizens, gaining the favour of princes, and making a figure on the theatre of the world. It was resolved that the young student should repair to Erfurt.

Luther arrived at this university in the year 1501. Jadocus, surnamed the Doctor of the Isenach, was then teaching the scholastic philosophy with much success. Melancthon regrets that the only thing then taught at Erfurt should have been a dialectics bristling with difficulties. He thinks that if Luther had found other professors there, if he had been trained in the milder and calmer

discipline of true philosophy, it might have moderated and softened the vehemence of his nature.[135] The new scholar began to study the philosophy of the middle ages in the writings of Occam, Scotus, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas. At a later period he had a thorough disgust for all this scholasticism. The very name of Aristotle, pronounced in his hearing, filled him with indignation; and he even went the length of saying, that if Aristotle was not a man, he would have no hesitation in taking him for the devil. But his mind, in its eagerness for learning, stood in need of better nourishment, and he began to study the splendid monuments of antiquity, the writings of [113] Cicero and Virgil, and the other classics. He was not contented, like the common run of students, with committing the productions of these writers to memory. He endeavoured, above all, to enter into their thoughts; to imbue himself with the spirit which animated them; to appropriate their wisdom; to comprehend the end of their writings; and enrich his understanding with their weighty sentiments and brilliant images. He often put questions to his professors, and soon outstripped his fellow students.[136] Possessed of a retentive memory and a fertile imagination, whatever he read or heard remained ever after present to his mind, as if he had actually seen it. "So shone Luther in his youth. The whole university," says Melancthon, "admired his genius."[137]

But even at that period this young man of eighteen did not confine his labours to the cultivation of his intellect. He had that serious thought, that uplifted heart, which God bestows on those whom he destines to be his most faithful servants. Luther felt that he was dependent on God—a simple, yet powerful, conviction—the source at once of profound humility and great achievements. He fervently invoked the Divine blessing on his labours. Each morning he began the day with prayer, then he went to church, and on his return set to study, losing not a moment during the course of the day. "To pray well," he was wont to say, "is more than the half of my study."[138]

Every moment which the young student could spare from his academical labours was spent in the library of the university. Books were still rare, and he felt it a great privilege to be able to avail himself of the treasures amassed in this vast collection. One day (he had then been two years at Erfurt, and was twenty years of age) he opens several books of the library, one after the other, to see who their authors were. One of the volumes which he opens in its turn attracts his attention. He has never before seen one like it. He reads the title, ... it is a Bible! a rare book, at that time unknown.[139] His interest is strongly excited; he is perfectly astonished to find in this volume any thing more than those fragments of gospels and epistles which the Church has selected to be read publicly in the churches every Sabbath day. Hitherto he had believed that these formed the [114] whole word of God. But here are so many pages, chapters, and books, of which he had no idea! His heart beats as he holds in his hand all this divinely-inspired Scripture, and he turns over all these divine leaves with feelings which cannot be described. The first page on which he fixes his attention tells him the history of Hannah and young Samuel. He reads, and his soul is filled with joy to overflowing. The child whom his parents lend to Jehovah for all the days of his life; the song of Hannah, in which she declares that the Lord lifts up the poor from the dust, and the needy from the dunghill, that he may set him with princes; young Samuel growing up in the presence of the Lord; the whole of this history, the whole of the volume which he has discovered, make him feel in a way he has never done before. He returns home, his heart full. "Oh!" thinks he, "would it please God one day to give me such a book for my own!"[140] Luther as yet did not know either Greek or Hebrew; for it is not probable that he studied these languages during the first two or three years of his residence at the university. The Bible which had so overjoyed him was in Latin. Soon returning to his treasure in the library, he reads and re-reads, and in his astonishment and joy returns to read again. The first rays of a new truth were then dawning upon him.

In this way God has put him in possession of His word. He has discovered the book of which he is one day to give his countrymen that admirable translation in which Germany has now for three centuries perused the oracles of God. It was perhaps the first time that any hand had taken down this precious volume from the place which it occupied in the library of Erfurt. This book, lying on the unknown shelves of an obscure chamber, is to become the book of life to a whole people. The Reformation was hid in that Bible.

This happened the same year that Luther obtained his first academical degree, viz., that of Bachelor. The excessive fatigue which he had undergone in preparing for his trials brought on a dangerous illness. Death seemed to be approaching, and solemn thoughts occupied his mind. He believed that his earthly course was about to terminate. There was a general lamentation for the young man. What a pity to see so many hopes so soon extinguished! Several friends came to visit him in his sickness; among others a priest, a venerable old man, who had with interest followed [115] the student of Mansfeld in his labours and academic life. Luther was unable to conceal the thought which agitated him. "Soon," said he, "I will be called away from this world." But the old man kindly replied, "My dear bachelor, take courage; you will not die of this illness. Our God will yet make you a man, who, in his turn, will console many other men. For God lays his cross on him whom he loves, and those who bear it patiently acquire much wisdom."[141] These words made a deep impression on the sick youth. When so near death he hears the lips of a priest reminding him that God, as Samuel's mother had said, lifts up the miserable. The old man has poured sweet consolation into his heart and revived his spirits; he will never forget him. "This was the first prediction the Doctor heard," says Mathesius, Luther's friend, who relates the fact; "and he often mentioned it." It is easy to understand what Mathesius means by calling it a prediction.

When Luther recovered, something within him had undergone a change. The Bible, his illness,

and the words of the old priest, seemed to have made a new appeal to him. As yet, however, there was nothing decided in his mind. He continued his studies, and, in 1505, took his degree of Master of Arts, or Doctor in Philosophy. The University of Erfurt was then the most celebrated in Germany,—the others in comparison with it being only inferior schools. The ceremony was, as usual, performed with great pomp. A procession with torches came to do homage to Luther.[142] The fête was superb, and all was joy. Luther, encouraged, perhaps, by these honours, was disposed to devote himself entirely to law, agreeably to his father's wish.

But God willed otherwise. While Luther was occupied with other studies, while he began to teach the physics and ethics of Aristotle, and other branches of philosophy, his heart ceased not to cry to him that piety was the one thing needful, and that he ought above all to make sure of his salvation. He was aware of the displeasure which God testifies against sin; he remembered the punishments which he denounces against the sinner; and he asked himself in fear, whether he was sure of possessing the Divine favour. His conscience answered, No! His character was prompt and decided; he resolved to do all that might be necessary to give him a sure hope of immortality. Two events, which happened in succession, shook his soul, and precipitated his [116] determination.

Among his friends at the university was one named Alexis, with whom he was very intimate. One morning it was rumoured in Erfurt that Alexis had been assassinated. Deeply moved at the sudden loss of his friend, he puts the question to himself—What would become of me were I called thus suddenly? The question fills him with the greatest dismay.[143]

This was in the summer of 1505. Luther, left at liberty by the ordinary recess of the university, resolved on a journey to Mansfeld, to revisit the loved abodes of his infancy, and embrace his parents. Perhaps he also wished to open his heart to his father, and sound him as to the design which was beginning to form in his mind, and obtain a consent to his embracing another calling. He foresaw all the difficulties which awaited him. The indolent habits of the majority of priests displeased the active miner of Mansfeld. Besides, ecclesiastics were little esteemed in the world; most of them had but scanty incomes, and the father, who had made many sacrifices to maintain his son at the university, and who saw him at twenty a public teacher in a celebrated school, was not disposed to renounce the hopes which his pride was cherishing.

We know not what passed during Luther's visit at Mansfeld. Perhaps the decided wish of his father made him afraid to open his heart to him. He again quitted the paternal roof to go and take his seat on the benches of the university, and had reached within a short distance of Erfurt, when he was overtaken by one of those violent storms which are not unfrequent among these mountains. The thunder bursts, and strikes close by his side. Luther throws himself on his knees. It may be his hour is come, Death, judgment, and eternity, surround him with all their terrors, and speak to him with a voice which he can no longer resist. "Wrapt in agony, and in the terror of death," as he himself describes it,[144] he makes a vow, if he is delivered from this danger to abandon the world, and give himself entirely to God. After he had risen from the ground, still continuing to see that death which must one day overtake him, he examines himself seriously, and asks what he ought to do.[145] The thoughts which formerly agitated him return with full force. He has endeavoured, it is true, to fulfil all his duties. But in what state is his soul? Can he [117] appear with a polluted heart before the tribunal of a God so greatly to be feared? He must become holy, and, accordingly, he now thirsts for holiness as he had thirsted for science. But where is it to be found? How shall he acquire it? The university has furnished him with the means of satisfying his desire of knowledge. Who will extinguish the agony, the flame which is consuming him? To what school of holiness must he bend his steps? He will go into a cloister; the monastic life will save him. How often has he heard tell of its power to transform a heart, to sanctify a sinner, to make a man perfect! He will enter a monastic order. He will then become holy, and in that way secure eternal life.[146]

Such was the event which changed the calling and all the destinies of Luther. We here recognise the finger of God. It was his mighty hand which threw down on the high road this young Master of Arts, this candidate for the bar, this future lawyer, in order to give an entirely new direction to his life. Rubianus, one of Luther's friends, wrote to him at a later period:—"Divine Providence had a view to what you were one day to become, when, as you were returning from your parents, the fire of heaven made you fall to the ground like another Paul, near the town of Erfurt, and carrying you off from our society, threw you into the Order of Augustine." Analogous circumstances thus signalised the conversion of Paul and Luther, the two greatest instruments which Divine Providence has employed in the two greatest revolutions which have taken place upon the earth.[147]

Luther again enters Erfurt. His resolution is immovable, and yet it is not without a pang he is going to break ties which are dear to him. He gives no hint to any one of his intentions. But one evening he invites his friends in the university to a cheerful and frugal repast. Music once more enlivens their social intercourse. It is Luther's adieu to the world. Henceforth, instead of those loved companions of pleasure and toil—monks; instead of those cheerful and intellectual conversations—the silence of the cloister; instead of that enchanting music—the grave notes of the tranquil chapel. God demands it; all must be sacrificed. Yet, for this last time, once more the joys of youth. His friends are full of glee. Luther even leads them on. But at the moment when [118] they are abandoning themselves to mirth and frolic, the young man becomes unable any longer to restrain the serious thoughts which occupy his heart. He speaks.... He makes known his intention to his astonished friends, who endeavour, but in vain, to combat it. That same night, Luther,

afraid perhaps of importunate solicitation, quits his lodgings, leaving behind him all his effects and all his books, with the exception of Virgil and Plautus, (as yet he had no Bible.) Virgil and Plautus! Epic and Comedy! singular representation of Luther's mind. In fact, there was in him a whole epic, a beautiful, splendid, and sublime poem; but being naturally inclined to gayety, pleasantry, and broad humour, he mingled more than one familiar trait with the solemn and magnificent groundwork of his life.

Furnished with these two books he proceeds alone, in the dark, to the convent of the Eremites of St. Augustine, and asks to be received. The door opens and closes, and he is separated for ever from his parents, his fellow-students, and the world. This took place on the 17th August 1505, when Luther's age was twenty-one years and nine months.

CHAP. III.

His Father's Anger—Pardon—Servile Employments—The Bag and the Cell—Courage—St. Augustine—D'Ailly—Occam—Gerson—The Bible—Hebrew and Greek—The Hours—Asceticism—Agony—Luther during Mass—Agony—Useless Observances—Luther in a Faint.

At length he was with God. His soul was in safety. This holiness, so earnestly longed for, he was now to find. At the sight of this young doctor, the monks were all admiration, and extolled him for his courage and contempt of the world.[148] Luther, meanwhile, did not forget his friends. He wrote to take leave of them and the world, and the next day despatched these letters, with the clothes he had hitherto worn, and his diploma of Master of Arts, which he returned to the university, that nothing might in future remind him of the world which he had abandoned.

His friends at Erfurt were thunderstruck. Must so distinguished a genius go and hide himself in [119]
this monastic life—more properly, a kind of death?[149] In deep sorrow they hastened to the convent, in the hope of inducing Luther to retrace the distressing step which he had taken; but all was useless. The gates were closed, and a month passed before any one was permitted to see or speak to the new monk.

Luther had hastened to acquaint his parents with the great change which had just occurred in his life. His father was thunderstruck. He trembled for his son,—so Luther himself informs us in his book on Monastic Vows, which he dedicated to his father. His weakness, his youth, the ardour of his passions, everything, in short, made him fear that after the first moment of enthusiasm, the indolence of the cloister would make the youth fall either into despair, or into grievous faults. He knew that this mode of life had proved fatal to many. Besides, the counsellor-miner of Mansfield had other views for his son. He was proposing a rich and honourable marriage for him—and, lo! all his ambitious projects are in one night overthrown by this imprudent action.

John wrote his son a very angry letter, in which, as Luther himself tells us, he *thou'd* him whereas he had *you'd* him ever since he had taken his degree of Master of Arts. He withdrew all his favour from him, and declared him disinherited of a father's affection. In vain did the friends of John Luther, and doubtless his wife also, endeavour to mollify him; in vain did they say to him, "If you are willing to make some sacrifice to God, let it be the best and dearest thing that you have—your son—your Isaac." The inexorable counsellor of Mansfeld would hear nothing.

Some time after, (the statement is given by Luther in a sermon which he preached at Wittemberg, 20th January 1544,) the plague broke out, and deprived John Luther of two of his sons. On the back of these bereavements, while the father's heart was torn with grief, some one came and told him, "The monk of Erfurt also is dead!" His friends took advantage of the circumstance to bring back the father's heart to the novice. "If it is a false alarm," said they, "at least sanctify your affliction by consenting sincerely to your son's being a monk." "Well, well!" replied John Luther, his heart broken, and still half rebellions; "and God grant him all success." At a later period, when Luther, who had been reconciled to his father, told him of the event which had led him to rush into monastic orders,—"God grant," replied the honest miner, "that what you [120]
took for a sign from heaven may not have been only a phantom of the devil!"[150]

At this time Luther was not in possession of that which was afterwards to make him the Reformer of the Church. His entrance into the convent proves this. It was an action done in the spirit of an age out of which he was soon to be instrumental in raising the Church. Though destined to become the teacher of the world, he was still its servile imitator. A new stone was placed on the edifice of superstition by the very hand which was soon to overturn it. Luther was seeking salvation in himself, in human practices and observances, not knowing that salvation is wholly of God. He was seeking his own righteousness and his own glory, and overlooking the righteousness and glory of the Lord. But what he as yet knew not he soon afterwards learned. That immense change which substituted God and His wisdom in his heart for the world and its traditions, and which prepared the mighty revolution of which he was the most illustrious instrument, took place in the cloister of Erfurt.

Martin Luther, on entering the convent, changed his name to that of Augustine.

The monks had received him with joy. It was no small satisfaction to their self-love to see the university abandoned for a house of their order, and that by one of the most distinguished teachers. Nevertheless, they treated him harshly, and assigned him the meanest tasks. They wished to humble the doctor of philosophy, and teach him that his science did not raise him above his brethren. They thought, moreover, they would thus prevent him from spending his time in studies from which the convent could not reap any advantage. The *ci-devant* Master of Arts behoved to perform the functions of watchman, to open and shut the gates, wind up the clocks, sweep the church, and clean up the rooms.[151] Then when the poor monk, who was at once porter, sacristan, and house-hold servant to the cloister, had finished his task—*"Cum sacco per civitatem"*—"To the town with the bag," exclaimed the friars; and then, with his bread-bag on his shoulders, he walked up and down over all the streets of Erfurt, begging from house to house, obliged, perhaps, to present himself at the doors of those who had been his friends or inferiors. On his return, he had either to shut himself up in a low narrow cell, looking out on a plot only a few yards in extent, or to resume his menial offices. But he submitted to all. Disposed by [121]
temperament to give himself entirely to whatever he undertook, when he turned monk he did it with his whole soul. How, moreover, could he think of sparing his body, or of having regard to what might satisfy the flesh? That was not the way to acquire the humility and holiness in quest of which he had come within the walls of the cloister.

The poor monk, worn out with fatigue, was eager to seize any moment which he could steal from his servile occupations, and devote it to the acquisition of knowledge. Gladly did he retire into a corner, and give himself up to his beloved studies. But the friars soon found him out, gathered around him, grumbled at him, and pushed him away to his labours, saying, "Along! along! it is not by studying, but by begging bread, corn, eggs, fish, flesh, and money, that a friar makes himself useful to his convent."[152] Luther submitted, laid aside his books, and again took up his bag. Far from repenting of having subjected himself to such a yoke, his wish was to bring it to a successful result. At this period, the inflexible perseverance with which he ever after followed out the resolutions which he had once formed, began to be developed. The resistance which he made to rude assaults gave strong energy to his will. God exercised him in small things that he might be able to stand firm in great things. Besides, in preparing to deliver his age from the miserable superstitions under which it groaned, it was necessary that he should feel the weight of them. In order to empty the cup he behoved to drink it to the dregs.

This severe apprenticeship, however, did not last so long as Luther might have feared. The prior of the convent, on the intercession of the university of which Luther was a member, relieved him from the mean functions which had been imposed on him, and the young monk resumed his studies with new zeal. The writings of the Fathers, particularly those of Augustine, engaged his attention; the Commentary of this illustrious doctor on the Psalms, and his treatise "On the Letter and the Spirit," being his special favourites. Nothing struck him more than the sentiments of this Father on the corruption of the human will, and on Divine grace. His own experience convincing him of the reality of this corruption, and the necessity of this grace, the words of Augustine found a ready response in his heart; and could he have been of any other school than that of Jesus Christ, it had doubtless been the school of the doctor of Hippo. The works of Peter D'Ailly and [122]
Gabriel Biel he almost knew by heart. He was struck with a remark of the former—that had not the Church decided otherwise, it would have been much better to admit that in the Lord's Supper bread and wine are truly received, and not mere accidents.

He likewise carefully studied the theologians, Occam and Gerson, who both express themselves so freely on the authority of the popes. To this reading he joined other exercises. In public discussions he was heard unravelling the most complicated reasonings, and winding his way through labyrinths where others could find no outlet. All who heard him were filled with admiration.[153]

But he had entered the cloister, not to acquire the reputation of a great genius, but in quest of the food of piety.[154] These labours he accordingly regarded as supernumerary.

But the thing in which he delighted above all others was to draw wisdom at the pure fountain of the word of God. In the convent he found a Bible fastened to a chain, and was ever returning to this chained Bible. He had a very imperfect comprehension of the Word, but still it was his most pleasant reading. Sometimes he spent a whole day in meditating on a single passage; at other times he learned passages of the Prophets by heart. His great desire was, that the writings of the apostles and prophets might help to give him a knowledge of the will of God, increase the fear which he had for his name, and nourish his faith by the sure testimony of the Word.[155]

Apparently at this period he began to study the Scriptures in the original tongues, and thereby lay the foundation of the most perfect and the most useful of his labours, the translation of the Bible. He used a Hebrew Lexicon which Reuchlin had just published. His first guide was probably John Lange, a friar of the convent, versed in Greek and Hebrew, and with whom he always maintained a close intimacy.[156] He also made great use of the learned Commentaries of Nicolas Lyra, who died in 1340, and hence the saying of Pflug, afterwards Bishop of Naumbourg, "Had not Lyra played the lyre, Luther had never danced. *Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset.*"

The young monk studied so closely and ardently that he often omitted to say his Hours during [123]
two or three weeks. Then becoming alarmed at the thought of having transgressed the rules of his order, he shut himself up to make amends for his negligence, and commenced conscientiously repeating all the omitted Hours, without thinking of meat or drink. On one occasion his sleep

went from him for seven weeks.

Earnestly intent on acquiring the holiness in quest of which he had entered the cloister, Luther addicted himself to the ascetic life in its fullest rigour, seeking to crucify the flesh by fastings, macerations, and vigils.[157] Shut up in his cell as in a prison, he struggled without intermission against the evil thoughts and evil propensities of his heart. A little bread and a herring were often all his food. Indeed, he was naturally very temperate. Often when he had no thought of purchasing heaven by abstinence, have his friends seen him content himself with the coarsest provisions, and even remain four days in succession without eating or drinking.[158] We have this on the testimony of a very credible witness, Melancthon, and we may judge from it what opinion to form of the fables which ignorance and prejudice have circulated concerning Luther's intemperance. At the period of which we treat there is no sacrifice he would have declined to make, in order to become holy and purchase heaven.[159] When Luther, after he had become Reformer, says that heaven is not purchased, he well knew what he meant. "Truly," wrote he to George, Duke of Saxony, "truly I was a pious monk, and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can tell. If ever monk had got to heaven by monkery, I had been that monk. In this all the monks of my acquaintance will bear me witness. Had the thing continued much longer I had become a martyr unto death, through vigils, prayer, reading, and other labours."[160]

We are touching on the period which made Luther a new man, and which, revealing to him the immensity of the Divine love, fitted him for proclaiming it to the world.

The peace which Luther had come in search of he found neither in the tranquillity of the cloister nor in monastic perfection. He wished to be assured of his salvation; it was the great want of his [124] soul, and without it he could have no repose. But the fears which had agitated him when in the world, followed him into his cell. Nay, they were even increased; the least cry of his heart raising a loud echo under the silent vaults of the cloister. God had brought him thither that he might learn to know himself, and to despair of his own strength and virtue. His conscience, enlightened by the Divine word, told him what it was to be holy; but he was filled with alarm at not finding, either in his heart or his life, that image of holiness which he had contemplated with admiration in the word of God; a sad discovery made by every man who is in earnest! No righteousness within, no righteousness without, everywhere omission, sin, defilement.... The more ardent Luther's natural disposition was the more strongly he felt the secret and unceasing resistance which human nature opposes to goodness. This threw him into despair.

The monks and theologians of the day invited him to do works in order to satisfy the Divine justice. But what works, thought he, can proceed from such a heart as mine! How should I be able with works polluted in their very principle, to stand in presence of my holy Judge? "I felt myself," says he, "to be a great sinner before God, and deemed it impossible to appease him by my merits."

He was agitated, and, at the same time, gloomy, shunning the silly and coarse conversation of the monks, who, unable to comprehend the tempests of his soul, regarded him with astonishment, [161] and reproached him for his gloom and taciturnity. It is told by Cochlœus, that one day, when they were saying mass in the chapel, Luther had come with his sighs, and stood amid the friars in sadness and anguish. The priest had already prostrated himself, the incense had been placed on the altar, the *Gloria* had been chanted, and they were reading the Gospel, when the poor monk, no longer able to contain his agony, exclaimed, in a piercing tone, while throwing himself on his knees, "Not I! not I!"[162] Every one was in amazement, and the service was for a moment interrupted. Perhaps Luther thought he had heard himself reproached with something of which he knew he was innocent; perhaps he meant to express his unworthiness to be one of those to whom the death of Christ brought eternal life. Cochlœus says that they were reading the passage [125] of Scripture which tells of the dumb man out of whom Christ expelled a demon. If this account is correct, Luther's cry might have a reference to this circumstance. He might mean to intimate that though dumb like the man, it was owing to another cause than the possession of a demon. In fact, Cochlœus informs us that the friars sometimes attributed the agonies of their brother to occult commerce with the devil,[163] and he himself is of the same opinion.

A tender conscience led Luther to regard the smallest fault as a great sin. No sooner had he discovered it than he strove to expiate it by the severest mortifications. This, however, had no other effect than to convince him of the utter inefficacy of all human remedies. "I tormented myself to death," says he, "in order to procure peace with God to my troubled heart and agitated conscience; but, surrounded with fearful darkness, I nowhere found it."

The acts of monastic holiness which lulled so many consciences, and to which he himself had recourse in his agony, soon appeared to Luther only the fallacious cures of an empirical and quack religion. "At the time when I was a monk, if I felt some temptation assail me, I am lost! said I to myself, and immediately resorted to a thousand methods, in order to suppress the cries of my heart. I confessed every day, but that did me no good. Thus oppressed with sadness, I was tormented by a multiplicity of thoughts. 'Look!' exclaimed I, 'there you are still envious, impatient, passionate! It is of no use then, for you, O wretch, to have entered this sacred order.'"

And yet Luther, imbued with the prejudices of his day, had from his youth up considered the acts, whose impotence he now experienced, as sure remedies for diseased souls. What was he to think of the strange discovery which he had just made in the solitude of the cloister? It is possible, then, to dwell in the sanctuary, and still carry within oneself a man of sin! He has received

another garment, but not another heart. His hopes are disappointed. Where is he to stop? Can it be that all these rules and observances are only human inventions? Such a supposition appears to him at one time a suggestion of the devil, and at another time an irresistible truth. Struggling alternately with the holy voice which spoke to his heart, and with venerable institutions which had the sanction of ages, Luther's life was a continual combat. The young monk, like a shade, glided through the long passages of the cloister, making them echo with his sad groans. His body [126] pined away and his strength left him; on different occasions he remained as if he were dead.[164]

Once, overwhelmed with sadness, he shut himself up in his cell, and for several days and nights allowed no one to approach him. Lucas Edemberger, one of his friends, feeling uneasy about the unhappy monk, and having some presentiment of the state in which he actually was, taking with him several boys, who were accustomed to chant in choirs, went and knocked at the door of his cell. No one opens or answers. Good Edemberger, still more alarmed, forces the door. Luther is stretched on the floor insensible, and showing no signs of life. His friend tries in vain to revive him, but he still remains motionless. The young boys begin to chant a soft anthem. Their pure voices act like a charm on the poor monk, who had always the greatest delight in music, and he gradually recovers sensation, consciousness, and life.[165] But if music could for some moments give him a slight degree of serenity, another and more powerful remedy was wanted to cure him effectually—that soft and penetrating sound of the gospel, which is the voice of God himself. He was well aware of this, and, accordingly, his sorrows and alarms led him to study the writings of the apostles and prophets with renewed zeal.[166]

CHAP. IV.

Pious Men in Cloisters—Staupitz—His Piety—His Visitation—Conversation—The Grace of Christ—Repentance—Power of Sin—Sweetness of Repentance—Election—Providence—The Bible—The Old Monk—The Remission of Sins—Consecration Dinner—The Fête Dieu—Call to Wittemberg.

Luther was not the first monk who had passed through similar struggles. The cloisters often shrouded within the obscurity of their walls abominable vices, at which if they had been brought [127] to light, every honest mind would have shuddered; but they often also concealed Christian virtues which were there unfolded in silence, and which, if they had been placed before the eyes of the world, would have excited admiration. These virtues, possessed by those who lived only with themselves and with God, attracted no attention, and were often even unknown to the modest convent within which they were contained. Leading a life known to God only, these humble solitaries fell occasionally into that mystical theology, sad malady of noblest minds, which formerly constituted the delight of the first monks on the banks of the Nile, and which uselessly consumes those who fall under its influence.

Still, when one of these men happened to be called to an eminent station, he there displayed virtues whose salutary influence was long and widely felt. The candle being placed on the candlestick gave light to all the house. Several were awakened by this light, and hence those pious souls, propagated from generation to generation, kept shining like solitary torches at the very time when cloisters were often little better than impure receptacles of the deepest darkness.

A young man had in this way attracted notice in one of the convents of Germany. He was named John Staupitz, and was of a noble family in Misnia. From his earliest youth, having a taste for science and a love of virtue, he longed for retirement, in order to devote himself to literature;[167] but soon finding that philosophy and the study of nature could do little for eternal salvation, he began to study theology, making it his special object to join practice with knowledge. For, says one of his biographers, it is vain to deck ourselves with the name of theologian, if we do not prove our title to the honourable name by our life.[168] The study of the Bible, and of the theology of St. Augustine, the knowledge of himself, and the war which he, like Luther, had to wage against the wiles and lusts of his heart, led him to the Redeemer, through faith in whom he found peace to his soul. The doctrine of the election of grace had, in particular, taken a firm hold of his mind. Integrity of life, profound science and eloquence, combined with a noble appearance and a dignified address, recommended him to his contemporaries.[169] The Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, made him his friend, employed him on different embassies, and under his direction founded the University of Wittemberg. This disciple of St. Paul and St. Augustine was the first [128] Dean of the Faculty of Theology in that school which was one day to send forth light to enlighten the schools and churches of so many nations. He attended the council of Lateran, as deputy from the Archbishop of Salzbourg, became provincial of his order in Thuringia and Saxony, and ultimately vicar-general of the Augustins all over Germany.

Staupitz lamented the corruption of manners and the errors in doctrine which were laying waste the Church. This is proved by his writings on the love of God, on Christian faith, on resemblance to Christ in his death, and by the testimony of Luther. But he considered the former of these evils as greatly the worse of the two. Besides, the mildness and indecision of his character, and his desire not to go beyond the sphere of action which he thought assigned to him, made him fitter to

be the restorer of a convent than the Reformer of the Church. He could have wished to confer important stations only on distinguished men, but not finding them, he was contented to employ others. "We must plough with horses," said he, "if we can find them; but if we have no horses, we must plough with oxen."[170]

We have seen the anguish and inward wrestlings to which Luther was a prey in the convent of Erfurt. At this time a visit from the vicar-general was announced, and Staupitz accordingly arrived to make his ordinary inspection. The friend of Frederick, the founder of the University of Wittemberg, the head of the Augustins, took a kind interest in the monks under his authority. It was not long ere one of the friars of the convent attracted his attention. This was a young man of middle stature, whom study, abstinence, and vigils, had so wasted away, that his bones might have been counted.[171] His eyes, which at a later period were compared to those of the falcon, were sunken, his gait was sad, and his looks bespoke a troubled soul, the victim of numerous struggles, yet still strong and bent on resisting. His whole appearance had in it something grave, melancholy, and solemn. Staupitz, whose discernment had been improved by long experience, easily discovered what was passing in the soul of the young friar, and singled him out from those around him. He felt drawn towards him, had a presentiment of his high destiny, and experienced the interest of a parent for his subaltern. He, too, had struggled like Luther, and could therefore understand his situation. Above all, he could show him the way of peace, which he himself had [129] found. The information he received of the circumstances which had brought the young Augustin to the convent increased his sympathy. He requested the prior to treat him with great mildness, and availed himself of the opportunities which his office gave him to gain the young friar's confidence. Going kindly up to him, he took every means to remove his timidity, which was moreover increased by the respect and reverence which the elevated rank of Staupitz naturally inspired.

The heart of Luther, till then closed by harsh treatment, opened at last, and expanded to the mild rays of charity. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."[172] The heart of Staupitz answered to the heart of Luther. The vicar-general understood him; and the monk, in his turn, felt a confidence in Staupitz which no one had hitherto inspired. He revealed to him the cause of his sadness, depicted the fearful thoughts which agitated him, and then in the cloister of Erfurt commenced a conversation full of wisdom and instruction.

"In vain," said Luther despondingly to Staupitz; "in vain do I make promises to God; sin has always the mastery."

"O my friend," replied the vicar-general, thinking how it had been with himself, "more than a thousand times have I sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never done so. Now I no longer swear; for I know I should not perform. Unless God be pleased to be gracious to me for the love of Christ, and to grant me a happy departure when I leave this world, I shall not be able with all my vows and all my good works to stand before him. I must perish."[173]

The young monk is terrified at the thought of the Divine justice, and lays all his fears before the vicar-general. The ineffable holiness of God, and his sovereign majesty, fill him with alarm. Who will be able to support the day of his advent—who to stand when he appeareth?

Staupitz resumes. He knows where he has found peace, and his young friend will hear it. "Why torment thyself," said he to him, "with all these speculations and high thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood which he has shed for thee; then thou shalt see the grace of God. Instead of making a martyr of thyself for thy faults, throw thyself into the arms of the Redeemer. Confide in him, in the righteousness of his life, and the expiation of his death. Keep not back; God is not angry with thee; it is thou who art angry with God. Listen to the Son of God, [130] who became man in order to assure thee of the Divine favour. He says to thee, 'Thou art my sheep; thou hearest my voice; none shall pluck thee out of my hand.'"[174]

But Luther does not here find the repentance which he believes necessary to salvation. He replies, and it is the ordinary reply of agonised and frightened souls, "How dare I believe in the favour of God, while there is nothing in me like true conversion? I must be changed before he can receive me."

His venerable guide shows him that there can be no true conversion while God is dreaded as a severe Judge. "What will you say then," exclaims Luther, "of the many consciences, to which a thousand unsupportable observances are prescribed as a means of gaining heaven?"

Then he hears this reply from the vicar-general, or rather his belief is, that it comes not from man, but is a voice sounding from heaven.[175] "No repentance," says Staupitz, "is true, save that which begins with the love of God and of righteousness.[176] What others imagine to be the end and completion of repentance is, on the contrary, only the commencement of it. To have a thorough love of goodness, thou must, before all, have a thorough love of God. If thou wouldest be converted, dwell not upon all these macerations and tortures; 'Love him who first loved thee.'"

Luther listens and listens again. These consoling words fill him with unknown joy, and give him new light. "It is Jesus Christ," thinks he in his heart. "Yes, it is Jesus Christ himself who consoles me so wonderfully by these sweet and salutary words."[177]

These words, in fact, penetrated to the inmost heart of the young monk, like the sharp arrow of a mighty man.[178] In order to repent, it is necessary to love God. Illumined with this new light, he

proceeds to examine the Scriptures, searching out all the passages which speak of repentance and conversion. These words, till now so much dreaded, become, to use his own expressions, "an agreeable sport, and the most delightful recreation. All the passages of Scripture which [131] frightened him seem now to rise up from all sides, smiling, and leaping, and sporting with him." [179]

"Hitherto," exclaims he, "though I carefully disguised the state of my heart, and strove to give utterance to a love which was only constrained and fictitious, Scripture did not contain a word which seemed to me more bitter than that of *repentance*. Now, however, there is none sweeter and more agreeable.[180] Oh! how pleasant the precepts of God are, when we read them not only in books, but in the precious wounds of the Saviour."[181]

Meanwhile, Luther, though consoled by the words of Staupitz was still subject to fits of depression. Sin manifested itself anew to his timorous conscience, and then the joy of salvation was succeeded by his former despair. "O my sin! my sin! my sin!" one day exclaimed the young monk in presence of the vicar-general, in accents of the deepest grief. "Ah!" replied he, "would you only be a sinner on canvass, and also have a Saviour only on canvass?" Then Staupitz gravely added, "Know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour even of those who are great, real sinners, and every way deserving of condemnation."

What agitated Luther was not merely the sin which he felt in his heart. The upbraidings of his conscience were confirmed by arguments drawn from reason. If the holy precepts of the Bible frightened him, some of its doctrines likewise increased his terror. Truth, which is the great means by which God gives peace to man, must necessarily begin by removing the false security which destroys him. The doctrine of election, in particular, disturbed the young man, and threw him into a field which it is difficult to traverse. Must he believe that it was man who, on his part, first chose God? or that it was God who first chose man? The Bible, history, daily experience, and the writings of Augustine, had shown him that always, and in every thing, in looking for a first cause, it was necessary to ascend to the sovereign will by which every thing exists, and on which every thing depends. But his ardent spirit would have gone farther. He would have penetrated into the secret counsel of God, unveiled its mysteries, seen the invisible, and comprehended the [132] incomprehensible. Staupitz interfered, telling him not to pretend to fathom the hidden purposes of God, but to confine himself to those of them which have been made manifest in Christ. "Look to the wounds of Christ," said he to him, "and there see a bright display of the purposes of God towards man. It is impossible to comprehend God out of Jesus Christ. In Christ you will find what I am, and what I require, saith the Lord. You can find him nowhere else, either in heaven or on the earth."[182]

The vicar-general went farther. He convinced Luther of the paternal designs of Providence, in permitting the various temptations and combats which the soul has to sustain. He exhibited them to him in a light well fitted to revive his courage. By such trials God prepares those whom he destines for some important work. The ship must be proved before it is launched on the boundless deep. If this education is necessary for every man, it is so particularly for those who are to have an influence on their generation. This Staupitz represented to the monk of Erfurt; "It is not without cause," said he to him, "that God exercises you by so many combats; be assured he will employ you in great things as his minister."

These words, which Luther hears with astonishment and humility, fill him with courage, and give him a consciousness of powers, whose existence he had not even suspected. The wisdom and prudence of an enlightened friend gradually reveal the strong man to himself. Nor does Staupitz rest here. He gives him valuable directions as to his studies, exhorting him in future to lay aside the systems of the school, and draw all his theology from the Bible. "Let the study of the Scriptures," said he, "be your favourite occupation." Never was good advice better followed. But what, above all, delighted Luther, was the present of a Bible from Staupitz. Perhaps it was the Latin Bible bound in red leather, which belonged to the convent, and which it was the summit of his desire to possess, that he might be able to carry it about with him wherever he went, because all its leaves were familiar to him, and he knew where to look for every passage.[183] At length this treasure is his own. From that time he studies the Scriptures, and especially the Epistles of St. Paul, with always increasing zeal. The only author whom he admits along with the Bible is St. Augustine. Whatever he reads is deeply imprinted on his soul, for his struggles had prepared him for comprehending it. The soil had been ploughed deep, and the incorruptible seed penetrates far [133] into it. When Staupitz left Erfurt, a new day had dawned upon Luther.

Nevertheless, the work was not finished. The vicar-general had prepared it, but its completion was reserved for a humbler instrument. The conscience of the young Augustin had not yet found repose, and, owing to his efforts and the stretch on which his soul had been kept, his body at length gave way. He was attacked by an illness which brought him to the gates of death. This was in the second year of his residence in the convent. All his agonies and terrors were awakened at the approach of death. His own pollution and the holiness of God anew distracted his soul. One day, when overwhelmed with despair, an old monk entered his cell, and addressed him in consoling terms. Luther opened his heart to him, and made him aware of the fears by which he was agitated. The respectable old man was incapable of following him into all his doubts as Staupitz had done; but he knew his *Credo*, and having found in it the means of consoling his own heart, he could apply the same remedy to the young friar. Leading him back to the Apostles' Creed, which Luther had learned in infancy at the school of Mansfield, the old monk good-naturedly repeated the article, "*I believe in the forgiveness of sins*." These simple words, which

the pious friar calmly repeated at this decisive moment, poured great consolation into the soul of Luther. "I believe," oft repeated he to himself on his sick-bed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "Ah!" said the monk, "the thing to be believed is not merely that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven; this the devils believe: God's command is, to believe that our own sins are forgiven." [184] How delightful this command appeared to poor Luther! "See what St. Bernard says in his sermon on the annunciation," added the old friar; "the witness which the Holy Spirit witnesseth with our spirit is, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

From this moment light sprung up in the heart of the young monk of Erfurt. The gracious word has been pronounced, and he believes it. He renounces the idea of meriting salvation, and puts implicit confidence in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. He does not see all the consequences of the principle which he has admitted; he is still sincere in his attachment to the Church, and yet he has no longer need of her. He has received salvation immediately from God [134] himself; and from that moment Roman Catholicism is virtually destroyed in him. He goes forward and searches the writings of the apostles and prophets, for every thing that may strengthen the hope which fills his heart. Each day he invokes help from above, and each day also the light increases in his soul.

The health which his spirit had found soon restores health to his body, and he rises from his sick-bed, after having, in a double sense, received a new life. During the feast of Noel, which arrived shortly after, he tasted abundantly of all the consolations of faith. With sweet emotion he took part in the holy solemnities, and when in the middle of the gorgeous service of the day, he came to chant these words:—"*O beata culpa, quæ talem meruisti Redemptorem!*" [185] his whole being said *Amen*, and thrilled with joy.

Luther had been two years in the cloister, and must now be consecrated priest. He had received much, and he looked forward with delight to the prospect which the priesthood presented of enabling him freely to give what he had freely received. Wishing to avail himself of the occasion to be fully reconciled to his father, he invited him to be present, and even asked him to fix the day. John Luther, though not yet entirely appeased, nevertheless accepted the invitation, and named Sabbath the 2nd May, 1507.

In the list of Luther's friends was the vicar of Isenach, John Braun, who had been his faithful adviser when he resided in that town. Luther wrote him on the 22nd April. It is the Reformer's earliest letter, and bears the following address:—"To John Braun, Holy and Venerable Priest of Christ and Mary." It is only in the two first letters of Luther that the name of Mary occurs.

"God, who is glorious and holy in all his works," says the candidate for the priesthood, "having designed to exalt me exceedingly,—me, a miserable and every way unworthy sinner, and to call me solely out of his abundant mercy, to his sublime ministry, it is my duty in order to testify my gratitude for a goodness so divine and so magnificent, (as far at least as dust can do it,) to fulfil with my whole heart the office which is entrusted to me."

At length the day arrived. The miner of Mansfield failed not to be present at the consecration of his son.... He even gave him an unequivocal mark of his affection and generosity, by making him a present of twenty florins on the occasion.

The ceremony took place, Jerome, Bishop of Brandebourg, officiating. At the moment of [135] conferring on Luther the right to celebrate mass, he put the chalice into his hand, uttering these solemn words, "*Accipe potestatem sacrificandi pro vivis et mortuis*"—"Receive power to sacrifice for the living and the dead." Luther then listened complacently to these words, which gave him the power of doing the very work appropriated to the Son of God; but they afterwards made him shudder. "That the earth did not swallow us both," said he, "was more than we deserved, and was owing to the great patience and long-suffering of the Lord." [186]

The father afterwards dined at the convent with his son, the friends of the young priest and the monks. The conversation turned on Martin's entrance into the cloister, the friars loudly extolling it as one of the most meritorious of works. Then the inflexible John, turning towards his son, said to him, "Hast thou not read in Scripture to obey thy father and thy mother?" [187] These words struck Luther; they gave him quite a different view of the action which had brought him into the convent, and for a long time continued to echo in his heart.

By the advice of Staupitz, Luther, shortly after his ordination, made short excursions on foot into the neighbouring parishes and convents, both for relaxation, to give his body the necessary exercise, and to accustom himself to preaching.

The Fête Dieu was to be celebrated with splendour at Eisleben, where the vicar-general was to be present. Luther repaired thither. He had still need of Staupitz, and missed no opportunity of meeting with this enlightened conductor who was guiding him into the way of life. The procession was numerous and brilliant. Staupitz himself carried the holy sacrament, and Luther followed in his sacerdotal dress. The thought that it was truly Jesus Christ that the vicar-general was carrying—the idea that Christ was there in person actually before him—suddenly struck Luther's imagination, and filled him with such amazement that he could scarcely move forward. The perspiration fell from him in drops; he shook, and thought he would have died with agony and terror. At length the procession ceased. This host which had so awakened the fears of the monk was solemnly deposited in the sanctuary, and Luther, as soon as he was alone with Staupitz, threw himself into his arms, and told him of his consternation. Then the worthy vicar-general,

[136]

who had long known that Saviour who breaketh not the bruised reed, said to him mildly, "It was not Jesus Christ, my brother. Jesus Christ does not alarm—he consoles merely."[188]

Luther was not to remain hid in an obscure convent. The time had arrived for his being transported to a larger theatre. Staupitz, with whom he was in constant correspondence, was well aware that the soul of the young monk was too active to be confined within so narrow a circle. He mentioned him to Frederick of Saxony, and this enlightened prince, in 1508, probably towards the close of the year, invited him to a chair in the university of Wittemberg. Wittemberg was a field on which he was to fight hard battles; and Luther felt that his vocation was there. Being required to repair promptly to his new post, he answered the appeal without delay; and, in the hurry of his removal, had not even time to write him whom he called his master and beloved father—John Braun, curate of Isenach. Some months after, he wrote—"My departure was so sudden, that those I was living with scarcely knew of it. I am far away, I confess: but the better part of me is still with you."[189] Luther had been three years in the cloister of Erfurt.

CHAP. V

The University of Wittemberg—First Employment—Biblical Lectures—Sensation—Preaching at Wittemberg—The Old Chapel—Impression.

In the year 1502, the Elector Frederick had founded a new university at Wittemberg, declaring, in the act by which he confirmed it, that he and his people would turn to it as towards an oracle. He thought not at the time that these words would be so magnificently realised. Two men belonging to the opposition which had been formed against the scholastic system, viz., Pollich of Mellerstadt, doctor of medicine, law, and philosophy, and Staupitz, had great influence in founding this school. The university declared St. Augustine its patron; and even this choice was a presage of good. In possession of great freedom, and regarded as a tribunal to which, in cases of difficulty, the supreme decision belonged, this new institution, which was in every way fitted to [137] become the cradle of the Reformation, powerfully contributed to the development of Luther and his work.

On his arrival at Wittemberg, Luther repaired to the convent of Augustins, where a cell was alloted him; for though professor, he ceased not to be monk. He was appointed to teach philosophy and dialectics. In assigning him these departments, regard had, no doubt, been had to the studies which he had prosecuted at Erfurt, and to his degree of Master of Arts. Thus Luther, who was hungering and thirsting for the word of life, saw himself obliged to give his almost exclusive attention to the scholastic philosophy of Aristotle. He had need of the bread of life which God gives to the world, and he must occupy himself with human subtleties. How galling! How much he sighed! "I am well, by the grace of God," wrote he to Braun, "were it not that I must study philosophy with all my might. Ever since I arrived at Wittemberg, I have eagerly desired to exchange this study for that of theology: but," added he, lest it should be thought he meant the theology of the time, "the theology I mean is that which seeks out the kernel of the nut, the heart of the wheat, and the marrow of the bone.[190] Howbeit God is God," continues he, with that confidence which was the soul of his life, "man is almost always deceived in his judgment; but he is our God, and will conduct us by his goodness for ever and ever." The studies in which Luther was at this time obliged to engage were afterwards of great service to him in combating the errors of the schoolmen.

Here, however, he could not stop. The desire of his heart must be accomplished. The same power which formerly pushed him from the bar into the monastic life now pushed him from philosophy towards the Bible. He zealously commenced the study of ancient languages, especially Greek and Hebrew, that he might be able to draw science and learning at the fountain-head. He was all his life an indefatigable student.[191] Some months after his arrival at the university he applied for the degree of Bachelor in Divinity, and obtained it in the end of March 1509, with a special injunction to devote himself to biblical theology, *ad Biblia*.

Every day at one, Luther had to lecture on the Bible,—a precious employment both for the professor and his pupils—giving them a better insight into the divine meaning of those oracles [138] which had so long been lost both to the people and the school.

He began his lectures with an exposition of the Psalms, and shortly after proceeded to the Epistle to the Romans. It was especially when meditating upon it that the light of truth entered his heart. After retiring to his quiet cell he spent hours in the study of the Divine Word—the Epistle of St. Paul lying open before him. One day, coming to the seventeenth verse of the first chapter, he read these words of the prophet Habakkuk, "*The just shall live by faith*." He is struck with the expression. The just, then, has a different life from other men, and this life is given by faith. These words, which he receives into his heart as if God himself had there deposited them, unveils the mystery of the Christian life to him, and gives him an increase of this life. Long after, in the midst of his numerous labours, he thought he still heard a voice saying to him, "The just shall live by faith."[192]

Luther's lectures, thus prepared, had little resemblance to those which had hitherto been delivered. It was not a declamatory rhetorician, or a pedantic schoolman that spoke; it was a Christian who had felt the power of revealed truth—truth which he derived from the Bible, and presented to his astonished hearers, all full of life, as it came from the treasury of his heart. It was not a lesson from man, but a lesson from God.

This novel exposition of the truth was much talked of. The news spread far and wide, and attracted a great number of foreign students to the recently founded university. Even some of the professors attended the lectures of Luther, among others, Mellerstadt, often surnamed, "*The Light of the World*." He was the first rector of the university, and had previously been at Leipsic, where he had vigorously combated the ridiculous lessons of the schoolmen, and denying that "the light of the first day of creation could be theology," had maintained that this science ought to be based on the study of literature. "This monk," said he, "will send all the doctors to the right about. He will introduce a new doctrine, and reform the whole Church, for he founds upon the word of God; and no man in the world can either combat or overthrow this word, even though he should attack it with all the weapons of philosophy, the sophists, Scotists, Albertists, Thomists, and the whole fraternity."[193]

Staupitz, who was the instrument in the hand of Providence to unfold the gifts and treasures hidden in Luther, invited him to preach in this church of the Augustins. The young professor [139] recoiled at this proposal. He wished to confine himself to his academic functions, and trembled at the thought of adding to them that of preacher. In vain did Staupitz urge him. "No, no," replied he, "it is no light matter to speak to men in the place of God."[194] Touching humility in this great Reformer of the Church! Staupitz insisted; but the ingenious Luther, says one of his biographers, found fifteen arguments, pretexts, and evasions, to excuse himself from this calling. The chief of the Augustins, still continuing his attack, Luther exclaimed, "Ah! doctor, in doing this, you deprive me of life. I would not be able to hold out three months." "Very well," replied the vicar-general, "so be it in God's name. For up yonder, also, our Lord has need of able and devoted men." Luther behoved to yield.

In the middle of the public square of Wittemberg was a wooden chapel, thirty feet long by twenty wide, whose sides, propped up in all directions, were falling to decay. An old pulpit made of fir, three feet in height, received the preacher. In this miserable chapel the preaching of the Reformation commenced. God was pleased that that which was to establish his glory should have the humblest origin. The foundation of the church of the Augustins had just been laid, and until it should be finished this humble church was employed. "This building," adds the contemporary of Luther who relates these circumstances, "may well be compared to the stable in which Christ was born. It was in this miserable inclosure that God was pleased, so to speak, to make his beloved Son be born a second time. Among the thousands of cathedrals and parish churches with which the world abounded, there was then one only which God selected for the glorious preaching of eternal life."[195]

Luther preaches, and every thing is striking in the new preacher. His expressive countenance, his noble air, his clear and sonorous voice, captivate the hearers.

The greater part of preachers before him had sought rather to amuse their auditory than to convert them. The great seriousness which predominates in Luther's preaching, and the joy with which the knowledge of the gospel has filled his heart, give to his eloquence at once an authority, a fervour, and an unction which none of his predecessors had. "Endowed," says one of his opponents,[196] "with a keen and acute intellect, and a retentive memory, and having an [140] admirable facility in the use of his mother tongue, Luther, in point of eloquence, yielded to none of his age. Discoursing from the pulpit as if he had been agitated by some strong passion, and suiting his action to his words, he produced a wonderful impression on the minds of his hearers, and like a torrent, carried them along whithersoever he wished. So much force, gracefulness, and eloquence, are seldom seen in the people of the north." "He had," says Bossuet, "a lively and impetuous eloquence, which hurried people away and entranced them."[197]

In a short time the little chapel could not contain the hearers who crowded to it. The council of Wittemberg then made choice of Luther for their preacher, and appointed him to preach in the town church. The impression which he produced here was still greater. The power of his genius, the eloquence of his diction, and the excellence of the doctrines which he announced, equally astonished his hearers. His reputation spread far and wide, and Frederick the Wise himself once came to Wittemberg to hear him.

Luther had commenced a new life. The uselessness of the cloister had been succeeded by great activity. The liberty, the labour, the constant activity to which he could devote himself at Wittemberg, completely restored his internal harmony and peace. He was now in his place, and the work of God was soon to exhibit its majestic step.

CHAP. VI.

Journey to Rome—A Convent on the Pô—Sickness at Bologna—Remembrances in Rome—Superstitious Devotion—Profaneness of the Clergy—Conversation—Disorders in Rome—Biblical Studies—Pilate's Stair—Influence on his Faith and on the Reformation—The Gate of Paradise—Luther's Confession.

Luther was teaching both in his academic chair and in the church, when his labours were interrupted. In 1510, or, according to some, not till 1511 or 1512, he was sent to Rome. Seven convents of his order having differed on certain points with the vicar-general,[198] the activity of Luther's mind, the power of his eloquence, and his talent for discussion, made him be selected to [141] plead the cause of these seven monasteries before the pope.[199] This Divine dispensation was necessary to Luther, for it was requisite that he should know Rome. Full of the prejudices and illusions of the cloister, he had always represented it to himself as the seat of holiness.

He accordingly set out and crossed the Alps, but scarcely had he descended into the plains of rich and voluptuous Italy, than he found at every step subjects of astonishment and scandal. The poor German monk was received in a rich convent of Benedictines, situated upon the Pô in Lombardy. This convent had thirty-six thousand ducats of revenue. Of these, twelve thousand were devoted to the table, twelve thousand to the buildings, and twelve thousand to the other wants of the monks.[200] The gorgeousness of the apartments, the beauty of the dresses, and the rarities of the table, all astonished Luther. Marble and silk, and luxury under all its forms! How new the sight to the humble friar of the poor convent of Wittemberg! He was astonished and said nothing, but when Friday came, how surprised was he to see abundance of meat still covering the table of the Benedictines! Then he resolved to speak out. "The Church and the pope," said he to them, "forbid such things." The Benedictines were indignant at this reprimand from the rude German, but Luther having insisted, and perhaps threatened to make their disorders known, some of them thought that the simplest plan was to get rid of their troublesome guest. The porter of the convent having warned him that he ran a risk in staying longer, he made his escape from this epicurean monastery, and arrived at Bologna, where he fell dangerously sick.[201] Some have seen in this sickness the effects of poison, but it is simpler to suppose that it was the effect which a change of living produced in the frugal monk of Wittemberg, whose principal food was wont to be bread and herrings. This sickness was not to be unto death, but for the glory of God. Luther's constitutional sadness and depression again overpowered him. To die thus far from Germany, under this burning sky in a foreign land, what a fate! The agonies which he had felt at Erfurt returned with all their force. The conviction of his sins troubled, while the prospect of the judgment-seat of God terrified him. But at the moment when these terrors were at the worst, the passage of St. Paul which had struck him at Wittemberg, "The just shall live by faith," (Rom., i, 17,) presented itself to his mind, and illumined his soul as with a ray of light from heaven. [142] Revived and comforted, he soon recovered his health, and resumed his journey to Rome, expecting he should there find quite a different life from that of the Lombard convents, and impatient by the sight of Roman holiness to efface the sad impressions which had been left upon his mind by his residence on the Pô.

At length, after a painful journey under the burning sky of Italy in the beginning of summer, he drew near to the city of the seven hills. His heart was moved, and his eyes looked for the queen of the world, and of the Church. As soon as he obtained a distant view of the eternal city, the city of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the metropolis of Catholicism, he threw himself on the ground, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee."

Luther is in Rome; the professor of Wittemberg is in the midst of the eloquent ruins of the Rome of the consuls and emperors—the Rome of the confessors and martyrs. Here lived that Plautus and Virgil, whose works he had taken with him into the cloister, and all those great men whose exploits had always caused his heart to beat. He perceives their statues, and the wrecks of monuments which attest their glory. But all this glory and all this power are past, and his foot treads on their dust. At every step he calls to mind the sad forebodings of Scipio shedding tears at the sight of Carthage in ruins, its burned palaces and broken walls, and exclaiming, "Thus, too, will it be with Rome!" "And in fact," says Luther, "the Rome of the Scipios and Cæsars has been changed into a corpse. Such is the quantity of ruins, that the foundations of the modern houses rest upon the roofs of the old. "There," added he, casting a melancholy look on the ruins, "there were the riches and treasures of the world."[202] All this rubbish, which he strikes with his foot, tells Luther, within the walls of Rome herself, that what is strongest in the eyes of men is easily destroyed by the breath of the Lord.

But he remembers that with profane ashes holy ashes are mingled. The burial-place of the martyrs is not far from that of the generals and triumphing heroes of Rome, and Christian Rome, with her sufferings, has more power over the heart of the Saxon monk than Pagan Rome with her glory. It was here the letter arrived in which Paul wrote, "*The just is justified by faith*," and not far off is the Appii Forum and the Three Taverns. There was the house of Narcissus—here the palace of Cæsar, where the Lord delivered the apostle from the mouth of the lion. Oh, what fortitude these recollections give to the heart of the monk of Wittemberg! [143]

Rome then presented a very different aspect. The pontifical chair was occupied by the warlike Julius II, and not by Leo X, as it has been said by some distinguished historians of Germany, no doubt through oversight. Luther often told an anecdote of this pope. When news was brought him of the defeat of his army by the French before Ravenna, he was reading his Hours. He dashed the book upon the ground, and said, with a dreadful oath, "Very well, so you have turned Frenchman. Is this the way in which you protect your Church?" Then turning in the direction of the country to

whose aid he meant to have recourse, he exclaimed, "Holy Switzer, pray for us."[203] Ignorance, levity, and dissoluteness, a profane spirit, a contempt of all that is sacred, and a shameful traffic in divine things; such was the spectacle which that unhappy city presented, and yet the pious monk continued for some time in his illusions.

Having arrived about the feast of St. John, he hears the Romans about him repeating a proverb which was then common among the people: "Happy," said they, "is the mother whose son says a mass on the eve of St. John." "Oh! how I could like to make my mother happy!" said Luther. The pious son of Margaret accordingly sought to say a mass on that day, but could not; the press was too great.[204]

Ardent and simple-hearted, he went up and down, visiting all the churches and chapels, believing all the lies that were told him, and devoutly performing the requisite acts of holiness; happy in being able to do so many pious works, which were denied to his countrymen. "Oh! how much I regret," said the pious German to himself, "that my father and mother are still alive. What delight I should have had in delivering them from the fire of purgatory, by my masses, my prayers, and many other admirable works."[205] He had found the light, but the darkness was still far from being entirely banished from his understanding. His heart was changed, but his mind was not fully enlightened. He possessed faith and love, but not knowledge. It was work of no small difficulty to escape from the dark night which had for so many ages covered the earth.

Luther repeatedly said mass at Rome, taking care to do it with all the unction and dignity which the service seemed to him to require. But how grieved was the heart of the Saxon monk, at [144] seeing the profane formality of the Roman priests in celebrating the sacrament of the altar. The priests, on their part, laughed at his simplicity. One day when he was officiating, he found that at the altar next to him seven masses had been read before he got through a single one. "Get on, get on," cried one of the priests to him; "make haste, and send Our Lady back her Son," making an impious allusion to the transubstantiation of the bread into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. On another occasion, Luther had only got as far as the Gospel, when the priest beside him had finished the whole mass. "On, on," said his companion; "make haste, make haste; are ye ever to have done?"[206]

His astonishment was still greater when, in the dignitaries of the Church, he discovered the same thing that he had found in common priests. He had hoped better of them.

It was fashionable at the papal court to attack Christianity, and, in order to pass for a complete gentleman, absolutely necessary to hold some erroneous or heretical opinion on the doctrines of the Church.[207] When Erasmus was at Rome, they had attempted to prove to him, by passages from Pliny, that there was no difference between the soul of man and that of the brutes;[208] and young courtiers of the pope maintained that the orthodox faith was merely the result of crafty inventions by some saints.[209]

Luther's employment, as envoy of the Augustins of Germany, caused him to be invited to several meetings of distinguished ecclesiastics. One day, in particular, he happened to be at table with several prelates, who frankly exhibited themselves to him in their mountebank manners and profane conversation, and did not scruple to commit a thousand follies in his presence, no doubt believing him to be of the same spirit as themselves. Among other things they related, in presence of the monk, laughing and making a boast of it, how when they were saying mass, instead of the sacramental words, which should transform the bread and wine into the Saviour's flesh and blood, they parodied them, and said, "*Panis es, et panis manebis; vinum es, et vinum manebis*:" Bread thou art, and bread wilt remain; wine thou art, and wine wilt remain. Then, continued they, we raise the *ostensorium*, and all the people worship it. Luther could scarcely believe his ears. His spirit, which was lively and even gay in the society of his friends, was all [145] gravity when sacred things were in question. He was scandalised at the profane pleasantries of Rome. "I was," said be, "a young monk, grave and pious, and these words distressed me greatly. If they speak thus in Rome at table, freely and publicly, thought I to myself, what will it be if their actions correspond to their words, and if all, pope, cardinals, courtiers, say mass in the same style? And I, who have devoutly heard so large a number read, how must I have been deceived!" [210]

Luther often mingled with the monks and the citizens of Rome. If some extolled the pope and his court, the great majority gave free utterance to their complaints and their sarcasms. What tales they told of the reigning pope, of Alexander VI, and of many others! One day his Roman friends told him how Cæsar Borgia, after having fled from Rome, was apprehended in Spain. When they were going to try him he pleaded guilty in prison, and requested a confessor. A monk having been sent, he slew him, and, wrapping himself up in his cloak, made his escape. "I heard that at Rome, and it is quite certain,"[211] said Luther. One day passing through a public street which led to St. Peter's, he stopped in amazement before a statue, representing a pope under the form of a woman holding a sceptre, clad in the papal mantle, and carrying an infant in her arms. It is a girl of Mentz, said they to him, whom the cardinals chose for pope, and who had a child at this spot. Hence no pope ever passes through this street. "I am astonished," said Luther, "how the popes allow the statue to remain."[212]

Luther had expected to find the edifice of the church in strength and splendour, but its gates were forced, and its walls consumed with fire. He saw the desolations of the sanctuary, and

started back in dismay. He had dreamed of nothing but holiness, and he discovered nothing but profanation.

He was not less struck with the disorders outside the churches. "The Roman police," says he, "is strict and severe. The judge or captain every night makes a round of the town on horseback, with three hundred attendants, and arrests every person he finds in the streets. If he meets any one armed he hangs him up, or throws him into the Tiber; and yet the city is full of disorder and murder, whereas, when the word of God is purely and rightly taught, peace and order are seen to reign, and there is no need of law and its severities."[213] "It is almost incredible what sins and infamous actions are committed at Rome," says he, on another occasion; "one would require to see it and hear it in order to believe it. Hence, it is an ordinary saying, that if there is a hell, Rome is built upon it. It is an abyss from whence all sins proceed."[214] [146]

This sight made a strong impression on Luther's mind at the time, and the impression was deepened at a later period. "The nearer we approach Rome the more bad Christians we find," said he several years after. "There is a common saying, that he who goes to Rome, the first time seeks a rogue, the second time finds him, and the third time brings him away with him in his own person; but now people are become so skilful, that they make all the three journeys in one." A genius, one of the most unhappily celebrated, but also one of the most profound of Italy, Machiavelli, who was living at Florence when Luther passed through it on his way to Rome, has made the same remark: "The strongest symptom," says he, "of the approaching ruin of Christianity, (he means Roman Catholicism,) is, that the nearer you come to the capital of Christendom the less you find of the Christian spirit. The scandalous examples and crimes of the court of Rome are the cause why Italy has lost every principle of piety and all religious sentiment. We Italians," continues the great historian, "are chiefly indebted to the Church and the priests for our having become a set of profane scoundrels."[215] At a later period Luther was fully aware how much he had gained by his journey "I would not take a hundred thousand florins," said he, "not to have seen Rome."[216]

The journey was also of the greatest advantage to him in a literary view. Like Reuchlin, Luther availed himself of his residence in Italy to penetrate farther into the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. He took lessons in Hebrew from a celebrated rabbi named Elias Levita; and thus, at Rome, partly acquired the knowledge of that Divine word under whose blows Rome was destined to fall.

But there was another respect in which the journey was of great importance to Luther. Not only was the veil torn away and the sardonic smile, and mountebank infidelity which lurked behind the Roman superstitions, revealed to the future Reformer, but, moreover, the living faith which God had implanted in him was powerfully strengthened. [147]

We have seen how he at first entered devotedly into all the vain observances, to which, as a price, the Church has annexed the expiation of sins. One day, among others, wishing to gain an indulgence which the pope had promised to every one who should on his knees climb up what is called Pilate's Stair, the Saxon monk was humbly crawling up the steps, which he was told had been miraculously transported to Rome from Jerusalem. But while he was engaged in this meritorious act, he thought he heard a voice of thunder which cried at the bottom of his heart, as at Wittemberg and Bologna, "*The just shall live by faith.*" These words, which had already on two different occasions struck him like the voice of an angel of God, resounded loudly and incessantly within him. He rises up in amazement from the steps along which he was dragging his body. Horrified at himself, and ashamed to see how far superstition has abased him, he flies far from the scene of his folly.[217]

In regard to this mighty word there is something mysterious in the life of Luther. It proved a creating word both for the Reformer and for the Reformation. It was by it that God then said, "Let light be, and light was."

It is often necessary that a truth, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be repeatedly presented to it. Luther had carefully studied the Epistle to the Romans, and yet, though justification by faith is there taught, he had never seen it so clearly. Now he comprehends the righteousness which alone can stand in the presence of God; now he receives from God himself, by the hand of Christ, that obedience which he freely imputes to the sinner as soon as he humbly turns his eye to the God-Man who was crucified. This is the decisive period in the internal life of Luther. The faith which has saved him from the terrors of death becomes the soul of his theology, his fortress in all dangers, the stamina of his discourse, the stimulant of his love, the foundation of his peace, the spur of his labours, his consolation in life and in death.

But this great doctrine of a salvation which emanates from God and not from man, was not only the power of God to save the soul of Luther, it also became the power of God to reform the Church; a powerful weapon which the apostles wielded, a weapon too long neglected, but at length brought forth in its primitive lustre from the arsenal of the mighty God. At the moment when Luther stood up in Rome, all moved and thrilling with the words which Paul had addressed fifteen centuries before to the inhabitants of this metropolis, truth, till then a fettered captive within the Church, rose up also, never again to fall. [148]

Here we must let Luther speak for himself. "Although I was a holy and irreproachable monk, my conscience was full of trouble and anguish. I could not bear the words, 'Justice of God.' I loved not the just and holy God who punishes sinners. I was filled with secret rage against him and

hated him, because, not satisfied with terrifying us, his miserable creatures, already lost by original sin, with his law and the miseries of life, he still further increased our torment by the gospel.... But when, by the Spirit of God, I comprehended these words; when I learned how the sinner's justification proceeds from the pure mercy of the Lord by means of faith,[218] then I felt myself revive like a new man, and entered at open doors into the very paradise of God.[219] From that time, also, I beheld the precious sacred volume with new eyes. I went over all the Bible, and collected a great number of passages which taught me what the work of God was. And as I had previously, with all my heart, hated the words, 'Justice of God,' so from that time I began to esteem and love them, as words most sweet and most consoling. In truth, these words were to me the true gate of paradise."

Accordingly, when called on solemn occasions to confess this doctrine, Luther always manifested his enthusiasm and rude energy. "I see," said he on a critical occasion, "that the devil is incessantly attacking this fundamental article[220] by the instrumentality of his doctors, and that, in this respect, he cannot rest or take any repose. Very well, I, Doctor Martin Luther, unworthy evangelist of our Lord Jesus Christ, hold this article—*that faith alone, without works, justifies in the sight of God*; and I declare that the emperor of the Romans, the emperor of the Turks, the emperor of the Tartars, the emperor of the Persians, the pope, all the cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, princes, and nobles, all men and all devils, must let it stand, and allow it to remain for ever. If they will undertake to combat this truth, they will bring down the flames of hell upon their heads. This is the true and holy gospel, and the declaration of me, Doctor Luther, according [149] to the light of the Holy Spirit.... Nobody," continues he, "has died for our sins but Jesus Christ the Son of God. I repeat it once more; should the world and all the devils tear each other, and burst with fury, this is, nevertheless, true. And if it be He alone who takes away sin, it cannot be ourselves with our works; but good works follow redemption, as the fruit appears on the tree. This is our doctrine; and it is the doctrine which the Holy Spirit teaches with all true Christians. We maintain it in the name of God. Amen."

It was thus Luther found what all doctors and reformers, even the most distinguished, had, to a certain degree at least, failed to discover. It was in Rome that God gave him this clear view of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. He had come to the city of the pontiffs seeking the solution of some difficulties relative to a monastic order, and he carried away in his heart the safety of the Church.

CHAP. VII.

Return—Doctor's Degree—Carlstadt—Luther's Oath—Principle of Reform—Luther's Courage—First Views of Reformation—The Schoolmen—Spalatin—Affair of Reuchlin.

Luther quitted Rome and returned to Wittemberg, his heart full of sadness and indignation. Turning away his eyes in disgust from the pontifical city, he directed them in hope to the Holy Scriptures, and to that new light of which the word of God seemed then to give promise to the world. This word gained in his heart all that the Church lost in it. He detached himself from the one and turned towards the other. The whole Reformation was in that movement. It put God where the priest had hitherto been.

Staupitz and the elector did not lose sight of the monk whom they had called to the university of Wittemberg. It would seem that the vicar-general had a presentiment of the work that was to be done in the world, and, feeling it too much for himself, wished to urge on Luther. There is nothing more remarkable, and perhaps more mysterious, than this personage, who is ever found hurrying on the monk into the path to which God calls him; and who himself ultimately goes and sadly ends his days in a convent. The preaching of the young professor had made an impression [150] on the prince. He had admired the vigour of his intellect, the nervousness of his eloquence, and the excellence of his expositions.[221] The elector and his friend, wishing to advance a man who gave such high hopes, resolved to make him take the honourable degree of Doctor of Divinity. Staupitz repairing to the convent, led Luther into the garden, and there alone with him, under a tree which Luther was afterwards fond of showing to his disciples,[222] the venerable father said to him—" It is now necessary, my friend, that you become a doctor of the Holy Scriptures." Luther recoiled at the idea; the high honour frightened him. "Look out," replied he, "for a more worthy person; as for me, I cannot consent to it." The vicar-general insisted, "The Lord God has much to do in the Church, and has need at present of young and vigorous doctors." These words, adds Melancthon, were perhaps used half in jest, and yet the event realised them. Many omens ordinarily precede great revolutions.[223] It is not necessary to suppose that Melancthon here speaks of miraculous predictions. The most incredulous age—that which preceded our own—saw this sentiment verified. There was no miracle; and yet how many presages announced the revolution with which it closed?

"But I am weak and sickly," replied Luther, "and have not long to live. Seek a strong man." "The Lord," replied the vicar-general, "has work in heaven as well as on the earth; dead or alive, God

has need of you in his counsel."[224]

"None but the Holy Spirit can make a doctor of theology,"[225] exclaimed the monk, still more alarmed. "Do what your convent asks," said Staupitz, "and what I, your vicar-general, command. You promised to obey us." "But my poverty," replied the friar. "I have no means of paying the expences attendant on such promotion." "Give yourself no trouble about them," said his friend. "The prince has been graciously pleased to take all the expences on himself." Luther, thus urged, saw it his duty to yield.

This was towards the end of the summer of 1512. Luther set out for Leipsic to receive the money necessary for his promotion from the elector's treasures. But according to the usages of courts, [151] the money came not. The friar getting impatient would have left, but monastic obedience detained him. At length, on the 4th of October, he received fifty florins from Pfeffinger and John Doltzig, and gave them his receipt for it, in which he designates himself merely as a monk. "I, Martin," says he, "friar of the order of Eremites."[226] Luther hastened back to Wittemberg.

Andrew Bodenstein was then Dean of the Faculty of Theology, and is best known under the name of Carlstadt, being that of his native town. He was also called A. B. C. It was Melancthon who first gave him this designation, which is taken from the three initial letters of his name. Bodenstein acquired the first elements of literature in his native place. He was of a grave and gloomy temper, perhaps inclined to jealousy, and of a restless intellect, eagerly bent, however, on acquiring knowledge, and endowed with great ability. He attended different universities in order to increase his acquirements, and studied theology even at Rome. On his return from Italy into Germany he established himself at Wittemberg, and became doctor in divinity. "At this period," says he himself afterwards, "I had not read the Holy Scriptures."[227] This account gives a very just idea of what the theology of that day was. Carlstadt, besides being a professor, was a canon and archdeacon. This is the person who was at a later period to make a rent in the Reformation. In Luther at that time, he only saw an inferior, but the Augustin soon became an object of jealousy to him. "I am not willing," said he one day, "to be a smaller man than Luther."[228] When Carlstadt conferred the highest university degree on his future rival, he was far from foreseeing the celebrity which the young professor was destined to obtain.

On the 18th of October, 1512, Luther was admitted a licentiate in theology, and took the following oath:—"I swear to defend evangelical truth by every means in my power."[229] The following day, Bodenstein, in presence of a numerous assembly, formally delivered to him the insignia of doctor of theology. He was made Biblical doctor, not doctor of sentences, and in this way was called to devote himself to the study of the Bible, and not to that of human tradition.[230] The oath, then, which he took was, as he relates,[231] to his well-beloved Holy Scripture. He promised to preach it faithfully, to teach it purely, to study it during his whole life, and to defend [152] it by discussion and by writing, as far as God should enable him to do so.

This solemn oath was Luther's call to be the Reformer. In laying it upon his conscience freely to seek, and boldly to announce Christian truth, this oath raised the new doctor above the narrow limits to which his monastic vow might perhaps have confined him. Called by the university and by his sovereign, in the name of the emperor, and of the See of Rome itself, and bound before God, by the most solemn oath, he was thenceforth the intrepid herald of the word of life. On this memorable day, Luther was dubbed knight of the Bible.

Accordingly, this oath taken to the Holy Scriptures, may be regarded as one of the causes of the renovation of the Church. The infallible authority of the word of God alone was the first and fundamental principle of the Reformation. All the reformations in detail which took place at a later period, as reformations in doctrine, in manners, in the government of the Church, and in worship, were only consequences of this primary principle. One is scarcely able at the present time to form an idea of the sensation produced by this elementary principle, which is so simple in itself, but which had been lost sight of for so many ages. Some individuals of more extensive views than the generality, alone foresaw its immense results. The bold voices of all the Reformers soon proclaimed this powerful principle, at the sound of which Rome is destined to crumble away:—"Christians, receive no other doctrines than those which are founded on the express words of Jesus Christ, his apostles, and prophets. No man, no assembly of doctors, are entitled to prescribe new doctrines."

The situation of Luther was changed. The call which the Reformer had received became to him like one of these extraordinary calls which the Lord addressed to the prophets under the Old Dispensation, and to the apostles under the New. The solemn engagement which he undertook made so deep an impression on his mind, that, in the sequel, the remembrance of this oath was sufficient to console him amid the greatest dangers and the sharpest conflicts. And when he saw all Europe agitated and shaken by the word which he had announced; when it seemed that the accusations of Rome, the reproaches of many pious men, and the doubts and fears of his own easily agitated heart, would make him hesitate, fear, and give way to despair, he called to mind the oath which he had taken, and remained firm, tranquil, and full of joy. "I have advanced in the name of the Lord," said he, on a critical occasion, "and I have put myself into his hands. His will [153] be done. Who asked him to make me a doctor? If He made me, let him sustain me; or if he repents of having made me, let Him depose me!.... This tribulation terrifies me not. I seek one thing only, and it is to have the Lord favourable to me in all that he calls me to do." Another time he said, "He who undertakes any thing without a divine call, seeks his own glory; but I, Doctor

Martin Luther, was compelled to become a doctor. Papism sought to stop me in the discharge of my duty, and you see what has happened to it; and still worse will happen. They will not be able to defend themselves against me. I desire, in the name of the Lord, to tread upon the lions, and trample under foot the dragons and vipers. This will commence during my life, and be finished after my death."[232]

From the hour when he took the oath Luther sought the truth solely for itself and for the Church. Still deeply impressed with recollections of Rome, he saw indistinctly before him a course which he determined to pursue with all the energy of his soul. The spiritual life which had hitherto been manifested within him was now manifested outwardly. This was the third period of his development. His entrance into the convent had turned his thoughts towards God: the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and of the righteousness of faith, had emancipated his soul; and his doctor's oath gave him that baptism of fire by which he became the Reformer of the Church.

His thoughts were soon directed in a general way to the subject of reformation. In a discourse which he had written apparently with a view to its being announced by the Provost of Litzkan, at the Council of Lateran, he affirmed that the corruption of the world was occasioned by the priests, who, instead of preaching the pure word of God, taught so many fables and traditions. According to him the word of life alone had power to accomplish the spiritual regeneration of man. Hence, even at this period, he made the salvation of the world depend on the re-establishment of sound doctrine, and not on a mere reformation of manners. Luther was not perfectly consistent with himself; he entertained contradictory opinions; but a powerful intellect was displayed in all his writings. He boldly broke the links by which the systems of the schools chained down human thought, passed beyond the limits to which past ages had attained, and formed new paths for himself. God was in him.

The first opponents whom he attacked were those famous schoolmen whom he had so thoroughly [154]
studied, and who then reigned as sovereigns in all universities. He accused them of Pelagianism; and, forcibly assailing Aristotle, the father of the school, and Thomas Aquinas, undertook to tumble both of them from the throne on which they sat, the one ruling philosophy, and the other theology.[233] "Aristotle, Porphyry, the theologians of sentences," (the schoolmen,) wrote he to Lange, "are the lost studies of our age.[234] There is nothing I more ardently long for than to expose this player, who has sported with the Church by wrapping himself up in a Greek mask, and to make his disgrace apparent to all." In all public disputations he was heard to say, "the writings of the apostles and prophets are more certain and more sublime than all the sophisms and all the theology of the school." Such sayings were new, but people gradually became accustomed to them. About a year after he could triumphantly write—"God works. Our theology and St. Augustine make wonderful progress, and reign in our university. Aristotle is on the decline, and is already tottering to his speedy and eternal overthrow. The lessons on the sentences are admirable for producing a yawn. No man can hope to have an audience if he does not profess Biblical theology."[235] Happy the university to which such a testimony can be given.

At the same time that Luther attacked Aristotle, he took the part of Erasmus and Reuchlin against their enemies. He entered into communication with these great men and others of the learned, such as Pirckheimer, Mutian, and Hütten, who belonged more or less to the same party. At this period he formed another friendship also, which was of great importance to him during his whole life.

There was then at the court of the elector a man distinguished for wisdom and candour, named George Spalatin. Born at Spalatus or Spalt, in the bishopric of Eichstadt, he had at first been curate of the village of Hohenkirch, near the forest of Thuringia, and was afterwards selected by Frederick the Wise to be his secretary and chaplain, and also tutor to his nephew, John Frederick, who was one day to wear the electoral crown. Spalatin retained his simplicity in the midst of the court. He appeared timid on the eve of great events, circumspect and prudent like his master,[236] when contrasted with the impetuous Luther, with whom he was in daily [155]
correspondence. Like Staupitz he was made for peaceful times. Such men are necessary, somewhat resembling those delicate substances in which we wrap up jems and trinkets to protect them from injury in travelling. They seem useless, and yet without them the precious jewels would have been broken and destroyed. Spalatin was not fitted to do great things, but he faithfully and unostentatiously acquitted himself of the task which had been assigned to him.[237] He was at first one of the principal assistants of his master in collecting those relics of saints, of which Frederick was long an amateur, but gradually, along with the prince, turned toward the truth. The faith which was then re-appearing in the Church did not take the firm hold of him that it did of Luther. He proceeded at a slower pace. He became Luther's friend at court, the minister through whom all affairs between the Reformer and the princes were transacted, the mediator between the Church and the State. The elector honoured Spalatin with his friendship; when on a journey they always travelled in the same carriage.[238] In other respects, the air of the court often half suffocated the good chaplain. He took fits of melancholy, and would have liked to quit all his honours, and be again a simple pastor in the woods of Thuringia; but Luther consoled him, and exhorted him to remain firm at his post. Spalatin acquired general esteem; the princes and the learned of his time testifying the sincerest regard for him. Erasmus said, "I inscribe the name of Spalatin not only among those of my principal friends, but also amongst those of my most venerated patrons; and this not on paper but on my heart."[239]

The affair of Reuchlin and the monks was then making a great noise in Germany. The most pious

men were often at a loss as to the party which they ought to embrace; for the monks wished to destroy Jewish books which contained blasphemies against Christ. The doctor of Wittemberg being now in high repute, the elector ordered his chaplain to consult him on this subject. The following is Luther's reply. It is the first letter which he addressed to the preacher of the court.

"What shall I say? These monks pretend to drive out Beelzebub, but not by the finger of God. For this I cease not to lament and groan. We Christians begin to be wise abroad, and we are void of sense at home.[240] On all the places of Jerusalem are blasphemies a hundred times worse than those of the Jews. The world is filled with spiritual idols. Inspired with a holy zeal, we should put [156] away and destroy these internal enemies, whereas we leave the matter which is most pressing; the devil himself persuading us to abandon our own business at the same time that he prevents us from amending what belongs to others."

CHAP. VIII.

Faith—Popular Declamations—Academical Instruction—Moral Purity of Luther—German Theology or Mysticism—The Monk Spenlein—Justification by Faith—Luther on Erasmus—Faith and Works—Erasmus—Necessity of Works—Practice of Works.

Luther did not lose himself in this quarrel. Living faith in Christ filled his heart and his life. "In my heart," said he, "faith in my Lord Jesus Christ reigns sole, and sole ought to reign. He alone is the beginning, the middle, and the end, of all the thoughts which occupy my mind night and day."[241] He was always heard with admiration when he spoke of this faith in Christ, whether in the professor's chair or in the church. His lessons diffused light, and men were astonished at not having sooner perceived truths which in his mouth appeared so evident. "The desire of justifying ourselves," said he, "is the source of all anguish of heart, whereas he who receives Jesus Christ as a Saviour has peace, and not only peace, but purity of heart. Sanctification of the heart is entirely a fruit of faith; for faith is in us a Divine work, which changes us, and gives us a new birth, emanating from God himself. It kills Adam in us by the Holy Spirit, which it communicates to us, giving us a new heart, and making us new men. "It is not by hollow speculation," exclaimed he again, "but by this practical method that we obtain a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."[242]

At this time Luther preached discourses on the Ten Commandments, which have come down to us under the name of *Popular Declamations*. Undoubtedly there are errors in them; for Luther himself was enlightened only by degrees. "The path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But in these discourses what truth! what simplicity! what eloquence! How easy to conceive the effect which the new preacher must have produced upon his audience and his age! We will quote only one passage taken from the commencement.

Luther goes up into the pulpit of Wittemberg, and gives out these words, "Thou shalt have no [157] other god before me." Then addressing himself to the people who filled the church, he says, "All the sons of Adam are idolaters, and guilty of violating this First Commandment."[243] This strange assertion no doubt surprises his hearers. He must therefore justify it, and accordingly proceeds:—"There are two kinds of idolatry, the one without, the other within.

"The one without is, when man worships wood and stone, beasts and stars.

"The one within is, when man, fearing punishment or seeking his ease, does not give worship to the creature, but loves it internally, and confides in it.

"What religion is this? You do not bend the knee before riches and honours, but you offer them your heart, the noblest part of you. Ah! you worship God with the body, and with the spirit you worship the creature.

"This idolatry reigns in every man until he is cured of it freely by the faith which is in Jesus Christ.

"And how is this cure performed?

"In this way. Faith in Christ strips you of all confidence in your own wisdom, your own righteousness, your own strength. It tells you that if Christ had not died for you, and so saved you, neither yourself nor any creature could have done it.[244] Then you learn to despise all those things which remained useless to you.

"There now remains to you only Jesus; Jesus alone; Jesus fully sufficient for your soul. No longer having any hopes in the creatures, you have now Christ only, in whom you hope all, and whom you love above all. Now Jesus is the sole, the only, the true God. When you have him for God you have no longer other gods."[245]

It is thus Luther shows how, by the gospel, the soul is brought back to God its sovereign good, agreeably to the words of Jesus Christ, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." The man who speaks thus to his age is not merely desirous to overthrow some abuses; he is

first of all desirous to establish true religion. His work is not negative merely—it is primarily positive.

Luther afterwards directs his discourse against the superstitions with which Christendom then [158] abounded, against signs and mysterious characters, observations of certain days and certain months, familiar demons, ghosts, the influence of the stars and wizards, metamorphoses, incubuses and succubuses, the patronage of saints, etc., etc. He attacks these idols one after the other, and vigorously casts down these false gods.

But it was at the university especially, in presence of enlightened youths, eager for truth, that Luther laid open all the treasures of the word of God. "His mode of explaining the Scriptures," says his illustrious friend, Melancthon, "was such, that in the judgment of all pious and enlightened men it was as if a new light had risen upon doctrine after a long dark night. He pointed out the difference between the Law and the Gospel. He refuted the error then prevalent in churches and schools, that men merit the forgiveness of sins by their own works, and are rendered righteous before God by means of external discipline. He thus brought back the hearts of men to the Son of God.[246] Like John the Baptist, he pointed to the Lamb of God, who had taken away the sins of the world. He explained how sins are pardoned freely for the sake of the Son of God, and how man receives the blessing through faith. He made no change in ceremonies; on the contrary, the established discipline had not, in his order a more faithful observer and defender. But he laboured more and more to make all comprehend the great and essential doctrines of conversion, of the forgiveness of sins, of faith, and the true consolation which is to be found in the cross. The pious were charmed and penetrated with the sweetness of this doctrine, while the learned received it gladly.[247] One would have said that Christ, the apostles and prophets, were coming forth from darkness and a loathsome dungeon."[248]

The firmness with which Luther fortified himself by Scripture gave great authority to his teaching, while other circumstances added to his power. His life corresponded to his words—his discourses were not merely from the life,[249] they came from the heart, and were exemplified in all his conduct. And when the Reformation burst forth many influential men, who were much grieved at seeing the rents that were made in the Church, won over by the Reformer's purity of conduct, and his admirable talents, not only did not oppose him, but even embraced the doctrine [159] to which his works bore testimony.[250] The more they loved Christian virtue the more they inclined to the Reformer. All honest theologians were in his favour.[251] Such is the testimony of those who knew him, in particular of Melancthon, the wisest man of his age, and Erasmus, Luther's celebrated opponent. Yet prejudice has dared to speak of his debauchery. Wittemberg was changed by this preaching of faith, and became the focus of a light which was soon to illumine Germany, and diffuse itself over all the Church.

In 1516, Luther published a treatise by an anonymous mystic theologian, (probably Ebland, priest at Frankfort,) entitled *German Theology*, wherein the author shows how man may attain perfection by the three methods of purification, illumination, and communion. Luther never plunged into mystical theology, but he received a salutary impression from it. It confirmed him in the disgust which he felt for dry scholastics—in his contempt for the works and observances so much dwelt upon by the Church—in his conviction of man's spiritual impotence, and of the necessity of grace, and in his attachment to the Bible. "To the schoolmen,"[252] wrote he to Staupitz, "I prefer the Mystics and the Bible;" thus placing the Mystics by the side of the inspired writers. Perhaps the *German Theology* also assisted him in forming a sounder idea of the sacraments, and especially of the mass. For the author of that work insists that the Eucharist gives Christ to man, but does not offer Christ to God. Luther accompanied this publication with a preface, in which he declared, that next to the Bible and St. Augustine, there was no book he had ever met with, from which he had learned more respecting God, Christ, man, and all things. Already several doctors had begun to inveigh against the Professors of Wittemberg, and to accuse them of innovation. "One would suppose," continues Luther, "that there never were men before us who taught as we do; yea, verily, there were. But the wrath of God, which our sins have deserved, did not permit us to see them, and to hear them. For a long time the universities kept the word of God lying in a corner. Let them read this book, and then tell me if our theology is new; for this book is not new."[253] But if Luther took all the good that was in mystical theology, he took not the bad that was in it. The great error in mysticism is, to overlook a free salvation. We are going to see a remarkable example of the purity of Luther's faith.

Luther, possessed of a tender and affectionate heart, was desirous to see those whom he loved in [160] possession of the light which had guided him into the paths of peace; and availed himself of all the opportunities which he had, as professor, preacher, and monk, as well as of his extensive correspondence, to communicate his treasure to others. One of his old brethren of the convent of Erfurt, the monk George Spenlein, was then in the convent of Memmingen. After having spent some time at Wittemberg, Spenlein had asked the doctor to sell different articles which he had left, viz., a tunic of Brussels cloth, a work of a doctor of Isenach, and a monk's frock. Luther carefully executed this commission. "I have received," said he to Spenlein, in a letter, 7th April 1516, "a florin for the tunic, half a florin for the book, and a florin for the frock, and have remitted the whole to the father-vicar," to whom Spenlein owed three florins. But Luther passes quickly from this account of monastic spoils to a more important subject.

"I should like much," says he to friar George, "to know how it is with your soul. Is it not weary of its own righteousness? does it not breathe at length and confide in the righteousness of Christ?

In our day pride seduces many, especially those who do their utmost to become righteous. Not comprehending the righteousness which is freely given us of God in Christ Jesus, they would stand before him by their merits. But that cannot be. When you lived with us you were in this error, as I also was. I am still constantly fighting with it; and have not yet completely triumphed.

"O my dear brother, learn to know Christ and Christ crucified. Learn to sing unto him a new song; to despair of thyself, and say, 'Thou, O Lord Jesus! thou art my righteousness, and I am thy sin! Thou hast taken what is mine, and given me what is thine.[254] What thou wert not thou hast become, in order that what I was not I might become.' Take care, O my dear George, not to pretend to such a purity as will make you unwilling to acknowledge yourself a sinner; for Christ dwells in sinners only. He came down from heaven, where he dwelt among the righteous, that he might dwell also among sinners. Meditate carefully on this love of Christ, and thou wilt derive ineffable blessing from it. If our labours and our afflictions could give us peace of conscience, why should Christ have died? Thou wilt find peace only in him, by despairing of thyself and of thy works, and learning with what love he opens his arms to thee, takes upon him all thy sins, and [161] gives thee all his righteousness."

Thus the powerful doctrine which had already saved the world in the days of the Apostles, and which was to save it a second time in the days of the Reformers, was expounded by Luther with force and clearness. Stretching over numerous ages of ignorance and superstition, he here shook hands with St. Paul.

Spenlein was not the only person whom he sought to instruct in this fundamental doctrine. He felt uneasy at the little truth which he discovered in this respect in the writings of Erasmus. It was of importance to enlighten a man whose authority was so great, and whose genius was so admirable. But how was he to do it? His friend at court, the elector's chaplain, was respected by Erasmus; and it is to him Luther addresses himself. "My dear Spalatin, the thing which displeases me in Erasmus, that man of vast erudition, is, that by the righteousness of works or of the law, of which the apostle speaks, he understands the fulfilment of the ceremonial law. The justification of the law consists not in ceremonies only, but in all the works of the Decalogue. When these works are performed without faith in Christ, they may, it is true, make Fabriciuses, Reguluses, and other men of strict integrity in the eyes of the world, but then they as little deserve to be called righteousness, as the fruit of a medlar to be called a fig. For we do not become righteous, as Aristotle pretends, by doing works of righteousness; but when we have become righteous we do such works.[255] The man must first be changed, and then the works. Abel was first pleasing to God, and then his sacrifice." Luther continues, "I pray you, fulfil the duty of a friend and of a Christian, by making Erasmus acquainted with those things." This letter is dated "In haste, from the corner of our convent, 19th Oct., 1516." It gives a true view of the footing on which Luther stood with Erasmus, and shows the sincere interest which he felt in whatever he thought truly advantageous to this distinguished writer. No doubt, at a later period, the opposition of Erasmus to the truth forced Luther to combat him openly, but it was only after he had sought to enlighten his opponent.

At length those views on the nature of goodness were propounded which were at once clear and profound, and the great truth was distinctly proclaimed, that the real goodness of a work consists not in its external form, but in the spirit in which it is done. Thus giving a mortal blow to all the superstitious observances, which had for ages choked the Church, and prevented Christian [162] virtues from growing and flourishing in it.

"I read Erasmus," again writes Luther, "but he is every day losing his credit with me. I like to see him, with so much skill and firmness, rebuking priests and monks for their loathsome ignorance, but I fear he will not do great service to the doctrine of Jesus Christ. What is of man has more hold on his heart than what is of God.[256] We live in dangerous times. A man is not a good and judicious Christian because he understands Greek and Hebrew. Jerome, who knew five languages, is inferior to Augustine, who only knew one, though Erasmus thinks differently. I am very careful to conceal my sentiments concerning Erasmus, lest I should give an advantage to his opponents. It may be the Lord will give him understanding in his own time."[257]

The impotence of man, and the omnipotence of God, were the two truths which Luther wished to re-establish. It is a sad religion and a sad philosophy which throws man back upon his natural powers. Ages have made trial of these boasted powers, and while man has of himself succeeded wonderfully in things which concern his earthly existence, he has never been able to dissipate the darkness which hides the true knowledge of God from his mind, nor to change a single inclination of his heart. The highest degree of wisdom attained by ambitious intellects, or minds inflamed with ardent longings after perfection, has only plunged them into despair.[258] The doctrine, therefore, which unveils to us our impotence, in order to acquaint us with a Divine power, which shall enable us to do all things, is a generous, consoling, and perfectly true doctrine; and the reformation which exhibits the glory of heaven on the earth, and pleads the rights of Almighty God with men, is a great reformation.

But nobody was better aware than Luther of the intimate and indissoluble tie which unites the gratuitous salvation of God with the free works of man. Nobody showed better than he that it is only by receiving all from Christ that man can give much to his brethren. He always presented the two acts, that of God and that of man, in the same picture. Thus, after having explained to friar Spenlein wherein saving righteousness consists, he adds "If you believe these things firmly as you ought to do, (for cursed is he who believeth not,) receive thy still ignorant and erring [163]

brethren as Jesus Christ has received thee. Bear with them patiently, make their sins thy own, and if thou hast any thing good, communicate it unto them. Receive one another, saith the Apostle, as Christ hath received us to the glory of God. It is a sad righteousness which will not bear with others, because it finds them wicked, and which thinks only of seeking the solitude of the desert, instead of doing them good by patience, prayer, and example. If thou art the lily and the rose of Christ, know that thy dwelling is among the thorns. Only take care that thou do not by thy impatience, thy rash judgments, and thy hidden pride, become thyself a thorn. Christ reigns in the midst of his enemies. Had he been pleased to live only among the good, and to die only for those who loved him, for whom, I ask, would he have died, and among whom would he have lived?"

It is touching to see how Luther himself carried these precepts of charity into practice. An Augustin of Erfurt, named George Leiffer, was subjected to severe trials. Luther learned it, and eight days after he had written the letter to Spenlein, went up to him kindly, and said—"I learn that you are agitated by many tempests, and that your spirit is tossed up and down upon the billows.... The cross of Christ is portioned out over all the earth, and each one receives his part. Do not you, then, reject that which is fallen to you. Rather receive it as a holy relic, not in a vessel of gold and of silver, but what is far better, in a heart of gold—a heart full of meekness. If the wood of the cross has been so sanctified by the blood and flesh of Christ, that we consider it to be the most venerable relic, how much more ought we to regard the injuries, persecutions, inflictions, and hatred of men as holy relics, since they have not only been touched by the flesh of Christ, but embraced, kissed, and blessed by his boundless love?"[259]

CHAP. IX.

First Theses—The Old Man and Grace—Visit to the Convents—Dresden—Erfurt—Tornator—Peace and the Cross—Results of the Journey—Labours—The Plague.

The instructions of Luther bore fruit. Several of his disciples already felt themselves urged publicly to profess the truths which the lessons of their master had revealed to them. Among his [164] hearers was a learned youth, named Bernard of Feldkirchen, professor of the physics of Aristotle in the university, and who, five years afterwards, was the first of the evangelical ecclesiastics who entered into the bond of matrimony.

Luther, while he was presiding, desired Feldkirchen to maintain theses in which his principles were expounded. The doctrines professed by Luther thus acquired new publicity. The disputation took place in 1516, and was Luther's first attack on the reign of the sophists and the Papacy. However feeble it was, it gave him considerable uneasiness. "I allow these propositions to be printed," said he, many years after, on publishing them in his works, "principally in order that the greatness of my cause, and the success with which God has crowned it, may not puff me up. For they fully manifest my shame; that is to say, the infirmity and ignorance, the fear and trembling, with which I commenced this struggle. I was alone, and had imprudently plunged into this affair. Not being able to draw back, I conceded several important points to the pope, and even adored him."[260]

The following are some of these propositions:[261]—

"The old man is vanity of vanities—he is wholly vanity, and renders all other creatures vain, how good soever they be.

"The old man is called *the flesh*, not only because he is led by sensual lusts, but also because, even though he were chaste, prudent, and just, he is not born anew of God by the Spirit.

"A man who is without the grace of God cannot observe the commands of God, nor prepare himself, in whole or in part, to receive grace, but necessarily remains under sin.

"The will of man without grace is not free, but enslaved, and that voluntarily.

"Jesus Christ, our strength and our righteousness, who trieth the hearts and reins, is alone the Searcher and Judge of our merits.

"Since everything is possible through Christ to him who believeth, it is superstitious to seek other aid, whether in the will of man or in the saints."[262]

This disputation made a great noise, and has been considered as the commencement of the Reformation.

The moment approached when this reformation was to burst forth. God was hastening to prepare the instrument which he meant to employ. The elector having built a new church at Wittemberg, [165] to which he gave the name of "All-Saints," sent Staupitz into the Netherlands to collect the relics with which he was desirous to enrich it. The vicar-general ordered Luther to take his place during his absence, and in particular to pay a visit to forty monasteries in Misnia and Thuringia.

Luther repaired first to Grimma, and thence to Dresden, everywhere labouring to establish the

truths which he had ascertained, and to enlighten the members of his own order. "Don't attach yourself to Aristotle, or to other teachers of a deceitful philosophy," said he to the monks, "but diligently read the word of God. Seek not your salvation in your own strength, and your own good works, but in the merits of Christ, and in Divine grace."[263]

An Augustin monk of Dresden had run off from his convent, and was living at Mayence, where the prior of the Augustins had received him. Luther wrote to the prior[264] to demand restitution of the lost sheep, and added these words, which are full of truth and charity, "I know that offences must come. It is no wonder that man falls; but it is a wonder he rises again, and stands erect. Peter fell, in order that he might know that he was a man; and we still see the cedar of Lebanon fall. Angels even (a thing which surpasses our comprehension) fell in heaven, and Adam fell in paradise. Why then be astonished when a reed is shaken by the wind, and the smoking flax is quenched?" From Dresden, Luther proceeded to Erfurt, to do the duties of vicar-general in the very convent where, eleven years before, he had wound up the clock, opened the door, and swept the Church. He appointed his friend, bachelor John Lange, a learned and pious, but austere man, prior of the convent, exhorting him to affability and patience. Shortly after he wrote him, "Show a spirit of meekness towards the prior of Nuremberg. This is fitting, inasmuch as the prior has put on a sour and bitter spirit. Bitter is not expelled by bitter, that is to say, devil by devil; but sweet expels bitter, that is to say, the finger of God casts out demons."[265]

It must perhaps be regretted, that on different occasions Luther did not remember this excellent advice.

At Neustadt on Orla there was nothing but division. Quarrelling and disturbance reigned in the convent. All the monks were at war with the prior, and assailed Luther with their complaints. The prior, Michael Dressel, or Tornator, as Luther calls him, translating his name into Latin, on his part explained all his grievances to the doctor. "Peace! peace!" said he. "You seek peace," replied [166]
Luther, "but you seek the peace of the world, and not that of Christ. Know you not that our God has placed his peace in the midst of war? He whom nobody troubles has no peace. But he who, troubled by all men, and by all the things of life, bears all calmly and joyfully, possesses true peace. You say, with Israel, Peace, peace; and there is no peace. Say rather with Christ, The cross, the cross; and there will be no cross. For the cross ceases to be a cross as soon as we can sincerely say with joy, O blessed cross, there is no wood like thine!"[266] After his return to Wittemberg, Luther, wishing to put an end to these divisions allowed the monks to elect another prior.

Luther returned to Wittemberg after an absence of six weeks. He was grieved at all that he had seen, but the journey gave him a better acquaintance with the Church and the world; gave him more confidence in his intercourse with men and furnished him with numerous opportunities of founding schools, and urging this fundamental truth, that "the Holy Scripture alone shows us the way to heaven," and to exhort the brethren to live together holily, chastely, and peacefully.[267] Doubtless, much seed was sown in the different Augustin convents during this journey of the Reformer. The monastic orders, which had long been the stay of Rome, perhaps did more for the Reformation than against it. This is true especially of the order of Augustins. Almost all pious men of a free and exalted spirit who were in cloisters, turned to the gospel, and a new and noble blood soon circulated in their orders, which were in a manner the arteries of German Catholicity. The world knew nothing of the new ideas of the Augustin of Wittemberg, after they had become the great subject of conversation in chapters and monasteries. In this way, more than one cloister was a seminary of reformers. At the moment when the great blow was struck, pious and brave men came forth from their obscurity, and abandoned the retreat of the monastic life, for the active career of ministers of the word of God. Even during the inspection of 1516, Luther by his words awoke many slumbering spirits, and hence this year has been called "the morning star of the gospel day."

Luther resumed his ordinary avocations. At this period he was oppressed with work; it was not enough that he was professor, preacher, and confessor; he had, moreover, a variety of temporal [167]
business connected with his order and his convent. "I almost constantly require two clerks," wrote he; "for I do little else the whole day than write letters. I am preacher to the convent, chaplain at table, pastor and parish minister, director of studies, vice-prior, which means prior eleven times over, inspector of the ponds of Litzkau, advocate of the inns of Herzberg at Torgau, reader of St. Paul, commentator on the Psalms.... I have seldom time to say my Hours and chant, —to say nothing of my combat with flesh and blood, the devil and the world.... See how lazy a man I am."[268]

About this time the plague broke out in Wittemberg, and a great part of the students and teachers left the town. Luther remained. "I don't well know," wrote he to his friend at Erfurt, "if the plague will allow me to finish the Epistle to the Galatians. Prompt and brisk, it makes great ravages, especially among the young. You advise me to flee. Whither shall I flee? I hope the world will not go to wreck though friar Martin fall.[269] If the plague makes progress, I will disperse the friars in all directions, but for myself I am stationed here, and obedience permits me not to flee, till he who has called me recall me. Not that I do not fear death, (for I am not the Apostle Paul, I am only his commentator;) but I hope the Lord will deliver me from fear." Such was the firmness of the doctor of Wittemberg. Will he, whom the plague could not force to recoil one step, recoil before Rome? Will he yield to the power of the scaffold?

CHAP. X.

Relations of Luther with the Elector—Luther and the Elector—Counsels to the Chaplain—Duke George—His Character—Luther before the Court—Dinner at Court—Emser's Supper.

The same courage which Luther displayed in presence of most formidable evils, he displayed in presence of the great. The elector was much pleased with the vicar-general, who had made a good collection of relics in the Netherlands. Luther gives an account of it to Spalatin. There is something curious in this affair of relics occurring at the moment when the Reformation is about to commence. Assuredly the Reformers had little idea of the point at which they were to arrive. A [168] bishopric seemed to the elector only a fit recompence to the vicar-general. Luther, to whom Spalatin wrote on the subject, strongly disapproved of it. "Many things," replied he, "please your prince, which, however, displease God. I deny not his ability in the affairs of the world, but in what concerns God and the salvation of souls, I account him seven-fold blind as well as his counsellor Pfeffinger. I say not this behind their backs like a slanderer; don't hide it from them, for I am ready to say it personally to both. Why," continues he, "would you environ this man with all the whirlwinds and tempests of episcopal cares?"[270]

The elector did not take Luther's frankness in bad part. "The prince," says Spalatin in a letter to him, "often speaks of you, and with much respect." Frederick sent the monk stuff to make a cassock of very fine cloth. "It would be too fine," said Luther, "were it not the gift of a prince. I am unworthy that any man should think of me, far less that a prince should, and so great a prince. The most useful persons to me are those who think the most ill of me.[271] Return thanks to our prince for his favour; but know that I desire not to be praised by you, or by any man—all praise of man being vain, and the praise which cometh from God alone being true."

The excellent chaplain did not wish to confine himself to his court functions. He desired to render himself useful to the people; but, like many of all times, he wished to do it without giving offence. He not only wished not to irritate any one, but, on the contrary, to conciliate general favour. "Point out," says he to Luther, "some work which I may translate into our mother tongue, a work which will please generally, and at the same time be useful." "Agreeable and useful!" replies Luther; "the request is beyond me. The better things are, the less they please. What is more salutary than Jesus Christ? And yet to most he is a savour of death. You will tell me that you wish to be useful to those who love what is good. In that case, just let the voice of Christ be heard. You will be agreeable and useful, depend upon it; but it will be to a very small number: for the sheep are rare in this region of wolves."[272]

Luther, however, recommended to his friend the sermons of Tauler. "I have never seen," said he, "either in Latin or our own tongue a sounder theology, or one more agreeable to the gospel. [169] Taste and see how sweet the Lord is; but be it after you have tasted and seen how bitter every thing is that is ours."[273]

It was in the course of the year 1517 that Luther entered into communication with Duke George of Saxony. The House of Saxony had then two heads. The princes, Ernest and Albert, carried off in their youth from the castle of Altenbourg by Kunz of Kaufungen, had, by the treaty of Leipsic, become the founders of the two houses which still bear their name. The Elector Frederick, the son of Ernest, at the period of which we write, was the chief of the Ernestine branch, while his brother, Duke George, was chief of the Albertine branch. Dresden and Leipsic were in the states of the duke, who had his residence in the former of these cities. His mother, Sidonia, was daughter of George Podiebrad, King of Bohemia. The long struggle which Bohemia had maintained with Rome, from the days of John Huss, had had some influence on the prince of Saxony, and he had often shown a desire for a reformation. "He has sucked it from his mother," it was said: "he is by birth an enemy of the clergy."[274] He in various ways annoyed the bishops, abbots, canons, and monks, in so much that his cousin, the elector, was more than once obliged to interpose in their behalf. It might have been supposed that Duke George would be a warm partisan of the Reformation. Devout Frederick, on the contrary, who had once put on the spurs of Gregory in the Holy Sepulchre, girt himself with the great ponderous sword of the conqueror of Jerusalem, and taking an oath to combat for the Church, like a bold knight, might have been expected to prove one of the most eager champions of Rome. But when the gospel is in question, the anticipations of human wisdom are often at fault. The result was the opposite of what might have been supposed. The duke would have taken pleasure in humbling the Church, and those connected with it, and lowering the bishops, whose princely train far surpassed his own; but to receive into his heart the evangelical doctrine which must have humbled it, to acknowledge himself a guilty sinner, incapable of being saved, unless through grace, was quite a different matter. He would willingly have reformed others, but he had no desire to reform himself. He would, perhaps, have assisted in obliging the bishop of Mentz to be contented with a single bishopric, and have no more than fourteen horses in his stable, as he himself repeatedly expressed it;[275] but when he saw another than himself appear as reformer,—when he saw a mere monk undertake the work,—and the Reformation gaining numerous adherents among the [170] humbler classes,—the haughty grandson of the Hussite king became the most violent adversary of the reform of which he had at first promised to be a partisan.

In July 1517, Duke George asked Staupitz to send him a learned and eloquent preacher. Staupitz sent Luther representing him as a man of great learning and irreproachable character. The prince invited him to preach at Dresden, in the chapel of the castle on the feast of St. James the Elder.

On the day fixed the duke and his court proceeded to the chapel to hear the preacher of Wittemberg.

Luther gladly seized the occasion to bear testimony to the truth before such an assembly. He took for his text the gospel of the day, "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons." (Matth., xx, 20-25.) He preached on the wishes and rash prayers of men; then dwelt strongly on the assurance of salvation, making it rest on this foundation, viz., That those who hear the word of God with faith are the true disciples, whom Jesus Christ has elected unto eternal life. He next treated of eternal election, showing that this doctrine, when exhibited in connection with the work of Christ, is well fitted to calm the terrors of conscience, and so, instead of disposing men to flee from God, allures them to seek their refuge in Him. In conclusion, he brought forward a parable of three virgins, and drew a very instructive improvement from it.

The word of truth made a deep impression on the hearers. Two in particular appeared to give earnest attention to the discourse of the monk of Wittemberg. The one was a respectable looking lady who sat in one of the court pews, and whose features bespoke deep emotion. It was Madam de la Sale, grand mistress to the duchess. The other was Jerome Emser, a licentiate in canon law, and secretary and counsellor to the duke. Emser was a man of talent and extensive information. A courtier and able politician, his wish would have been to please both parties at once; to pass at Rome for a defender of the papacy, and at the same time figure in Germany among the learned men of the age. But under this flexible spirit a violent temper lay concealed. Thus Luther and Emser, who were afterwards repeatedly to break a lance, met for the first time in the chapel of the castle of Dresden.

The dinner-bell having rung for the inmates of the castle, the ducal family and the persons attached to the court were soon seated at the table. The conversation naturally turned on the preacher of the morning. "How did you like the sermon?" said the duke to Madam de la Sale. [171] "Could I again hear such another discourse," replied she, "I could die in peace." "And I," replied George, angrily, "would give a good sum not to have heard it. Such discourses are good only to make people sin with confidence."

The master having thus stated his opinion, the courtiers proceeded without restraint to express their dissatisfaction. Every one was ready with his remark. Some alleged, that in the parable of the three virgins, Luther had had three ladies of the court in his eye. On this the talk was endless. They rallied the three ladies whom they affirmed that Luther had intended.[276] He is an ignorant blockhead, said one. He is a proud monk, said another. Each had his comment on the sermon, making the preacher say whatever he pleased. The truth had fallen into the midst of a court ill prepared to receive it. Every one tore it at pleasure. But while the word of God was to many an occasion of stumbling, to the grand mistress it was a stone "elect and precious." Falling sick about a month after, she confidently embraced the grace of the Saviour, and died rejoicing.[277]

In regard to the duke, perhaps the testimony which he had heard given to the truth was not in vain. However much he opposed the Reformation during his life, it is known that in his last moments he declared, that his only hope was in the merits of Jesus Christ.

It naturally fell to Emser to do the honours to Luther in his master's name. He accordingly invited him to supper. Luther refused; but Emser insisted and constrained him to come. Luther only expected to meet a few friends, but he soon perceived that a trap had been laid for him.[278] A master of arts from Leipsic, and several Dominicans, were with the prince's secretary. The master of arts, who had an overweening opinion of himself, and a deep hatred of Luther, accosted him with a bland and friendly air; but he soon broke out, and screamed at full pitch.[279] The battle began. "The discussion," says Luther, "turned on the absurdities of Aristotle and St. Thomas."[280] At last Luther challenged the master of arts, with all the erudition of the Thomists, to define what it was to fulfil the commandments of God. The master of arts, though embarrassed, put on a good countenance. "Pay me my fees," says he, stretching out his hand, "*da pastum*." One would have said, he was going to give a lesson in form, mistaking the guests for his [172] pupils. "At this foolish reply," adds the Reformer, "we all burst a laughing, and the party broke up."

During the conversation, a Dominican had been listening at the door, and would fain have come in to spit in Luther's face.[281] He refrained, however, though he afterwards made a boast of it. Emser, who had been delighted at seeing his guests battling, while he seemed to hold a due medium, hastened to apologise to Luther for the manner in which the party had gone off.[282] Luther returned to Wittemberg.

CHAP. XI

Return to Wittemberg—Theses—Nature of Man—Rationalism—Demand at Erfurt—Eck —Urban Regius—Luther's Modesty.

Luther zealously resumed his labours. He was preparing six or seven young theologians, who were forthwith to undergo an examination in order to obtain a licence to teach. And what most delighted him was, that their promotion was to be to Aristotle's disgrace. "I should like," said he, "to multiply his enemies as fast as possible."[283] With that view, he at this time published Theses, which deserve attention.

The leading topic which he discussed was *liberty*. He had already glanced at it in the theses of Feldkirchen, but now went deeper into it. Ever since Christianity began, there has been a struggle, more or less keen, between the opposite doctrines of the freedom and the slavery of man. Some schoolmen had taught, like Pelagius and others, that man possessed in himself the liberty or power of loving God and doing good. Luther denied this liberty, not to deprive man of it, but, on the contrary, to make him obtain it. The struggle, then, in this great question, is not, as is usually said, between liberty and servitude; but between a liberty proceeding from man, and a liberty proceeding from God. Some who call themselves the advocates of liberty, say to man, "You have the power of doing good, and require a greater liberty." Others, who have been called advocates of slavery, say to him, on the contrary, "You have no true liberty; but God offers it to you in the gospel." The one party speaks of liberty, but a liberty which must end in slavery; while [173] the other speaks of slavery, in order to give liberty. Such was the struggle in the time of St. Paul, in the time of Augustine, and in the time of Luther. Those who say "Change nothing!" are champions of slavery. Those who say "Let your fetters fall!" are champions of liberty.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the whole Reformation can be summed up in this particular question. It is one of the many doctrines which the Wittemberg doctor maintained—that is all. It would, above all, be a strange illusion to hold, that the Reformation was fatalism, or an opposition to liberty. It was a magnificent emancipation of the human mind. Bursting the numerous bands with which thought had been bound by the hierarchy, and reviving the ideas of liberty, right, and examination, it delivered its own age, and with it ours also, and the remotest posterity. And let it not be said that the Reformation, while it freed man from human despotism, enslaved him by proclaiming the sovereignty of grace. No doubt, it wished to bring back the human will to the Divine, to subordinate the one, and completely merge it in the other; but what philosopher knows not that entire conformity to the will of God alone constitutes sovereign, perfect freedom; and that man will never be truly free, until supreme righteousness and truth have sole dominion over him?

The following are some of the Ninety-nine Propositions which Luther sent forth into the Church, in opposition to the Pelagian rationalism of scholastic theology.

"It is true that man, who is become a corrupt tree, can only will and do what is evil.

"It is not true that the will, when left to itself, can do good as well as evil; for it is not free but captive.

"It is not in the power of the will of man to choose or reject whatever is presented to it.

"Man cannot naturally wish God to be God. His wish is that he himself were God, and that God were no God.

"The excellent, infallible, and sole preparation for grace, is the eternal election and predestination of God.[284]

"It is false to say that when man does all he can, he clears away the obstacles to grace.

"In one word, nature possesses neither a pure reason nor a good will.[285]

"On the part of man, there is nothing which precedes grace, unless it be impotence and even [174] rebellion.

"There is no moral virtue without pride or sullenness, that is to say, without sin.

"From the beginning to the end we are not the masters of our actions, but the slaves of them.

"We do not become righteous by doing what is righteous, but having become righteous we do what is righteous.

"He who says that a theologian who is not a logician is a heretic and an adventurer, maintains an adventurous and heretical proposition.

"There is no form of reasoning (syllogism) which accords with the things of God.[286]

"If the form of the syllogism could be applied to divine things, we should know the article of the Holy Trinity, and should not believe it.

"In one word, Aristotle is to theology as darkness to light.

"Man is more hostile to the grace of God than he is to the law itself.

"He who is without the grace of God sins incessantly, even though he neither kills, nor steals, nor commits adultery.

"He sins, for he does not fulfil the law spiritually.

"Not to kill, and not to commit adultery, externally, and in regard to action, merely, is the righteousness of hypocrites.

"The law of God and the will of man are two adversaries, who, without the grace of God, can never agree.[287]

"What the law wishes the will never wishes; only from fear it may make a show of wishing.

"The law is the hangman of the will, and is subject only to the Child who has been born unto us. [288] (Isaiah, ix, 6.)

"The law makes sin abound; for it irritates and repulses the will.

"But the grace of God makes righteousness abound, through Jesus Christ, who makes us love the law.

"Every work of the law appears good externally, but internally is sin.

"The will, when it turns toward the law without the grace of God, does so only for its own interest.

"Cursed are those who do the works of the law.

"Blessed are all those who do the works of the grace of God. [175]

"The law, which is good, and in which we have life, is the law of the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, (Rom., v, 5.)

"Grace is not given in order that works may be done more frequently and more easily, but because without grace there cannot be any work of love.

"To love God is to hate oneself, and know nothing out of God."[289]

In this way Luther attributes to God all the good that man can do. The thing to be done is not to repair, or, so to speak, to patch up the will of man; an entirely new will must be given him. God alone could say this; for God alone could perform it. This is one of the greatest and most important truths that the will of man can acknowledge.

But Luther, while proclaiming the impotence of man, did not fall into the opposite extreme. He says in the eighth thesis, "It follows not that the will is naturally bad, that is to say, that its nature is of the essence of evil, as the Manichees taught."[290] Originally the nature of man was essentially good; but it turned aside from goodness, that is, God, and is inclined to evil. Still its origin remains holy and glorious, and is capable, by the power of God, of regaining its original. The object of Christianity is to restore it. The gospel, it is true, exhibits man in a state of degradation and impotence, but as placed between two glories and two grandeurs,—a past glory, from which he has been precipitated, and a future glory, to which he is called. This is the truth, and man knows it to be the truth; and how little soever he thinks of it, he easily discovers that all which is told him of his actual purity, power, and glory, is only a lie, designed to cradle his pride and rock it asleep.

Luther, in his theses, attacked not only the pretended goodness of man's will, but also the pretended light of his understanding in regard to divine things. In fact, scholasticism had exalted reason as well as the will. This theology, in the hands of some of its teachers, was, at bottom, only a species of rationalism. The propositions which we have enumerated indicate this; for they look as if directed against the rationalism of our own day. In the theses, which were the signal of the Reformation, Luther attacked the Church and the popular superstitions which to the gospel had added indulgences, purgatory, and numberless abuses. In those which we have just given he [176] attacked the school and the rationalism which had robbed the gospel of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, his revelation and his grace. The Reformation attacked rationalism before it attacked superstition. It proclaimed the rights of God before lopping off the excrescences of man. It was positive before it was negative. This has not been sufficiently attended to, and yet, without attending to it, it is impossible duly to appreciate the character of this religious revolution.

Be this as it may, the truths which Luther thus expressed with so much energy were quite new. To maintain these theses at Wittemberg had been an easy matter. There his influence was paramount, and it would have been said that he had chosen a field of battle where he knew no combatant could appear. In offering battle in another university he gave them a greater publicity; and it was by publicity that the Reformation was effected. He turned his eyes towards Erfurt, where the theologians had shown themselves so exasperated against him.

He, accordingly, sent his theses to John Lange, prior of Erfurt, and wrote him as follows: "My anxiety for the decision which you will give as to these theses is great, extreme, too great, perhaps, and keeps me on the rack. I much suspect that your theologians will consider as paradoxical and *kakodoxical*,[291] what I must henceforth regard as most orthodox. Tell me how it is, and as soon as you possibly can. Have the goodness to make known to the Faculty of Theology, and to all, that I am ready to come and publicly maintain these propositions either in the university or the monastery." It does not seem that Luther's challenge was accepted. The monks of Erfurt contented themselves with intimating that his theses had incurred their high

displeasure.

But he was desirous to send them to some other part of Germany; and with that view bethought him of a man who plays an important part in the history of the Reformation, and with whom the reader must be made acquainted.

A distinguished professor, named John Meyer, was then teaching in the university of Ingolstadt, in Bavaria. He was a native of Eck, a village in Swabia, and was commonly called Doctor Eck. He was a friend of Luther, who respected his talents and acquirements. Full of intellect, he had read much, and was possessed of a very retentive memory. To erudition he added eloquence. His voice and gesture bespoke the vivacity of his genius. In regard to talent, Eck was in the south of [177] Germany what Luther was in the north. They were the two most distinguished theologians of the period, though of very different views. Ingolstadt was almost the rival of Wittemberg. The reputation of these two doctors attracted crowds of eager students from all quarters to the universities in which they taught; their personal qualities not less than their abilities endearing them to their pupils. The character of Doctor Eck has been assailed, but an anecdote in his history will show that at this period, at least, his heart was not closed against generous impressions.

Among the students whom his fame had attracted to Ingolstadt was a young man, named Urban Regius, from the banks of an Alpine lake. He had first studied at the university of Fribourg in Brisgau. On his arrival at Ingolstadt, to which he had been attracted by the fame of Doctor Eck, Urban engaged in his course of philosophy, and gained the favour of his master. Requiring to provide for his maintenance, he was under the necessity of taking charge of some young noblemen, and had not only to superintend their studies and their conduct, but also to purchase on his own account whatever books and clothes they required. The youths dressed in style, and kept a good table. Regius becoming embarrassed prayed the parents to recall their sons. "Never fear," was the answer. His debts increased, his creditors became pressing, and he was at his wit's end. The emperor was raising an army against the Turks, and a recruiting party having arrived at Ingolstadt, Urban in despair enlisted. Clothed in military attire, he appeared in the ranks at the time when the review took place, previous to their departure. Doctor Eck coming up at that instant with several of his colleagues, was greatly surprised to discover his student among the recruits. "Urban Regius!" said he, fixing his keen eye on him. "Here," replied the recruit. "What, pray, is the cause of this?" The young man told his story. "I take the matter upon myself," replied Eck, and setting his halberd aside, bought him off from the recruiting party. The parents, threatened by the Doctor with the displeasure of the prince, sent the necessary funds to defray the expences of their children, and Urban Regius was saved to become at a later period one of the pillars of the Reformation.

Doctor Eck occurred to Luther as the proper person to publish his theses on Pelagianism and scholastic rationalism in the south of the empire. He did not, however, send them to the professor of Ingolstadt directly, but employed a mutual friend, the excellent Christopher Scheurl, secretary to the town of Nuremberg, praying him to send them to Eck at Ingolstadt, which is at no great [178] distance from Nuremberg. "I send you," says he, "my paradoxical, and even kakistodoxical (κακιστοδοξας) propositions, as many think them. Communicate them to our dear friend, the very learned and talented Eck, that I may learn and know what he thinks of them."[292] These were the terms in which Luther then spoke of Doctor Eck; such was the friendship then subsisting between them. It was not Luther who broke it off.

Ingolstadt, however, was not the field on which the battle was to be fought. The doctrines on which these theses turned were perhaps of greater importance than those which, two months after, set the Church in a blaze; and yet, notwithstanding of Luther's challenges, they passed unnoticed. At most, they were read within the circle of the school, and produced no sensation beyond it. The reason was, because they were only university propositions and theological doctrines, whereas the subsequent theses related to an evil which had grown up in the midst of the people, and was then causing devastation in all parts of Germany. So long as Luther was contented with reviving forgotten doctrines, all was silence; but when he attacked abuses which were universally felt, every one turned to listen.

Nevertheless, all that Luther proposed in either case was to produce one of those theological discussions which were then so common in universities. To this circle his views were confined. He was humble, and his humility amounted even to distrust and anxiety. "Considering my ignorance," said he, "all I deserve is to be hid in a corner, without being known by any one under the sun."[293] But a mighty hand drew him out of this corner in which he wished to remain unknown to the world. A circumstance, independent of Luther's will, threw him into the field of battle, and the war commenced. This providential circumstance we are now called upon to relate.

BOOK THIRD. [179]

CHAP. I.

THE INDULGENCES AND THESES.

1517, 1518.

Cortège—Tezel—Tezel's Discourse—Confession—Four Graces—Sale—Public Penance—A Letter of Indulgence—Exceptions—Feasting and Debauchery.

At this period the people of Germany were all in motion. The Church had opened a vast market on the earth. From the crowd of customers, and the noise and pleasantry of the sellers, one would have thought it a fair, only a fair held by monks. The merchandise which they were showing off, and selling a bargain, was, as they said, the salvation of souls.

The merchants travelled the country in a fine carriage, accompanied by three mounted attendants, journeying in grand style, and living at great expence. One would have said it was some high Mightiness with his suite and officers, and not a vulgar dealer or mendicant monk. When the cortège approached a town, a messenger was despatched to the magistrate to say, "The grace of God and of St. Peter is at your gates." Immediately the whole place was in motion. Clergy, priests, nuns, the council, school-masters and their scholars, the incorporations with their colours, men and women, old and young, went out to meet the merchant with lighted tapers in their hand, amid the sound of music and the ringing of bells, "insomuch," says a historian, "that God himself could not have been received with greater honour." After the formalities were over the whole body proceeded to the church. The Bull of Grace by the pontiff was carried in front, on a velvet cushion or cloth of gold. Next came the chief of the indulgence merchants, carrying a large wooden cross, painted red. The whole procession moved forward, amid hymns, prayers, and the smoke of incense. The merchant monk and his attendants were received at the church by the pealing organ and thrilling music. The cross was placed in front of the altar, and over it the [180] pope's arms were suspended. All the time it remained there the clergy of the place, the penitentiaries and sub-commissaries, came each day after vespers or before the *salute*, to do obeisance to it with white wands in their hands.[294] This grand affair produced a lively sensation in the quiet cities of Germany.

At these sales one personage in particular drew the attention of the spectators. It was he who carried the great red cross, and played the principal character. He was clothed in the dress of a Dominican, and had an arrogant air. His voice was Stentorian, and though in his sixty-third year, [295] he seemed still in full vigour. This man, the son of one Diez, a jeweller of Leipsic, was called John Diezel, or Tezel. He had studied in his native town, became bachelor in 1487, and two years after entered the Dominican order. Numerous honours had accumulated on his head. Bachelor in theology, prior of the dominicans, apostolic commissary, inquisitor, *hæreticæ pravitatis inquisitor*, he had discharged the office of commissary of indulgences, without intermission, from 1502. The skill which he had acquired as subaltern soon raised him to the office of commissary-in-chief. He had eighty florins a month, and all his expences paid, together with a carriage and three horses; but his perquisites (it is easy to comprehend what they were) far exceeded his salary. In 1507 at Freiberg he gained two thousand florins in two days. If he discharged the functions, he had also the manners of a quack. Convicted of adultery and shameful misconduct at Inspruck, his vices had almost cost him his life. The Emperor Maximilian had ordered him to be put into a sack and thrown into the river; but the Elector Frederick happening to arrive, obtained his pardon.[296] The lesson which he thus received had not given him more modesty; for he had two of his children along with him.

Miltitz, the pope's legate, mentions the fact in one of his letters.[297] It would have been difficult to find in all the cloisters of Germany a man better fitted for the traffic with which he was entrusted. To the theology of a monk, to the zeal and temper of an inquisitor, he united the greatest effrontery; but the thing which, above all, made the task easy to him, was his skill in inventing extraordinary stories to captivate the minds of the people. To him all means were good that filled his coffers. Raising his voice, and giving free vent to his vulgar eloquence, he offered [181] his indulgences to every comer, and knew better than any dealer at a fair how to set off his merchandise.[298]

After the cross was erected, and the arms of the pope suspended over it, Tezel mounted the pulpit, and with a tone of assurance began to extol the value of the indulgences in presence of the crowd who had been attracted to the church by the ceremony. The people listened and stared on hearing the wondrous virtues of which he told them. A Jesuit historian, speaking of the Dominicans with whom Tezel was associated, says, "Some of these preachers failed not, as usual, to outrage the subject which they treated, and so to exaggerate the value of the indulgences as to make people suppose they were certain of their own salvation, and of the deliverance of souls from purgatory as soon as the money was paid."[299] If such were the scholars, we may judge what the master was. Let us listen to one of his harangues after setting up the cross.

"Indulgences are the most precious and most sublime gift of God.

"This cross (pointing to the red cross) has the very same efficacy as the actual cross of Jesus Christ.[300]

"Come, and I will give you letters under seal, by which even the sins which you may have a desire to commit in future will all be forgiven.

"I would not exchange my privileges for that of St. Peter in heaven; for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons.

"There is no sin too great for an indulgence to remit; and even should any one (the thing, no doubt, is impossible) have done violence to the Holy Virgin Mary, mother of God, let him pay, let him only pay well, and it will be forgiven him.[301]

"Think, then, that for each mortal sin you must, after confession and contrition, do penance for seven years, either in this life or in purgatory. Now, how many mortal sins are committed in one day, in one week? How many in a month, a year, a whole life?[302] Ah! these sins are almost innumerable, and innumerable sufferings must be endured for them in purgatory. And now, by means of these letters of indulgence, you can at once, for life, in all cases except four, which are reserved to the Apostolic See, and afterwards at the hour of death, obtain a full remission of all your pains and all your sins." [182]

Tezel even made financial calculations on the subject.

"Do you not know," said he, "that when a man proposes to go to Rome, or to any other country where travellers are exposed to danger, he sends his money to the bank, and for every five hundred florins that he means to have, gives five, or six at most, in order that, by means of letters from the bank, he may receive the money safely at Rome or elsewhere.... And, you, for the fourth of a florin, will not receive these letters of indulgence, by means of which you might introduce into the land of paradise, not worthless money, but a divine and immortal soul, without exposing it to the smallest risk."[303]

Tezel next passed to another subject.

"But more than this," said he; "indulgences not only save the living: they also save the dead.

"For this repentance is not even necessary.

"Priest! noble! merchant! wife! young girls! young men! hear your departed parents and your other friends, crying to you from the bottom of the abyss, 'We are enduring horrible torments! A little alms would deliver us; you can give it, and yet will not!'"

These words, uttered by the formidable voice of the charlatan monk, made his hearers shudder.

"At the very instant," continued Tezel, "when the piece of money chinks on the bottom of the strong box, the soul comes out of purgatory, and, set free, flies upward into heaven."[304]

"O imbecile and brutish people, who perceive not the grace which is so richly offered to you!... Now heaven is everywhere open!... Do you refuse at this hour to enter? When, then, will you enter? Now you can ransom so many souls! Hard-hearted and thoughtless man, with twelve pence you can deliver your father out of purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him! I will be justified on the day of judgment, but you, you will be punished so much the more severely, for having neglected so great salvation. I declare to you, that though you had only a single coat, you would be bound to take it off and sell it, in order to obtain this grace.... The Lord our God is no longer God. He has committed all power to the pope." [183]

Then, trying to avail himself of other weapons still, he added, "Know you why our most holy Lord is distributing so great a grace? His object is to raise up the ruined church of St. Peter and St. Paul, so that it may not have its equal in the universe. That church contains the bodies of the holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and of a multitude of martyrs. Owing to the actual state of the building, these holy bodies are now, alas! beaten, flooded, soiled, dishonoured, and reduced to rottenness, by the rain and the hail.... Ah! are these sacred ashes to remain longer in mud and disgrace?"[305]

This picture failed not to make an impression on many who felt a burning desire to go to the help of poor Leo X, who had not wherewith to shelter the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul from the rain.

Then the orator opened on the arguers and traitors who opposed his work. "I declare them excommunicated," exclaimed he.

Afterwards addressing docile souls, and making a profane use of Scripture, "Happy are the eyes which see what you see; for I tell you, that many prophets and many kings have desired to see the things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things which you hear, and have not heard them." And at last, showing the strong box in which the money was received, he usually concluded his pathetic discourse with this triple appeal to the people, "Bring! bring! bring!" "These words," says Luther, "he uttered with such horrible bellowing, that one might have thought it was a mad bull making a rush at people, and striking them with his horns."[306] When his discourse was ended, he came down from the pulpit, ran towards the chest, and in presence of the people chucked a piece of money into it, taking care to make it give a very loud tinkle.[307]

Such were the discourses which astonished Germany, heard in the days when God was preparing Luther.

At the termination of the discourse, the indulgence was understood "to have established its throne in the place in due form." Confessionals were set up adorned with the pope's arms. The

sub-commissaries, and the confessors whom they selected, were considered to represent the [184]
apostolical penitentiaries of Rome at the jubilee, and on each of these confessionals were posted, in large characters, their names, surnames, and designations.

Then a crowd pressed forward to the confessor, each coming with a piece of money in his hand. Men, women, and children, the poor, even those who lived on alms, all found means of procuring money. The penitentiaries, after having anew explained the greatness of the indulgence to each individual, asked, "How much money can you afford to part with, in order to obtain so complete a forgiveness?" "This question," says the Instruction of the Archbishop of Mentz to the commissaries; "this question ought to be put at this moment, that the penitents may thereby be the better disposed to contribute."[308]

Four valuable graces were promised to those who aided in building the basilisk of St. Peter. "The first grace which we announce to you," said the commissaries, according to their Letter of Instruction, "is the complete pardon of all sins."[309] After this came three other graces,—*first*, the right of choosing a confessor, who, whenever the hour of death should seem to be at hand, would give absolution from all sins, and even from the greatest crimes reserved for the Apostolic See;[310] *second*, a participation in all the blessings, works, and merits of the Catholic Church, in prayers, fastings, alms, and pilgrimages; and, *third*, the redemption of the souls which are in purgatory.[311]

To obtain the first of these graces, it was necessary to have contrition of heart and confession of the lips, or, at least, the intention of confessing. But for the three others, they could be obtained without contrition or confession, merely by paying. Previous to this, Christopher Columbus, extolling the value of gold, had said quite gravely, "He who possesses it may introduce souls into paradise." Such was the doctrine taught by the Archbishop-Cardinal of Mentz, and the commissaries of the pope. "As to those," said they, "who would deliver souls from purgatory, and procure for them pardon of all their offences, let them throw money into the chest. It is not necessary for them to have contrition of the heart or confession of the lips.[312] Let them only hasten with their money; for they will thus do a work most useful to the souls of the departed, and to the erection of the Church of St. Peter." Greater blessings could not be offered at a cheaper rate.

When the confession was over, and it did not take long, the faithful hastened towards the seller. [185]
One only had charge of the sale, and kept his counter near the cross. He carefully eyed those who approached him, examining their air, bearing, and dress, and asked a sum proportioned to the appearance which each presented. Kings, queens, princes, archbishops, bishops, were, according to the regulation, to pay twenty-five ducats for an ordinary indulgence. Abbots, counts, and barons, paid ten. Others of the nobility, rectors, and all who had an income of five hundred florins, paid six. Those who had two hundred florins a-year paid one; others, only a half. Moreover, when the tax could not be followed to the letter, full powers were given to the commissary-apostolic, who was to arrange everything in accordance with the dictates of "sound reason," and the generosity of the donor.[313] For particular sins, Tezel had a particular tax. Polygamy paid six ducats; theft in a church, and perjury, nine ducats; murder, eight ducats; magic, two ducats. Samson, who carried on the same traffic in Switzerland as Tezel in Germany, had a somewhat different tax. For infanticide he charged four livres *tournois*; for parricide or fratricide, a ducat.[314]

The apostolic commissaries sometimes encountered difficulties in carrying on their trade. It often happened, both in towns and villages, that husbands were opposed to the whole concern, and prohibited their wives from giving any thing to these merchants. What, then, were devout spouses to do? "Have you not your dowry, or some other property, at your own disposal?" asked the dealers. "In that case we may dispose of part for so sacred a purpose, even against the will of your husbands."[315]

The hand which had given the indulgence could not receive the money. This was prohibited under the severest penalties; for there might be good reason to suspect that that hand would not have been faithful. The penitent himself behoved to deposit the price of his pardon in the chest. [316] Angry looks were given to those who were audacious enough not to open their purses.[317]

If among those who pressed forward to the confessionals, there happened to be any one whose crime was publicly known, though of a kind which the civil law could not reach, he behoved, first of all, to do public penance. For this purpose they first led him to a chapel or sacristy, where they stripped him of his clothes, and took off his shoes, leaving him nothing but his shirt. His arms were crossed upon his breast, a light placed in one hand, and a rod in the other. Then the [186]
penitent walked at the head of the procession which proceeded to the red cross. He remained on his knees till the chant and the collect was finished. Then the commissary gave out the Psalm, *Miserere mei*. The confessors immediately approached the penitent, and led him across the church towards the commissary, who, taking the rod from his hand, and gently striking him thrice on the back with it,[318] said to him, "The Lord have pity on thee, and forgive thy sin." He then gave out the *Kyrie Eleison*. The penitent was led back to the front of the cross, and the confessor gave him the apostolic absolution, and declared him restored to the company of the faithful. Sad mummery, concluded with a holy expression, which, at such a moment, was mere profanation!

It is worth while to know the contents of one of those diplomas of absolution which led to the Reformation of the Church. The following is a specimen:—"May our Lord Jesus Christ have pity on thee, N. N., and absolve thee by the merit of his most holy passion. And I, in virtue of the apostolic power entrusted to me, absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments, and penalties, which thou mayest have deserved; moreover, from all the excesses, sins, and crimes, which thou mayest have committed, how great and enormous soever they may have been, and for whatever cause, even should they have been reserved to our most holy Father the pope, and to the apostolic see. I efface all the marks of disability, and all the notes of infamy which thou mayest have incurred on this occasion. I remit the pains which thou shouldest have to endure in purgatory. I render thee anew a partaker in the sacraments of the church. I again incorporate thee into the communion of saints, and re-establish thee in the innocence and purity in which thou wert at the hour of thy baptism; so that, at the moment of thy death, the gate of entrance to the place of pains and torments will be shut to thee, and, on the contrary, the gate which leads to the heavenly paradise, will be opened to thee. If thou art not to die soon, this grace will remain unimpaired till thy last hour arrive. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"Friar John Tezel, commissary, has signed it with his own hand."

How dexterously presumptuous and lying words are here intermingled with holy Christian expressions!

All the faithful required to come and confess at the place where the red cross was erected. The only exceptions were the sick, the aged, and pregnant women. If, however, there happened to be [187] in the neighbourhood some noble in his castle, or some great personage in his palace, there was an exemption for him;[319] for he might not care to mingle with the crowd, and his money was worth the going for.

If there happened to be a convent whose heads were opposed to the traffic of Tezel, and prohibited their monks from visiting the places where the indulgence had erected its throne, means were still found to remedy the evil by sending them confessors, who were commissioned to absolve them against the will of their order and the will of their heads.[320] There was not a vein in the mine, however small, which they did not find means of working.

At length they arrived at the object and end of the whole affair, the summing up of the cash. For greater security, the strong box had three keys—one in the hands of Tezel, the second in those of the treasurer, appointed by the firm of Fugger of Augsburg, who had been appointed agents in this vast enterprise, while the third was entrusted to the civil authority. When the moment arrived, the counters were opened in the presence of a notary-public, and the whole was duly counted and recorded. Must not Christ arise and drive these profane sellers from the temple?

The mission being closed, the dealers relaxed from their labours. It is true the instructions of the commissary-general forbade them to frequent taverns and suspicious places;[321] but they cared little for this prohibition. Sin must have appeared a very trivial matter to people who had such an easy trade in it. "The mendicants," says a Roman Catholic historian, "led a bad life, expending in taverns, gaming-houses, and places of infamy, what the people retrenched from their necessities."[322] It is even averred, that in taverns they sometimes played at dice for the salvation of souls.[323]

CHAP. II.

The Franciscan Confessor—The Soul in the Burying-Ground—The Shoemaker of Hagenau—The Students—Myconius—Conversation with Tezel—Stratagem by a Gentleman—Conversation of the Wise and of the People—A Miner of Schneeberg.

But let us look at some of the scenes which then took place in Germany during this sale of the pardon of sins; for we here meet with anecdotes which, by themselves alone, give a picture of the [188] times. As we proceed with our narrative we deem it best to let men speak for themselves.

At Magdebourg Tezel refused to absolve a wealthy female, unless she would pay him one hundred florins in advance. She consulted her ordinary confessor, who was a Franciscan. "God," replied he, "gives the remission of sins freely, and does not sell it." However, he begged her not to tell Tezel what advice he had given her. But the merchant having somehow or other heard of words so injurious to his interest, exclaimed, "Such an adviser deserves to be banished or burned."[324]

Tezel rarely found men enlightened enough, and still more rarely men bold enough, to resist him. For the most part he had a good market from the superstitious crowd. He had erected the red cross of indulgences at Zwickau, and the good parishioners had hastened to make the money which was to deliver them chink on the bottom of the chest. He was going away with a well-filled purse. The evening before his departure the chaplains and their attendants applied to him for a farewell entertainment. The request was reasonable; but how was it possible to comply with it?

the money was already counted and sealed up. The next morning he orders the large bell to be rung. Crowds hastened to the church, every one thinking that something extraordinary must have happened, as the station was closed. "I had resolved," said he, "to depart this morning, but last night was awoke by groans. On listening I found they came from the burying-ground. Alas! it was a poor soul calling and entreating me instantly to deliver it from the torment by which it was consumed. I have, therefore, remained one day more, in order to stir up the compassion of Christian hearts in favour of this unhappy soul. I am willing myself to be the first to give, and whosoever does not follow my example will deserve damnation." What heart would not have responded to such an appeal? Who knew, moreover, whose soul it was that was crying in the burying-ground? The people contributed freely, and Tezel gave the chaplains and their attendants a jovial entertainment, defraying the expence by the offerings which he had received in favour of the soul of Zwickau.[325]

The indulgence merchants had fixed their station at Hagenau in 1517. A shoemaker's wife, taking advantage of the authority of the instruction of the commissary-general, had, contrary to the will of her husband, procured a letter of indulgence, and paid a gold florin for it. She died shortly [189] after. The husband not having caused mass to be said for the repose of her soul, the curate charged him with contempt of religion, and the judge of Hagenau summoned him to appear. The shoemaker put his wife's indulgence in his pocket and repaired to the court. "Is your wife dead?" asked the judge. "Yes," replied he. "What have you done for her?" "I have buried her body, and commended her soul to God." "But have you caused a mass to be said for the salvation of her soul?" I have not; it was unnecessary. She entered heaven the moment of her death." "How do you know that?" "Here is the proof." So saying, he takes the indulgence out of his pocket, and the judge, in presence of the curate, reads in as many words that the woman who received it would not enter purgatory, but go straight to heaven. "If the reverend curate maintains that a mass is still necessary, my wife has been cheated by our most holy father the pope. If she was not cheated, then it is the reverend curate who is cheating me." This was unanswerable, and the accused was acquitted. Thus the good sense of the people did justice to these pious frauds.[326]

One day when Tezel was preaching at Leipsic, and introducing into his sermons some of those stories of which we have given a sample, two students feeling quite indignant, rose up and left the church, exclaiming, "It is impossible for us to listen longer to the drolleries and puerilities of this monk."[327] One of them, it is said, was young Camerarius, afterwards the intimate friend of Melancthon, and his biographer.

But of all the young men of the period, he on whom Tezel made the strongest impression unquestionably was Myconius, afterwards celebrated as a Reformer, and historian of the Reformation. He had received a Christian education. His father, a pious man of Franconia, was wont to say to him, "My son, pray frequently, for all things are freely given to us by God alone. The blood of Christ," added he, "is the only ransom for the sins of the whole world. O, my son! were there only three men that could be saved by the blood of Christ, believe, and believe with confidence, that thou art one of the three. It is an insult to the blood of the Saviour to doubt if it saves."[328] Then cautioning his son against the traffic which was beginning to be established in Germany—"The Roman indulgences," said he to him, "are nets which fish for money, and deceive the simple. The forgiveness of sins and of eternal life are not things for sale."

At the age of thirteen Frederick Myconius was sent to the school of Annaberg to finish his [190] studies. Shortly after, Tezel arrived in the town, and remained in it for two years. The people flocked in crowds to his sermon. "There is no other method," exclaimed Tezel in his voice of thunder; "there is no other method of obtaining eternal life than the satisfaction of works; but this satisfaction is impossible for man, and, therefore, all he can do is to purchase it from the Roman pontiff."[329] When Tezel was about to quit Annaberg, his addresses became more urgent. "Soon," exclaimed he, in a threatening tone, "soon will I take down the cross, shut the gate of heaven,[330] and quench the lustre of that sun of grace which is now shining in your eyes." Then resuming the gentle accent of persuasion, "Now," said he, "is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Then raising his voice anew, the pontifical Stentor,[331] who was addressing the inhabitants of a rich mineral district, loudly exclaimed, "Bring your money, burghers of Annaberg, contribute largely in behalf of the indulgences, and your mines and your mountains will be filled with pure silver." In conclusion, he declared that at Pentecost he would distribute his letters to the poor gratuitously, and for the love of God.

Young Myconius being among the number of Tezel's hearers, felt an eager desire to avail himself of this offer. Going up to the commissaries, he said to them in Latin, "I am a poor sinner, and need a gratuitous pardon!" The merchants replied, "Those alone can have part in the merits of Jesus Christ who lend a helping hand to the Church, in other words, who give money." "What is the meaning then," said Myconius, "of those promises of free gift, which are posted up on the walls and doors of the churches?" "Give at least a shilling," said Tezel's people who had gone to their master, and interceded with him for the young man, but without effect. "I am not able." "Only Sixpence." "I have not even so much." The dominicans then began to fear that he wished to entrap them. "Listen," said they to him, "we will make you a present of the sixpence." The young man, raising his voice in indignation, answered, "I want no indulgences that are purchased. If I wished to purchase, I would only have to sell one of my school-books. I want a free pardon, given purely for the love of God, and you will have to give account to God for having allowed the salvation of a soul to be lost for a sixpence." "Who sent you to entrap us?" exclaimed the merchants. "Nothing but the desire of receiving the grace of God could have tempted me to [191]

appear before such mighty lords," replied the young man, and withdrew.

"I was much grieved," said he, "at being sent thus pitilessly away; but I still felt within myself a Comforter, who told me that there was a God in heaven, who, without money and without price, pardons repenting sinners for the love of his Son Jesus Christ. As I was taking leave of those people, I melted into tears, and, sobbing, prayed, 'O God! since these men have refused me the forgiveness of my sins, because I had no money to pay for it, do thou, O Lord, have pity on me, and forgive my sins in pure mercy!' I went to my lodging, and taking up my crucifix, which was lying on my desk, laid it on my chair, and prostrated myself before it. I cannot describe what I felt. I asked God to be my Father, and to do with me whatsoever he pleased. I felt my nature changed, converted, and transformed. What formerly delighted me now excited my disgust. To live with God, and please him, was my strongest, my only desire."[332] Thus Tezel himself contributed to the Reformation. By crying abuses he paved the way for a purer doctrine, and the indignation which he excited in a generous youth was one day to break forth mightily. We may judge of this by the following anecdote.

A Saxon gentleman, who had heard Tezel at Leipsic, felt his indignation aroused by his falsehoods, and going up to the monk, asked him whether he had power to pardon the sins which were intended to be committed? "Assuredly," replied Tezel. "I have full power from the pope to do so." "Well then," resumed the knight, "there is one of my enemies on whom I should like to take a slight revenge without doing him any deadly injury, and I will give you ten crowns in return for a letter of indulgence, which will completely acquit me." Tezel made some objections; at last, however, they came to an agreement for thirty crowns. Soon after the monk quits Leipsic. The gentleman accompanied by his servants, waited for him in a wood between Jüterboch and Treblin, and rushing out upon him, and giving him some blows with a stick, carried off the rich indulgence chest, which the inquisitor had with him. Tezel cries out robbery, and carries his complaint before the judges, but the gentleman shows the letter with Tezel's own signature, exempting him beforehand from all punishment. Duke George, who had at first been very angry, on seeing the document ordered the accused to be acquitted.[333]

This traffic everywhere occupied men's thoughts, and was everywhere talked of. It was the [192]
subject of conversation in castles, in academies, and at the firesides of the citizens, as well as in inns and taverns, and all places of public resort.[334] Opinions were divided, some believing, and others expressing indignation. The sensible portion of the community rejected the whole system of indulgences with disgust. It was so contrary to Scripture and to morality, that all who had any knowledge of the Bible, or any natural light, condemned it in their hearts, and only waited for a signal to declare their opposition to it. On the other hand, scoffers found ample materials for raillery. The people, who had for many years been irritated by the misconduct of the priests, and whom nothing but the fear of punishment induced to keep up a certain show of respect, gave free vent to their hatred. Complaints and sarcasms were everywhere heard on the avarice of the clergy.

Nor did they stop here. They even attacked the power of the keys, and the authority of the sovereign pontiff. "Why," said they, "does not the pope deliver all souls from purgatory at once from a holy charity, and in consideration of the sad misery of these souls, seeing he delivers so great a number for the love of perishable money, and of the cathedral of St. Peter? Why do feasts and anniversaries of the dead continue to be celebrated? Why does not the pope restore or allow others to resume the benefices and prebends which have been founded in favour of the dead, since it is now useless, and even reprehensible, to pray for those whom indulgences have for ever delivered?" "What kind of new holiness in God and the pope is this—from a love of money to enable a wicked profane man to deliver a pious soul beloved of the Lord from purgatory, rather than deliver it themselves gratuitously from love, and because of its great wretchedness."[335]

The gross and immoral conduct of the traffickers in indulgences was much talked of. "In paying carriers for transporting them with their goods, the innkeepers with whom they lodge, or any one who does any piece of work for them, they give a letter of indulgence for four, five, or any number of souls, as the case may be." In this way, the diplomas of salvation were current in inns and in markets like bank bills or paper money. "Bring! Bring!" said the common people, "is the head, the belly, the tail, and the whole body of the sermon."[336]

A miner of Schneeberg, meeting a seller of indulgences, asked, "Must we indeed give credit to [193]
what you have often said of the power of the indulgence, and of the authority of the pope, and believe it possible, by throwing a penny into the box, to ransom a soul from purgatory?" The merchant assured him it was true. "Ah!" resumed the miner, "what an unmerciful man the pope must be, for a paltry penny to leave a miserable soul so long crying in the flames. If he has no ready money, let him borrow some hundred thousand crowns, and deliver all these people at once. We poor folks will willingly pay him both the interest and the capital." Thus Germany was weary of the shameful traffic which was going on in the midst of her, and could no longer tolerate the impostures of these master-swindlers of Rome, as Luther calls them.[337] Yet no bishop, no theologian, durst oppose their quackery and their fraud. The minds of men were in suspense, and asked whether God would not raise up some mighty man for the work which required to be done? This man nowhere appeared.

CHAP. III.

Leo X—Necessities of the Pope—Albert—His Character—Favours the Indulgences—The Franciscans and the Dominicans.

The pope then on the pontifical throne was not a Borgia but Leo X, of the illustrious house of Medici. He was able, frank, kind, and gentle. His address was affable, his liberality without bounds, and his morals, superior to those of his court. Cardinal Pallavicini, however, acknowledges that they were not altogether irreproachable. To this amiable character he joined several of the qualities of a great prince. He showed himself friendly to science and art. The first Italian comedies were represented in his presence; and there are few of his day which he did not see performed. He was passionately fond of music. Musical instruments resounded every day in his palace; and he was often heard humming the airs which had been performed before him. He was fond of magnificence, and spared nothing when fêtes, games, theatricals, presents or rewards, were in question. No court surpassed that of the sovereign pontiff in splendour and [194] gayety. Accordingly, when it was learned that Julian Medicis was proposing to reside at Rome with his young bride, "God be praised," exclaimed Cardinal Bibliena, the most influential counsellor of Leo X, "the only thing we wanted was a female court."[338] A female court was necessary to complete the court of the pope. To religious sentiment Leo was completely a stranger. "His manners were so pleasing," says Sarpi, "that he would have been perfect if he had had some acquaintance with religious matters, and been somewhat more inclined to piety, which seldom, if ever, gave him any concern."[339]

Leo was greatly in want of money. He had to provide for his immense expenditure, supply all his liberalities, fill the purse of gold which he daily threw to the people, keep up the licentious exhibitions of the Vatican, satisfy the numerous demands of his relations and voluptuous courtiers, give a dowry to his sister, who had been married to Prince Cibo, a natural son of Pope Innocent VIII, and meet the expenditure occasioned by his taste for literature, arts, and pleasure. His cousin, Cardinal Pucci, as skilful in the art of hoarding as Leo in that of lavishing, advised him to have recourse to indulgences. Accordingly, the pope published a bull, announcing a general indulgence, the proceeds of which were, he said, to be employed in the erection of the church of St. Peter, that monument of sacerdotal magnificence. In a letter, dated at Rome, under the seal of the Fisherman, in November, 1517, Leo applies to his commissary of indulgences for one hundred and forty-seven gold ducats, to pay a manuscript of the thirty-third book of Livy. Of all the uses to which he put the money of the Germans, this was, doubtless, the best. Still it was strange to deliver souls from purgatory in order to purchase a manuscript history of the wars of the Roman people.

There was at this time in Germany a young prince who might be regarded as in many respects a living image of Leo X. This was Albert, a younger brother of the elector, Joachim of Brandenburg. At twenty-four years of age he had been appointed Archbishop and Elector of Mentz and of Magdeburg, and two years after made a cardinal. Albert had neither the virtues nor the vices which are often met with in the high dignitaries of the church. Young, fickle, worldly, but not without some generous feelings, he was perfectly aware of many of the abuses of Catholicism, [195] and cared little for the fanatical monks by whom he was surrounded. His equity disposed him, in part at least, to acknowledge the justice of what the friends of the gospel demanded. In his secret heart he was not much opposed to Luther. Capito, one of the most distinguished Reformers, was long his chaplain, counsellor, and confidant. Albert regularly attended his sermons. "He did not despise the gospel," says Capito; "on the contrary, he highly esteemed it, and for a long time would not allow the monks to attack Luther." But he would have liked Luther not to compromise him, and to take good care while exposing the doctrinal errors and vices of the inferior clergy, not to disclose the faults of bishops and princes. In particular, he was most anxious that his name should not be mixed up with the affair. His confidant, Capito, who had imposed upon himself, as men often do in situations similar to his, thus addressed Luther: "Look to the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles; they rebuked the Pharisees and the incestuous man of Corinth, but they never expressly named them. You know not what is passing in the hearts of the bishops; and, perhaps, there is more good in them than you suppose." But the fickle and profane spirit of Albert, still more than the susceptibilities and fears of his self-love, estranged him from the Reformation. Affable, clever, handsome, extravagant, and wasteful, delighting in the pleasures of the table, in rich equipages, splendid buildings, licentious pleasures, and literary society, this young Archbishop-Elector was in Germany what Leo X was at Rome. His court was one of the most magnificent in the empire, and he was prepared to sacrifice to pleasure and grandeur all the sentiments of truth which, perhaps, might have insinuated themselves into his heart. Nevertheless, his better convictions continued even to the last to exercise some degree of influence over him, and he repeatedly gave indications of moderation and equity.

Albert, like Leo, was in want of money. The Fuggers, rich merchants in Augsburg, had made him advances which he behoved to repay, and hence, though he had managed to secure two archbishoprics and a bishopric, he was unable to pay Rome for his Pallium. This ornament of white wool, bespangled with black crosses and blessed by the pope, who sent it to the archbishops as a token of their dignity, cost them twenty-six, or, some say, thirty thousand florins. In order to obtain money, Albert, naturally enough, bethought himself of having recourse to the same methods as the pope. He accordingly applied to him for the general farming of the [196] indulgences, or, as they expressed it at Rome, "of the sins of the Germans."

The popes sometimes kept the indulgences in their own hands, and at other times farmed them out, in the same way as some governments still do gaming-houses. Albert made an offer to Leo to share the profit with him, and Leo, in agreeing to the bargain, stipulated for immediate payment of the Pallium. Albert had been counting on paying it out of the indulgences, and therefore applied anew to the Fuggers, who, thinking the security good, agreed, on certain conditions, to make the advance required, and were appointed bankers to the concern. They were the bankers of the princes of this period, and were afterwards made counts in return for the services which they had rendered.

The pope and the archbishop having thus, by anticipation, shared in the spoils of the good souls of Germany, the next matter was to select the persons who were to carry the affair into effect. It was first offered to the Franciscan order, whose guardian was conjoined with Albert. But, as it was already in bad odour with honest people, these monks were not anxious to have anything to do with it. The Augustins, who were more enlightened than the other religious orders, would have been less inclined to undertake it. The Franciscans, however, being afraid of offending the pope, who had just sent their chief, De, Forli, a cardinal's hat, a hat which had cost this poor mendicant order thirty thousand florins, the guardian deemed it more prudent not to refuse openly, but, at the same time, threw all sorts of difficulties in Albert's way. They could never understand each other, and, accordingly, when the proposal was made to the Elector to undertake the whole charge, he eagerly closed with it. The Dominicans, on the other hand, longed for a share in the general collection which was about to commence. Tezel, who was already famous in the trade, hastened to Mentz to offer his services to the Elector. In consideration of the talent which he had displayed in publishing the indulgences for the knights of the Teutonic order of Prussia and Livonia, his proposals were accepted, and in this way, the whole traffic passed into the hands of his order.[340]

CHAP. IV.

[197]

Tezel approaches—Luther at the Confessional—Tezel's Rage—Luther without a Plan—Jealousy among the Orders—Luther's Discourse—The Elector's Dream.

In so far as we know, Luther heard of Tezel, for the first time, at Grimma, in 1516, when he was on the eve of beginning his visit to the churches. While Staupitz was still with Luther, it was told him that an indulgence merchant was making a great noise at Vürzen. Even some of his extravagant sayings were quoted. Luther's indignation was roused, and he exclaimed, "Please God, I'll make a hole in his drum."[341]

Tezel, on his return from Berlin, where he had met with a most friendly reception from the elector Joachim, brother of the farmer-general, took up his head-quarters at Juterboch. Staupitz, availing himself of his influence with the elector Frederick, had often represented to him the abuses of the indulgences, and the scandalous proceedings of the mendicants,[342] and the princes of Saxony feeling indignant at the shameful traffic, had forbidden the merchant to enter their territory. He was, accordingly, obliged to remain on those of the Archbishop of Magdeburg, but at the same time came as near to Saxony as he could, Juterboch being only four miles from Wittemberg. "This great thresher of purses," says Luther, "set about threshing[343] the country in grand style, so that the money began to leap, tumble, and tinkle, in his chest." The people of Wittemberg went in crowds to the indulgence market of Juterboch.

At this period Luther had the highest respect for the church and for the pope. "I was then," said he, "a monk, a most bigoted Papist, so intoxicated and imbued with the doctrines of Rome, that if I had been able I would willingly have lent a hand in killing any one audacious enough to refuse obedience to the pope in the minutest matter.[344] I was a real Saul, as many still are." But, at the same time, his heart was ready to declare in favour of all that he believed to be truth, and against all that he believed to be error. "I was a young doctor just of the irons, ardent and rejoicing in the word of the Lord."[345]

[198]

One day when Luther had taken his seat in the confessional at Wittemberg, several citizens of the town came before him, and one after another confessed the grossest immoralities. Adultery, libertinism, usury, ill-gotten wealth, were the crimes with which the minister of the word was entertained by persons of whose souls he was one day to give account. He rebukes, corrects, and instructs them; but what is his astonishment when these people tell him that they don't choose to abandon their sins?... Quite amazed, the pious monk declares, that since they refuse to promise amendment, he cannot give them absolution. The wretched creatures then appealed to their letters of indulgence, exhibiting them and extolling their virtues. But Luther replied, that he cared little for the paper which they had shown him, and added, *unless you repent, you will all perish*. They made an outcry, and expostulated, but the doctor was immovable; "they must cease to do evil, and learn to do well, ... otherwise no absolution." "Beware," added he, "of lending an ear to the harangues of the venders of indulgences; you might be better employed than in buying those licences which are sold you for the most paltry sum."[346]

Much alarmed, these inhabitants of Wittemberg hastened back to Tezel to tell him how his letters were disregarded by an Augustin monk. Tezel, on hearing this, became red with fury, crying, and stamping, and cursing in the pulpit.[347] To strike a deeper terror into the people, he repeatedly kindled a fire in the market-place, declaring he had received orders from the pope to burn all heretics who should dare to oppose his holy indulgences.

Such is the circumstance, which was not the cause, but the first occasion of the Reformation. A pastor seeing the sheep of his flock in a path which must lead them to destruction, makes an effort to deliver them. As yet, he has no thought of reforming the church and the world. He has seen Rome and its corruptions, but he declares not against Rome. He perceives some of the abuses under which Christianity is groaning, but has no thought of correcting these abuses. He has no desire to become Reformer.[348] He has no plan for the reformation of the Church any more than he had had one for himself. God intends reform, and for reform selects Luther. The same remedy which had proved so powerful in curing his own wretchedness, the hand of God will employ by him to cure the miseries of Christendom. He remains quiet in the sphere which is [199] assigned to him, walking merely where his Master calls him, and fulfilling his duties as professor, preacher, and pastor, at Wittemberg. While seated in the church, his hearers come and open their hearts to him. Evil makes an assault upon him, and error seeks him out, of her own accord. He is interfered with in the discharge of his duty, and his conscience, which is bound to the word of God, resists. Is it not God that calls him? To resist is a duty, and being a duty, is also a right. He has no alternative but to speak. In this way were events ordered by that God who was pleased, says Mathesius, "to restore Christendom by means of the son of a forge master, and to purify the impure doctrine of the church, by making it pass through his furnaces.[349]

Having given this detail, it must be unnecessary to refute a false imputation invented by some of Luther's enemies, but not till after his death. Jealousy for his order, it has been said, grief at seeing a shameful and condemned traffic entrusted to the Dominicans in preference to the Augustins, who had hitherto enjoyed it, led the doctor of Wittemberg to attack Tezel and his doctrines. The well known fact that this traffic was first offered to the Augustins, who refused it, is sufficient to refute this fable, which has been repeated by writers who have copied each other; even Cardinal Pallavicini states that the Augustins never had discharged this office.[350] Besides, we have seen the travail of Luther's soul. His conduct needs no other explanation. It was impossible for him not to make open profession of the doctrine to which he owed his happiness. In Christianity, every man who finds a blessing longs to make others partakers in it. In our day it is time to abandon those puerile explanations which are unworthy of the great revolution of the sixteenth century. To lift a world, a more powerful lever was required. The Reformation existed not in Luther only; it was the offspring of his age.

Luther impelled equally by obedience to the truth of God, and by charity towards men, mounted the pulpit. He forewarned his hearers; but, as he himself says, he did it gently.[351] His prince had obtained particular indulgences from the pope for the church of the castle of Wittemberg, and it was possible that some of the blows which he was going to level at the indulgences in question might fall on those of the Elector. No matter; he will run the risk. If he sought to please men, he would not be the servant of Christ.

"No man can prove by Scripture," says the faithful minister of the Word to the people of [200] Wittemberg, "that the justice of God exacts a penalty or satisfaction from the sinner; the only duty which it imposes upon him is true repentance, sincere conversion, a resolution to bear the cross of Jesus Christ, and to be diligent in good works. It is a great error to think we can ourselves satisfy the justice of God for our sins. He always pardons them gratuitously by his inestimable grace.

"The Christian Church, it is true, requires something from the sinner, and consequently has the power of remitting what she so requires, but that is all. Even these indulgences of the Church are tolerated, only on account of indolent and imperfect Christians, who will not zealously exercise themselves in good works. For they stimulate none to sanctification, but leave all in imperfection."

Then adverting to the pretext under which the indulgences were published, he continues:—"It would be much better to contribute to the erection of St. Peter's church from love to God, than to purchase indulgences in this view.... But you ask, Are we then never to purchase them? I have already said, and I repeat it; my advice is, Don't purchase. Leave them to sleepy Christians, but do you walk apart in your own path. The faithful must be diverted from indulgences, and urged to do the works which they neglect."

At last, glancing at his adversaries, Luther concludes thus:—"If some cry out that I am a heretic, (for the truth which I preach is very hurtful to their strong box,) their clamour gives me little concern. They are dull and sickly brains, men who never felt the Bible, never read Christian doctrine, never comprehended their own teachers, and who turn to rottenness, wrapped up in the tatters of their vain opinions,[352] ... God grant them and us a sound mind. Amen." After these words, the doctor descended from the pulpit, leaving his hearers in astonishment at his bold language.

This sermon was printed, and made a deep impression on all who read it. Tezel answered it, and Luther replied; but these discussions did not take place till a later period, (1518).

The feast of All Saints drew near. The chronicles of that day here relate a circumstance, which,

though not important to the history of the period, may, however, serve to characterise it. It is a dream of the Elector, which in substance is unquestionably authentic, though several [201] circumstances may have been added by those who have related it. It is mentioned by Seckendorf, [353] who observes, that the fear of giving their adversaries ground to say that the doctrine of Luther was founded upon dreams, has perhaps prevented several historians from speaking of it.

The Elector Frederick of Saxony, say the chronicles of the time, was at his castle of Schweinitz, six leagues from Wittemberg. On the morning of the 31st October, being in company with his brother Duke John, who was then co-regent, and became sole elector after his death, and with his chancellor, the Elector said to the Duke,

"Brother, I must tell you a dream which I had last night, and the meaning of which I should like much to know. It is so deeply impressed on my mind, that I will never forget it, were I to live a thousand years. For I dreamed it thrice, and each time with new circumstances."

Duke John.—"Is it a good or a bad dream?"

The Elector.—"I know not; God knows."

Duke John.—"Don't be uneasy at it; but be so good as tell it to me."

The Elector.—"Having gone to bed last night, fatigued and out of spirits, I fell asleep shortly after my prayer, and slept quietly for about two hours and a half; I then awoke, and continued awake till midnight, all sorts of thoughts passing through my mind. Among other things, I thought how I was to observe the feast of All Saints. I prayed for the poor souls in purgatory, and supplicated God to guide me, my counsels, and my people, according to truth. I again fell asleep, and then dreamed that Almighty God sent me a monk, who was a true son of the Apostle Paul. All the saints accompanied him by order of God, in order to bear testimony before me, and to declare that he did not come to contrive any plot, but that all that he did was according to the will of God. They asked me to have the goodness graciously to permit him to write something on the door of the church of the castle of Wittemberg. This I granted through my chancellor. Thereupon the monk went to the church, and began to write in such large characters, that I could read the writing at Schweinitz. The pen which he used was so large that its end reached as far as Rome, where it pierced the ears of a lion that was couching there,[354] and caused the triple crown upon the head of the pope to shake. All the cardinals and princes running hastily up, tried to prevent it [202] from falling. You and I, brother, wished also to assist, and I stretched out my arm ... but at this moment I awoke, with my arm in the air, quite amazed, and very much enraged at the monk for not managing his pen better. I recollected myself a little: it was only a dream.

"I was still half asleep, and once more closed my eyes. The dream returned. The lion, still annoyed by the pen, began to roar with all his might, so much so that the whole city of Rome and all the states of the holy empire, ran to see what the matter was. The pope requested them to oppose this monk, and applied particularly to me, on account of his being in my country. I again awoke, repeated the Lord's Prayer, entreated God to preserve his Holiness, and once more fell asleep.

"Then I dreamed that all the princes of the empire, and we among them, hastened to Rome, and strove one after another to break the pen; but the more we tried the stiffer it became, sounding as if it had been made of iron. We at length desisted. I then asked the monk (for I was sometimes at Rome and sometimes at Wittemberg) where he got this pen, and why it was so strong. 'The pen,' replied he, 'belonged to an old goose of Bohemia, a hundred years old.[355] I got it from one of my old school-masters. As to its strength, it is owing to the impossibility of depriving it of its pith or marrow, and I am quite astonished at it myself.' Suddenly I heard a loud noise; a large number of other pens had sprung out of the long pen of the monk.... I awoke a third time; it was daylight...."

Duke John.—"Chancellor, what is your opinion? Would we had a Joseph or a Daniel enlightened by God!"

Chancellor.—"Your Highnesses know the common proverb, that the dreams of young girls, learned men, and great lords, have usually some hidden meaning. The meaning of this dream, however, we will not be able to know for some time; not till the things to which it relates have taken place. Wherefore, leave the accomplishment to God, and place it wholly in his hand."

Duke John.—"I am of your opinion, Chancellor; 'tis not fit for us to annoy ourselves in attempting to discover the meaning; the God will overrule all for his glory."

Elector.—"May our faithful God do so; yet I will never forget this dream. I have indeed thought of an interpretation, but I keep it to myself. Time, perhaps, will show if I have been a good diviner."

Thus, according to the manuscript of Weimar, the morning of 31st of October was spent at [203] Schweinitz. Let us see how the evening was spent at Wittemberg. We again return to the province of History.

CHAP. V.

Feast of All Saints—The Theses—Their Force—Moderation—Providence—Letter to Albert—Indifference of the Bishops—Dissemination of the Theses.

The words of Luther had produced little effect. Tezel, without troubling himself, continued his traffic and his impious harangues.[356] Will Luther submit to these crying abuses, and keep silence? As a pastor, he has earnestly exhorted those who have had recourse to his ministry, and, as a preacher, he has lifted his warning voice in the pulpit. It still remains for him to speak as a theologian—to address, not individuals in the confessional, not the assembly of the faithful in the church of Wittemberg, but all who, like himself, are teachers of the word of God. His resolution is taken.

He has no thought of attacking the Church, or of putting the pope on his defence. On the contrary, it is his respect for the pope that will not allow him to be any longer silent with regard to claims by which he is injured. He must take the part of the pope against audacious men, who dare to associate his venerable name with their disgraceful traffic. Far from thinking of a revolution which is to destroy the primacy of Rome, Luther expects to have the pope and Catholicism for his allies against impudent monks.[357]

The feast of All Saints was an important day for Wittemberg, and especially for the church which the Elector had there erected and filled with relics. On that day these relics, adorned with silver and gold, and precious stones, were brought out and exhibited to the eyes of the people, who were astonished and dazzled by their magnificence.[358] Whoever on that day visited the church and confessed in it obtained a valuable indulgence. Accordingly, on this great occasion, pilgrims came in crowds to Wittemberg.

On the 31st of October, 1517, Luther, who had already taken his resolution, walks boldly towards [204] the church to which the superstitious crowds of pilgrims were repairing, and puts up on the door of this church ninety-five Theses or propositions against the doctrine of indulgences. Neither the Elector, nor Staupitz, nor Spalatin, nor any, even the most intimate of his friends, had been previously informed of this step.[359] In these theses, Luther declares, in a kind of preamble, that he had written them with the express desire of setting the truth in the full light of day. He declares himself ready to defend them on the morrow at the university, against all and sundry. The attention which they excite is great; they are read and repeated. In a short time the pilgrims, the university, the whole town is ringing with them. The following are some of these Propositions, written with the pen of the monk, and fixed on the door of the church of Wittemberg.

1. "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says 'repent,' he means that the whole life of his followers on the earth is a constant and continual repentance.

2. "This expression cannot be understood of the sacrament of penitence, (that is to say, of confession and satisfaction,) as administered by the priest.

3. "Still the Lord intends not to speak merely of internal repentance. Internal repentance is null, if it does not manifest itself externally by the mortification of the flesh.

4. "Repentance and sorrow—that is to say, true penitence—continue so long as a man is displeased with himself—that is, until he passes from this life into life eternal.

5. "The pope is not able, and does not wish to remit any other penalty than that which he has imposed of his own good pleasure, or conformably to the canons, that is to say, the papal ordinances.

6. "The pope cannot remit any condemnation, but only declare and confirm the remission which God himself has given. At least he can only do it in cases which belong to him. If he does otherwise, the condemnation remains exactly as before.

8. "The laws of ecclesiastical penance ought to be imposed on the living only, and have nothing to do with the dead.

21. "The commissaries of indulgence are mistaken when they say that the pope's indulgence delivers from all punishment and saves.

25. "The same power which the pope has over purgatory throughout the Church, each bishop has individually in his own diocese, and each curate in his own parish.

27. "It is the preaching of human folly to pretend, that at the very moment when the money [205] tinkles in the strong box, the soul flies off from purgatory.

28. "This much is certain; as soon as the money tinkles, avarice and the love of gain arrive, increase, and multiply. But the aids and prayers of the Church depend only on the will and good pleasure of God.

32. "Those who imagine they are sure of salvation by means of indulgences will go to the devil, with those who teach them so.

35. "It is an antichristian doctrine to pretend, that, in order to deliver a soul from purgatory, or to purchase an indulgence, there is no need of either sorrow or repentance.

36. "Every Christian who truly repents of his sins has entire forgiveness of the penalty and the fault, and, so far, has no need of indulgence.

37. "Every true Christian, dead or alive, participates in all the blessings of Christ and of the Church by the gift of God and without a letter of indulgence.

38. "Still the dispensation and pardon of the pope must not be despised; for his pardon is a declaration of the pardon of God.

40. "Genuine sorrow and repentance seek and love punishment; but the mildness of indulgence takes off the fear of punishment, and begets hatred against it.

42. "Christians must be told that the pope has no wish and no intention that they should in any respect compare the act of purchasing indulgences with any work of mercy.

43. "Christians must be told that he who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does better than he who buys an indulgence:

44. "For the work of charity makes charity increase, and renders a man more pious; whereas the indulgence does not make him better, but only gives him more self-confidence, and makes him more secure against punishment.

45. "Christians must be told that he who sees his neighbour want, and, instead of helping him, purchases an indulgence, purchases not the indulgence of the pope, but incurs the Divine displeasure.

46. "Christians must be told that if they have no superfluity, they are bound to keep what they have, in order to procure necessaries for their families, and not to lavish it on indulgences.

47. "Christians must be told that to purchase an indulgence is optional, not obligatory.

48. "Christians must be told that the pope having more need of prayer offered up in faith than of money, desires the prayer more than the money when he dispenses indulgences.

49. "Christians must be told that the indulgence of the pope is good provided they do not place their confidence in it, but that nothing is more hurtful if it diminishes piety. [206]

50. "Christians must be told that if the pope knew of the extortions of the preachers of indulgences, he would rather that the metropolis of St. Peter were burned and reduced to ashes, than see it built with the skin, flesh, and bones, of his sheep.

51. "Christians must be told that the pope, as is his duty, would dispense his own money to the poor people whom the preachers of indulgences are now robbing of their last penny, were he, for that purpose, even to sell the metropolis of St. Peter.

52. "To hope to be saved by indulgences is an empty and lying hope even should the commissary of indulgences, nay, the pope himself, be pleased to pledge his own soul in security of it.

53. "Those who, on account of the preaching of indulgences, forbid the preaching of the word of God, are enemies of the pope and of Jesus Christ.

55. "The pope cannot have any other thought than this:—If the indulgence, which is the lesser matter, is celebrated with bell, pomp, and ceremony, it is necessary, *à fortiori*, to honour and celebrate the gospel, which is the greater matter, with a hundred bells, a hundred pomps, and a hundred ceremonies.

62. "The true and precious treasure of the Church is the holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.

65. "The treasures of the gospel are nets, which once caught the rich, and those who were at ease in their circumstances:

66. "But the treasures of indulgence are nets, in which, now-a-days, they catch, not rich people, but the riches of people.

67. "It is the duty of bishops and pastors to receive the commissaries of apostolic indulgences with all respect:

68. "But it is still more their duty to use their eyes and their ears, in order to see that the said commissaries do not preach the dreams of their own imaginations instead of the orders of the pope.

71. "Cursed be he who speaketh against the indulgence of the pope.

72. "But blessed be he who speaks against the foolish and impudent words of the preachers of indulgences.

76. "The indulgence of the pope cannot take away the smallest daily sin, in regard to the fault or delinquency.

79. "To say that a cross adorned with the arms of the pope is as powerful as the cross of Christ is blasphemy.

80. "Bishops, pastors, and theologians, who allow such things to be said to the people, will be

called to account for it.

81. "This shameful preaching, these impudent eulogiums on indulgences make it difficult for the learned to defend the dignity and honour of the pope against the calumnies of the preachers, and the subtile and puzzling questions of the common people. [207]

86. "Why, say they, does not the pope, whose wealth is greater than that of rich Crœsus, build the metropolis of St. Peter with his own money rather than with that of poor Christians?

92. "Would, then, that we were discumbered of all the preachers who say to the church of Christ, Peace! Peace! when there is no peace!

94. "Christians should be exhorted to diligence in following Christ their head through crosses, death, and hell.

95. "For it is far better to enter the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation, than to acquire a carnal security by the flattery of a false peace."

Here, then, was the commencement of the work. The germ of the Reformation was contained in these theses of Luther. The abuses of indulgence were attacked in them, (and this was their most striking feature,) but behind those attacks there was, moreover, a principle which although it attracted the attention of the multitude far less, was destined one day to overthrow the edifice of the papacy. The evangelical doctrine of a free and gratuitous remission of sins was here publicly professed for the first time. Henceforth the work must grow. In fact, it was evident that any man who had faith in the remission of sins as preached by the doctor of Wittemberg; any one who had this conversion and sanctification, the necessity of which, he urged, would no longer concern himself about human ordinances, but would escape from the swaddling-bands of Rome, and secure the liberty of the children of God. All errors behoved to give way before this truth. By it light had at first entered Luther's own mind, and by it, in like manner, light is to be diffused in the Church. What previous reformers wanted was a clear knowledge of this truth; and hence the unfruitfulness of their labours. Luther himself was afterwards aware that, in proclaiming justification by faith, he had laid the axe to the root of the tree. "This is the doctrine," said he, "which we attack in the followers of the papacy. Huss and Wickliff only attacked their lives, but in attacking their doctrine, we take the goose by the neck. All depends on the Word which the pope took from us and falsified. I have vanquished the pope, because my doctrine is according to God, and his is according to the devil.[360]

We too have in our day forgotten the capital doctrine of justification by faith, though, in a sense, the reverse of that of our fathers. "In the time of Luther," says one of our contemporaries,[361] "the remission of sins at least cost money, but in our day every one supplies himself gratis." These two extremes are very much alike. Perhaps there is even more forgetfulness of God in our extreme, than in that of the sixteenth century. The principle of justification by the grace of God, which brought the Church out of so much darkness at the time of the Reformation, is also the only principle which can renew our generation, put an end to its doubts and waverings, destroy the canker of egotism, establish the reign of morality and justice, and, in one word reunite the world to God, from whom it has been separated. [208]

But if the theses of Luther were mighty in virtue of the truth which they proclaimed, they were not less so through the faith of their declared defender. He had boldly unsheathed the sword of the Word, and he had done it trusting to the power of truth. He had felt, that in leaning on the promises of God he could, in the language of the world, afford to risk something. Speaking of this bold attack, he says, "Let him who would begin a good enterprise undertake it, trusting to its own merits, and not (of this let him beware) to the help and countenance of man. Moreover, let not men, nor even the whole world, deter him. For these words will never deceive:—'It is good to trust in the Lord; and none that trust in him shall be confounded.' But let him who neither is able nor willing to hazard something through trust in God, beware of undertaking any thing."[362] Doubtless, Luther, after putting up his theses on the door of the church of All Saints, retired to his tranquil cell, in full possession of the peace and joy imparted by an action done in the name of the Lord, and for the sake of eternal truth.

These theses, notwithstanding of their great boldness, still bespeak the monk, who refuses to allow a single doubt as to the authority of the See of Rome. But in attacking the doctrine of indulgences, Luther had, without perceiving it, assailed several errors, the exposure of which could not be agreeable to the pope, seeing that they tended, sooner or later, to bring his supremacy in question. Luther, at the time, did not see so far; but he felt all the boldness of the step which he had just taken, and, consequently, thought himself bound to temper it in so far as was consistent with the respect due to truth. He, accordingly, presented his theses only as doubtful propositions on which he was anxious for the views of the learned; and, conformably to the established custom, annexed to them a solemn protestation, declaring that he wished not to say or affirm any thing not founded on Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and the rights and decretals of the See of Rome. [209]

Often, in the sequel, on contemplating the immense and unlooked-for consequences of this courageous attack, Luther was astonished at himself, and could not understand how he had ventured upon it. An invisible hand, mightier than his own, held the leading reins, and pushed him into a path which he knew not, and from the difficulties of which he would, perhaps, have recoiled, if he had known them, and been advancing alone and of himself. "I engaged in this dispute," says he, "without premeditated purpose, without knowing it or wishing it; and was

taken quite unprepared. For the truth of this I appeal to the Searcher of hearts."[363]

Luther had become acquainted with the source of these abuses. He had received a little book, ornamented with the arms of the Archbishop of Mentz and Magdeburg, and containing the regulations to be observed in the sale of indulgences. It was this young prelate, therefore, this accomplished prince, who had prescribed, or at least sanctioned, all this quackery. In him Luther only sees a superior to whom he owes fear and reverence;[364] and wishing not to beat the air, but to address those entrusted with the government of the Church, he sends him a letter, distinguished at once by its frankness and humility. Luther wrote this letter to Albert the same day on which he put up his theses.

"Pardon me, most reverend Father in Christ, and most illustrious Prince," says he to him, "if I, who am only the dregs of mankind,[365] have the presumption to write your High Mightiness. The Lord Jesus is my witness, that, feeling how small and despicable I am, I have long put off doing it.... Will your Highness, however, be pleased to let fall a look on a grain of dust, and, in accordance with your episcopal meekness, graciously receive my petition.

"There are people who are carrying the papal indulgence up and down the country in the name of your Grace. I do not so much blame the declamation of the preachers, (I have not heard them,) as the erroneous ideas of unlearned and simple people, who imagine that by buying indulgences [210] they secure their salvation....

"Good God! souls entrusted to your care, most venerable Father, are conducted to death, and not to life. The just and strict account which will be required of you grows and augments from day to day.... I have not been able to continue longer silent. Ah! man is not saved by works, or by the performances of his bishop.... Even the righteous scarcely is saved; and the way that leadeth unto life is strait. Why, then, do the preachers of indulgences by vain fables inspire the people with a false security?

"According to them, indulgence alone ought to be proclaimed, ought to be extolled.... What! Is it not the chief and only duty of bishops to instruct the people in the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ?[366] Jesus Christ has nowhere ordered the preaching of indulgence; but has strongly enjoined the preaching of the gospel.[367] How dreadful, then and how perilous, for a bishop to allow the gospel to be passed in silence, and nothing but the sound of indulgence to be incessantly dunned into the ears of his people....

"Most worthy Father in God, in the Instruction of the commissaries, which has been published in name of your Grace, (doubtless without your knowledge,) it is said that the indulgence is the most precious treasure,—that it reconciles man to God, and enables those who purchase it to dispense with repentance.

"What then, can I, what ought I to do, most venerable Bishop, most serene Prince? Ah! I supplicate your Highness, by the Lord Jesus Christ, to turn upon this business an eye of paternal vigilance, to suppress the pamphlet entirely, and ordain preachers to deliver a different sort of discourses to the people. If you decline to do so, be assured you will one day hear some voice raised in refutation of these preachers, to the great dishonour of your most serene Highness."

Luther at the same time sent his theses to the archbishop, and, in a postscript, asked him to read them, that he might be convinced how little foundation there was for the doctrine of indulgences.

Thus Luther's whole desire was, that the watchmen of the Church should awake, and exert themselves in putting an end to the evils which were laying it waste. Nothing could be more noble and more respectful than this letter from a monk to one of the greatest princes of the Church and the empire. Never was there a better exemplification of the spirit of our Saviour's [211] precept—"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." This is not the course of violent revolutionists, who contemn powers and blame dignities. It is a cry proceeding from the conscience of a Christian and a priest, who gives honour to all, but in the first place fears God. However, all prayers and supplications were useless. Young Albert, engrossed by his pleasures and ambitious designs, made no reply to this solemn appeal. The Bishop of Brandebourg, Luther's ordinary—a learned and pious man, to whom, also, he sent his theses—replied that he was attacking the power of the Church, that he would involve himself in great trouble and vexation, that the thing was beyond his strength, and that his earnest advice to him was to keep quiet.[368] The princes of the Church shut their ears against the voice of God, thus energetically and affectingly declared by the instrumentality of Luther. They would not comprehend the signs of the times; they were struck with that blindness which has been the ruin of so many powers and dignities. "Both thought," says Luther afterwards, "that the pope would be too many for a miserable mendicant like me."

But Luther was better able than the bishops to perceive the disastrous effects which the indulgences had upon the manners and lives of the people; for he was in direct correspondence with them. He had constantly a near view of what the bishops learned only by unfaithful reports. If the bishops failed him, God did not fail him. The Head of the Church, who sits in heaven, and to whom has been given all power upon the earth, had himself prepared the ground, and deposited the grain in the hands of his servant. He gave wings to the seed of truth, and sent it in an instant over the whole length and breadth of his Church.

Nobody appeared at the university next day to attack the propositions of Luther. The traffic of

Tezel was too much in discredit, and too disgraceful for any other than himself, or some one of his creatures, to dare to take up the gauntlet. But these theses were destined to be heard in other places than under the roof of an academical hall. Scarcely had they been nailed to the door of the castle church of Wittemberg, than the feeble strokes of the hammer were followed throughout Germany by a blow which reached even to the foundations of proud Rome, threatening sudden ruin to the walls, the gates, and the pillars of the papacy, stunning and terrifying its champions, and at the same time awakening thousands from the sleep of error.[369]

These theses spread with the rapidity of lightning. A month had not elapsed before they were at [212]
Rome. "In a fortnight," says a contemporary historian,[370] "they were in every part of Germany, and in four weeks had traversed almost the whole of Christendom; as if the angels themselves had been the messengers, and carried them before the eyes of all men. Nobody can believe what a noise they made." They were afterwards translated into Dutch and Spanish, and a traveller even sold them at Jerusalem. "Every one," says Luther, "was complaining of the indulgences; and as all the bishops and doctors had kept silence, and nobody had ventured to bell the cat, poor Luther became a famous doctor, because, as they expressed it, one had at length come who dared to do it. But I liked not this glory; the music seemed to me too lofty for the words."[371]

Some of the pilgrims, who had flocked from different countries to Wittemberg for the feast of All Saints, instead of indulgences carried home with them the famous theses of the Augustin monk, and thus helped to circulate them. All read, pondered, and commented on them. They occupied the attention of all convents and all universities.[372] All pious monks who had entered the cloister to save their soul, all upright and honest men, rejoiced in this striking and simple confession of the truth, and wished with all their heart that Luther would continue the work which he had begun. At length a monk had had the courage to undertake this perilous contest. It was a reparation made to Christendom, and the public conscience was satisfied. In these theses piety saw a blow given to all kinds of superstition; the new theology hailed in them the defeat of the scholastic dogmas; princes and magistrates regarded them as a barrier raised against the encroachments of ecclesiastical power; while the nations were delighted at seeing the decided negative which this monk had given to the avarice of the Roman chancery. Erasmus, a man very worthy of credit, and one of the principal rivals of the Reformer, says to Duke George of Saxony, "When Luther attacked this fable, the whole world concurred in applauding him." "I observe," said he on another occasion to Cardinal Campeggi, "that those of the purest morals, and an evangelical piety, are the least opposed to Luther. His life is lauded even by those who cannot bear his faith. The world was weary of a doctrine containing so many childish fables, and was thirsting for that living water, pure and hidden, which issues from the springs of the evangelists and the apostles. The genius of Luther was fitted to accomplish these things, and his zeal must [213]
have animated him to the noble enterprise."[373]

CHAP. VI.

Reuchlin—Erasmus—Flek—Bibra—The Emperor—The Pope—Myconius—The Monks—Apprehensions—Adelman—An Old Priest—The Bishop—The Elector—The Inhabitants of Erfurt—Luther's Reply—Trouble—Luther's Moving Principle.

We must follow these propositions wherever they penetrated; to the studies of the learned, the cells of monks, and the palaces of princes, in order to form some idea of the various but wonderful effects which they produced in Germany.

Reuchlin received them. He was weary of the hard battle which he had been obliged to fight against the monks. The power which the new combatant displayed in his theses revived the spirit of the old champion of letters, and gave joy to his saddened heart. "Thanks be to God," exclaimed he, after he had read them, "now they have found a man who will give them so much to do, that they will be obliged to let me end my old age in peace."

The prudent Erasmus was in the Netherlands when the theses reached him. He was inwardly delighted at seeing his secret wishes for the reformation of abuses expressed with so much boldness, and commended their author, only exhorting him to more moderation and prudence. Nevertheless, some persons in his presence blaming Luther's violence, he said, "God has given men a cure which cuts thus deep into the flesh, because otherwise the disease would be incurable." And at a later period when the Elector of Saxony asked his opinion as to Luther's affair, he replied with a smile, "I am not at all astonished at his having made so much noise, for he has committed two unpardonable faults; he has attacked the tiara of the pope and the belly of the monks."[374]

Dr. Flek, prior of the cloister of Steinlausitz, had for some time given up reading mass, but had not told any one his reason. He one day found the theses of Luther posted up in the refectory of [214]
his convent. He went up and began to read them, but had only perused a few, when unable to contain his joy, he exclaimed, "Well, well, he whom we have been so long looking for is come at last; and this you monks will see." Then reading in the future, says Mathesius, and playing upon the word Wittemberg, he said, "Everybody will come to seek wisdom at this mountain, and will

find it.[375] He wrote to the doctor to persevere courageously in his glorious combat. Luther calls him a man full of joy and consolation.

The ancient and celebrated episcopal see of Würzburg was then held by Lowrence de Bibra, a man, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, pious, honest, and wise. When a gentleman came to intimate to him that he intended his daughter for the cloister, "Give her rather a husband," said he; and then added, "Are you in want of money for that purpose? I will lend you." The emperor and all the princes held him in the highest esteem. He lamented the disorders of the Church, and especially those of convents. The theses having reached his palace also, he read them with great delight, and publicly declared his approbation of Luther. At a later period he wrote to the Elector Frederick, "Don't part with pious Dr. Martin Luther; for he has been wronged." The Elector delighted at this testimony, wrote the Reformer with his own hand to acquaint him with it.

The Emperor Maximilian, predecessor of Charles V, also read and admired the theses of the monk of Wittemberg. He perceived his talents, and foresaw that this obscure Augustin might, indeed, become a powerful ally of Germany in her struggle with Rome. Accordingly, he instructed his envoy to say to the Elector of Saxony, "Take good care of the monk Luther, for the time may come when we shall have need of him;"[376] and shortly after, being at a diet with Pfeffinger, the Elector's confidential councillor, he said to him, "Well what is your Augustin doing? Assuredly his propositions are not to be despised; he will give the monks enough to do."[377]

At Rome even, and in the Vatican, the theses were not so ill received as might have been supposed. Leo X judged of them as a friend of letters, rather than a pope. The amusement which they gave him made him overlook the severe truths which they contained; and when Sylvester Prierias, the master of the sacred palace, who had the office of examining new works, urged him to treat Luther as a heretic, he replied, "This Friar, Martin Luther, is a great genius; all that is [215] said against him is mere monkish jealousy."[378]

There were few on whom the theses of Luther produced a deeper impression than on the scholar of Annaberg, whom Tezel had so pitilessly repulsed. Myconius had entered a convent, and the very first evening dreamed he saw an immense field quite covered with ripe corn. "Cut," said the voice of his guide to him; and when he excused himself for want of skill, his guide showed him a reaper, who was working with inconceivable rapidity. "Follow, and do like him," said the guide. [379] Myconius, eager for holiness as Luther had been, devoted himself when in the convent to vigils, fasts, macerations, and all the works invented by men; but at length he despaired of ever attaining the objects of his efforts. He abandoned study, and spent his whole time in manual labour. Sometimes he bound books, sometimes used the turning-lathe, and sometimes did any other kind of work. Still, however, this external labour did not appease his troubled conscience. God had spoken to him, and he could not fall back into his former slumber. This state of agony lasted for several years. It is sometimes supposed that the paths of the Reformers were quite smooth, and that after they renounced the observances of the Church, their remaining course was easy and pleasant. It is not considered that they arrived at the truth by means of internal struggles, a thousand times more painful than the observances to which servile minds easily submitted.

At length the year 1517 arrived. The theses of Luther were published, and, traversing Christendom, arrived also at the convent where the scholar of Annaberg was residing. He hid himself in a corner of the cloister, with John Voit, another monk, that they might be able to read them without interruption.[380] They contained the very truth of which his father had told him. His eyes were opened, he felt a voice within him responding to that which was then sounding throughout Germany, and great consolation filled his heart. "I see plainly," said he, "that Martin Luther is the reaper whom I saw in my dream, and who taught me to gather the ears of corn." He immediately began to profess the doctrine which Luther had proclaimed. The monks, alarmed when they heard him, argued with him, and declaimed against Luther and against his convent. "That convent," replied Myconius, "is like our Lord's sepulchre; they wish to prevent Christ from [216] rising again, but will not succeed." At last his superiors, seeing they could not convince him, interdicted him for a year and a half from all intercourse with the world, not permitting him even to write or to receive letters, and threatening him with perpetual imprisonment. However, for him also the hour of deliverance arrived. Being afterwards appointed pastor at Zwickau, he was the first who declared against the papacy in the churches of Thuringia. "Then," says he, "I could work with my venerable father Luther at the Gospel harvest." Jonas describes him as a man as able as he was willing.[381]

Doubtless, there were others also to whom Luther's theses were the signal of life. They kindled a new light in many cells, cottages, and palaces. "While those who had entered convents in quest of good fare and indolence, or rank and honours," says Mathesius, "began to load the name of Luther with reproaches, the monks who lived in prayer, fasting, and mortification, thanked God as soon as they heard the cry of the eagle, announced by John Huss, a century before."[382] Even the people who did not well understand the theology of the question, and who only knew that Luther was assailing the empire of mendicants and lazy monks, received it with bursts of joy. An immense sensation was produced in Germany by his bold propositions. However, some of the Reformer's contemporaries, who foresaw the consequences to which they might lead, and the numerous obstacles which they were destined to encounter, loudly expressed their fears, or at most rejoiced with trembling.

"I am much afraid," wrote the excellent canon of Augsburg, Bernard Adelman, to his friend Pirckeimer, "that the worthy man must yield at last to the avarice and power of the partizans of indulgences. His representations have had so little effect, that the Bishop of Augsburg, our primate and metropolitan,[383] has just ordered new indulgences, in the name of the pope, for St. Peter's at Rome. Let him hasten to seek the aid of princes. Let him beware of tempting God; for it were to show an absolute want of sense to overlook the imminent danger to which he is exposed." Adelman was greatly delighted when it was rumoured that Henry VIII had invited Luther to England. "There," thought he, "he will be able to teach the truth in peace." Several thus imagined that the doctrine of the gospel was to be supported by the power of princes, not knowing that it advances without this power, and is often trammelled and weakened by the possession of it.

The celebrated historian, Albert Kranz, was at Hamburg on his deathbed, when Luther's theses were brought to him. "You are right, friar Martin," he exclaimed, "but you will not succeed.... Poor monk! Go into your cell and cry, 'Lord, have mercy on me!'"[384] [217]

An old priest of Hexter in Westphalia, having received and read the theses in his presbytery, said in Low German, shaking his head, "Dear friar Martin! if you succeed in overthrowing this purgatory and all these paper merchants, assuredly you are a mighty segnior!" Erbenius, a century later, wrote beneath these words the following stanza:—

"Quid vero nunc si viveret,
Bonus iste clericus diceret?"

What then would the good clerk say,
Were he alive to see this day.

Not only did many of Luther's friends entertain fears as to the step which he had taken, but several even testified their disapprobation.

The Bishop of Brandenburg, distressed at seeing his diocese the scene of so important a contest, was anxious to suppress it. He resolved to take the gentle method, and employed the Abbot of Lenin to say to Luther, in his name, "I don't find any thing in the theses contradictory of Catholic truth. I myself condemn these indiscreet proclamations; but for the love of peace and deference to your bishop, cease writing on the subject." Luther was confounded at being thus humbly addressed by so great an abbot and so great a bishop, and led away by the feelings of the moment, replied, "I consent. I would rather obey than work miracles, were it in my power."[385]

The Elector was grieved at the commencement of a contest which was no doubt legitimate, but the end of which it was impossible to foresee. No prince was more desirous than Frederick for the maintenance of public peace. Now, what an immense fire might this small spark not kindle? What discord, what rending of nations, might this quarrel of monks not produce? The Elector repeatedly made Luther aware how much he was annoyed.[386]

Even in his own order and his own convent of Wittemberg, Luther met with disapprobation. The prior and sub-prior, terrified at the clamour of Tezel and his companions, repaired in fear and trembling to the cell of friar Martin, and said, "Do not, we entreat you, bring shame on our order. The other orders, and especially the Dominicans, are overjoyed to think that they are not to be alone in disgrace." Luther was moved by these words, but soon recovering himself, he replied, "Dear fathers, if the thing is not done in the name of God it will fail, but if it is, let it proceed." The prior and sub-prior said no more. "The thing proceeds even now," adds Luther, after relating this anecdote, "and, please God, always will proceed better and better, even to the end. Amen." [387] [218]

Luther had many other attacks to sustain. At Erfurt he was accused of violence and pride in his manner of condemning the opinions of others—the charge usually brought against those who act under the strong conviction which the word of God gives. He was also charged with precipitation and fickleness.

"They call upon me for moderation," replied Luther, "and they themselves, in the judgment which they pass upon me, trample it under foot!... We see the mote in our brother's eye, and observe not the beam in our own.... Truth will no more gain by my moderation than it will lose by my presumption. I desire to know," continued he, addressing Lange, "what errors you and your theologians have found in my theses? Who knows not that a new idea is seldom advanced without an appearance of arrogance, and an accusation of disputatiousness? Were humility herself to undertake something new, those of an opposite opinion would charge her with pride.[388] Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death? Because they were deemed proud despisers of the wisdom of the time, and advanced new truths without previously taking counsel of the organs of ancient opinion."

"Let not the wise of the present day, then, expect of me humility, or rather hypocrisy enough, to ask their opinion before publishing what duty calls me to say. What I do will be done, not by the prudence of men, but by the counsel of God. If the work is of God, who can arrest it? If it is not of God, who can advance it?... Not my will, nor theirs, nor ours, but Thy will be done, O Holy Father who art in heaven!" In these words what courage, what noble enthusiasm, what confidence in God, and, above all, what truth, truth fitted to all times!

Still the reproaches and accusations which assailed Luther from all quarters, failed not to make

some impression on his mind. His hopes were disappointed. He had expected to see the heads of [219]
the church, and the most distinguished scholars of the nation, publicly uniting with him; but it was otherwise. A word of approbation, allowed to escape at the first moment of enthusiasm, was all that the best disposed gave him, while several of those whom he had till then most highly venerated were loud in censuring him. He felt himself alone in the whole Church,[389] alone against Rome, alone at the foot of that ancient and formidable edifice, whose foundations lay deep in the bowels of the earth, whose battlements reached the clouds, and at which he had just struck a daring blow. He was troubled and depressed. Doubts which he thought he had surmounted returned with new force. He trembled at the thought of having the authority of the whole Church against him, of withdrawing from that authority and resisting that voice which nations and ages had humbly obeyed, of setting himself in opposition to that church which he had from infancy been accustomed to venerate as the mother of the faithful.... He a paltry monk ... the effort was too great for man.[390] No step cost him more than this, and, accordingly, it was the step which decided the Reformation.

The struggle which took place in his soul cannot be better described than in his own words. "I began this affair," says he, "with great fear and trembling. Who was I, a poor, miserable, despicable friar, liker a corpse than a living man;[391]—who was I, to oppose the majesty of the pope, before whom not only the kings of the earth and the whole world, but also, if I may so speak, heaven and hell trembled, compelled to yield obedience to his nod? Nobody can imagine what my heart suffered during those two first years, and into what depression, I might say what despair, I was often plunged. No idea of it can be formed by those proud spirits who afterwards attacked the pope with great boldness, although with all their ability they could not have done him the least harm, had not Jesus Christ, by me his feeble and unworthy instrument, given him a wound which never will be cured. But while they were contented to look on, and leave me alone in danger, I was not so joyful, so tranquil, or so sure about the business; for at that time I did not know many things which, thank God, I know now. It is true, several pious Christians were much pleased with my Propositions, and set a great value upon them, but I could not own and regard them as the organs of the Holy Spirit. I looked only to the pope, the cardinals, bishops, [220]
theologians, jurisconsults, monks, and priests. That was the direction from which I expected the Spirit to come. Still having, by means of Scripture, come off victorious over all contrary arguments, I have at length, by the grace of Christ, though after much pain, travail, and anguish, surmounted the only argument which arrested me, viz., that it is necessary to listen to the Church;[392] for from the bottom of my heart I honoured the church of the pope as the true church, and did so with much more sincerity and veneration, than those shameless and infamous corrupters who are now so very forward in opposing me. Had I despised the pope as much as he is despised in the hearts of those who praise him so loudly with their lips, I would have dreaded that the earth would instantly open and swallow me up as it did Corah and his company!"

How honourable these misgivings are to Luther! How well they display the sincerity and uprightness of his soul! And how much more worthy of respect do those painful assaults which he had to sustain, both within and without, prove him to be, than mere intrepidity without any such struggle, could have done! The travail of his soul clearly displays the truth and divinity of his work. We see that their origin and principle were in heaven. After all the facts which we have stated, who will presume to say that the Reformation was an affair of politics? No, assuredly; it was not the effect of human policy, but of the power of God. Had Luther been urged by human passions only, he would have yielded to his fears; his miscalculations and scruples would have smothered the fire which had been kindled in his soul, and he would only have thrown a transient gleam upon the Church, in the same way as the many zealous and pious men, whose names have come down to us. But now God's time had arrived; the work was not to be arrested; the emancipation of the Church was to be accomplished. Luther was destined at least to prepare that complete emancipation and those extensive developments which are promised to the kingdom of Christ. Accordingly, he experienced the truth of the magnificent promise, "The strong men shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fail; but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles." This Divine power which filled the heart of the doctor of Wittemberg, and which had engaged him in the combat, soon gave him back all his former resolution.

CHAP. VII. [221]

Tezel's Attack—Luther's Reply—Good Works—Luther and Spalatin—Study of Scripture —Scheurl and Luther—Doubts on the Theses—Luther for the People—A New Suit.

The reproaches, timidity, or silence, of Luther's friends had discouraged him; the attacks of his enemies had the very opposite effect. This frequently happens. The adversaries of the truth, while thinking by their violence to do their own work, often do that of God himself.[393] The gauntlet which had been thrown down was taken up by Tezel with a feeble hand. Luther's sermon, which had been to the people what his theses had been to the learned, was the subject of his first reply. He refuted it point by point, in his own way, and then announced that he was preparing to combat his adversary at greater length in theses which he would maintain at the university of

Frankfort on the Oder. "Then," said he, adverting to the conclusion of Luther's sermon; "then every one will be able to judge who is heresiarch, heretic, schismatic, erroneous, rash, and calumnious. Then will it be manifest to the eyes of all who has a dull brain, who has never felt the Bible, read Christian doctrines, understood his own teachers.... In maintaining the propositions which I advance, I am ready to suffer all things, prison, cudgel, water, and fire."

One thing which strikes us in reading this production of Tezel is the difference between his German and that of Luther. One would say that an interval of several ages is between them. A foreigner, especially, sometimes finds it difficult to comprehend Tezel, whereas the language of Luther is almost the same as that of our day. A comparison of the two is sufficient to show that Luther is the creator of the German language. No doubt, this is one of his least merits, but still it is one.

Luther replied without naming Tezel; Tezel had not named him. But there was nobody in Germany who could not have placed at the head of their publications the name which they had judged it expedient to suppress. Tezel tried to confound the repentance which God demands with the penance which the Church imposes, in order to give a higher value to his indulgences. Luther made it his business to clear up this point.

"To avoid many words," said he, in his graphic style, "I give to the wind (which, besides, has more [222]
leisure than I have) his other words, which are only sheets of paper and withered leaves; and I content myself with examining the foundations of his house of bur-thistle.

"The penitence which the holy father imposes cannot be that which Jesus Christ demands; for whatever the holy father imposes he can dispense with; and if these two penitences were one and the same, it would follow that the holy father takes away what Jesus appoints, and thereby makes void the commandment of God.... Ah! if it so pleases him, let him maltreat me," continues Luther, after quoting other false interpretations of Tezel; "let him call me heretic, schismatic, calumniator, or anything he likes; I will not on that account be his enemy, but will pray for him as for a friend. But it is not possible to allow him to treat the Holy Scriptures, our consolation, (Rom., xv, 4,) as a sow treats a sack of corn."[394]

We must accustom ourselves to Luther's occasional use of expressions too harsh and homely for our age,—it was the custom of the time; and under those words which in our days would violate the proprieties of language, there is usually a force and justice which disposes us to pardon their rankness. He continues thus:—

"He who buys indulgences, say our adversaries, does better than he who gives alms to a poor man not absolutely in extremity. Now, let them tell us that the Turks are profaning our churches and crosses, we will be able to hear it without a shudder; for we have amongst ourselves Turks a hundred times worse, who profane and annihilate the only true sanctuary, the word of God, which sanctifies all things.... Let him who would follow this precept take good care not to give food to the hungry, nor clothing to the naked, before they give up the ghost, and, consequently, have no need of his assistance."

It is important to contrast the zeal which Luther thus manifests for good works with what he says of justification by faith. Indeed, no man who has any experience, or any knowledge of Christianity, needs this new proof of a truth of which he is fully assured; viz., that the more we adhere to justification by faith, the more strongly we feel the necessity of works, and the more diligently we practise them; whereas lax views as to the doctrine of faith necessarily lead to laxity of conduct. Luther, as St. Paul before, and Howard after him, are proofs of the former; all men [223]
without faith (and with such the world is filled) are proofs of the latter.

Luther comes next to the insulting language of Tezel, and pays him back in his own way. "At the sound of these invectives methinks I hear a large ass braying at me. I am delighted at it, and would be very sorry that such people should give me the name of a good Christian." We must give Luther as he is with all his foibles. This turn for pleasantry, coarse pleasantry, was one of them. The Reformer was a great man, undoubtedly a man of God; but he was a man, not an angel, and not even a perfect man. Who is entitled to call upon him for perfection?

"For the rest," adds he, challenging his opponents to the combat, "although it is not usual to burn heretics for such points, here, at Wittemberg, am I, Doctor Martin Luther! Is there any inquisitor who pretends to chew fire, and make rocks leap into the air? I give him to know, that he has a safe-conduct to come here, an open door, and bed and board certain, all by the gracious care of our admirable Duke Frederick, who will never protect heresy."[395]

We see that Luther was not deficient in courage. He trusted to the word of God—a rock which never gives way in the tempest. But God in faithfulness gave him still further aid. The bursts of joy with which the multitude had hailed Luther's theses were soon succeeded by a gloomy silence. The learned had timidly drawn back on hearing the calamities and insults of Tezel and the Dominicans. The bishops, who had previously been loud in condemnation of the abuses of indulgences, seeing them at length attacked, had not failed, with an inconsistency of which there are but too many examples, to find that at that time the attack was inopportune. The greater part of the Reformer's friends were frightened. Several of them had fled. But when the first terror was over, the minds of men took an opposite direction. The monk of Wittemberg soon saw himself again surrounded with a great number of friends and admirers.

There was one who, although timid, remained faithful to him throughout this crisis, and whose

friendship at once solaced and supported him. This was Spalatin. Their correspondence was not interrupted. "I thank you," says he, when speaking of a particular mark of friendship which he had received from him; "but what do I not owe you?"[396] It was on the 11th November, just fifteen days after the publication of the theses, and consequently when the minds of men were in [224] a state of the greatest fermentation, that Luther thus delights to unbosom his gratitude to his friend.

In the same letter to Spalatin, it is interesting to see the strong man, who had just performed a most daring exploit, declaring from what source he derives his strength. "We can do nothing of ourselves; we can do everything by the grace of God. By us all ignorance is invincible, but no ignorance is invincible by the grace of God. The more we endeavour of ourselves to attain to wisdom, the nearer we approach to folly.[397] It is not true that this invincible ignorance excuses the sinner; were it so there would be no sin in the world."

Luther had not sent his propositions, either to the prince or to any of his courtiers. The chaplain seems to have expressed some surprise at this, and Luther answers:—"I did not wish my theses to reach our illustrious prince or any of his court, before those who think themselves specially addressed had received them, lest it should be thought that I had published them by order of the prince or to gain his favour, or from opposition to the Bishop of Mentz. I hear there are already several who dream such things. But now I can swear in all safety that my theses were published without the knowledge of Duke Frederick."[398]

If Spalatin solaced his friend, and supported him by his influence, Luther on his part was desirous to meet the requests of the modest chaplain. The latter, among other questions, asked one which is frequently repeated in our day, "What is the best method of studying the Holy Scriptures?"

"Till now, my dear Spalatin," replied Luther, "you have asked questions which I could answer. But to direct you in the study of the Scriptures is more than I am able to do. However, if you would absolutely know my method, I will not hide it from you.

"It is most certain that we cannot succeed in comprehending the Scripture either by study or mere intellect. Your first duty, then, is to begin with prayer.[399] Entreat the Lord that he will in his great mercy deign to grant you the true knowledge of his Word. There is no other interpreter of the word of God than the Author of that word according as it is said, 'They will all be taught of God.' Hope nothing from your works, nothing from your intellect. Trust only in God, and in the [225] influence of his Spirit. Believe one who is speaking from experience."[400]

We here see how Luther attained possession of the truth of which he was a preacher. It was not, as some pretend, by confiding in a presumptuous reason, nor, as others maintain, by abandoning himself to hateful passions. The source from which he drew it was the purest, holiest, and most sublime—God himself consulted in humility, confidence, and prayer. Few in our day imitate him, and hence few comprehend him. To a serious mind these words of Luther are in themselves a justification of the Reformation.

Luther likewise found comfort in the friendship of respectable laymen. Christopher Scheurl, the excellent secretary of the imperial city of Nuremberg, gave him gratifying marks of his friendship. We know how pleasant expressions of sympathy are to the man who feels himself assailed from all quarters. The secretary of Nuremberg did more; he tried to make friends to his friend. He urged him to dedicate one of his works to a then celebrated lawyer of Nuremberg, named Jerome Ebner:—"You have a high idea of my studies," modestly replied Luther; "but I have the poorest idea of them myself. Nevertheless, I was desirous to meet your wishes. I have searched ... ; but in all my store, which I never found so meagre, nothing presented itself which seemed at all worthy of being dedicated to so great a man by so little a man."[401] Striking humility! It is Luther who speaks thus, and the person with whom he contrasts himself is Doctor Ebner, who is altogether unknown to us. Posterity has not ratified Luther's judgment.

Luther, who had done nothing to circulate his theses, had not sent them to Scheurl any more than to the Elector and his courtiers. The secretary of Nuremberg expressed his surprise. "I had no intention," replies Luther, "to give my theses so much publicity. I wished only to confer on their contents with some of those who reside with us or near us;[402] intending, if they condemned, to destroy, and if they approved, to publish them. But now they are printed, reprinted, and spread far and wide, beyond my expectation; so much so that I repent of their production.[403] Not that I have any fear of the truth being known by the people, (for this was all I [226] sought,) but this is not the way of instructing them. There are questions in the theses as to which I have still my doubts; and if I had thought that they were to produce such a sensation, there are things which I would have omitted, and others which I would have affirmed with greater confidence." Luther afterwards thought differently. Far from fearing he had said too much, he declared that he ought to have said still more. But the apprehensions which Luther expresses to Scheurl do honour to his sincerity. They show that he had nothing like a premeditated plan, had no party spirit, no overweening conceit, and sought nothing but the truth. When he had fully discovered the truth, his language was different. "You will find in my first writings," said he, many years after, "that I very humbly made many concessions to the pope, and on points of great importance; concessions which I now detest, and regard as abominable and blasphemous."[404]

Scheurl was not the only layman of importance who, at this time, testified his friendship for Luther. The celebrated painter, Albert Durer, sent him a present, (perhaps one of his pictures,)

and the doctor expressed his sense of the obligation in the warmest terms.[405]

Thus Luther had practical experience of the truth of that saying of Divine wisdom:—"A friend loveth at all times; and a brother is born for adversity." Those words he remembered for the sake of others also, and accordingly pleaded the cause of the whole population. The Elector had just levied a tax, and it was confidently alleged that he was going to levy another, probably on the advice of his counsellor Pfeffinger, against whom Luther often throws out cutting sarcasms. The doctor boldly placed himself in the breach. "Let not your Highness," said he, "despise the prayer of a poor mendicant. In the name of God I entreat you not to order a new tax. My heart is broken, as well as that of several of your most devoted servants, at seeing how much the last has injured your fair fame, and the popularity which your Highness enjoyed. It is true that God has endowed you with profound intellect, so that you see much farther into things than I, or doubtless all your subjects, do. But, perhaps, it is the will of God that a feeble intellect instruct a great one, in order that no one may trust in himself, but only in the Lord our God. May he deign to keep your body in [227] health for our good, and destine your soul to life eternal. Amen." In this way it is that the gospel, while it makes us honour kings, makes us also plead the cause of the people. While it tells them of their duties, it, at the same time, reminds the prince of their rights. The voice of a Christian such as Luther, raised in the cabinet of a sovereign, might often supply the place of a whole assembly of legislators.

In this letter, in which Luther addresses a harsh lesson to the Elector, he fears not to present a request to him, or rather to remind him of a promise, viz., to give him a new suit. This freedom of Luther, at a moment when he might have feared he had given offence to Frederick, is equally honourable to the prince and to the Reformer. "But," adds he, "if it is Pfeffinger who has the charge of it, let him give it in reality, and not in protestations of friendship. He knows very well how to weave a web of good words, but no good cloth ever comes out of it." Luther thought, that, by the faithful counsel which he had given to his prince, he had well deserved his court dress. [406] Be this as it may, two years later he had not received it, and renewed his request.[407] This seems to indicate that Frederick was not so much under the influence of Luther as has been said.

CHAP. VIII.

Disputation at Frankfort—Tezel's Theses—Menaces—Opposition of Knipstrow—Luther's Theses Burnt—The Monks—Luther's Peace—Tezel's Theses Burnt—Luther's Vexation.

The minds of men had thus gradually recovered from their first alarm. Luther himself was disposed to declare that his words did not mean so much as had been imagined. New circumstances might divert public attention, and the blow struck at Roman doctrine might, as had been the case with so many others, spend itself in the air. The partisans of Rome prevented this result. They fanned the flame instead of smothering it.

Tezel and the Dominicans replied haughtily to the attack which had been made upon them. Burning with eagerness to crush the audacious monk who had disturbed their traffic, and to gain the favour of the Roman pontiff, they uttered cries of rage. They maintained that to attack the indulgence ordered by the pope was to attack the pope himself, and they called in the aid of all [228] the monks and theologians of their school.[408] In fact, Tezel felt that an opponent like Luther was too much for him single-handed. Quite disconcerted, but more especially enraged at the doctor's attack, he quitted the environs of Wittemberg, and repaired to Frankfort on the Oder, where he arrived as early as November, 1517. The university of that town, like that of Wittemberg, was of recent date. One of the professors was Conrad Wimpina, a man of much eloquence, an old rival of Pollich of Mellerstadt, and one of the most distinguished theologians of the time. Wimpina's envy was excited both by the doctor and by the university of Wittemberg; for their reputation obscured his. Tezel applied to him for a reply to Luther's theses, and Wimpina wrote two series of antitheses, the former to defend the doctrine of indulgences, and the latter to defend the authority of the pope.

This disputation, which had been long prepared and loudly advertised, and of which Tezel entertained the highest hopes, took place on the 20th January, 1518. Tezel having beaten up for recruits, monks had been sent from all the neighbouring cloisters, and assembled to the number of more than three hundred. Tezel read his theses, one of which declared, "that whosoever says that the soul does not fly away from purgatory as soon as the money tinkles on the bottom of the strong box, is in error."[409]

But, above all, he maintained propositions, according to which, the pope appeared to be truly, as the apostle expresses it, *seated as God in the temple of God*. It was convenient for this shameless merchant to take refuge under the pope's mantle, with all his disorders and scandals.

In presence of the numerous assembly in which he stood, he declared himself ready to maintain as follows:—

3. "Christians must be taught that the pope, by the greatness of his power, is above the whole

universal Church and all councils. His orders ought to be implicitly obeyed.

4. "Christians must be taught that the pope alone is entitled to decide in matters of Christian faith; that he, and none but he, has the power to explain the meaning of Scripture in his own sense, and to approve or condemn all words or works of others.

5. "Christians must be taught that the judgment of the pope in things which concern Christian [229] faith, and which are necessary to the salvation of the human race, cannot possibly err.

6. "Christians must be taught that in matters of faith they ought to lean and rest more upon the opinion of the pope, as manifested by his decisions, than on the opinion of all wise men, as drawn by them out of Scripture.

8. "Christians must be taught that those who attack the honour and dignity of the pope are guilty of the crime of lese-majesty, and deserve malediction.

17. "Christians must be taught that there are many things which the Church regards as authentic articles of universal truth, although they are not found either in the canon of Scripture or in ancient doctors.

44. "Christians must be taught to regard those as obstinate heretics, who, by their words, their actions, or their writings, declare that they would not retract their heretical propositions were excommunication after excommunication to rain or hail upon them.

48. "Christians must be taught that those who protect heretics in their error, and who, by their authority, prevent them from being brought before the judge who is entitled to try them, are excommunicated; that if, in the space of a year, they desist not from doing so, they will be declared infamous, and severely punished with various punishments, in terms of law, and to the terror of all men.[410]

50. "Christians must be told that those who spoil so many books and so much paper, and who preach or dispute publicly and wickedly on the confession of the mouth, the satisfaction of works, the rich and great indulgences of the Bishop of Rome, and on his power; that those who ally themselves with those so preaching or writing, who take pleasure in their writings, and circulate them among the people and in the world; that those, in fine, who secretly speak of those things in a contemptuous and irreverent manner, may well tremble at incurring the pains which have just been named, and of precipitating themselves and others with them, at the last day, into eternal condemnation, and even here below into great disgrace. For every beast that toucheth the mountain shall be stoned."

We see that Luther was not the only person whom Tezel attacked. In the forty-eighth thesis he had probably the Elector of Saxony in view. These propositions savour much of the Dominican. To [230] threaten every contradictor with severe punishment was an inquisitor's argument, and scarcely admitted of a reply. The three hundred monks whom Tezel had brought together gaped and stared in admiration of his discourse. The theologians of the university were too much afraid of being classed with the abettors of heresy, or were too much attached to the principles of Wimpina, candidly to adopt the extraordinary theses which had just been read.

The whole affair, about which so much noise had been made, seemed destined to be only a sham fight; but among the crowd of students present at the disputation was a young man of about twenty, named John Knipstrow. He had read the theses of Luther, and found them conformable to the doctrines of Scripture. Indignant at seeing the truth publicly trampled under foot, while no one appeared to defend it, this young man rose up, to the great astonishment of the whole assembly, and attacked the presumptuous Tezel. The poor Dominican, who had not counted on such opposition, was quite disconcerted. After some efforts, he quitted the field of battle, and gave place to Wimpina, who made a more vigorous resistance; but Knipstrow pressed him so closely, that, to put an end to a contest, which in his eyes was so unbecoming, Wimpina, who presided, declared the discussion closed, and proceeded forthwith to confer the degree of doctor on Tezel, in recompence of this glorious combat. Wimpina, to disencumber himself of the young orator, caused him to be sent to the convent of Pyritz in Pomerania, with orders that he should be strictly watched. But this dawning light was only removed from the banks of the Oder that it might afterwards shed a bright effulgence in Pomerania.[411] When God sees it meet, he employs scholars to confound teachers.

Tezel, wishing to repair the check which he had received, had recourse to the *ultima ratio* of Rome and the inquisitors,—I mean the faggot. On a public walk in one of the suburbs of Frankfort, he caused a pulpit and a scaffold to be erected, and repaired thither in solemn procession with his *insignia* of inquisitor. Mounting the pulpit, he let loose all his fury. He darted his thunder, and with his Stentorian voice exclaimed, that the heretic Luther ought to be burned alive. Then placing the doctor's theses and sermon on the scaffold, he burned them.[412] He was better acquainted with this kind of work than with the defence of theses. Here he met with no [231] opponents, and his victory was complete. The impudent Dominican returned in triumph to Frankfort. When parties in power are vanquished, they have recourse to certain demonstrations which must be conceded to them as a kind of consolation to their disgrace.

The second theses of Tezel form an important epoch in the Reformation. They changed the locality of the dispute, transporting it from the indulgence market to the halls of the Vatican, and diverting it from Tezel to the pope. Instead of the contemptible creature whom Luther had taken

in his fist, they substituted the sacred person of the Head of the church. Luther was stunned at this. It is probable that he would himself have taken the step at a later period, but his enemies spared him the trouble. Thenceforward the question related not merely to a disreputable traffic, but to Rome; and the blow by which a bold hand had tried to demolish the shop of Tezel, shook the very foundations of the pontifical throne.

Tezel's theses were only a signal to the Roman troops. A cry against Luther arose among the monks, who were infuriated at the appearance of an adversary more formidable than either Erasmus or Reuchlin had been. The name of Luther resounded from the pulpits of the Dominicans, who addressed themselves to the passions of the people, and inveighed against the courageous doctor, as a madman, a deceiver, and a demoniac. His doctrine was denounced as the most dreadful heresy. "Wait only for a fortnight, or four weeks at farthest," said they, "and this noted heretic will be burned." Had it depended only on the Dominicans, the fate of the Saxon doctor had soon been that of Huss and Jerome, but his life was destined to accomplish what the ashes of Huss had begun. Each does the work of God, one by his death, and another by his life. Several now began to cry out that the whole university of Wittemberg was tainted with heresy, and pronounced it infamous.[413] "Let us pursue the villain, and all his partisans," continued they. In several places these exclamations had the effect of stirring up the passions of the people. Those who shared the opinions of the Reformer had the public attention directed towards them; and in every place where the monks were strongest, the friends of the gospel felt the effects of their hatred. Thus, in regard to the Reformation, the Saviour's prediction began to be accomplished, "They will revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." This is a recompence which the world at no time fails to bestow on the decided friends of the gospel. [232]

When Luther was made acquainted with Tezel's theses, and with the general attack of which they were the signal, his courage rose. He felt that it was necessary to withstand such adversaries to the face; and his intrepid zeal had no difficulty in resolving so to do. At the same time, their feebleness made him aware of his own strength, and told him what he was.

He did not, however, allow himself to give way to those emotions of pride which are so natural to the heart of man. "It gives me more difficulty," he writes to Spalatin, "to refrain from despising my adversaries, and so sinning against Jesus Christ, than it would give me to vanquish them. They are so ignorant in things human and divine, that one is ashamed at having to fight with them; and yet it is their very ignorance which gives them their inconceivable audacity and face of brass."[414] But the most powerful support to Luther's heart, in the midst of this universal opposition, was the deep conviction that his cause was the cause of truth. "Let it not surprise you," he writes to Spalatin, at the beginning of the year 1518, "that I am so much insulted. I am delighted with these insults. Did they not curse me, I could not believe so firmly that the cause which I have undertaken is God's own cause.[415] Christ has been set up for a sign to be spoken against. I know," added he, "that from the beginning of the world the nature of the word of God has been such, that every one who has preached it to the world, has been obliged, like the apostles, to leave all and lay his account with death. Were it otherwise, it would not be the word of Jesus Christ."[416] This peace in the midst of agitation is a thing unknown to the world's heroes. Men placed at the head of a government, or of a political party, are seen to give way under their labours and their vexations. The Christian in his struggles usually acquires new strength, because he has access to a mysterious source of repose and courage, unknown to those whose eyes are closed to the gospel.

One thing, however, sometimes distressed Luther, viz., the thought of the dissensions which his courageous opposition might produce. He knew that a single word might be sufficient to set the world in a flame; and when he foresaw prince against prince, and perhaps nation against nation, his patriotic heart was saddened, and his Christian charity alarmed. His wish was for peace; but he behoved to speak out. So God required. "I tremble," said he, "I shudder at the thought of being the cause of discord among such mighty princes."[417] [233]

He still kept silence in regard to Tezel's propositions concerning the pope. Had he been carried away by passion, he would doubtless have made an impetuous assault on the extraordinary doctrine under which his opponents sought to take shelter. He did not do so; and there is in this delay, reserve, and silence, something grave and solemn, which sufficiently explains the spirit by which he was animated. He waited, but not through weakness; for when he struck he gave a heavier blow.

Tezel, after his *auto da fe* at Frankfort on the Oder, had hastened to send his theses into Saxony. There, thought he, they will serve as an antidote to those of Luther. A man from Halle, employed by the inquisitor to circulate his propositions, arrived at Wittemberg. The students of the university, still indignant at Tezel for having burned the theses of their master, no sooner heard of the messenger's arrival, than they sought him out, and, gathering round, jostled and frightened him. "How dare you bring such things here?" demanded they. Some purchasing part of the copies with which he was provided, and others seizing the rest, they got possession of his whole stock, amounting to eight hundred copies. Then, unknown to the Elector, the senate, the rector, Luther, and all the other professors,[418] they put up the following notice on the boards of the university:—"Whosoever is desirous to be present at the burning and funeral of Tezel's theses, let him repair at two o'clock to the market-place."

Crowds assembled at the hour, and committed the propositions of the Dominican to the flames,

amid loud acclamations. One copy which escaped, Luther afterwards sent to his friend, Lange of Erfurt. These generous but imprudent youths followed the old precept, "*Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth*" and not that of Jesus Christ; but after the example which doctors and professors had given at Frankfort, can we be astonished that young students followed it at Wittemberg? The news of this academical execution spread throughout Germany, and made a great noise.[419] Luther was extremely vexed at it.

"I am astonished," he writes to his old master, Jodocus, at Erfurt, "how you could think it was I [234] that burned Tezel's theses. Do you think that I am so devoid of sense? But what can I do? When I am the subject of remark, every thing seems to be believed.[420] Can I tie up the tongues of the whole world? Very well! Let them say, let them hear, let them see, let them pretend whatever they please; I will act as long as the Lord gives me strength, and with his help will fear nothing." "What will come out of it," says he to Lange, "I know not, unless it be that my danger is much increased."[421] The act of the students shows how much their hearts already burned for the cause which Luther defended. This was an important symptom; for a movement among the young of necessity soon extends to the whole nation.

The theses of Tezel and Wimpina, though little esteemed, produced a certain effect. They heightened the dispute, widened the rent which had been made in the mantle of the Church, and brought questions of the highest interest into the field. Accordingly, the heads of the Church began to look more narrowly at the matter, and to declare decidedly against the Reformer. "Verily, I know not in whom Luther confides," said the Bishop of Brandenburg, "when he dares thus attack the power of bishops." Perceiving that this new circumstance called for new proceedings, the bishop came in person to Wittemberg; but he found Luther animated with the inward joy which a good conscience imparts, and determined to give battle. The bishop felt that the Augustin monk was obeying an authority superior to his, and returned to Brandenburg in a rage. One day, in the winter of 1518, when sitting at his fireside, he turned to those who were about him and said, "I will not lay down my head in peace till I have thrown Martin into the fire, as I do this brand," throwing one into the grate. The revolution of the sixteenth century was not to be accomplished by the heads of the Church any more than that of the first century had been by the Sanhedrim and the synagogue. In the sixteenth century, the heads of the Church were opposed to Luther, the Reformation, and its ministers, in the same way as they were opposed to Jesus Christ, the gospel, and his apostles, and as they too often are at all times to the truth. "The bishops," says Luther, in speaking of the visit which the Bishop of Brandenburg had paid him, "begin to perceive that they ought to have done what I am doing, and they are consequently ashamed. They call me proud and audacious, and I deny not that I am so. But they are not the people to know either what God is, or what we are."[422]

CHAP. IX. [235]

Prierio—System of Rome—The Dialogue—System of Reform—Reply to Prierio—The Word—The Pope and the Church—Hochstraten—The Monks—Luther replies—Eck—The School—The Obelisks—Luther's Sentiments—The Asterisks—Rupture.

A more serious resistance than that of Tezel was already opposed to Luther. Rome had answered. A reply had issued from the walls of the sacred palace. It was not Leo X who had taken it into his head to speak theology. "A quarrel of monks," he had one day said. "The best thing is not to meddle with it." And on another occasion, "It is a drunken German who has written these theses; when he recovers from his wine he will speak differently."[423] A Dominican of Rome, Sylvester Mazolini de Prierio or Prierias, master of the sacred palace, exercised the functions of censor, and in this character was the first man in Italy who knew of the Saxon monk's theses.

A Roman censor and the theses of Luther! What a rencounter! Liberty of speech, liberty of investigation, liberty of faith, come into collision in Rome, with that power which pretends to have in its hands a monopoly of intelligence, and to open and shut the mouth of Christendom at its pleasure. The struggle between Christian liberty, which begets children of God, and pontifical despotism, which begets slaves of Rome, is, as it were, personified during the first days of the Reformation, in the encounter between Luther and Prierio.

The Roman censor, prior-general of the Dominicans, employed to determine what Christendom must say, or not say, and know or not know, hastened to reply, and published a tract, which he dedicated to Leo X. He spoke contemptuously of the German monk, and declared, with a self-sufficiency altogether Roman, "that he was anxious to know whether this Martin had a nose of iron, or a head of brass, which could not be broken."[424] Then, in the form of a dialogue, he attacked the theses of Luther, employing alternately, ridicule, insult, and threatening.

The combat between the Augustin of Wittemberg and the Dominican of Rome took place on the very question which lies at the foundation of the Reformation; viz., "What is the sole infallible [236] authority to Christians?" The following is the system of the Church, as expounded by its most independent organs.[425]

The letter of the written Word is dead without the spirit of interpretation, which alone unfolds its hidden meaning. Now this spirit is not granted to every Christian, but to the Church; in other words, to the priests. It is great presumption to maintain, that he who promised to be with his Church always to the end of the world, could abandon it to the power of error. It will be said, perhaps, that the doctrine and constitution of the Church are not the same as we find them in the sacred oracles. This is true; but the change is only apparent, relating to the form, and not to the substance. Moreover, the change is an advance. The living power of the Spirit has given reality to what exists in Scripture only in idea; it has embodied the sketches of the Word, put a finishing hand to these sketches, and completed the work of which the Bible had furnished only the first outlines. Scripture ought, therefore, to be understood in the sense determined by the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Here the Catholic doctors are divided. General councils, say some, and Gerson among the number, are the representatives of the Church. The pope, says others, is the depositary of the Spirit of interpretation; and no man is entitled to understand Scripture in a sense differing from that of the Roman pontiff. This was the opinion of Prierio.

Such was the doctrine which the master of the sacred palace opposed to the rising Reformation. On the power of the pope and the Church he advanced propositions at which the most shameless flatterers of the court of Rome would have blushed. The following is one of the points which he maintains at the commencement of his tract:—"Whoever rests not in the doctrine of the Roman Church, and the Roman pontiff, as the infallible rule of faith, from which the Holy Scripture itself derives its force and authority, is a heretic."[426]

Then in a dialogue, in which Luther and Sylvester are the speakers, the latter tries to refute the doctor's propositions. The sentiments of the Saxon monk were quite new to a Roman censor. Accordingly, Prierio shows that he understood neither the emotions of his heart, nor the motives of his conduct. To the teacher of truth he applied the little standards of the valets of Rome. "Dear Luther!" says he, "were you to receive a bishopric and a plenary indulgence for the repair of your Church from our lord the pope, you would proceed more gently, and would even prose in favour [237] of the indulgence which you are now pleased to blacken!" The Italian, so proud of the elegance of his manners, sometimes assumes the most scurrilous tone. "If the property of dogs is to bite," says he to Luther, "I fear your father must have been a dog."[427] The Dominican begins at last to be almost astonished at his own condescension in speaking to a rebellious monk; and concludes with showing his opponent the cruel teeth of an inquisitor. "The Roman Church," says he, "having in the pope the summit of spiritual and temporal power, may, by the secular arm, constrain those who after receiving the faith, stray from it. She is not bound to employ arguments for the purpose of combating and subduing the rebellious."[428]

These words traced by the pen of one of the dignitaries of the Roman court had a very significant meaning. They failed, however, to terrify Luther. He believed, or feigned to believe, that this dialogue was not by Prierio, but by Ulrich von Hütten, or by some other of the authors of "The Letters of some Obscure Men," who (said he in his sarcastic strain) had, in order to stir up Luther against Prierio, compiled this mass of absurdity.[429] He had no desire to see the court of Rome in arms against him. However, after remaining for some time silent, his doubts, if he had any, having been dispelled, he set to work, and in two days after was prepared with his reply.[430]

The Bible had produced the Reformer and begun the Reformation. Luther, in believing, had no need of the testimony of the Church. His faith was derived from the Bible itself; from within, and not from without. His thorough conviction that the evangelical doctrine was immovably founded on the word of God made him regard all external authority as useless. Luther's experience, in this respect, opened a new prospect to the Church. The living spring which had burst forth before the monk of Wittemberg, was destined to become a stream at which nations would quench their thirst.

The Church had said that, in order to understand the Word, the Spirit of God must interpret it, and so far the Church was right. But her error consisted in regarding the Holy Spirit as a monopoly conferred on a certain caste, and in thinking that it could be appropriated exclusively to certain assemblies and colleges, to a city or a conclave. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," [238] were the words of the Son of God, when speaking of the Spirit of God; and, on another occasion, "They will ALL be taught of God." The corruption of the Church, the ambition of pontiffs, the animosities of councils, the squabbles of the clergy, and the pomp of prelates, had made this Holy Spirit, this breath of humility and peace, eschew the dwelling of the priesthood. He had deserted the assemblies of the proud, and the palaces of the princes of the Church, and gone to live in retirement among simple Christians and modest priests. He had shunned a domineering hierarchy, which often forced blood from the poor, whom it trampled under foot; he had shunned a proud and ignorant clergy, whose chiefs were skilled, not in the Bible, but in the sword; and he was found sometimes among despised sects, and sometimes among men of talents and learning. The holy cloud, withdrawing from proud basilisks and gorgeous cathedrals, had descended on the obscure dwellings of the humble, or on chambers where studious men calmly pursued their conscientious labours. The Church, degraded by her love of power and riches, dishonoured in the eyes of the people by the venal use which she made of the doctrine of life; the Church which sold salvation in order to fill a treasury, for luxury and debauchery to empty, had lost all respect. Men of sense no longer set any value on her testimony, but, despising an authority so degraded, turned with joy, towards the Divine word, and its infallible authority, as toward the only refuge which remained to them in the general confusion.

The age, therefore, was prepared. The bold movement by which Luther changed the point on

which the human heart rested its highest hopes, and with a mighty hand transferred those hopes from the walls of the Vatican to the rock of the word of God, was hailed with enthusiasm. This was the work which the Reformer had in view in his reply to Prierio.

Putting aside the axioms which the Dominican had placed at the head of his work, he says, "After your example, I, too, am going to lay down some axioms."

"The first is the saying of St. Paul, 'Should we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'"

The second is the following passage of St. Augustine, addressed to St. Jerome:—"I have learned to pay to the canonical books alone the honour of believing very firmly that none of them has erred; as to others, I believe not what they say, for the simple reason, that it is they who say it."

Luther then vigorously proceeds to lay down the fundamental principles of the Reformation,—*the word of God, the whole word of God, and nothing but the word of God*. "If you understand these principles," continues he, "you will also understand that your whole dialogue is completely overturned; for you have done nothing else than adduce the words and opinions of St. Thomas." Next, attacking the axioms of his opponent, he frankly declares his opinion that popes and councils may err. He complains of the flattery of the Roman courtiers in attributing to the pope the alleged infallibility of both popes and councils, and declares that the Church exists virtually only in Christ, and representatively only in Councils.[431] Coming afterwards to the supposition which Prierio had made, he says, "No doubt you judge me by yourself, but if I aspired to a bishopric, assuredly I would not use language which sounds so hateful in your ears. Do you imagine I am ignorant how bishoprics and the popedom are procured at Rome? Do not the very children in the streets sing the well known words— [239]

> 'Rome now-a-days is more unclean,
> Than ought that in the world is seen?'"[432]

This was among the stanzas current in Rome before the election of one of the last popes. Nevertheless, Luther speaks of Leo with respect. "I know," says he, "that in him we have, as it were, a Daniel in Babylon; his integrity has repeatedly endangered his life." He concludes with a few words in reply to the menaces of Prierio: "In fine, you say that the pope is at once pontiff and emperor, and that he has power to constrain by the secular arm. Are you thirsting for murder? Take my word for it, your rhodomontades and your loud-sounding threats cannot terrify me. Though I be killed, Christ lives, Christ my Lord, and the Lord of all, blessed for ever and ever. Amen."[433]

Thus Luther with a strong arm assails the infidel altar of the papacy, opposing to it the altar of the word of God, alone holy, alone infallible, before which he would have every knee to bow, and on which he declares himself ready to sacrifice his life.

Prierio published a reply, and after it a third treatise on "the Irrefragable Truth of the Church and of the Roman Pontiff," in which, founding on ecclesiastical law, he says, that though the pope were to send the people and himself to the devil *en masse*, he could not for so doing be either judged or deposed.[434] The pope was at length obliged to impose silence on Prierio. [240]

A new opponent soon entered the list. He too was a Dominican. James Hochstraten, inquisitor at Cologne, whom we have already seen assailing Reuchlin and the friends of letters, was furious when he saw Luther's boldness. It was indeed necessary that darkness and monkish fanaticism should engage in close fight with him who was to give them their death-blow. Monkism was formed after primitive truth had begun to decay, and from that period downward, errors and monks had gone hand in hand. The man who was to hasten their ruin had appeared; but these sturdy champions would not quit the field without a fierce combat. This combat they continued to wage with him throughout his whole life, though the proper personification of it is in Hochstraten; Hochstraten and Luther—the one, the free and intrepid Christian, and the other, the blustering slave of monkish superstition. Hochstraten unchains his rage, and, with loud cries, demands the death of the heretic.... His wish is to secure the triumph of Rome by means of the flames. "It is high treason against the Church," exclaims he, "to let so execrable a heretic live another single hour. Let a scaffold be instantly erected for him!" This sanguinary counsel was, alas! but too well followed in many countries; the voice of numerous martyrs, as in the first days of the Church, bore testimony to the truth in the midst of the flames. But in vain were fire and sword invoked against Luther. The angel of Jehovah constantly encamped around him and shielded him.

Luther replied to Hochstraten briefly, but very energetically. "Go," says he to him, when concluding; "go, delirious murderer, whose thirst can only be quenched by the blood of the brethren. My sincere desire is, that you guard against calling me a Christian and a believer, and that, on the contrary, you never cease to denounce me as a heretic. Understand these things well, you bloody man, you enemy of the truth; and if your furious rage impel you to devise mischief against me, do it with circumspection, and time your measures well. God knows what I purpose if he grants me life. My hope and expectation (God willing) will not deceive me."[435] Hochstraten was silent.

A more painful attack awaited the Reformer. Dr. Eck, the celebrated professor of Ingolstadt, who procured the liberty of Urban Regius, Luther's friend, had received the famous theses. Eck was [241]

not the man to defend the abuses of indulgences, but he was a doctor of the school, and not of the Bible, being well versant in scholastics, but not in the word of God. If Prierio had represented Rome, and Hochstraten had represented the monks, Eck represented the School. The School which, for about five centuries, had ruled Christendom, far from yielding to the first blows of the Reformer, proudly rose up to crush the man who dared to assail it with floods of contempt. Eck and Luther, the School and the Word, came to blows on more than one occasion; but the present was the occasion on which the combat commenced.

Eck must have regarded several of Luther's assertions as erroneous; for nothing obliges us to question the sincerity of his convictions. He defended the scholastic opinions with enthusiasm, just as Luther defended the declarations of the word of God. We may even suppose that he was somewhat pained at seeing himself obliged to oppose his old friend, and yet it would seem, from the mode of attack, that passion and jealousy had some share in his determination.

He gave the name of *Obelisks* to his remarks on the theses of Luther. Wishing at first to save appearances, he did not publish his work, but contented himself with communicating it confidentially to his ordinary, the Bishop of Eichstädt. Soon, however, whether through the indiscretion of the bishop, or of Eck himself, the *Obelisks* were circulated in all quarters. A copy having fallen into the hands of a friend of Luther, Link, preacher at Nuremberg, he lost no time in sending it to the Reformer. Eck was a much more formidable opponent than Tezel, Prierio, and Hochstraten; his work was the more dangerous the more it surpassed theirs in knowledge and subtlety. He affected pity for his "feeble opponent," (knowing well that pity injures more effectually than anger,) and insinuated that the propositions of Luther contained Bohemian poison, and savoured of Bohemia. By these malicious insinuations he threw upon Luther the obloquy and hatred which in Germany attached to the name of Huss and the schismatics of his country.

The malice which shone through this treatise roused Luther's indignation, while the thought that the blow was given by an old friend, was still more distressing. However, he must sacrifice his affections in defending the truth. Luther unbosomed his heart and its sadness, in a letter to Egranus, pastor at Zwickau—"I am called in the *Obelisks* a venomous man, a Bohemian, a heretic, seditious, insolent, and presumptuous.... I say nothing of milder epithets, such as sleepy, imbecile, ignorant, contemner of the sovereign pontiff, etc. This book is full of the grossest [242] insults, and yet the author is a distinguished man, alike remarkable for learning and talent; and (it is this that grieves me most) a man with whom I had recently contracted a close friendship, [436] viz., John Eck, doctor in theology, and chancellor of Ingolstadt, a celebrated and illustrious author. Did I not know the thoughts of Satan, I would be astonished at the furious manner in which this man has broken off a friendship at once so pleasant and so recent;[437] and this without giving me any warning—without writing or saying a single word."

But if Luther's heart be wounded, his courage is not destroyed. On the contrary, he girds himself for the combat. "Rejoice, my brother," says he to Egranus, whom a violent enemy had also attacked; "rejoice, and be not alarmed at all these flying leaves. The more furious my adversaries become, the more I advance. I leave the things which are behind, that they may bark after them, and follow those which are before, that they may in like manner bark after them in their turn."

Eck felt how shameful his conduct had been, and endeavoured to justify it in a letter to Carlstadt, in which he calls Luther "their common friend;" and throws all the blame on the Bishop of Eichstadt, at whose instigation he pretended that he had written the work. His intention, he said, was not to publish the *Obelisks*; but for this he would have had more regard for the friendship subsisting between him and Luther; and he requested that Luther, instead of coming to open rupture with him, would turn his arms against the theologians of Frankfort. The professor of Ingolstadt, who had not feared to strike the first blow, began to be alarmed at the power of the opponent whom he had imprudently attacked, and would willingly have evaded the contest. It was too late.

All these fine words did not persuade Luther, who was, however, disposed to be silent, and said, "I will patiently swallow this morsel, though fit for Cerberus."[438] But his friends were of a different opinion, and urged, or rather constrained him to answer. He, accordingly, replied to the *Obelisks* by his *Asterisks*, opposing (as he says, playing upon the word) to the rust and lividity of Obelisks the light and dazzling brightness of the stars of heaven. In this work he treats his new opponent less harshly than those whom he had previously combated; but his indignation is seen peeping through his words.

He showed that in the chaos of the *Obelisks* there was nothing from the holy Scriptures, nothing [243] from the Fathers of the Church, and nothing from the ecclesiastical canons; that they contained only scholastic glosses, and opinion after opinion, many of them mere dreams;[439] in a word, contained the very things which Luther had attacked. The Asterisks are full of spirit and life. The author's indignation rises at the errors of his friend's book, but he shows pity to the man.[440] He reiterates the fundamental principle which he had laid down in his reply to Prierio:—"The sovereign pontiff is a man, and may be led into error; but God is truth, and cannot be deceived." [441] Then employing the *argumentum ad hominem* against the scholastic doctor, he says to him, "It is certainly impudent in any one to teach, as the philosophy of Aristotle, any dogma which cannot be proved by his authority. You grant this. Well, then, it is *a fortiori*, the most impudent of all things to affirm in the Church and among Christians anything that Jesus Christ himself has not taught.[442] Now in what part of the Bible is it said that the treasure of Christ's merits is in the

hands of the pope?"

He adds, "As to the malicious charge of Bohemian heresy, I patiently bear the reproach for the love of Jesus Christ. I live in a celebrated university, a distinguished town, an important bishopric, and a powerful duchy, where all are orthodox, and where, doubtless, no toleration would be given to so wicked a heretic."

Luther did not publish *The Asterisks*; he only communicated them to his friends. It was not till a later period that they were given to the public.[443]

This rupture between the doctor of Ingolstadt and the doctor of Wittemberg made a sensation in Germany. They had common friends. Scheurl, in particular, by whose instrumentality their friendship appears to have been originally formed, was exceedingly annoyed. He was one of those who longed to see a reform throughout the whole Germanic church, produced through the medium of its most distinguished organs. But if in matters of principle the most eminent theologians of the period came to open rupture, and while Luther advanced in a new path, Eck put himself at the head of those who kept to the old path, what disruption must inevitably ensue? [244] Would not numerous adherents gather around each of the two chiefs, and form two hostile camps in the heart of the empire?

Scheurl exerted himself to reconcile Eck and Luther. The latter declared that he was willing to forget every thing; that he loved the genius, and admired the erudition of Dr. Eck,[444] and that the proceedings of his old friend had caused him more grief than anger. "I am ready," says he, "either for peace or war; but I prefer peace. Do you then set about it. Grieve with us, that the devil has thrown among us this beginning of strife, and then rejoice that Christ in his mercy hath removed it."[445] About the same time, he addressed a most friendly letter to Eck, who, however, not only did not answer it, but did not even send him a verbal message."[446] It was too late for reconciliation; and the breach became wider and wider. The pride of Eck, and his unforgiving temper, soon completely broke any remaining ties of friendship.

CHAP. X.

Popular Writings—Our Father—Thy Kingdom Come—Thy Will be Done—Our Daily Bread—Sermon on Repentance—Forgiveness through Christ.

Such were the struggles which the champion of the word of God had to maintain at the outset of his career. But these combats with the leaders of society, these academical disputes, are of small account with the Christian. Human doctors imagine they have gained the noblest of triumphs if they succeed in filling some newspapers and some saloons with the noise of their systems. As it is with them more an affair of self-love, or party spirit, than of good to humanity, this worldly success satisfies them. Accordingly, their labours are only a smoke, which, after blinding us, passes off and leaves no trace behind. Neglecting to introduce their fire among the masses of the population, they do nothing more than make it skim along the surface of society.

It is not so with the Christian. His object is not success in a coterie, or an academy, but the [245] salvation of souls. He therefore willingly avoids the brilliant skirmishing, which he might carry on at his ease with the champions of the world, and prefers the obscure labours which carry life and light into rural cottages, and the lanes of cities. Thus did Luther, or rather according to the precept of his Master, *he did the one, without leaving the other undone*. While combating inquisitors, university chancellors, and masters of the sacred palace, he strove to diffuse sound religious knowledge among the multitude. With that view, he at this time published different popular writings, such as his *Discourses on the Ten Commandments*, delivered two years before in the church of Wittemberg, and which we have already noticed; and his *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, for simple and ignorant laymen*.[447] Who would not like to know how the Reformer then addressed the people?

We will quote some of the words which he sent, as he says, in the preface to the second of these works, "to course the country."

Prayer, that inward act of the heart, will doubtless ever be one of the points with which a reformation in heart and life must commence, and, accordingly, it early engaged the attention of Luther. It is impossible, in a translation, to keep up his energetic style, and the vigour of a language which was formed so to speak, as it fell from his pen; however, we will try.

"When you pray," says he, "have few words, but many thoughts and affections, and, above all, let these be profound. The less you speak, the better you pray. Few words and many thoughts make the Christian, many words and few thoughts, the pagan.

"Seeming and bodily prayer is that muttering of the lips, that external babble, which comes forth without attention, striking the eyes and ears of men; but prayer in spirit and in truth is the inward desire, the emotions, and sighs which proceed from the depths of the heart. The former is the prayer of hypocrites, and of all who trust in themselves. The latter is the prayer of the

children of God, who walk in his fear."

Then coming to the first words of our Lord's Prayer, "Our Father," he thus expresses himself:—"Among all the names of God, there is none which inclines more toward him than the name of Father. We should not have so much happiness and consolation in calling him Lord, or God, or Judge.... By this name of father his bowels of compassion are moved; for there is no voice more [246] lovely or touching than that of a child to its father.

"*Who art in heaven.* He who confesses that he has a Father in heaven owns himself to be, as it were, an orphan on the earth. Hence his heart feels an ardent desire like that of a child living out of its father's country, among strangers, in wretchedness and sorrow. It is as if he said, 'Alas! my father! thou art in heaven, and I, thy miserable child, am on the earth, far from thee, in all sorts of dangers, necessities, and sorrows.'

"*Hallowed be thy name!* He who is passionate and envious, who curses or slanders, dishonours God, in whose name he was baptized. Applying the vessel which God has consecrated to profane uses, he resembles a priest who should use the holy cup to give drink to a sow, or to gather manure.

"*Thy kingdom come.* Those who amass wealth, who erect magnificent buildings, who seek after all that the world can give, and with the lips repeat this prayer, are like the large pipes of a church organ, which sounds and cries at full pitch, and without ceasing, but has neither words, nor sense, nor reason."...

Farther on, Luther attacks the error of pilgrimages, which was then so general. "One goes to Rome, another to St. James; one builds a chapel, another founds an endowment, in order to reach the kingdom of God; but all neglect the essential point, which is to become themselves his kingdom. Why do you go beyond seas in quest of the kingdom of God?... Your heart is the place in which it ought to rise.

"It is a dreadful thing," continues he, "to hear us utter this prayer, '*Thy will be done*.' Where in the Church do we see this will done?... Bishop rises against bishop, and church against church. Priests, monks, and nuns, quarrel and fight; throughout there is nothing but discord. And yet all parties exclaim that they have a good will and an upright intention; and so to the honour and glory of God they altogether do the work of the devil....

"Why do we say *our bread*?" continues he, "explaining these words, "*Give us this day our daily bread*." "Because we pray, not for the ordinary bread which pagans eat, and which God gives to all men, but for *our* bread—bread to us, children of the heavenly Father.

"And what, then, is this bread of God? It is Jesus Christ our Lord; '*I am the living bread which came down from heaven, and give life to the world*.' Wherefore let us not deceive ourselves. Sermons and instructions which do not represent to us, or give us the knowledge of Jesus Christ, [247] cannot be the daily bread and food of our souls....

"What avails it that such a bread is prepared for us, if it is not served out to us, and we cannot taste it?... It is as if a magnificent feast were prepared, and there were nobody to hand the bread, bring the dishes, and pour out the liquor; so that the guests would be left to feed by the eye and the smell.... This is the reason why it is necessary to preach Christ, and Christ alone.

"But what, then, you ask, is it to know Jesus Christ, and what profit is gained by it? Answer:—To learn to know Jesus Christ is to comprehend what the Apostle says—*Christ has of God been made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*. Now, you comprehend this when you perceive that your wisdom is culpable folly, your righteousness damnable iniquity, your holiness damnable pollution, your redemption miserable condemnation—when you feel that, before God and all the creatures, you are truly a fool, a sinner, an impure and condemned man—and when you show, not only by your words, but from the bottom of your heart, and by your works, that there remains to you no comfort and no salvation, save Jesus Christ. To believe is nothing else than to eat this bread of heaven."

Thus Luther faithfully fulfilled his resolution to open the eyes of a people whom priests had blindfolded, and were leading at their pleasure. His writings, which in a short time spread over all Germany, caused new light to arise, and shed the seeds of truth in abundance on a soil well prepared to receive it. But while thinking of those at a distance, he did not forget those who were near.

The dominicans from their pulpits denounced him as an infamous heretic. Luther, the man of the people, and who, had he been so disposed, could with a few sentences have set them in commotion, always disdained such triumphs, and made it his sole aim to instruct his hearers.

His reputation, which was continually extending, and the courage with which he raised the banner of Christ in the midst of an enslaved Church, made his sermons be followed with increasing interest. Never had the confluence been so great. Luther went straight to the point. One day, having mounted the pulpit of Wittemberg, he undertook to establish the doctrine of repentance. The discourse pronounced on this occasion afterwards became very celebrated, and contains several of the fundamental principles of evangelical doctrine.

At first he contrasts the pardon of men with the pardon of heaven. "There are," says he, "two [248] remissions—the remission of the penalty, and the remission of the fault. The former reconciles man externally with the Church; the latter, which is the heavenly indulgence, reconciles man

with God. If a man has not within himself that tranquil conscience, that cheerful heart which God's remission gives, no indulgence can aid him were he to buy all that ever have been on the earth."

He afterwards continues thus: "They wish to do good works before their sins are pardoned, whereas sins must be pardoned before good works can be done. Works do not banish sin; but banish sin, and you will have works.[448] Good works should be done with a cheerful heart and a good conscience toward God; in other words, with the forgiveness of sins."

He then comes to the principal object of his sermon, an object which was identified with that of the whole Reformation. The Church had put herself in the place of God and his word; he objects to this, and makes every thing depend on faith in the word.

"The remission of the fault," says he, "is not in the power of the pope, or the bishop, or the priest, or any man whatever, but rests solely on the word of Christ, and your own faith. For Christ did not choose to build our comfort or our salvation on a word or work of man, but only on himself, on his own work and word. Your repentance and your works may deceive you, but Christ your God will never deceive, will never waver; and the devil cannot overthrow his words."[449]

"A pope or a bishop has no more power than the humblest priest where the remission of the fault is in question. And even where there is no priest, each Christian, were it a woman or a child,[450] can do the same thing. For if a simple Christian says to you, 'God pardons sin in the name of Jesus Christ,' and you receive the saying with firm faith, as if God himself had spoken, you are acquitted.

"If you believe not that your sins are pardoned, you make your God a liar, and declare that you put greater confidence in your vain thoughts than in God and his word.

"Under the Old Testament neither priest, nor king, nor prophet, had power to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; but under the New Testament every believer has this power. The Church is quite replete with the remission of sins.[451] If a pious Christian comforts your conscience by the [249] word of the cross, be it man or woman, young or old, receive the comfort with a faith so firm, that you would sooner submit to many deaths than doubt that it is ratified in the presence of God.... Repent, and do all the works that you can do; but let the faith which you have in the pardon of Jesus Christ stand in the front rank, and have sole command on the field of battle."[452]

Thus spoke Luther to his astonished and enraptured hearers. All the scaffoldings which impudent priests had, for their own profit, reared between God and the soul of man, were thrown down, and man brought face to face with his Maker. The word of pardon came down pure from on high, without passing through a thousand corrupting channels. It was no longer necessary that the testimony of God, in order to be available, should previously be stamped by men with their false seal. The monopoly of the sacerdotal caste was abolished, and the Church emancipated.

CHAP. XI.

Apprehensions of Luther's friends—Journey to Heidelberg—Bibra—The Palatine Castle—Rupture—The Paradoxes—Dispute—The Hearers—Bucer—Brentz—Snepf—Conversations with Luther—Labours of the Young Doctors—Effects on Luther—The Old Professor—The True Light—Arrival.

Meanwhile, the fire which had been kindled at Wittemberg behoved to be kindled elsewhere. Luther, not contented with announcing the truth in the place of his residence, whether to the academic youth or to the people, was desirous to shed the seeds of sound doctrine in other places. The Augustin order were to hold their general chapter at Heidelberg, in the spring of 1518. Luther, as one of the most distinguished men of the order, was invited to attend; but his friends did all they could to dissuade him from undertaking the journey. In fact, the monks had laboured to render the name of Luther odious in all the places through which he had to pass. To insult they had added threatening; and a small matter might have sufficed to excite a popular tumult of which he might have been made the victim. "Or even," said his friends, "what they may not dare to do by violence, they will accomplish by fraud and stratagem."[453] But in the [250] discharge of a duty, Luther did not allow himself to be arrested by the fear of any danger, however imminent. He therefore turned a deaf ear to the timid suggestions of his friends, and directed them to Him in whom his confidence was placed, and under whose protection he desired to undertake the perilous journey. After the feast of Easter he quietly set out on foot,[454] on the 13th April 1518.

He had with him a guide named Urban, who carried his small bundle, and was to accompany him as far as Wurzburg. How many thoughts must have occupied the heart of the servant of the Lord during this journey! At Weissenfels, the pastor, though not of his acquaintance, instantly recognised him as the doctor of Wittemberg, and gave him a hearty reception.[455] At Erfurt, he was joined by two other Augustin friars. At Judenbach, the three fell in with Degenard Pfeffinger,

the Elector's confidential councillor, who entertained them at the inn. "I have had the pleasure," wrote Luther to Spalatin, "of making this rich lord some shillings poorer. You know how I like to take every occasion of making a hole in the purses of the rich for the benefit of the poor, especially if the rich are my friends."[456] He arrived at Coburg, worn out with fatigue. "All goes well by the grace of God," wrote he; "only, I confess I have sinned in undertaking the journey on foot. But for this sin I presume I will have no need of the remission of indulgences, for my contrition is perfect, and my satisfaction complete. I am knocked up with fatigue, and all the conveyances are full. Is not this enough, or rather more than enough of penitence, contrition, and satisfaction?"[457]

The Reformer of Germany, not finding a place in the public conveyances, nor any one who was willing to yield him his place, was obliged next morning, notwithstanding of his fatigue, humbly to resume his journey on foot. He arrived at Wurzburg on the evening of the second Sabbath after Easter, and sent back his guide.

Bishop Bibra, who had received the theses with so much delight, lived in this town, and Luther had a letter for him from the Elector of Saxony. The bishop, overjoyed at the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with this bold champion of the truth, hastened to invite him to the episcopal palace. He went out to receive him, spoke to him in the kindest terms, and offered to furnish him with a guide as far as Heidleberg. But at Wurzburg, Luther had fallen in with his two friends, the vicar-general Staupitz, and Lange, the prior of Erfurt, who offered him a place in [251] their carriage. He therefore thanked Bibra for his offer, and next day the three friends set out from Wurzburg. They travelled thus for three days, conversing together, and on the 21st April arrived at Heidelberg. Luther went to lodge at the Augustin convent.

The Elector of Saxony had given him a letter to Count Palatine Wolfgang, Duke of Bavaria. Luther repaired to his magnificent castle, the site of which is still the admiration of strangers. The monk of the plains of Saxony had a heart to admire the position of Heidelberg, where the two lovely valleys of the Rhine and the Necker unite. He delivered his letter to James Simler, steward of the court. Simler having read it, said, "Truly you have here a valuable letter of credit." The Count Palatine received him with much kindness, and often invited him, as well as Lange and Staupitz, to his table. This friendly reception added greatly to Luther's comfort. "We relax and amuse ourselves with an agreeable and pleasant chit-chat," says he, "eating and drinking, and surveying all the magnificence of the Palatine palace, admiring its ornaments, its armoury, and cuirasses; in short, every thing remarkable in this distinguished and truly royal castle."[458]

However, Luther had other work to do. He behoved to work while it was day. Transported to an university which exercised great influence on the west and south of Germany, he was there to strike a blow which should shake the churches of those countries. He, accordingly, began to write theses which he proposed to maintain in a public discussion. Such discussions were of ordinary occurrence; but Luther felt, that in order to make his useful, it was necessary to give it a peculiar interest. His disposition, moreover, inclined him to present the truth under a paradoxical form. The professors of the university would not allow the discussion to take place in their public hall, and it became necessary to hold it in a hall of the Augustin convent. The 26th of April was the day on which it was to take place.

Heidelberg, at a later period, received the gospel, and even at this discussion in the convent, an observer might have augured that good would result from it.

The reputation of Luther attracted a large concourse of hearers; professors, courtiers, citizens, and students, crowded to it. The doctor gave the name of Paradoxes to his theses, and it is, perhaps, the name which might still be applied to them in the present day. It would be easy, however, to translate them into evident propositions. The following are some of the Paradoxes:—

1. "The law of God is a salutary rule of life. Nevertheless, it cannot aid man in his search after [252] righteousness; on the contrary, it impedes him.

3. "Works of man, how fair and good soever they may be, are, to all appearance, only mortal sins.

4. "Works of God, how deformed and bad soever they may appear, have always an immortal merit.

7. "The works of the just themselves would be mortal sins, did they not, through holy reverence for the Lord, fear that their works would in fact be mortal sins.[459]

9. "To maintain that works done without Christ are dead, but not mortal, is dangerous forgetfulness of the fear of God.

13. "Since the fall of man, free will exists only in name, and when man does all that is possible for him to do, he sins mortally.

16. "A man who expects to attain to grace by doing all that it is possible for him to do, adds sin to sin, and doubles his guilt.

18. "It is certain that man, to become capable of receiving the grace of Christ, must entirely despair of himself.

21. "An honorary theologian calls evil good, and good evil; but a theologian of the cross speaks according to truth.

22. "The wisdom which teaches man to know the invisible perfections of God in his works, inflates, blinds, and hardens him.

23. "The law excites the wrath of God, kills, curses, accuses, judges, and condemns, whatever is not in Christ.[460]

24. "Still this wisdom (§ 22) is not bad; and the law (§ 23) is not to be rejected; but the man who does not study the knowledge of God under the cross, changes its good into evil.

25. "He is not justified who does many works; but he who, without works, believes much in Jesus Christ.

26. "The law says, Do this! And what it commands is never done. Grace says, Believe in him! And, lo! all things are accomplished.[461]

28. "The love of God finds nothing in man, but creates in him what it loves. The love of man proceeds from self-love."[462]

Five doctors of theology attacked these theses. They had read them with the astonishment which novelty excites. The theology seemed to them very strange. Yet according to Luther's own testimony, they discussed them with a courtesy which he could not but esteem; and, at the same time, with force and discernment. [253]

Luther, on his part, displayed an admirable mildness in his replies, incomparable patience in listening to the objections of his opponents, and all the liveliness of St. Paul in solving the difficulties which were started. His answers, which were short, but replete with the word of God, filled all the hearers with admiration. "He very much resembles Erasmus," said several; "but in one thing he surpasses him,—he professes openly what Erasmus is contented only to insinuate." [463]

The discussion was drawing to a close. Luther's opponents had retired with honour from the field of battle, the youngest of them, Doctor George Niger, alone continuing the struggle with the mighty combatant. Amazed at the bold propositions of the Augustin monk, and feeling utterly at a loss for arguments to refute them, he exclaimed, in an agitated tone,—"Were our peasants to hear such things, they would stone you to death."[464] At these words there was a general laugh throughout the audience.

Never had hearers listened more attentively to a theological disputation. The first words of the Reformer had awakened men's minds, and questions which shortly before had met with indifference, were now full of interest. Several countenances gave visible expression to the new ideas which the bold assertions of the Saxon doctor had suggested to their minds.

Three youths in particular were strongly moved. One of them, named Martin Bucer, was a Dominican, of about twenty-seven years of age, who, notwithstanding of the prejudices of his order, seemed unwilling to lose a single word which fell from the doctor. Born in a little town of Alsace, he had entered a convent at sixteen, and soon displayed such talents that the monks entertained the highest hopes of him.[465] "He will one day be an ornament to our order," said they. His superiors had sent him to Heidelberg that he might devote himself to the study of philosophy, theology, Greek, and Hebrew. At this period Erasmus having published several of his works, Bucer read them with avidity.

Shortly after, the first works of Luther appeared, and the Alsatian student hastened to compare the Reformer's doctrine with the holy Scriptures. Some doubt as to the truth of the popish religion arose in his mind.[466] This was the way in which light was diffused in those days. The Elector Palatine took notice of the young man. His strong and sonorous voice, his pleasing address, his eloquence, and the freedom with which he attacked prevailing vices, made him a distinguished preacher. He was appointed chaplain to the court, and was acting in this capacity when Luther's journey to Heidelberg was announced. Bucer was greatly delighted; nobody repaired with greater eagerness to the hall of the Augustin convent. He had provided himself with paper, pens, and ink, wishing to write down whatever the doctor should say. But while his hand was rapidly tracing the words of Luther, the hand of God was writing the great truths which he heard in more ineffaceable characters on his heart. The rays of the doctrine of grace beamed upon his soul on this memorable occasion.[467] The Dominican was gained over to Christ. [254]

Not far from Bucer sat John Brentz or Brentius, then about nineteen years of age. Brentz, who was the son of a magistrate of a town in Swabia, had, at thirteen, been enrolled among the students of Heidelberg. None of them showed such application. As soon as the hour of midnight struck, Brentz rose and commenced his labours. This practice became so habitual to him, that, during the rest of his life, he could never sleep beyond that hour. At a later period he devoted these still moments to meditation on the Scriptures. Brentz was one of the first to perceive the new light which then rose on Germany, and he received it into his soul in the full love of it.[468] He read the writings of Luther with avidity, and must have been overjoyed at the prospect of hearing him personally at Heidelberg. Young Brentz was particularly struck with one of the doctor's propositions, viz., "Not he who does many works is justified before God, but he who, without works, believes much in Jesus Christ."

A pious woman of Heilbronn, on the Necker, wife of a councillor of that town, named Snepf, had,

after the example of Hannah, dedicated her first born to the Lord, earnestly desiring to see him devote himself to theology. The young man, who was born in 1495, made rapid progress in literature, but whether from taste or ambition, or compliance with his father's wishes, he devoted himself to the study of law. The pious mother was grieved when she saw her son Ehrhard following another course than that to which she had dedicated him; she warned and urged him, [255] and always concluded by reminding him of the vow which she had made at his birth.[469] At length, overcome by his mother's perseverance, Ehrhard Snepf yielded, and soon felt such delight in his new studies, that nothing in the world could have diverted him from them.

He was in terms of intimacy with Bucer and Brentz, and they remained friends all their lives; "for," says one of their biographers, "friendships founded on the love of literature and virtue are never extinguished." He was present with his two friends at the Heidelberg discussion. The Paradoxes and the bold struggle of the Wittemberg doctor gave Snepf a new impulse. Rejecting the vain dogma of human merit, he embraced the doctrine of free justification.

The next day Bucer paid a visit to Luther. "I conversed with him," says he, "and without witnesses; and had a most exquisite repast, not from the viands, but from the truths which were set before me. Whatever objections I stated, were readily answered by the doctor, who explained every thing with the utmost clearness. O! that I had time to write you more about it."[470] Luther himself was touched with the sentiments of Bucer. "He is the only friar of his order," wrote he to Spalatin, "who is in good faith. He is a young man of great promise; he received me with simplicity, and conversed with me with earnestness; he is deserving of our confidence and our love."[471]

Brentz, Snepf, and others also, urged by the new truths which began to dawn upon their minds, in like manner visited Luther, speaking and conferring with him, and asking explanations of any thing which they might not have comprehended. The Reformer, in his answers, founded upon the Bible. At every word that fell from him fresh light arose, and his visitors saw a new world opening before them.

After Luther's departure these noble-minded men began to teach at Heidelberg. It was necessary to follow out what the man of God had begun, and not allow the torch which he had kindled to be extinguished. The scholars will speak should the masters be silent. Brentz, although he was still so youthful, explained St. Matthew, at first in his own room, and afterwards, when it could not contain his hearers, in the hall of philosophy. The theologians, filled with envy at seeing the great [256] concourse which he drew together, were much offended.

Brentz next took orders, and transferred his lectures to the college of the Canons of the Holy Spirit. In this way the fire which had already been kindled in Saxony was kindled also in Heidelberg. The light radiated from numerous *foci*. This period has been designated the seed-time of the Palatinate.

But the fruits of the Heidelberg discussion were not confined to the Palatinate. These bold friends of the truth soon became luminaries in the Church. They all occupied eminent stations, and took part in the numerous discussions, to which the Reformation gave rise. Strasburg, and at a later period England, were indebted to the labours of Bucer, for a purer knowledge of the truth. Snepf taught first at Marburg, then at Stutgard, Tubingen, and Jena. Brentz, after teaching at Heidelberg, long continued to labour at Halle, in Swabia, and at Tubingen. These three individuals will again come before us.

This discussion caused Luther himself to advance. He grew daily in the knowledge of the truth. "I am one of those," said he, "who have made progress by writing and by instructing others; and not one of those, who, from nothing, become all at once great and learned doctors."

He was delighted at seeing the avidity with which youth in schools received the growing truth; and this consoled him when he saw how deeply the old doctors were rooted in their opinions. "I have the glorious hope," said he, "that, in like manner as Christ, when rejected by the Jews, went to the Gentiles, we will now see true theology, though rejected by these old men of vain and fantastical opinions, welcomed by the rising generation."[472]

The Chapter being closed, Luther thought of returning to Wittemberg. The Count Palatine gave him a letter to the Elector, in which he said that "Luther had displayed so much ability in the discussion as to reflect great glory on the university of Wittemberg." He was not permitted to return on foot.[473] The Augustins of Nuremberg conducted him as far as Wurzburg, and from thence he proceeded to Erfurt with the friars belonging to it. As soon as he arrived he called on his old master Jodocus. The venerable professor, who had been much concerned and shocked at the career which his pupil had followed, was accustomed to put a theta (θ) before all Luther's sentences,—that being the letter which the Greeks used to express condemnation.[474] He had [257] written to the young doctor, censuring his conduct, and he was anxious to answer by word of mouth. Not having been received, he wrote Jodocus:—"The whole university, with the exception of a single licentiate, thinks as I do. Nay, more; the prince, the bishop, several other prelates, and all our enlightened citizens, declare, with one voice, that hitherto they have neither known nor understood Jesus Christ and his gospel. I am ready to receive your correction, and though it should be harsh I will think it pleasant. Unbosom your heart then without fear, disburden yourself of your anger. I have no wish, I am not able to be angry with you. God and my conscience bear witness."[475]

The aged doctor was touched by the sentiments of his old pupil, and wished to see if there was no means of removing the condemnatory theta. They had an explanation; but nothing resulted from it. "I have at least," said Luther, "made him understand, that all their sentences are like the beast which is said to eat itself. But it is vain to speak to the deaf. The doctors cling obstinately to their petty distinctions, although they confess that they have nothing to support them but what they term the light of natural reason—a dark chaos to us who proclaim no other light than Jesus Christ, the only true light."[476]

Luther quitted Erfurt in the carriage of the convent. He was thus brought to Eisleben, and from thence the Augustins of the place, proud of a doctor who threw so much lustre on their order and on their town which had given him birth, caused him to be conveyed to Wittemberg with their own horses, and at their own expence. All were desirous to testify affection and esteem for the extraordinary man who was rising at every step.

He arrived on Saturday after the Ascension. The journey had done him good. His friends found him stronger and healthier looking than before his departure,[477] and were delighted with all he told them. Luther reposed for some time from the fatigues of his campaign and the discussion at Heidelberg, but this repose was only a preparation for more severe exertions.

BOOK FOURTH.

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CHAP. I.

LUTHER BEFORE THE LEGATE.

MAY-DECEMBER, 1518.

Repentance—The Pope—Leo X—Luther to his Bishop—Luther to the Pope—Luther to the Vicar-General—Rovere to the Elector—Discourse on Excommunication—Influence and Power of Luther.

Truth had at length raised her head in the bosom of Christendom. Victorious over the inferior organs of the papacy, she behoved to have a struggle with its chief. We are going to see Luther at close quarters with Rome.

This step was taken on his return from Heidelberg. His first theses on indulgences had been misunderstood, and he determined to explain their meaning with greater clearness. The outcry raised by the blind hatred of his enemies had convinced him how important it was to gain the most enlightened part of the nation in favour of truth, and he resolved to appeal to its judgment by calling attention to the foundation on which his convictions rested. It was, indeed, necessary for once to appeal to the decision of Rome; and he hesitates not to send all his explanations. Presenting them with one hand to the enlightened and impartial among his countrymen, he with the other lays them before the throne of the sovereign pontiff.

These explanations of his theses, which he denominated *Solutions*,[478] were written with great moderation. Luther tried to soften the passages which had caused most irritation, and gave proof of genuine modesty. At the same time, he showed that his convictions were immovable; and he courageously defended all the propositions which truth obliged him to maintain. He again repeated, that every Christian who truly repents possesses the remission of sins without [259] indulgence; that the pope, like the humblest of priests, can only declare simply what God has already pardoned; that the treasure of the merits of the saints administered by the pope was a chimera, and that Holy Scripture was the only rule of faith. Let us hear himself on some of these points.

He begins with establishing the nature of true penitence, and contrasts the divine act, which renews man, with the mummery of the Romish Church. "The Greek word μετανοειτε," says he, "signifies—be clothed with a new spirit and new feelings; have a new nature; so that, ceasing to be earthly, you may become heavenly.... Christ is a teacher of the spirit and not of the letter, and his words are spirit and life."[479] He, therefore, inculcates, not those external penances which the proudest sinners can perform without being humbled, but a repentance according to spirit and truth—a repentance which may be fulfilled in all the situations of life, under the purple of kings, the cassock of priests, and the coronet of princes, amid the magnificence of Babylon, where a Daniel lived, as well as under a monk's frock and a beggar's tatters.

Farther on we meet with these bold words, "I give myself no trouble as to what pleases or displeases the pope. He is a man like other men. There have been several popes who loved not only errors and vices, but even things still more extraordinary. I listen to the pope as pope, that is when he speaks in the canons, according to the canons, or when he decides some article with a council, but not when he speaks out of his own head. If I did otherwise, would I not be bound to say with those who know not Jesus Christ, that the horrible massacres of Christians of which Julius II was guilty, were the kind acts of an affectionate shepherd towards the Lord's sheep?"

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"I cannot but be astonished," continues he, "at the simplicity of those who have said that the two swords of the gospel represent, the one the spiritual power, and the other the temporal. Yes, the pope holds a sword of steel, and so exhibits himself to Christendom, not as a tender father, but as a formidable tyrant. Ah! God in his anger has given us the sword we wished, and withdrawn that which we despised. In no quarter of the world have there been more dreadful wars than among Christians.... Why did the ingenious intellect which discovered this fine commentary, not with equal subtlety interpret the history of the two keys committed to St. Peter, and in that way make it an established dogma of the Church, that the one serves to open the treasures of heaven, and the other the treasures of the world."[481]

"It is impossible," he again says, "that a man can be a Christian without having Christ; and if he has Christ, he at the same time has all that belongs to Christ. The thing which gives peace to our conscience is, that by faith our sins are no longer ours, but Christ's, on whom God has laid them; and that, on the other hand, all the righteousness of Christ is ours, to whom God has given it. Christ puts his hand upon us, and we are cured. He throws his mantle over us and we are covered; for he is the glorious Saviour, blessed for ever and ever."[482] [260]

With such views of the riches of salvation by Jesus Christ, there was no need of indulgences.

Luther, while attacking the papacy, speaks honourably of Leo X. "The times in which we live are so bad," says he, "that even the greatest personages cannot come to the help of the Church. We have now a very good pope in Leo X. His sincerity and knowledge fill us with joy. But what can one man, though amiable and agreeable, do by himself alone? He certainly deserved to be pope in better times. We, in our day, deserve only such popes as Julius II, and Alexander VI."

He afterwards comes to the crowning point. "I wish to say the thing in a few words and boldly. The Church stands in need of a reformation; and this cannot be the work either of a single man, like the pope, or of many men, like the cardinals, and fathers of councils; but it must be that of the whole world, or, rather, it is a work which belongs to God only. As to the time in which such a reformation ought to begin, He alone who created time can tell.... The embankment is broken down, and it is no longer in our power to arrest the torrents which are rushing impetuously along."

Such are some of the thoughts and declarations which Luther addressed to the enlightened among his countrymen. The Feast of Pentecost was at hand; and, at this period, when the apostles rendered the first testimony of their faith to the risen Saviour, Luther, a new apostle, published this enlivening book in which he expressed his earnest longings for a resurrection of the Church. Saturday, 22nd May, 1518, being Pentecost eve, he sent his work to his ordinary, the Bishop of Brandenburg, with the following letter:—

"Most worthy Father in God,—Some time ago, when a novel and unheard-of doctrine, touching the apostolic indulgences, began to make a noise in these countries, both learned and ignorant felt concerned; and many persons, some of them known to me, and others whom I did not even know by face, urged me to publish, by word of mouth, or by writing, what I thought of the novelty, I am unwilling to say, the impudence of this doctrine. At first I was silent, and kept back. But at length matters came to such a point, that the holiness of the pope was compromised. [261]

"What was I to do? I thought it best neither to approve nor to condemn these doctrines; but to establish a discussion on this important point, until the Holy Church should decide.

"Nobody having come forward to this combat, to which I had invited all the world, and my theses having been considered not as materials for discussion, but positive assertions,[483] I feel myself obliged to publish an explanation of them. Deign, then, most gracious Bishop, to receive these trifles[484] at my hand. And that all the world may see I am not acting presumptuously, I supplicate your reverence to take pen and ink, and blot out, or even throw into the fire and burn, whatever in them displeases you. I know that Jesus Christ has no need of my labours and my services, and that he can very well, without me, publish good tidings to his Church. Not that the bulls and menaces of my enemies deter me; very much the contrary. If they were not so impudent and so shameless, nobody would hear a word from me; I would shut myself up in a corner, and there study by myself for myself. If this affair is not of God, it certainly cannot be my affair, nor that of any man, but a thing of nought. Let the glory and honour be ascribed to Him to whom alone they belong."

Luther had still the greatest respect for the head of the Church. He supposed that there was justice in Leo X, and a sincere love of truth. He resolved, therefore, to apply to him also; and eight days after, on Trinity Sunday, 30th May, 1518, addressed him in a letter, of which we give the following extracts:—

"To the Most Blessed Father, Leo X, Sovereign Bishop,
"Friar Martin Luther, Augustin, wishes eternal salvation!

"I learn, most Holy Father, that evil reports are current with regard to me, and that my name is brought into bad odour with your Holiness. I am called heretic, apostate, traitor, and a thousand other opprobrious epithets; what I see astonishes, what I hear amazes me. But the only foundation of my tranquillity remains, and that is a pure and peaceful conscience. Be pleased to listen to me, most Holy Father, to me, who am only an ignorant child."

Luther relates the origin of the whole affair, and continues thus:—

"In all taverns, nothing was heard but complaints of the avarice of priests, and attacks on the [262] power of the keys and the sovereign pontiff. This all Germany can testify. On hearing these things, my zeal for the glory of Christ was moved, (so I thought,) or if they will explain it otherwise, my young and boiling blood was inflamed.

"I warned several of the princes of the Church, but some mocked me, and others turned a deaf ear. All seemed paralysed by the terror of your name. Then I published the discussion,

"And this, most Holy Father! this is the fire which is said to have set the whole world in flames!

"Now, what must I do? I cannot retract, and I see that this publication is subjecting me to inconceivable hatred in all quarters. I love not to stand forth in the midst of the world; for I am without knowledge, without talent, and far too feeble for such great things, especially in this illustrious age, in which Cicero himself, were he alive, would be obliged to hide in some obscure corner.[485]

"But in order to appease my adversaries, and respond to numerous solicitations, I here publish my thoughts. I publish them, Holy Father, that I may place myself in safety under the shadow of your wings. All who are willing will thus be able to understand with what simplicity of heart I have asked the ecclesiastical authority to instruct me, and what respect I have shown for the power of the keys.[486] If I had not managed the affair in a becoming manner, it is impossible that the most serene lord Frederick, Duke and Elector of Saxony, who shines among the friends of apostolical and Christian truth, would ever have tolerated in his university of Wittemberg a man so dangerous as I am represented to be.

"Wherefore, most Holy Father, I throw myself at the feet of your Holiness, and submit to you with all I have, and all I am. Destroy my cause, or embrace it; decide for me, or decide against me; take my life, or restore it to me, just as you please. I will recognise your voice as the voice of Jesus Christ, who presides and speaks by you. If I have deserved death I refuse not to die.[487] The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains. Let him be praised to all eternity. Amen. May he sustain you for ever and ever. Amen.

"On the day of the Holy Trinity, in the year 1518.

"Friar Martin Luther, *Augustin*."

What humility and truth in this fear, or rather in this confession of Luther, that his young and [263] boiling blood had perhaps been too quickly inflamed! We here recognise the man of sincerity, who, not presuming on himself, fears the influence of passion even in those of his actions which are most conformable to the word of God. There is a wide difference between this language and that of a proud fanatic. We see in Luther an earnest desire to gain over Leo to the cause of truth, to prevent all disruption, and make this reformation, the necessity of which he proclaims, come from the very pinnacle of the Church. Assuredly, he is not the person who ought to be charged with destroying in the West that unity, the loss of which was afterwards so much regretted. He sacrificed every thing in order to maintain it; every thing but truth. It was not he, but his adversaries, who, by refusing to acknowledge the fulness and sufficiency of the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ, are chargeable with having rent the Saviour's robe at the foot of the cross.

After writing this letter, Luther, the very same day, addressed his friend Staupitz, vicar-general of his order. It was through him he wished his "Solutions" and his epistle to reach Leo.

"I pray you," says he to him, "kindly to accept the miserable things[488] which I send you, and transmit them to the excellent pope, Leo X. Not that I would thereby drag you into the perils to which I am exposed. I wish to take all the danger to myself. Jesus Christ will see whether what I have said comes from him or comes from me—Jesus Christ, without whose will neither the tongue of the pope can move, nor the hearts of kings resolve.

"To those who threaten me I have no answer to give, unless it be the remark of Reuchlin, 'The poor man has nothing to fear, for he has nothing to lose.'[489] I have neither money nor goods, and I ask none. If I once possessed some honour and some reputation, let him that has begun to strip me of them finish his work. I have nothing left but this miserable body, enfeebled by so many trials; let them kill it by force or fraud, to the glory of God. In this way they will, perhaps, shorten my life an hour or two. Enough for me to have a precious Redeemer, a powerful Priest, Jesus Christ the Lord! I will praise him while I have a breath of life; and if none will praise him with me, how can I help it?"

These words enable us to read Luther's heart.

While he was thus looking with confidence towards Rome, Rome had thoughts of vengeance [264] towards him. On the 3rd of April, Cardinal Raphael De Rovere had written to the Elector Frederick in the pope's name, stating that suspicions were entertained of his faith, and that he ought to beware of protecting Luther.

"Cardinal Raphael," says Luther, "would have had great pleasure in seeing me burned by Duke Frederick."[490] Thus Rome began to whet her arms against Luther, and the first blow which she aimed at him was through the mind of his protector. If she succeeded in destroying the shelter

under which the monk of Wittemberg was reposing, he would become an easy prey.

The German princes attached much importance to their reputation as Christian princes. The slightest suspicion of heresy filled them with alarm, and the court of Rome had shrewdly availed itself of this feeling. Frederick, moreover, had always been attached to the religion of his fathers, and Raphael's letter made a very strong impression on his mind. But it was a principle with the Elector not to act hastily in any thing. He knew that truth was not always on the side of the strongest. The transactions of the empire with Rome had taught him to distrust the selfish views of that court; and he was aware that in order to be a Christian prince, it was not necessary to be the pope's slave.

"He was not," says Melancthon, "one of those profane spirits who wish to stifle all changes in their first beginnings.[491] Frederick resigned himself to God. He carefully read the writings which were published, and what he judged true he allowed no one to destroy."[492] He had power to do so. Supreme in his own States, he was respected in the empire at least as highly as the emperor himself.

It is probable that Luther learned something of this letter of Cardinal Raphael, which was sent to the Elector on the 7th of July. Perhaps it was the prospect of excommunication which this Roman missive seemed to presage, that led him to mount the pulpit of Wittemberg on the 15th of the same month, and on this subject deliver a discourse which made a profound impression. He distinguished between internal and external excommunication; the former excluding from communion with God, and the latter excluding only from the ceremonies of the Church. "Nobody," says he, "can reconcile a lapsed soul with God save God himself. Nobody can separate man from communion with God unless it be man himself by his own sins! Happy he who dies [265] unjustly excommunicated! While for righteousness' sake he endures a heavy infliction on the part of man, he receives the crown of eternal felicity from the hand of God."

Some highly applauded this bold language, while others were more irritated by it. But Luther was no longer alone; and although his faith needed no other support than that of God, a phalanx of defence against his enemies was formed around him. The Germans had heard the voice of the Reformer. His discourses and his writings sent forth flashes which awoke and illumined his contemporaries. The energy of his faith fell in torrents of fire on slumbering hearts. The life which God had infused into this extraordinary soul was imparted to the dead body of the Church; and Christendom, which had for so many ages been motionless, was animated with a religious enthusiasm. The devotedness of the people to the superstitions of Rome diminished every day, and the number of hands which offered money for the purchase of pardon became fewer and fewer,[493] while at the same time Luther's fame continued to increase. People turned towards him, and hailed him with love and respect as the intrepid defender of truth and liberty.[494] No doubt the full depth of the doctrines which he announced was not perceived. It was enough for the greater number to know that the new doctor withstood the pope, and that the empire of priests and monks was shaken by his powerful word. To them the attack of Luther was like one of those fires which are kindled on mountain tops, as the signal for a whole nation to rise and burst its chains. Before the Reformer suspected what he had done, all the generous hearted among his countrymen had already acknowledged him for their leader. To many, however, the appearance of Luther was something more. The word of God, which he wielded with so much power, pierced their minds like a sharp two-edged sword; and their hearts were inflamed with an ardent desire to obtain the assurance of pardon and eternal life. Since primitive times the Church had not known such hungering and thirsting after righteousness. If the preaching of Peter the Hermit and Bernard so aroused the population of the middle ages as to make them take up a perishable cross, the preaching of Luther disposed those of his time to embrace the true cross, the truth which saves. The framework which then lay with all its weight on the Church had smothered [266] everything; the form had destroyed the life. But the powerful word given to Luther caused a quickening breath to circulate over the soil of Christendom. At the first glance the writings of Luther were equally captivating to believers and unbelievers,—to unbelievers, because the positive doctrines afterwards to be established were not yet fully developed in them; and to believers, because they contained the germ of that living faith which they so powerfully express. Hence the influence of these writings was immense; they spread almost instantaneously over Germany and the world. The prevailing impression of men every where was, that they were assisting, not at the establishment of a sect, but at a new birth of the Church and of society. Those who were born of the Spirit of God ranged themselves around him who was its organ. Christendom was divided into two camps,—the one leagued with the spirit against the form, and the other with the form against the spirit. It is true that on the side of the form were all the appearances of strength and grandeur, and on the side of the spirit those of feebleness and insignificance. But the form, devoid of the spirit, is a lifeless body, which the first breath may upset. Its appearance of power only provokes hostility and accelerates its downfall. In this way the simple truth had placed Luther at the head of a mighty army.

CHAP. II.

Diet at Augsburg—The Emperor to the Pope—The Elector to Rovere—Luther cited to

Rome—Luther's Peace—Intercession of the University—Papal Brief—Luther's Indignation—The Pope to the Elector.

This army was needed; for the great began to move. Both the empire and the Church were uniting their efforts to rid themselves of this troublesome monk. Had the imperial throne been occupied by a brave and energetic prince, he might have profited by these religious agitations, and, throwing himself on God and the nation, given new force to the former opposition to the papacy. But Maximilian was too old, and was determined, moreover, to sacrifice every thing to what he regarded as the end of his existence,—the aggrandisement of his house, and through it the exaltation of his grandson.

The Emperor Maximilian at this time held a diet at Augsburg, Six Electors attended in person, and all the Germanic States were represented at it, while the kings of France, Hungary, and [267] Poland, sent their ambassadors. All these princes and envoys appeared in great splendour. The war against the Turks was one of the subjects for which the diet had assembled. The legate of Leo X strongly urged the prosecution of it; but the States, instructed by the bad use which had formerly been made of their contributions, and sagely counselled by the Elector Frederick, contented themselves with declaring that they would take the matter into consideration, and at the same time, produced new grievances against Rome. A Latin discourse, published during the Diet, boldly called the attention of the German princes to the true danger. "You wish," said the author, "to put the Turk to flight. This is well; but I am much afraid that you are mistaken as to his person. It is not in Asia, but in Italy, that you ought to seek him."[495]

Another affair of no less importance was to occupy the Diet. Maximilian was desirous that his grandson Charles, already king of Spain and Naples, should be proclaimed king of the Romans, and his successors in the imperial dignity. The pope knew his interest too well to wish the imperial throne to be occupied by a prince whose power in Italy might prove formidable to him. The Emperor thought he had already gained the greater part of the electors and states, but he found a strenuous opponent in Frederick. In vain did he solicit him, and in vain did the ministers and best friends of the Elector join their entreaties to those of the Emperor. Frederick was immovable, and proved the truth of what has been said of him, that when once satisfied of the justice of a resolution, he had firmness of soul never to abandon it. The Emperor's design failed.

From this time the Emperor sought to gain the good will of the pope, in order to render him favourable to his plans; and as a special proof of his devotedness, on the 5th August, wrote him the following letter:—"Most Holy Father, we learned some days ago that a friar of the Augustin order, named Martin Luther, has begun to maintain divers propositions as to the commerce in indulgences. Our displeasure is the greater because the said friar finds many protectors, among whom are powerful personages.[496] If your Holiness and the very reverend fathers of the Church, (the Cardinals,) do not forthwith employ their authority to put an end to these scandals, not only will these pernicious doctors seduce the simple, but they will involve great princes in their ruin. We will take care that whatever your Holiness may decide on this matter, for the glory [268] of Almighty God, shall be observed by all in our empire."

This letter must have been written after some rather keen discussion between Maximilian and Frederick. The same day, the Elector wrote to Raphael de Rovere. He had doubtless learned that the Emperer was addressing the Roman pontiff, and to parry the blow he put himself in communication with Rome.

"I can have no other wish," said he, "than to show myself submissive to the universal Church. Accordingly, I have never defended the writings and sermons of Doctor Martin Luther. I understand, moreover, that he has always offered to appear with a safe-conduct before impartial, learned, and Christian judges, in order to defend his doctrine, and submit, in the event of being convinced by Scripture itself."[497]

Leo X, who had hitherto allowed the affair to take its course, aroused by the cries of theologians and monks, instituted an ecclesiastical court, which was to try Luther at Rome, and in which Sylvester Prierio, the great enemy of the Reformer, was at once accuser and judge. The charge was soon drawn up, and Luther was summoned by the court to appear personally in sixty days.

Luther was at Wittemberg, calmly awaiting the good effect which his humble letter to the pope was, as he imagined, to produce, when, on the 7th of August, only two days after the despatch of the letters of Maximilian and Frederick, he received the citation from the Roman tribunal. "At the moment," says he, "when I was expecting the benediction, I saw the thunder burst upon me. I was the lamb troubling the water to the wolf. Tezel escapes, and I must allow myself to be eaten."

This citation threw Wittemberg into consternation; for whatever course Luther might adopt, he could not avert the danger. If he repaired to Rome he must there become the victim of his enemies. If he refused to go, he would, as a matter of course, be condemned for contumacy, without being able to escape; for it was known that the legate had received orders from the pope to do everything he could do to irritate the Emperor and the German princes against him. His friends were in dismay. Must the teacher of truth go with his life in his hand to that great city, *drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus*? Is it sufficient to ensure any man's destruction that he has raised his head from the bosom of enslaved Christendom? Must this man, whom God appears to have formed for resisting a power which hitherto nothing has been able to [269] resist, be also overthrown? Luther, himself, saw no one who could save him unless it were the Elector, but he would rather die than endanger his prince. His friends at last fell on an expedient

which would not compromise Frederick. Let him refuse a safe-conduct, and Luther will have a legitimate cause for refusing to appear at Rome.

On the 8th of August Luther wrote to Spalatin, praying that the Elector would employ his influence to have him cited in Germany. He also wrote to Staupitz, "See what ambuscades they use to ensnare me, and how I am surrounded with thorns. But Christ lives and reigns, to-day, yesterday, and for ever. My conscience assures me that what I have taught is the truth, though it becomes still more odious when I teach it. The Church is like the womb of Rebecca. The children must struggle together so as even to endanger the life of the mother.[498] As to what remains, entreat the Lord that I may not have too much joy in this trial. May God not lay the sin to their charge."

The friends of Luther did not confine themselves to consultation and complaint. Spalatin, on the part of the Elector, wrote to Renner, the Emperor's secretary, "Dr. Martin is very willing that his judges shall be all the universities of Germany, with the exception of those of Erfurt, Leipsic, and Frankfort on the Oder, which he has ground to suspect. It is impossible for him to appear personally at Rome."[499]

The university of Wittemberg wrote a letter of intercession to the pope himself, and thus spoke of Luther,—"The feebleness of his body, and the dangers of the journey, make it difficult and even impossible for him to obey the order of your Holiness. His distress and his prayers dispose us to have compassion on him. We, then, as obedient sons, entreat you, most Holy Father, to be pleased to regard him as a man who has never taught doctrines in opposition to the sentiments of the Roman Church." On the same day the university, in its anxiety, addressed Charles de Miltitz, a Saxon gentleman, the chamberlain, and a great favourite of the pope, and bore testimony to Luther in terms still stronger than those which it had ventured to insert in the former letter. "The worthy father, Martin Luther, Augustin, is the noblest and most honourable man of our university. For several years we have seen and known his ability, his knowledge, his high attainments in arts and literature, his irreproachable manners, and his altogether Christian conduct."[500]

This active charity on the part of all who were about Luther is his finest eulogium. [270]

While the issue was anxiously waited for, the affair terminated more easily than might have been supposed. The Legate de Vio, chagrined at not having succeeded in the commission which he had received to prepare a general war against the Turks, was desirous to give lustre to his embassy in Germany by some other brilliant exploit; and thinking that if he extinguished heresy he would reappear at Rome with glory, he asked the pope to remit the affair to him. Leo felt himself under obligation to Frederick, for having so strenuously opposed the election of young Charles, and was aware that he might still want his assistance. Accordingly, without adverting to the citation, he charged his legate by a brief, dated 23rd of August, to examine the affair in Germany. The pope lost nothing by this mode of proceeding; and, at the same time, if Luther could be brought to a retractation, the noise and scandal which his appearance at Rome might have occasioned were avoided.

"We charge you," said he, "to bring personally before you, to pursue and constrain without delay, and as soon as you receive this our letter, the said Luther, who has already been declared heretic by our dear brother, Jerome, Bishop of Asculan."[501]

Then the pope prescribes the severest measures against Luther.

"For this purpose invoke the arm and assistance of our very dear son in Christ, Maximilian, the other princes of Germany, and all its commonalties, universities, and powers ecclesiastical or secular; and if you apprehend him, keep him in safe custody, in order that he may be brought before us."[502]

We see that this indulgent concession of the pope was little else than a surer method of dragging Luther to Rome. Next follow the gentle measures:—

"If he returns to himself, and asks pardon for his great crime, asks it of himself, and without being urged to do it, we give you power to receive him into the unity of Holy Mother Church."

The pope soon returns to malediction.

"If he persists in his obstinacy, and you cannot make yourself master of his person, we give you power to proscribe him in all parts of Germany, to banish, curse, and excommunicate all who are attached to him, and to order all Christians to shun their presence."

Still this is not enough. The pope continues:—

"And in order that this contagion maybe the more easily extirpated, you will excommunicate all [271]
prelates, religious orders, communities, counts, dukes, and grandees, except the Emperor Maximilian, who shall refuse to seize the said Martin Luther and his adherents, and send them to you, under due and sufficient guard. And if (which God forbid) the said princes, communities, universities, grandees, or any one belonging to them, offer an asylum to the said Martin and his adherents, in any way, and give him, publicly or in secret, by themselves or others, aid and counsel, we lay under interdict these princes, communities, and grandees, with their towns, burghs, fields, and villages, whither said Martin may flee, as long as he shall remain there, and for three days after he shall have left."

This audacious chair, which pretends to be the representative on earth of Him who has said, *God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved*, continues its anathemas; and, after having denounced penalties against ecclesiastics, proceeds:—

"In regard to the laity, if they do not obey your orders instantly, and without any opposition, we declare them infamous, (with the exception of the most worthy Emperor,) incapable of performing any lawful act, deprived of Christian burial, and stript of all fiefs which they may hold, whether of the apostolic see, or of any other superior whatsoever."[503]

Such was the fate which awaited Luther. The monarch of Rome has leagued for his destruction, and to effect it, spared nothing, not even the peace of the tomb. His ruin seems inevitable. How will he escape this immense conspiracy? But Rome had miscalculated; a movement produced by the Spirit of God was not to be quelled by the decrees of its chancery.

Even the forms of a just and impartial inquest had not been observed. Luther had been declared heretic, not only without having been heard, but even before the expiry of the period named for his compearance. The passions (and nowhere do they show themselves stronger than in religious discussions) overleap all the forms of justice. Strange proceedings, in this respect, occur, not only in the Church of Rome, but in Protestant churches also, which have turned aside from the gospel; in other words, in all places where the truth is not, every thing done against the gospel is deemed lawful. We often see men who, in any other case, would scruple to commit the smallest injustice, not hesitating to trample under foot all forms and all rights when the matter in question is [272] Christianity, and the testimony borne to it.

When Luther was afterwards made acquainted with this brief, he expressed his indignation. "Here," says he, "is the most remarkable part of the whole affair. The brief is dated on the 23rd of August, and I was cited for the 7th of August; so that between the citation and the brief there is an interval of sixteen days. Now, make the calculation, and you will find that my Lord Jerome, Bishop of Asculan, has proceeded against me, given judgment, condemned, and declared me heretic, before the citation could have reached me, or at most sixteen days after it had been despatched to me. Now, I ask, where are the sixty days given me in the citation? They commenced on the 7th August, and were to end on the 7th October. Is it the style and fashion of the court of Rome to cite, admonish, accuse, judge, and pronounce sentence of condemnation, all in one day, against a man who is at such a distance from Rome, that he knows nothing at all of the proceedings? What answer would they give to this? Doubtless, they forgot to purge themselves with hellebore before proceeding to such falsehoods."[504]

But at the same time that Rome was secretly depositing her thunders in the hands of her legate, she was endeavouring, by smooth and flattering words, to detach the prince whose power she most dreaded from Luther's cause. The same day, 25th August 1518, the pope wrote the Elector of Saxony. Recurring to those wiles of ancient policy which we have already pointed out, he endeavoured to flatter the prince's self-love:

"Dear son," said the Roman pontiff, "when we think on your noble and honourable race, and on yourself, its head and ornament; when we recollect how you and your ancestors have always desired to maintain Christian faith, and the honour and dignity of the Holy See, we cannot believe that a man who abandons the faith can trust to the favour of your Highness, in giving loose reins to his wickedness. And yet it is told us from all quarters that a certain friar, Martin Luther, Eremite of the order of St. Augustine, has, like a child of malice, and a contemner of God, forgotten his habit and his order, which consist in humility and obedience, and is boasting that he fears neither the authority nor the punishment of any man, because assured of your favour and protection.

"But, as we know that he is mistaken, we have thought good to write to your Highness, and exhort you, according to the Lord, to be vigilant for the honour of your name as a Christian [273] prince, and to defend yourself from these calumnies—yourself the ornament, the glory, and sweet savour of your noble race—and to guard, not only against a fault so grave as that which is imputed to you, but also against even the suspicion which the insensate hardihood of this friar tends to excite against you."

Leo X, at the same time, announced to Frederick that he had charged Cardinal Saint Sixtus to examine the affair, and he enjoined him to put Luther into the hands of the legate, "lest," added he, returning again to his favourite argument, "lest the pious people of our time, and of future times, may one day lament and say, The most pernicious heresy with which the Church of God has been afflicted was excited by the favour and support of this high and honourable House."[505]

Thus Rome had taken all her measures. With one hand she diffused the perfume of praise, which is always so intoxicating, while the other held terrors and vengeance.

All the powers of the earth, emperor, pope, princes, and legates, began to move against this humble friar of Erfurt, whose internal combats we have already traced. "*The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed.*"

CHAP. III.

The Armourer Schwarzerd—His Wife—Philip—His Genius—His Studies—The Bible—Call to Wittemberg—Melancthon's Departure and Journey—Leipsic—Mistake—Luther's Joy—Parallel—Revolution in Education—Study of Greek.

The letter and brief had not reached Germany, and Luther was still fearing that he would be obliged to appear at Rome, when a happy event gave comfort to his heart. He needed a friend to whom he could unbosom his sorrows, and whose faithful love would solace him in his hours of depression. All this God gave him in Melancthon.

On the 14th February 1497, George Schwarzerd, a skilful armour-master of Bretten, a small town in the Palatinate, had a son born to him, who was named Philip, and who afterwards distinguished himself under the name of Melancthon. Patronised by the Palatine princes, and those of Bavaria and Saxony, George was a man of unimpeachable integrity. He often refused the [274] price which purchasers offered him, and on learning that they were poor, insisted on returning their money. He rose regularly at midnight, and on his knees offered up a prayer. If on any occasion morning arrived without his having done it, he felt dissatisfied with himself the whole day. Barbara, Schwarzerd's wife, was daughter of an honourable magistrate named John Reuter. She was of a gentle temper, somewhat inclined to superstition, but otherwise remarkable for wisdom and prudence. From her we have the old well-known German rhymes—

> The giving of alms impoverisheth not;
> Attendance at Church impedeth not;
> Greasing the wheel retardeth not;
> Ill-gotten gear enricheth not;
> The Book of God deceiveth not.

And again—

> Those who are pleased more to expend
> Than their fields can render,
> Must come to ruin in the end,
> It may be to a halter.[506]

Young Philip was not eleven when his father died. Two days before, George called his son to his bed-side, and exhorted him to have the thought of God always present. "I foresee," said the dying armourer, "that dreadful storms are coming to shake the world. I have seen great things, but greater are in preparation. May God guide and direct you!" Philip, after receiving his father's blessing, was sent to Spires, that he might not be present at his death. He departed crying bitterly.

The young boy's grandfather, the worthy bailie Reuter, who had also a son, acted as a father to him, and took him, together with his brother, George, under his own roof. Shortly after he gave the three boys for tutor John Hungarus, an excellent man, who afterwards, and at a very advanced age, became a powerful preacher of the gospel. He let nothing pass in the young man, punishing him for every fault, yet with discretion. "In this way," says Melancthon in 1554, "he made me a grammarian. He loved me as a son, I loved him as a father, and we will meet, I trust, in eternal life."[507]

Philip was remarkable for the excellence of his understanding, and for his facility in learning, and expounding what he had learned. He could not endure idleness, and always sought out some one [275] with whom he might discuss what he had heard.[508] It often happened that educated strangers passed through Bretten, and visited Reuter. The bailie's grandson instantly accosted them, entered into conversation with them, and so pressed them in discussion as to excite the wonder of those present. To a powerful genius he joined great sweetness of temper, and was hence a general favourite. He had a stammer, but, like the celebrated orator of the Greeks, made such exertions to overcome it, that it afterwards completely disappeared.

His grandfather having died, Philip was sent with his brother and his young uncle, John, to the school of Pforzheim. The boys resided with one of their relatives, the sister of the famous Reuchlin. Eager for knowledge, Philip, under the tuition of George Simler, made rapid progress in science, and especially in the study of Greek, for which he had a real passion. Reuchlin often came to Pforzheim, and having become acquainted with his sister's young boarders, was soon struck with Philip's answers, and gave him a Greek grammar and a Bible. These two books were to be the study of his whole life.

When Reuchlin returned from his second journey into Italy, his young relative, then twelve years of age, with some friends, performed a Latin comedy of his own composition before him, in honour of his arrival. Reuchlin, in raptures with the talents of the youth, embraced him tenderly, called him his dear son, and jocularly gave him the red bonnet which he had received on being made doctor. It was at this time Reuchlin changed his name of Schwarzerd into that of Melancthon. Both words, the one German, and the other Greek, mean *black earth*. It was a general custom with the learned thus to change their names into Greek or Latin.

Melancthon, at twelve, repaired to the university of Heidelberg, and began to gratify his eager

thirst for knowledge. He was admitted Bachelor at fourteen. In 1512 Reuchlin invited him to Tubingen, which contained a great number of distinguished literary men. Here he attended at the same time lectures on theology, medicine, and jurisprudence. There was no branch of knowledge which he did not think it his duty to study. His object was not praise, but the possession of science and the benefits of it.

The Holy Scriptures particularly occupied him. Those who frequented the church of Tubingen had often observed a book in his hands, which he studied between the services. This unknown [276] volume seemed larger than the common prayer-books, and the report spread that Philip when in church read profane books. It turned out that the object of their suspicion was a copy of the Holy Scriptures, printed a short time before at Bâsle by John Frobenius. This volume he studied through life with unwearied application. He had it always with him, carrying it to all the public meetings to which he was invited.[509] Rejecting the vain system of the schoolmen, he devoted himself to the simple word of the Gospel. Erasmus at this time wrote to Œcolampadius, "Of Melancthon I have the highest opinion, and the highest hopes. Jesus grant that this young man may have a long life! He will completely eclipse Erasmus."[510] Melancthon, nevertheless, shared in the errors of his age. "I shudder," says he, in advanced life, "when I think of the honour which I paid to images when I was still in the papacy."[511]

In 1514, he was made doctor in philosophy, and began to teach. His age was seventeen. The grace and attractiveness which he gave to his lectures formed a striking contrast to the insipid method which the doctors, and especially the monks, had hitherto pursued. He took an active part in the combat in which Reuchlin was engaged with the *Obscurants* of his age. His agreeable conversation, his gentle and elegant manners, gaining him the love of all who knew him, he soon acquired great authority, and a solid reputation in the world.

At this time, the Elector Frederick having conceived the idea of inviting some distinguished professor of ancient languages to his university of Wittemberg, applied to Reuchlin who suggested Melancthon. Frederick saw all the lustre which this young Hellenist might shed on an institution which was so dear to him; and Reuchlin, delighted at seeing so fine a field opened to his young friend, addressed him in the words of Jehovah to Abraham,—"*Come out from thy country, and thy kindred, and thy father's house, and I will render thy name great, and thou shalt be blessed.*" "Yes," continues the old man, "I hope it will be so with thee, my dear Philip, my work and my comfort."[512] In this invitation, Melancthon saw a call from God. The university was grieved to part with him, and yet he was not without envious rivals and enemies. He left his native country, exclaiming, "The will of the Lord be done." He was then twenty-one years of age.

Melancthon made the journey on horseback, in company with some Saxon merchants, in the [277] same way in which caravans travel in the desert; for, says Reuchlin, he knew neither the towns nor the roads.[513] At Augsburg he did homage to the Elector, who happened to be there. At Nuremberg he saw the excellent Pirckheimer, whom he already knew, and at Leipsic formed an intimacy with the learned Hellenist, Mosellanus. In this last town the university gave a fete in honour of him. It was a truly academic repast. The dishes were numerous, and as each made its appearance, a professor rose and addressed Melancthon in a Latin discourse previously prepared. He immediately gave an *extempore* reply. At length, worn out with so much eloquence, "Most illustrious friends," said he, "allow me to reply once for all to your addresses; for not being prepared, I cannot put as much variety into my replies as you into your addresses." Thereafter the dishes arrived without the accompaniment of a discourse.[514]

Reuchlin's young relative arrived at Wittemberg, 25th August, 1518, two days after Leo X had signed the brief addressed to Cajetan, and the letter to the Elector.

The professors of Wittemberg did not receive Melancthon with so much favour as those of Leipsic had done. The first impression which he made upon them did not correspond to their expectations. They saw a young man, who seemed still younger than he really was, of small stature, and a feeble, timid air. Is this the illustrious doctor whom the greatest men of the age, Erasmus and Reuchlin, extol so loudly?... Neither Luther, with whom he first was made acquainted, nor his colleagues, conceived high hopes of him, when they saw his youth, his embarrassment, and whole appearance.

Four days after his arrival (29th August) he delivered his inaugural address. The whole university was assembled. The boy, as Luther calls him,[515] spoke such elegant Latin, and displayed so much knowledge, a mind so cultivated, and a judgment so sound, that all his hearers were filled with admiration.

At the termination of the address, all pressed forward to congratulate him, but none felt more joy than Luther, who hastened to communicate to his friends the feelings with which his heart was overflowing. Writing Spalatin, 31st August, he says, "Melancthon, four days after his arrival, delivered an address so beautiful and so learned, that it was listened to with universal approbation and astonishment. We have soon got the better of the prejudices which his stature [278] and personal appearance had produced. We praise and admire his eloquence; we thank the prince and you for the service you have done us. I ask no other Greek master. But I fear that his delicate body will not be able to digest our food, and that, on account of the smallness of his salary, we shall not keep him long. I hear that the Leipsic folks are already boasting of being able to carry him off from us. Oh, my dear Spalatin, beware of despising his age and personal appearance. He is a man worthy of all honour.[516]

Melancthon immediately began to explain Homer, and St. Paul's Epistle to Titus. He was full of ardour. "I will do my utmost," wrote he to Spalatin, "to bring Wittemberg into favour with all who love literature and virtue."[517] Four days after the inauguration, Luther again wrote to Spalatin, "I recommend to you most particularly the very learned and very amiable Greek, Philip. His class-room is always full. All the theologians in particular attend him. He sets all classes from the highest to the lowest, to the learning of Greek."[518]

Melancthon was able to return the affection of Luther, in whom he soon discovered a goodness of heart, a strength of intellect, a courage and a wisdom, which he had not previously found in any man. He venerated and loved him. "If there is any one," said he, "whom I love strongly, and whom my whole soul embraces, it is Martin Luther."[519]

"Thus met Luther and Melancthon, and they were friends till death. We cannot sufficiently admire the goodness and wisdom of God in uniting two men so different, and yet so necessary to each other. What Luther had in warmth, elasticity, and force, Melancthon had in perspicuity, wisdom, and gentleness. Luther animated Melancthon; Melancthon moderated Luther. They were like the two forms of electric matter, the positive and the negative, which modify each other. Had Luther been without Melancthon, the stream had perhaps overflowed its bank; and, on the other hand, Melancthon, when without Luther, hesitated, and even yielded, where he ought to have stood firm.[520] Luther did much by vigour, and Melancthon perhaps did not less by pursuing a slower and calmer course. Both were upright, open, and generous, and both, smitten with the love of the word of eternal life, served it with a fidelity and devotedness which formed the [279] distinguishing feature of their lives.

The arrival of Melancthon produced a revolution, not only at Wittemberg, but throughout Germany and the learned world. His study of the Greek and Latin classics, and of philosophy, had given him an order, perspicuity, and precision of thought, which shed new light and inexpressible beauty on all the subjects which he discussed. The mild spirit of the gospel fertilized and enlivened his meditations, and the driest subjects when he expounded them were invested with a grace which fascinated all his hearers. The sterility which scholasticism had spread over education ceased, and a new mode of instruction and study commenced. "Thanks to Melancthon," says a distinguished German historian, "Wittemberg became the national school."[521]

It was, indeed, of great importance, that a man thoroughly versed in Greek should teach in this university, where the new developments of theology called masters and scholars to study the primitive documents of the Christian faith in the original languages. Thenceforth Luther set himself zealously to this task. Often did the meaning of a Greek term, which had previously been unknown to him, throw sudden light on his theological views. For example, how great his satisfaction and delight when he saw that the Greek word, μετανοια, which according to the Latin church, meant a penance, a satisfaction enacted by the Church, meant in Greek a transformation or conversion of heart. A thick mist all at once disappeared from before his eyes. The two meanings given to this word are sufficient to characterise the two churches.

The impulse which Melancthon gave to Luther, in regard to the translation of the Bible, is one of the most remarkable circumstances in the friendship of these two great men. As early as 1517, Luther had made some attempts at translation, and procured as many Greek and Latin books as he could. Now, aided by his dear Philip, his task received a new impetus. Luther obliged Melancthon to take part in his researches, by consulting him on difficult passages, and the work, destined to be one of the greatest works of the Reformer, advanced more surely and more rapidly.

Melancthon, on his part, became acquainted with a new theology. The beautiful and profound doctrine of justification by faith filled him with astonishment and joy. Still, in receiving the system Luther professed, he acted independently, moulding it according to the particular form of his own intellect; for, although he was only twenty-one years of age, he was one of those [280] precocious minds which enter early into possession of all their powers, and are themselves from the very outset.

The zeal of the masters was soon transfused into the scholars. It was proposed to reform the course of study. With the concurrence of the Elector, certain branches, only of scholastic importance, were suppressed, and at the same time a new impulse was given to classic pursuits. The school of Wittemberg underwent a transformation, and the contrast between it and other universities became still more prominent. Still, however, the landmarks of the Church were observed, though all felt that they were on the eve of a great battle with the pope.

CHAP. IV.

Sentiments of Luther and Staupitz—Order to Appear—Alarms and Courage—The Elector with the Legate—Departure for Augsburg—Sojourn at Weimar—Nuremberg.

The arrival of Melancthon, doubtless, gave a pleasant turn to Luther's thoughts at this very

critical moment; and, doubtless, in the sweet intercourse of a growing friendship, and amid the biblical labours to which he devoted himself with new zeal, he sometimes forgot Prierio, Leo, and the ecclesiastical court before which he behoved to plead. Still, these were only fleeting moments, and his thoughts were ever recurring to the formidable tribunal before which implacable enemies had summoned him to appear. What terrors would not this thought have thrown into a mind which was seeking aught else than the truth! But Luther trembled not! Confiding fully in the faithfulness and power of God, he remained firm, and was quite ready to expose himself single-handed to the rage of enemies mightier than those who had lighted the fire for John Huss.

A few days after the arrival of Melancthon, and before the pope's resolution transferring the citation of Luther from Rome to Augsburg could be known, Luther wrote Spalatin:—"I ask not our sovereign to do any thing whatever for the defence of my theses. I am willing to be delivered up and thrown single into the hands of my adversaries. Let him allow the whole storm to burst upon me. What I have undertaken to defend, I hope I shall be able, with the assistance of Christ, to maintain. Violence, indeed, must be submitted to; but still without abandoning the truth."[522]

[281] The courage of Luther communicated itself to others. Men of the greatest gentleness and timidity, on seeing the danger which threatened the witness for the truth, found words full of energy and indignation. The prudent and pacific Staupitz, on the 7th September, wrote to Spalatin: "Cease not to exhort the prince, your master and mine, not to be alarmed at the roaring of the lions. Let him defend the truth without troubling himself about Luther, or Staupitz, or the order. Let there be a place where men can speak freely and without fear. I know that the plague of Babylon—I had almost said of Rome—breaks forth against all who attack the abuses of those traffickers in Jesus Christ. I have myself seen a preacher of the truth thrown headlong from the pulpit; I have seen him, though on a festival, bound and dragged to a dungeon. Others have seen still greater cruelties. Therefore, my dear friend, strive to make his Highness persevere in his sentiments."[523]

The order to appear at Augsburg before the cardinal legate at length arrived. Luther had now to do with one of the princes of the Church. All his friends entreated him not to go.[524] They feared that on the journey snares might be laid for him, and an attempt made on his life. Some employed themselves in looking out for an asylum to him. Staupitz himself, the timid Staupitz, felt moved at the thought of the dangers which threatened that friar Martin whom he had drawn from the obscurity of the cloister, and placed on the troubled stage where his life was now in peril. Ah! would it not have been better if the poor friar had remained for ever unknown? It was too late. Still, at least, he would do everything to save him. Accordingly, on the 15th September he wrote him from his convent of Salzburg, urging him to flee and seek an asylum beside himself. "It seems to me," said he, "that the whole world is enraged, and in coalition against the truth. In the same way crucified Jesus was hated. I see not that you have anything to expect but persecution. Shortly, no man will be able without the permission of the pope, to sound the Scriptures, and search for Jesus Christ in them, though this Christ himself enjoins. You have only a few friends; and would to God that the fear of your adversaries did not prevent those few from declaring in your favour. The wisest course is to quit Wittemberg for a time and come to me. Thus we will live and die together. This is also the prince's opinion," adds Staupitz.[525]

[282] From different quarters Luther received the most alarming notices. Count Albert of Mansfeld sent a message to him to beware of setting out, for some great barons had sworn to make themselves masters of his person, and to strangle or drown him.[526] But nothing could deter him. He never thought of availing himself of the vicar-general's offer. He will not go and hide himself in the obscurity of the convent of Salzburg, but will faithfully remain on the stormy scene on which the hand of God has placed him. It is by persevering in the face of adversaries, and proclaiming the truth with loud voice in the midst of the world, that the reign of truth advances. Why, then, should he flee? He is not one of "those who draw back to perdition; but of those who believe to the saving of the soul." The words of the Master whom he serves, and loves better than life, are incessantly echoing in his heart, "*Whosoever will confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.*" In Luther and in the Reformation we uniformly meet with that intrepid courage, that high-toned morality, that boundless charity, which the first preaching of Christianity manifested to the world. "I am like Jeremiah," says Luther, at the period of which we are now speaking; "Jeremiah, the man of quarrel and discord; but the more they multiply their menaces the more they increase my joy. My wife and children are well provided, (of course, meaning he had none;) my fields, my houses, and all my goods, are in order.[527] They have already torn my honour and my reputation to shreds. The only thing left me is my poor body, and let them take it; they will only shorten my life some few hours. My soul they cannot take from me. He who would publish the word of Christ in the world must expect death every hour; for our bridegroom is a bridegroom of blood."[528]

The Elector was then at Augsburg. A short time before quitting that town after the Diet, he had of his own accord paid a visit to the legate. The cardinal, greatly flattered by this mark of respect from so illustrious a prince, promised that if the monk presented himself he would listen to him like a father, and kindly dismiss him. Spalatin, on the part of the prince, wrote to his friend that the pope had named a commission to try him in Germany; that the Elector would not allow him to be dragged to Rome; and that he must prepare to set out for Augsburg. Luther resolved to obey; but the warning which he had received from Count Mansfeld made him apply to Frederick for a safe-conduct. Frederick replied that it was unnecessary, and merely gave him recommendations

to some of the leading counsellors of Augsburg. He also sent him some money for the journey. [283] The Reformer, poor and defenceless, set out on foot to place himself in the hands of his adversaries.[529]

What must have been his feelings on quitting Wittemberg, and directing his steps towards Augsburg, where the legate of the pope was waiting for him! The object of this journey was not like that of Heidelberg, a friendly meeting. He was going to appear in presence of the legate of Rome without a safe-conduct; perhaps he was going to death. But in him faith was not a mere matter of show. Being a reality it gave him peace, and in the name of the Lord of Hosts he could advance without fear to bear testimony to the Gospel.

He arrived at Weimar on the 28th of September, and lodged in the convent of the Cordeliers. One of the monks was unable to withdraw his eyes from him. It was Myconius. This was the first time he had seen Luther, and he longed to approach him, and tell that he owed the peace of his soul to him, and that his whole desire was to labour with him. But Myconius being closely watched by his superiors, was not permitted to speak to Luther.[530]

The elector of Saxony was then holding his court at Weimar, and this is probably the reason why the Cordeliers gave admittance to the doctor. The day after his arrival the feast of St. Michael was celebrated. Luther said mass, and was even invited to preach in the church of the castle. It was a mark of favour which the prince wished to give him. He, accordingly, in presence of the court, preached a long sermon, on the text of the day, which is taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew, (chap, xviii, 1-11.) He spoke forcibly against hypocrites, and those who boast of their own righteousness; but he did not speak of the angels, though this was the customary topic on St. Michael's day.

The courage of the doctor of Wittemberg, in calmly setting out on foot to obey a summons, which in the case of so many before him had issued in death, astonished those who saw him. Interest, admiration, and compassion, succeeded each other in their minds. John Kestner, superintendant to the Cordeliers, alarmed at the idea of the dangers which awaited his guest, said to him, "Brother, you will find at Augsburg Italians, men of learning, and subtle antagonists, who will give you much to do. I fear you will not be able to defend your cause against them. They will cast you into the fire, and with their flames consume you."[531] Luther replied gravely, "Dear friend, [284] pray to our Lord God, who is in heaven, and present a *Pater noster* for me, and his dear child, Jesus, whose cause my cause is, that he may be gracious toward me. If he maintain his cause, mine is maintained. But if he pleases not to maintain it, assuredly it is not I who can maintain it; and it is he who will bear the affront."

Luther continued his journey on foot, and arrived at Nuremberg. He was going to present himself before a prince of the Church, and wished his dress to be suitable; but his clothes were old, and, besides, had suffered much by the journey. He borrowed a frock from his faithful friend, Winceslaus Link, preacher at Nuremberg.

Luther, doubtless, did not confine his visit to Link, but also saw his other friends in Nuremberg, secretary Scheurl, the celebrated painter, Albert Durer, to whom Nuremberg is now erecting a statue, and many others. He strengthened himself by intercourse with the excellent of the earth, while many monks and laymen expressed alarm, and endeavoured to shake him by representing the difficulties in his way. Letters which he wrote from this town show the spirit by which he was animated. "I have met," says he, "with pusillanimous men, who would persuade me not to go to Augsburg; but I have determined on going. The will of the Lord be done. Even at Augsburg, even in the midst of his enemies, Jesus Christ reigns. Let Christ live; let Luther and every sinner die. According as it is written: Let the God of my salvation be exalted! Behave well, persevere, stand firm; for we must not be reproved either by men or by God; God is true, and man a liar."[532]

Link and an Augustin monk could not consent to allow Luther to travel alone and meet the dangers which threatened him. They were acquainted with his bold and fearless character, and suspected he would fail in due precaution. They, therefore, accompanied him. When they were about five leagues from Augsburg, Luther, exhausted, no doubt, by the fatigue of travelling, and the varied emotions of his heart, was seized with violent pains in the stomach. He thought he was dying, and his friends becoming very uneasy, hired a car to transport him. They arrived at Augsburg on the evening of Friday the 7th of October, and lighted at the Augustin convent. Luther was greatly fatigued, but soon recovered; his faith and mental energy speedily recruiting his exhausted body.

CHAP. V.

[285]

Arrival at Augsburg—De Vio—His Character—Serra-Longa—Preliminary Conversation—Visit of the Counsellors—Return of Serra-Longa—The Prior—Luther's Wisdom—Luther and Serra-Longa—The Safe-Conduct—Luther to Melancthon.

The instant he was at Augsburg, and before he had seen any one, Luther, wishing to pay all due respect to the legate, begged Winceslaus Link to go and announce his arrival. Link did so, and

humbly declared to the cardinal, on the part of the doctor of Wittemberg, that he was ready to appear at his order. The legate was delighted with the news. At last he had a hold of this boisterous heretic, who, he assured himself, would not quit the walls of Augsburg as he had entered. At the same time, when Link went to the legate, the monk Leonard set out to announce Luther's arrival to Staupitz. The vicar-general had written the doctor, that he would certainly come as soon as he should know of his being in the town, and Luther was unwilling to lose an instant in giving him intimation.[533]

The Diet was closed, and the Emperor and the electors had already separated. The Emperor, it is true, had not left but was hunting in the neighbourhood. The ambassador of Rome was thus at Augsburg alone. Had Luther come during the Diet, he would have found powerful protectors, but now it seemed that every thing must bend under the weight of papal authority.

The name of the judge before whom Luther had to appear was not fitted to increase his confidence. Thomas de Vio surnamed Cajetan, from the town of Gaeta, in the kingdom of Naples, where he was born, had, from his youth, given great hopes. Having at sixteen entered the Dominican order, against the express wish of his parents, he afterwards became general of his order, and a cardinal of the Roman Church. But what was worse for Luther, this learned doctor was one of the most zealous defenders of the scholastic theology, which the Reformer had always treated so unmercifully. His mother was said to have dreamt during her pregnancy, that St. Thomas would in person educate the child to which she was to give birth, and introduce him to heaven. Hence De Vio, on becoming Dominican, had changed his name from James to Thomas. He had zealously defended the prerogatives of the papacy, and the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, whom he regarded as the most perfect of theologians.[534] A lover of pomp and show, he almost [286]
gave a literal meaning to the Roman maxim that legates are above kings, and surrounded himself with great state. On the first of August, he had celebrated a solemn mass in the cathedral of Augsburg, and in presence of all the princes of the empire, had placed the cardinal's hat on the head of the Archbishop of Mentz while kneeling before the altar, and had delivered to the Emperor himself the hat and sword consecrated by the pope. Such was the man before whom the monk of Wittemberg was going to appear, clothed in a frock which was not even his own. Besides, the acquirements of the legate, the austerity of his disposition, and the purity of his morals, gave him in Germany an influence and authority which other Roman courtiers would not have easily obtained. To this reputation for sanctity he doubtless owed his mission. Rome saw that he would serve her purposes admirably. Thus the personal qualities of Cajetan made him still more formidable. Moreover, the business entrusted to him was not complicated. Luther had already been declared a heretic.[535] If he refused to retract, the duty of the legate was to put him in prison; or if he escaped, to launch excommunication at every one who should dare to give him an asylum. This was all that Rome required to be done by the legate before whom Luther was cited.[535]

Luther had recovered strength during the night, and on Saturday morning 8th October, being somewhat rested from his journey, began to consider his strange situation. He felt resigned, and waited till the will of God should be manifested by the event. He had not long to wait. A personage who was unknown to him sent in a message, as if he had been entirely devoted to his service, to say that he was coming to wait upon him, and that Luther must take good care not to appear before the legate without having seen him. This message came from an Italian named Urban of Serra-Longa, who had often been in Germany, as envoy of the Margrave of Montferrat. He was known to the Elector of Saxony, to whom he had been accredited, and after the death of the Margrave had attached himself to Cardinal de Vio.

The finesse and manners of this man formed a very striking contrast to the noble frankness and generous integrity of Luther. The Italian shortly after arrived at the Augustin convent. The cardinal had sent him to sound the Reformer, and prepare him for the retractation which he was [287]
expected to make. Serra-Longa imagined that his residence in Germany gave him great advantages over the other courtiers in the suite of the legate, and he hoped to have good sport with the German monk.

He arrived attended by two servants, and pretended to have come of his own accord, because of the friendship which he felt for a favourite of the Elector of Saxony, and because of his attachment to the Holy Church. After paying his respects to Luther in the warmest terms, the diplomatist added, in an affectionate manner,—

"I come to give you sage and good advice. Re-attach yourself to the Church. Submit unreservedly to the cardinal. Retract your injurious expressions. Remember the Abbot Joachim of Florence. He, you know, had said heretical things, and yet was declared not heretical, because he retracted his errors."

Luther spoke of defending himself.

Serra-Longa.—"Beware of doing so!... Would you pretend to fight with the legate of his holiness, as if you were tilting at a tournay?"

Luther.—"When it is proved that I have taught anything contrary to the Roman Church I will pass judgment on myself, and retract instantly. The whole question will be, Whether the legate leans more upon St. Thomas than the faith authorises him to do? If he does, I will not yield to him."

Serra-Longa.—"Ah! Ah! Do you pretend, then, to break lances?"

Then the Italian began to say things which Luther designates horrible. He pretended that false propositions might be maintained, provided they produced money and filled the strong box—that the universities must take good care not to dispute on the authority of the pope—that their duty, on the contrary, was to maintain that the pope can, at his beck, alter or suppress articles of faith; [536] adding other things of the same nature. But the wily Italian soon perceived that he was forgetting himself. Returning to soft words, he strove to persuade Luther to submit to the legate in every thing, and retract his doctrines, his oaths, and his theses.

The doctor, who, at the outset, had given some credit to the fine protestations of orator Urban, (as he designates him in his account of the interview,) was now convinced that they were of very little value, and that Serra-Longa was much more on the legate's side than on his. He, therefore, became less communicative, and contented himself with saying that he was quite disposed to [288] exercise humility, give proof of obedience, and make satisfaction in whatever matters he had been mistaken. At these words Serra-Longa, overjoyed, exclaimed, "I am off to the legate, and you will follow me; everything will go off most admirably; it will be soon finished...."[537]

He went off. The Saxon monk, who had more discernment than the Roman courtier, thought within himself, "This wily Sinon has come along ill-prepared and ill-instructed by his Greeks."[538] Luther was suspended between hope and fear; hope, however, predominating. The visit and the strange assertions of Serra-Longa, whom at a later period he calls an inexpert mediator,[539] made him resume courage.

The counsellors and other inhabitants of Augsburg, to whom the Elector had recommended Luther, hastened to visit the monk, whose name was now resounding throughout all Germany. Peutinger, counsellor of the empire, who was one of the most distinguished patricians of the town, and often invited Luther to his table, counsellor Langemantel, Dr. Auerbach of Leipsic, the two brothers Adelmann, both canons, and several others besides, repaired to the convent of the Augustins, and gave a cordial welcome to the extraordinary man, who had journeyed so far to come and place himself in the hands of the creatures of Rome. "Have you a safe-conduct?" they asked. "No!" replied the intrepid monk. "What hardihood!" exclaimed they. "It was, indeed," says Luther, "a fit term to designate my rash folly." All with one voice entreated him not to go to the legate until he had obtained a safe-conduct from the Emperor himself. It is probable that the public had already heard of the papal brief of which the legate was the bearer.

"But," replied Luther, "I came to Augsburg without a safe-conduct, and have arrived in good health."

"The Elector having recommended you to us, you ought to obey us, and do what we tell you," rejoined Langemantel, kindly but firmly. Dr. Auerbach seconded his remonstrances. "We know," says he, "that the cardinal, at the bottom of his heart, is in the highest degree incensed against you.[540] No trust can be put in the Italians."[541]

Canon Adelmann likewise insisted, "You have been sent defenceless, and it has been forgotten to [289] furnish you with the precise thing which you required."[542] These friends engaged to obtain the necessary safe-conduct from the Emperor. They afterwards told Luther how many persons even of elevated rank, were inclined in his favour. "Even the minister of France, who quitted Augsburg a few days ago, spoke of you in the most honourable terms."[543] This statement struck Luther, and he afterwards remembered it. Thus, the most respectable citizens in one of the first cities of the empire were already gained to the Reformation.

They were still conversing when Serra-Longa re-appeared. "Come," said he to Luther, "the cardinal is waiting for you and I myself am going to conduct you to his presence. Listen while I tell you how you are to appear. When you enter the hall where he is, you will prostrate yourself before him with your face on the ground; when he tells you to rise, you will get up on your knees, and not stand erect, but wait till he bids you.[544] Recollect that it is before a prince of the Church that you are going to appear. For the rest fear nothing; the whole will be finished soon, and without difficulty."

Luther, who had promised this Italian that he would be ready to follow at his call, felt embarrassed. Yet he hesitated not to inform him of the advice which he had received from his Augsburg friends, and spoke to him of a safe-conduct.

"Beware of asking one," immediately replied Serra-Longa; "you have no need of it. The legate is well-disposed, and quite ready to finish the thing amicably. If you ask a safe-conduct you will totally spoil your affair."[545]

"My gracious lord, the Elector of Saxony," replied Luther, "has recommended me to several honourable men of this town, who counsel me to undertake nothing without a safe-conduct. I must follow their advice, for, were I not to do so, and were anything to happen, they would write to the Elector, my master, that I had refused to listen to them."

Luther persisted in his resolution, and Serra-Longa saw himself obliged to return to his chief, to announce the obstacle which his mission had encountered at the moment when he was flattering himself with seeing it crowned with success.

Thus terminated the conferences of that day with the orator of Montferrat.

Another invitation was given to Luther. John Frosch, the prior of the Carmelites, who was an old friend of his, and two years before, as a licentiate of theology, had maintained theses under the presidency of Luther, paid him a visit, and earnestly begged he would come and reside with him. He claimed the honour of having the doctor of Germany for his guest. Men at length feared not to do homage to him in presence of Rome; the feeble had already become strong. Luther accepted, and left the Augustin convent for that of the Carmelites. The day did not close without serious reflection. The eagerness of Serra-Longa, and the fears of the counsellors, equally served to acquaint him with the difficulty of his position. Nevertheless, God in heaven was his protector, and under his guardianship he could sleep without fear. [290]

The next day, being Sunday,[546] gave him somewhat more repose. He had, however, to endure a different kind of fatigue. The whole talk of the town was about Dr. Luther, and, as Melancthon expresses it, every body was desirous to see "this new Erostratus, who had kindled so immense a conflagration."[547] The people pressed around him, and the good doctor, no doubt smiled at their eagerness.

But he had to submit to another kind of importunity. If the people were desirous to see him, they were still more so to hear him, and he was requested on all hands to preach. Luther had no greater delight than in proclaiming the word, and would have been happy to preach Jesus Christ in this great city, in the solemn circumstances in which he was placed. But on this occasion, as on many others, he showed a strong sense of propriety, and profound respect for his superiors, and refused to preach, lest the legate might suppose that he did it in order to give him pain, and by way of defiance. This moderation and wisdom were undoubtedly of as much value as a sermon.

The cardinal's creatures, however, did not leave him in tranquillity, but returned to the charge. "The Cardinal," said they, "assures you of his entire grace and favour. What do you fear?" They alleged a thousand reasons in order to induce him to go. "He is a father full of mercy, said one of these envoys; but another approaching, whispered in his ear, "Don't believe what is told you—he does not keep his word."[548] Luther adhered to his resolution.

On Monday morning, 10th October, Serra-Longa returned to the charge. The courtier had made it a point of honour to succeed in his negotiation. As soon as he entered, he exclaimed in Latin, [291] "Why do you not come to the cardinal? He is waiting for you with the most indulgent feelings. The whole matter may be summed up in six letters:—Revoca, Retract. Come, you have nothing to fear."

Luther thought within himself, these six are important letters; but, without entering into discussion on the subject, said, "As soon as I have obtained the safe-conduct I will appear."

Serra-Longa broke out on hearing these words. He insisted, and remonstrated, but found Luther immovable. Becoming more and more irritated, he exclaimed, "You imagine, doubtless, that the Elector will take up arms in your behalf, and for your sake run the risk of losing the territories handed down to him from his fathers."

Luther.—"God forbid."

Serra-Longa.—"Abandoned by all, where will your refuge be?"

Luther.—(*Looking upwards with the eye of faith,*) "Under heaven."[549]

Serra-Longa, struck with this sublime reply, for which he was not prepared, remained a moment silent, and then continued:—

"What would you do if you had the pope, the legate, and all the cardinals, in your hands, as they have you in theirs?"

Luther.—"I would pay them all honour and respect. But in my view, the word of God takes precedence of all."

Serra-Longa.—(*Laughing, and wagging one of his fingers as the Italians do.*) "Hem! Hem! all honour ... I don't believe a word of it...."

He then went out, leapt into his saddle, and disappeared.

Serra-Longa returned no more to Luther; but he long remembered both the resistance which he had met with from the Reformer, and that which his master also was soon to experience. At a later period, we shall see him with loud cries demanding Luther's blood.

Serra-Longa had not long left the doctor when the safe-conduct arrived. His friends had obtained it from the counsellor of the empire, who, it is probable, had previously consulted with the Emperor, as he was not far from Augsburg. It would even seem, from a remark afterwards made by the cardinals that, to avoid offending him, his consent had been asked. This may have been his reason for employing Serra-Longa to work upon Luther; for to have openly opposed the giving of a safe-conduct would have been to reveal intentions which he was desirous to conceal. It was [292] safer to induce Luther himself to desist from his demand. It was soon seen, however, that the Saxon monk was not made of pliable materials.

Luther is going to appear. While demanding a safe-conduct, he did not trust to a carnal arm; for he knew very well that a safe-conduct did not save John Huss from the flames. He only wished to do his duty by submitting to the advice of his master's friends. Jehovah will decide. If he requires

him to give back his life, he is ready to give it joyfully. At this solemn moment, he feels a longing for converse with his friends, especially with Melancthon, now so dear to his heart, and avails himself of a moment of retirement to write him.

"Comport yourself like a man," says he to him, "as you always do. Teach our dear youth what is right and agreeable to God. For me, I am ready to be sacrificed for you and for them, if it is the Lord's will.[550] Sooner than retract what I was bound to teach, I would die, and even (what would be to me the greatest misfortune) be deprived for ever of your delightful society, thus losing (perhaps by my fault) the excellent studies to which we are now devoted.

"Italy, like Egypt of old, is plunged in darkness, so thick that it may be felt. Nobody knows anything of Christ, or of what relates to him; and yet these people are our lords and masters in faith and manners. Thus the wrath of God is fulfilled upon us, as the prophet speaks: '*I will give them youths for governors, and babes will rule over them.*' Conduct yourself as in presence of the Lord, my dear Philip, and avert the divine wrath by pure and fervent prayer."

The legate, informed that Luther was next day to appear before him, assembled the Italians and Germans, in whom he had the greatest confidence, in order to consider what was necessary to be done with the Saxon monk. Opinions were divided. "He must," says one, "be compelled to retract." "He must be seized," says another, "and imprisoned." A third thought that it was better to get quit of him; and a fourth that an attempt should be made to gain him by kindness and lenity. This last advice the cardinal seems at first to have determined to adopt.[551]

CHAP. VI.

[293]

First appearance—First Words—Conditions of Rome—Propositions to Retract—Luther's reply—He withdraws—Impressions on both sides—Arrival of Staupitz.

The day of conference at length arrived.[552] The legate, knowing that Luther had declared his readiness to retract what could be proved contrary to the truth, had great hopes of success. He doubted not that it would be easy for a man of his rank and knowledge to bring back this monk to the obedience of the Church.

Luther repaired to the legate, accompanied by the prior of the Carmelites, (his host and friend,) two friars of the convent, Dr. Link, and an Augustin, probably the one who had come with him from Nuremberg. Scarcely had he entered the palace of the legate, than all the Italians in the suite of the prince of the Church rushed forward. Every one wished to see the famous doctor, and pressed so upon him that he could scarcely advance. Luther found the Apostolical Nuncio, and Serra-Longa, in the hall where the cardinal was waiting. The reception was cold but polite, and conformable to Roman etiquette. Luther, following the instructions which Serra-Longa had given him, prostrated himself before the cardinal; when told to rise, he put himself on his knees; and, on a new order from the legate, stood erect. Several of the most distinguished Italians in the service of the legate pushed forward into the hall to be present at the interview. They desired above all to see the German monk humbling himself before the representative of the pope.

The legate remained silent. Hating Luther as an adversary of the theological supremacy of St. Thomas, and as the head of an active opposition in a rising university, whose very first steps had greatly disquieted the Thomists, he was pleased at seeing him lying before him, and thought, says a contemporary, that Luther was going to sing a palinode. Luther, on his part, waited till the prince should address him; but seeing he did not, he took his silence for an invitation to begin, and spoke as follows:—

"Most Worthy Father,—On the citation of his Papal Holiness, and at the request of my most gracious lord, the Elector of Saxony, I appear before you as a submissive and obedient son of the holy Christian Church, and I acknowledge that I published the Propositions and Theses in question. I am ready to listen in all obedience to the charge brought against me, and to allow myself, if I am mistaken, to be instructed in the way of truth." [294]

The cardinal, who had resolved to assume the air of a tender father, full of compassion for an erring child, now spoke in the most friendly tone, praised the humility of Luther, expressed all the joy it gave him, and said:—"My dear son, you have stirred up all Germany by your dispute on indulgences. I am told that you are a very learned doctor in the Scriptures, and have many disciples. Wherefore, if you would be a member of the Church, and find in the pope a most gracious lord, listen to me."

After this exordium, the legate did not hesitate to disclose to him at once all that he expected of him—so confident was he of his submission. "Here," said he, "are three articles which, by the order of our most holy father, Leo X, I have to lay before you; *First*, You must retrace your steps, acknowledge your faults, and retract your errors, propositions, and discourses: *Secondly*, You must promise to abstain in future from circulating your opinions; and, *Thirdly*, You must engage to be more moderate, and to avoid every thing that might grieve or upset the Church."

Luther.—"I request, most worthy father, that you will communicate to me the brief of the pope, in

virtue of which you have received full power to dispose of this affair."

Serra-Longa, and the other Italians in the cardinal's suite, stared on hearing this request; and although the German monk had already appeared to them a very odd man, they could scarcely recover from the astonishment produced by so bold a speech. Christians, accustomed to ideas of justice, desire just procedure in the case of others as well as of themselves, but those who act habitually in an arbitrary manner are quite surprised when they are told to proceed in regular form, according to law.

De Vio.—"This request, my dear son, cannot be granted. You must acknowledge your errors, take care of your words in future, and not return to your vomit, so that we may be able to sleep without trouble and anxiety; thereafter, conformably to the order and authority of our most holy father the pope, I will arrange the affair."

Luther.—"Have the goodness, then, to tell me in what I have erred."

At this new request the Italian courtiers, who had expected to see the poor German on his knees crying mercy, were struck with still greater astonishment. Not one of them would have thought of condescending so far as to answer so impertinent a question. But De Vio, who considered it [295] ungenerous to crush the cative monk with the whole weight of his authority, and who, besides, was confident that his superior knowledge would give him an easy victory, consented to tell Luther of what he was accused, and even to enter into discussion with him. In justice to this general of the Dominicans, it must be admitted that he had more equity, a better sense of propriety, and less passion, than have been shown on many occasions since, in similar affairs. He assumed a tone of condescension, and said:—

"Very dear son!—Here are two propositions which you have advanced, and which you must first of all retract: *First*, The treasury of indulgences does not consist of the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Second*, The man who receives the Holy Sacrament must have faith in the grace which is offered to him."

In fact, both of these propositions gave a mortal blow to the Roman traffic. If the pope had not the power to dispose at pleasure of the merits of the Saviour; if those who received the bills which the courtiers of the Church were negotiating did not receive part of this infinite righteousness, the paper lost all its value, and was worth no more than if it had been blank. It was the same with the sacraments. Indulgences were to some extent an extraordinary branch of the commerce of Rome, whereas the sacraments were of the nature of an ordinary branch. The returns which they yielded were far from being insignificant. To maintain that faith was necessary before the sacraments could confer a real benefit on a Christian soul, was to deprive them of all interest in the eyes of the people; faith being a thing which the pope did not give, which was beyond his power, and came from God only. To declare it necessary was to wrest out of the hands of Rome both speculation and profit. Luther, in attacking these two dogmas, had imitated Jesus Christ, when at the commencement of his ministry he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, saying, *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise*.

"I will not, in order to combat these errors," continued Cajetan, "invoke the authority of St. Thomas and the other scholastic doctors; I will found only on the authority of Holy Scripture, and speak with you in all friendship."

But scarcely had De Vio begun to unfold his proofs than he deviated from the rule which he had declared his intention to follow.[553] He combated Luther's first proposition by an [296] extravagant[554] of Pope Clement, and the second by all sorts of scholastic dogmas. The discussion commenced on this constitution of the pope in favour of indulgences. Luther, indignant at the authority which the legate ascribed to a decree of Rome, exclaimed:—

"I cannot receive such constitutions as sufficient proofs in so important matters. For they wrest the Holy Scripture, and never quote it appositely."

De Vio.—"The pope has authority and power over all things."

Luther, (keenly.)—"Save Scripture."[555]

De Vio, (ironically.)—"Save Scripture!... The pope, know you not, is above Councils? Even recently he condemned and punished the Council of Bâsle."

Luther.—"The university of Paris appealed."

De Vio.—"These Parisian gentry will pay the penalty."

The discussion between the cardinal and Luther afterwards turned on the second point, viz., on faith. This Luther declared to be necessary, in order to receive benefit from the sacraments, and, according to his custom, quoted several passages of Scripture in favour of the opinion which he maintained, but the legate received them with loud laughter. "It is of general faith you speak, then," said he.—"No!" replied Luther. One of the Italians, master of the ceremonies to the legate, out of all patience at Luther's opposition and his answers, was burning with eagerness to speak. He was constantly trying to break in, but the legate enjoined silence, and at last was obliged to reprimand him so sharply, that the master of the ceremonies left the hall in confusion.[556]

"As to indulgences," said Luther, "if it can be shown that I am mistaken, I am quite willing to be

instructed. One may pass over that point without being a bad Christian, but on the article of faith, were I to yield a whit, I should be denying Jesus Christ. With regard to it, then, I am neither able nor willing to yield, and by the grace of God never shall."

De Vio, (beginning to lose temper.)—"Whether you will or not, you must this very day retract that article; otherwise for that article alone, I will reject and condemn all your doctrine."

Luther.—"I have no will apart from that of the Lord; He will do with me what pleases him. But had I five heads, I would lose them all sooner than retract the testimony which I have borne to holy Christian faith."

De Vio.—"I did not come here to reason with you. Retract, or prepare to suffer the pains which you have deserved."[557] [297]

Luther saw plainly that it was impossible to settle the matter by a conference. His opponent sat before him as if he were the pope himself, and insisted on his receiving humbly, and with submission, whatever he said, while his answers, even when founded on the Holy Scriptures, were received with a shrug of his shoulders, and all sorts of irony and contempt. He thought the wisest course would be to answer the cardinal in writing. This method, thought he, leaves at least some consolation to the oppressed. Others will be able to form a judgment of the affair, and the unjust adversary, who, by clamour, remains master of the field of battle, may be deterred by it. [558]

Luther having signified his intention to withdraw, the legate said to him, "Do you wish me to give you a safe-conduct to Rome?"

Nothing would have been more agreeable to Cajetan than the acceptance of this offer, as it would have disencumbered him of a task, the difficulties of which he began to comprehend. But the Reformer, who saw all the difficulties with which he was surrounded even at Augsburg, took good care not to accept a proposal the effect of which could only have been to give him over, bound hand and foot, to the vengeance of his enemies. He rejected it as often as De Vio was pleased to renew it, and this was frequently. The legate disguised the pain which he felt at Luther's refusal, and, wrapping himself up in his dignity, dismissed the monk with a smile of compassion, under which he tried to conceal his disappointment, and at the same time the politeness of one who hopes he may succeed better another time.

No sooner was Luther in the court of the palace than the talkative Italian, the master of the ceremonies, whom his master's reprimands had obliged to quit the hall of conference, delighted at being able to speak out of sight of Cajetan, and burning with eagerness to confound the abominable heretic by his luminous reasons, ran after him, and continuing to walk, began to retail his sophisms. But Luther, weary of this foolish personage, answered him with one of those cutting expressions which he had so much at command, and the poor master of the ceremonies left off, and returned in confusion to the cardinal's palace.

Luther did not carry away a very high opinion of his opponent. He had heard from him, as he afterwards wrote to Spalatin, propositions which were quite at variance with theology, and in the mouth of any other person would have been regarded as arch-heretical. And yet De Vio was considered the most learned of the Dominicans. Second to him was Prierias. "From this," says Luther, "we may infer what those must have been who were tenth or hundredth."[559] [298]

On the other hand, the noble and resolute bearing of the Wittemberg doctor had greatly surprised the cardinal and his courtiers. Instead of a poor monk humbly begging pardon, they had found a free man, a decided Christian, an enlightened teacher, who insisted that unjust accusations should be supported by proof, and who defended his doctrine triumphantly. All the inmates of Cajetan's palace inveighed against the pride, obstinacy, and effrontery of this heretic. Luther and De Vio had mutually learned to know each other, and both prepared for their second interview.

A very agreeable surprise awaited Luther on his return to the convent of the Carmelites. The vicar-general of the Augustin order, his friend, his father Staupitz, had arrived at Augsburg. Not having been able to prevent Luther from coming to this city, Staupitz gave his friend a new and touching proof of his attachment by coming personally in the hope of being useful to him. This excellent man foresaw that the conference with the legate would lead to very serious consequences. He was equally agitated by his fears and his friendship for Luther, who, after his painful sederunt, felt it refreshing to clasp so valuable a friend in his arms. Having told him that it had been impossible for him to get an answer worth any thing, and how the legate had been contented to demand a retractation without trying to convince him—"It is absolutely necessary," said Staupitz, "to give the legate a written answer."

After what he had heard of the first interview, Staupitz hoped nothing from the others, and, therefore, determined on a proceeding which he deemed necessary. He resolved to loose Luther from obedience to his order. By this Staupitz hoped to gain two ends. If, as all anticipated, Luther fell in the struggle, the disgrace of his condemnation would not fall on the whole order; or if the cardinal ordered Staupitz to oblige Luther to silence or retractation, he would have an excuse for not doing it.[560] The ceremony, which took place in the usual form, made Luther aware of all that he had thenceforth to expect. He felt exceedingly at seeing the ties which he had formed in the enthusiasm of his youth, thus broken. The order of his choice rejects him. His natural protectors stand aloof, and he becomes a stranger to his brethren. But though his heart is filled with [299]

sadness at the thought, he recovers all his joy on turning to the promises of a faithful God, who has said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*."

The counsellors of the empire having intimated to the legate, through the Bishop of Trent, that Luther was provided with an imperial safe-conduct, and having caused it to be declared at the same time, that nothing was to be attempted against the doctor's person, De Vio became angry, and sharply replied in words characteristically Roman, "Very well, but I will do what the pope commands."[561] We know what this was.

CHAP. VII.

Communication to the Legate—Second Appearance—Luther's Declaration—The Legate's Reply—The Legate's Volubility—Luther's Request.

The next day[562] both parties prepared for the second interview, which promised to be decisive. The friends of Luther, who had resolved to accompany him to the legate, repaired to the convent of the Carmelites. The dean of Trent, and Peutinger, both counsellors of the emperor, and Staupitz, arrived in succession. Shortly after the doctor had the pleasure to see them joined by the Chevalier Philip von Feilitsch, and Doctor Ruhel, counsellors of the Elector, who had been ordered by their master to attend the conferences, and protect the liberty of Luther. They had arrived the previous evening, and were, says Mathesius, to stand at his side, as at Constance the Chevalier de Chlum stood at the side of John Huss. The doctor, moreover, took a notary, and accompanied with all these friends, proceeded to the legate.

At this moment Staupitz came up to him; he thoroughly comprehended Luther's situation, and knew that if he did not fix his eye solely on the Lord, who is the deliverer of his people, he must succumb. "My dear brother," said he to him seriously, "constantly remember that you have begun these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus God surrounded his humble servant with consolation and encouragement.[563]

Luther, on arriving at the cardinal's, found a new opponent. This was the prior of the Dominicans of Augsburg, who was seated at the side of his chief. Luther, agreeably to the resolution which he [300] had formed, had written his reply, and, after the usual salutations, with a firm voice read the following declaration:—

"I declare that I honour the holy Roman Church, and that I will continue to honour it. I have sought the truth in public discussions; and all that I have said I regard, even at this hour, as just, true, and Christian. Still I am a man, and maybe mistaken. I am, therefore, disposed to receive instruction and correction in the things in which I may have erred. I declare myself ready to reply, by word of mouth or by writing, to all the objections and all the charges which my lord the legate may bring against me. I declare myself ready to submit my theses to the four universities of Bâsle, Friburg in Brisgau, Louvain, and Paris; and to retract what they declare to be erroneous. In a word, I am ready to do all that may be demanded of a Christian. But I protest solemnly against the course which is sought to be given to this affair, and against the strange pretension of constraining me to retract without having refuted me."[564]

Undoubtedly, nothing could be more equitable than these proposals of Luther, and yet they must have been very embarrassing to a judge whose decision had been prescribed to him beforehand. The legate, who had not expected this protestation, sought to conceal his uneasiness by pretending to laugh at it, and assuming an exterior of gentleness, said to Luther, smiling, "This protestation is unnecessary, I will not dispute with you either in public or in private, but I purpose to arrange the affair kindly, and like a father." The whole policy of the cardinal consisted in putting aside the strict forms of justice, which afford protection to those who are prosecuted, and in treating the affair only as one of administration between superior and inferior;—a commodious method, in as much as it opens up a wide field for arbitrary procedure.

Still maintaining the most affectionate manner, "My dear friend," said De Vio, "abandon, I pray you, a useless design. Rather return to yourself, acknowledge the truth, and I am ready to reconcile you with the Church and the sovereign bishop. Whether you will or not, it matters little. It will be hard for you to kick against the pricks...."

Luther, who saw himself treated as if he were already proved a rebellious child, rejected of the Church, exclaimed, "I cannot retract; but I offer to answer, and in writing. "We had enough of debating yesterday."[565]

De Vio was irritated at this expression, which reminded him that he had not acted with sufficient [301] prudence; but he recovered himself, and said with a smile, "Debating, my dear son! I did not debate with you. I have no wish to debate; but in order to please the most serene Elector Frederick, I am willing to hear you, and exhort you amicably and paternally."

Luther did not comprehend why the legate should have been so much offended at the expression which he had used; for, thought he, if I had not wished to speak politely, I would have said, not

debated, but *disputed*, and *wrangled*,—for that was truly what we did.

Still De Vio, who felt that before the respectable witnesses who were present at the conference it was at least necessary to seem to try to convince Luther to return to the two propositions, which he had singled out as fundamental errors, thoroughly resolved to let the Reformer speak as little as possible. Strong in his Italian volubility he overwhelms him with objections, to which he does not wait for a reply. Sometimes he jests, sometimes he scolds; he declaims with impassioned heat, mixes up the most heterogeneous subjects, quotes St. Thomas and Aristotle, cries, and gets into a passion with all who differ with him in opinion, and then apostrophises Luther. Luther, more than ten times, tries to speak, but the legate instantly interrupts him, and showers down menaces upon him. Retractation! retractation! is the whole sum of his demand; he thunders, and domineers, and insists on having all the talk to himself.[566] Staupitz interferes to stop the legate. "Have the goodness," says he, "to give Doctor Martin time to answer." But the legate recommences his discourse, quotes the *extravagants* and the opinions of St. Thomas, determined to harangue during the whole interview. If he cannot convince, and if he dares not strike, he at least can stun.

Luther and Staupitz saw clearly that they must abandon the hope, not only of enlightening De Vio by discussion, but also of making a useful profession of faith. Luther, therefore, resumed the request which he had made at the commencement, and which the cardinal had then evaded. Since he was not permitted to speak, he asked that he might, at least, be allowed to write, and send his written reply to the legate. Staupitz supported him; several others who were present joined their entreaties, and Cajetan, notwithstanding of all his repugnance for what was written, (for he remembered that what is written remains,) at last consented. The meeting broke up. The [302] hope of terminating the affair at this interview was adjourned, and it became necessary to await the result of a subsequent conference.

The permission which the general of the Dominicans gave Luther to prepare an answer, and to answer in writing, the two distinct and articulate accusations which he had made, touching indulgences and faith, was nothing more than justice demanded, and yet we are obliged to De Vio for it, as a mark of moderation and impartiality.

Luther left the cardinal's palace delighted that his request had been granted. In going and returning he was the object of public attention. All enlightened men were interested in his case, as if it had been their own, for it was felt that the cause then pleaded at Augsburg was the cause of the gospel, justice, and liberty. The lowest of the people alone were with Cajetan; and of this he doubtless gave some significant hints to the Reformer, who afterwards spoke of them.[567]

It became more and more evident that the legate had no wish to hear any more from Luther than the words "I retract;" and these Luther was resolved not to pronounce. What will be the issue of this unequal struggle? How can it be imagined that the whole power of Rome, brought to bear on a single man, will not succeed in crushing him? Luther sees this. Feeling the weight of the terrible hand under which he is placed, he gives up the hope of ever returning to Wittemberg, revisiting his dear Philip, and again finding himself in the midst of the generous youths into whose hearts he loved so much to shed the seeds of life. He sees excommunication hanging over his head, and has no doubt that it must shortly fall upon him.[568] These prospects afflict his soul, but do not overwhelm it. His confidence in God is not shaken. God may break the instrument which he has been pleased till now to employ, but the truth will be maintained. Whatever happens, Luther must defend it to the last. He accordingly, begins to prepare the protestation which he is to present to the legate. It appears that he devoted to it part of the 13th October.

CHAP. VIII. [303]

Third Appearance—Treasury of Indulgences—Faith—Humble Request—Legate's Reply —Luther's Reply—Legate's Rage—Luther Retires—First Defection.

On Friday the 14th October, Luther returned to the cardinal, accompanied by the counsellors of the Elector. The Italians pressed around him as usual, and were present at the conference in great numbers. Luther advanced, and presented his protestation to the legate. The cardinal's people looked with astonishment at a writing which, in their eyes, was so audacious. The following is the doctor of Wittemberg's declaration to their master:[569]—

"You attack me on two points. First, you oppose to me the Constitution of Pope Clement VI, in which it is said, that the treasury of indulgences is the merit of Jesus Christ and the saints; whereas I deny this in my theses.

"Panormitanus, (Luther thus designates Ives, author of the famous collection of ecclesiastical law, entitled *Panormia*, and Bishop of Chartres at the end of the eleventh century,) Panormitanus declares, in his First Book, that in regard to holy faith, not only a General Council, but every believer is superior to the pope, if he produces declarations of Scripture, and better arguments than the pope.[570]

"The voice of our Lord Jesus Christ rises far above all the voices of men, whatever be the names they bear.

"What gives me the greatest pain and uneasiness is, that this Constitution contains doctrines quite opposed to the truth. It declares that the merits of the saints is a treasure, while all Scripture testifies that God recompenses far more richly than we deserve. The prophet exclaims, 'Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight can no living man be justified.'[571] 'Woe to men, however honourable and laudable their life may be,' says St. Augustine, 'were judgment passed upon it without mercy.'[572]

"Hence the saints are not saved by their merits, but only by the mercy of God, as I have declared. I maintain this, and adhere firmly to it. The words of holy Scripture, which declare that the saints have not enough of merit, must take precedence of the words of men, who affirm that they have too much; for the pope is not above, but beneath the word of God." [304]

Luther does not stop here, but shows that if indulgences cannot be the merit of saints, no more are they the merit of Christ. He observes, that indulgences are barren and without fruit, since they have no other effect than to exempt men from doing good works, such as prayers and alms. "No," exclaims he, "the merit of Christ is not a treasure of indulgences, which exempts from well-doing; but a treasure of grace, which gives life. The merit of Christ is applied to believers without indulgences, without keys, by the Holy Spirit only, and not by the pope. If any one has a better founded opinion than mine," adds he, in concluding this first point, "let him show it, and then I will retract."

"I have affirmed," says he, in coming to the second article, "that no man can be justified before God unless it be by faith, and hence that it is necessary for man to believe with full assurance that he has obtained grace. To doubt of this grace is to reject it. The righteousness and life of the righteous is his faith."[573]

Luther proves his proposition by a multitude of quotations from Scripture.

"Be pleased, then, to intercede for me with our most holy lord, Pope Leo X," adds he, "in order that he may not treat me with so much disfavour.... My soul seeks the light of truth. I am not so proud, so desirous of vain-glory, as to be ashamed to retract if I have taught what is false. My greatest joy will be to see the triumph of whatever accords with the will of God. Only let them not force me to do anything which is contrary to the cry of my conscience."

The legate had taken the declaration from Luther's hands, and after having perused it, said to him coldly, "You have here useless verbiage, you have written many vain words; you have answered the two articles foolishly, and blotted your paper with a number of passages of holy Scripture which have no reference to the subject." Then, with a disdainful air, De Vio threw down the protestation, as setting no value upon it, and resuming the tone which he had found tolerably successful at the last interview, began to cry at full pitch that Luther must retract. Luther was immovable. "Friar! friar!" exclaims De Vio in Italian, "last time you were very good, but to-day you are very naughty." Then the cardinal begins a long discourse, drawn from the writings of St. Thomas, again loudly extols the Constitution of Clement VI, and persists in maintaining, that, in virtue of this Constitution, the very merits of Jesus Christ are distributed to the faithful by means of indulgences. He thinks he has silenced Luther, who sometimes begins to speak, but De Vio scolds, thunders away without ceasing, and insists on having the whole field of battle to himself. [305]

This method might have had some success a first time, but Luther was not the man to suffer it a second. His indignation at length burst forth; it is his turn to astonish the spectators, who deem him already vanquished by the volubility of the prelate. He raises his powerful voice, seizes the favourite objection of the cardinal, and makes him pay dear for his temerity in having entered the lists with him. "Retract! retract!" repeated De Vio, showing the Constitution of the pope. "Well," replied Luther, "if it can be proved by this Constitution that the treasure of indulgences is the merit of Jesus Christ, I consent to retract according to the will and good pleasure of your Eminence...."

The Italians, who expected nothing of the kind, stared at these words, and could scarcely contain their joy at seeing the enemy at length caught in the net. The cardinal was, as it were, out of himself; he laughed outright, but with a laugh in which anger and indignation mingled; darting forward, he lays hold of the volume containing the famous Constitution, looks it out, pounces upon it, and, quite proud of his victory, reads it aloud, with boiling and heaving breast.[574] The Italians exult; the Elector's counsellors are uneasy and embarrassed: Luther is waiting for his opponent. At length, when the cardinal comes to the words, "The Lord Jesus Christ has acquired this treasure by his sufferings,". Luther stops him, "Most worthy father," says he, "be so good as consider and carefully meditate this expression, '*has acquired*.'[575] Christ has acquired a treasure by his merits; the merits, therefore, are not the treasure; for, to speak philosophically, cause and effect are different things. The merits of Christ have acquired authority to the pope to grant such indulgences to the people, but what the hand of the pope distributes is not the merits themselves. Thus, then my conclusion is true, and the Constitution, which you invoke with so much noise, bears testimony with me to the truth which I proclaim."

De Vio still holds the book in his hand; his eyes are still riveted on the fatal passage, but he has nothing to reply. Thus he is taken in the net which he himself had laid, and Luther with strong hand keeps him in, to the inexpressible astonishment of the Italian courtiers around him. The

legate would have evaded the difficulty, but could not. He had long abandoned the testimony of [306]
Scripture and the authority of the Fathers; he had taken refuge in this Extravagant of Clement VI, and there he is caught. Still he has too much finesse to let his embarrassment appear. Wishing to hide his shame, the prince of the Church suddenly changes the subject, and rushes violently to other articles. Luther who perceives the adroit manœuvre, allows him not to escape; he grasps and completely closes the net which he has thrown over the cardinal, and makes evasion impossible. "Most reverend father!" says he, with an irony clothed in the form of respect, "your Eminence cannot surely think that we Germans do not know grammar; to be a treasure, and to acquire a treasure, are very different things."

"Retract!" says De Vio; "retract, or, if you don't, I send you to Rome, to appear there before the judges entrusted with the cognisance of your cause. I excommunicate you; you, all your partizans, all who are or may become favourable to you, and I reject them from the Church. Full authority in this respect has been given me by the holy apostolic See.[576] Think you your protectors can stop me? Do you imagine that the pope cares for Germany? The little finger of the pope is stronger than all the German princes."[577]

"Deign," replies Luther, "to send the written reply which I handed you to pope Leo X, with my very humble prayers."

At these words, the legate, glad to find a moment's respite, again wraps himself up in a feeling of his dignity, and proudly and passionately says to Luther:—

"Retract, or return not."[578]

Luther is struck with the expression. This time he gives no verbal answer, but bows and takes his leave, followed by the Elector's counsellors. The cardinal and his Italians, left alone, stare at each other, confounded at the issue of the debate.

Thus the Dominican system, clad in the Roman purple, had proudly dismissed its humble opponent. But Luther felt that there is a power, viz., Christian truth—truth, which no authority, secular or spiritual, can ever subdue. Of the two combatants, he who withdrew was master of the field.

This is the first step by which the Church detached herself from the papacy.

Luther and De Vio never saw each other again; but the Reformer had made a powerful [307]
impression on the legate, an impression which was never entirely effaced. What Luther had said on faith, and what De Vio read in the subsequent writings of the doctor of Wittemberg, greatly modified the cardinal's views. The theologians of Rome were surprised and displeased at his statements on justification in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. The Reformer did not recoil, did not retract; but his judge, he who never ceased exclaiming, Retract! changed his views, and indirectly retracted his errors. In this way was the Reformer's unshaken fidelity rewarded.

Luther returned to the convent where he had met with hospitality. He had stood firm, had borne testimony to the truth and done his part. God will do the rest. His heart was filled with peace and joy.

CHAP. IX.

De Vio and Staupitz—Staupitz and Luther—Luther and Spalatin—Luther to Carlstadt—Communion—Link and De Vio—Departure of Staupitz and Link—Luther to Cajetan—The Cardinal's Silence—Luther's Farewell—Departure—Appeal to the Pope.

Still the news brought to him were not at all satisfactory. The rumour in the town was, that if he would not retract, he was to be seized and immured in a dungeon. The vicar-general of the order, Staupitz himself, it was confidently said, had been obliged to consent to it.[579] Luther cannot believe what is told him of his friend. No! Staupitz will not betray him. As to the designs of the cardinal, judging by his own words, it is difficult to doubt. Still he is unwilling to flee before the danger; his life, like truth herself, is in mighty hands; and, notwithstanding of the danger which threatens him, he resolves not to quit Augsburg.

The legate soon repented of his violence. He felt that he had gone out of his course, and he was desirous to return to it. Scarcely had Staupitz finished dinner, (it was the morning when the interview had taken place, and the dinner-hour was mid-day,) when he received a message from the cardinal to wait upon him. Staupitz was accompanied by Winceslaus Link.[580] The vicar-general found the legate alone with Serra-Longa. De Vio immediately went up to Staupitz, and, in [308]
the mildest accents said to him:—"Try, then, to persuade your monk, and induce him to make a retraction. Of a truth I am otherwise satisfied with him, and he has not a better friend than I." [581]

Staupitz.—"I have done so already, and will still counsel him to submit to the Church in all

humility."

De Vio.—"You must answer the arguments which he draws from holy Scripture."

Staupitz.—"I must confess to you, my lord, that that is beyond my strength; for Dr. Martin is my superior both in talent and in knowledge of the holy Scriptures."

The cardinal doubtless smiled at the vicar-general's frankness. He himself knew, besides, wherein lay the difficulty of convincing Luther. He continued, and said to Link:—

"Are you aware, that, as partizans of a heretical doctrine, you are yourselves liable to the pains of the Church?"

Staupitz.—Deign to resume the conference with Luther. Appoint a public discussion of the controverted points."

De Vio, (*terrified at the very idea.*)—"I won't have any further discussion with that beast. For it has in its head piercing eyes and strange speculations."[582]

Staupitz at last obtained the cardinal's promise to give Luther a written statement of what he was to retract.

The vicar-general went immediately to Luther, and, shaken by the cardinal's representations, tried to bring about some arrangement. "Refute then," says Luther, "the passages of Scripture which I have brought forward." "It is above my power," said Staupitz. "Well," said Luther, "it is against my conscience to retract, so long as no other explanation can be given of these passages." "What!" continued he, "the cardinal pretends, as you assure me, that he is desirous to arrange the affair without shame or disadvantage to me. Ah! these are Roman words, and signify in good German that it would be my disgrace and eternal ruin. What else has he to expect, who, from fear of man and against the voice of his conscience, abjures the truth?"[583]

Staupitz did not insist; he merely intimated that the cardinal had consented to give him a written statement of the points of which he demanded a retractation. Then, doubtless, he informed him of his resolution to leave Augsburg, where he had nothing more to do, and Luther imparted to him a design which he had formed with a view to comfort and strengthen their souls.

Staupitz promised to return, and they separated for a short time.

Luther, left alone in his cell, turned his thoughts towards friends who were dear to his heart. He [309] transported himself to Weimar and Wittemberg. He was desirous to inform the Elector of what was passing; and, afraid of compromising the prince by addressing him directly, wrote to Spalatin, and begged him to inform his master how matters stood. He related the whole affair, even to the promise of the legate to give him a written statement of the controverted points, and concluded:—"Thus matters are; but I have neither hope nor confidence in the legate. I will not retract a single syllable. I will publish the reply which I have sent him, in order that, if he proceeds to violence, his shame may extend over all Christendom."[584]

The doctor next availed himself of some moments still left him to communicate with his friends at Wittemberg.

"Peace and felicity!" wrote he to Doctor Carlstadt. "Accept these few lines as if they were a long letter; for time and events are pressing on me. Another time I will write you and others at greater length. For three days my affair has been under discussion, and things are now come to this, that I have no hope of returning to you, and expect nothing but excommunication. The legate is absolutely determined that I shall have no discussion, either public or private. He says, he wishes not to be my judge but my father, and yet the only words he will hear from me are, 'I retract, and own that I have been mistaken.' These, again, are words which I won't say.

"My cause is in so much the greater peril, that its judges are not only implacable enemies, but, moreover, men incapable of comprehending it. However, the Lord God lives and reigns; to his care I commend myself, and I doubt not that, in answer to the prayers of some pious souls, he will send me assistance; methinks I feel that I am prayed for.

"Either I shall return to you without having suffered harm, or, struck with excommunication, will be obliged to seek an asylum elsewhere.

"Be this as it may, comport yourself valiantly, stand firm, exalt Christ intrepidly and joyfully....

"The cardinal always calls me his dear son. I know what this amounts to. Nevertheless, I am persuaded I would be to him the dearest and most agreeable of men, if I would only pronounce the single word *Revoco*, I retract. But I will not become a heretic by retracting the faith which made me become a Christian. Better be hunted, cursed, burnt, and put to death....

"Take care of yourself, my dear doctor, and show this letter to our theologians, to Amsdorff, [310] Philip, Otten, and others, in order that you may pray for me, and also for yourselves; for the affair which is here discussed is yours also. It is that of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and of divine grace."[585]

Delightful thought! which ever gives full peace and consolation to those who have borne testimony to Jesus Christ, to his divinity and grace, when the world from all quarters showers down its censures, ejections, and frowns. "Our cause is that of faith in our Lord!" And how sweet

also the conviction expressed by the Reformer, "I feel that I am prayed for." The Reformation was the work of prayer and piety. The struggle between Luther and De Vio was a struggle between the religious element re-appearing in full life, and the expiring remains of the quibbling dialectics of the middle ages.

Such was Luther's converse with his absent friends. Staupitz soon returned; Doctor Ruhel and the Chevalier de Ferlitzoch, the Elector's envoys, also arrived after they had taken leave of the cardinal. Some other friends of the gospel joined them; and Luther, seeing the generous men thus assembled on the point of separating, perhaps separating from himself for ever, proposed that they should join in celebrating the Lord's Supper. The proposal was accepted, and this little flock of believers communicated in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. What feelings must have filled the hearts of these friends of the Reformer at this moment when celebrating the Eucharist with him and thinking that it was perhaps the last time he would be permitted to do so! What joy and love must have animated Luther's heart at seeing himself so graciously received by his Master at an hour when men were repulsing him! How solemn must that supper have been—how sacred that evening![586]

The next day[587] Luther waited for the articles which the legate was to send him, but no message arriving, he begged his friend, Dr. Winceslaus Link, to go to the cardinal. De Vio received Link with the greatest affability, and assured him that he would act only as a friend. "I no longer," says he, "regard Doctor Martin Luther as a heretic. I will not excommunicate him at this time, at least if I do not receive other orders from Rome. I have sent his reply to the pope by an express." Then, to give a proof of his good intentions, he added, "Would Doctor Martin Luther only retract what relates to the indulgences, the affair would soon be ended; for, with regard to [311] faith in the sacrament, it is an article which every one may interpret and understand in his own way." Spalatin, who relates these words, adds the sarcastic but just remark: "It clearly follows, that Rome has more regard for money than for the purity of the faith and the salvation of souls." [588]

Link returned to Luther. He found Staupitz with him, and gave an account of his visit. When he mentioned the legate's unlooked for concession, "It had been worth while," said Staupitz, "for Dr. Winceslaus to have had a notary and witnesses with him to take down the words, for if such a proposal was known it would greatly prejudice the cause of the Romans."

Meanwhile, the smoother the prelate's words became, the less the honest Germans trusted him. Several of the worthy men to whom Luther had been recommended consulted together. "The legate," said they, "is plotting some mischief by the courier of whom he speaks; there is good ground to fear that you will all be seized and cast into prison."

Staupitz and Winceslaus, therefore, determined to quit the town. Embracing Luther, who persisted in remaining at Augsburg, they set out in all haste by different roads for Nuremberg, not without a feeling of great uneasiness as to the fate of the intrepid witness whom they left behind.

Sunday passed quietly enough. Luther waited in vain for a message from the legate. But as he did not send him a word, Luther at last resolved to write him. Staupitz and Link, before their departure, had begged him to make all possible submission to the cardinal. Luther was yet without experience in Rome and its envoys; but if submission did not succeed, he would be able to regard it as a warning. Now, he must at least make the attempt. In so far as concerns himself, not a day passes in which he does not condemn himself, does not mourn over the facility with which he allows himself to be hurried into expressions which exceed the bounds of propriety. Why should he not confess to the cardinal that which he daily confesses to God? Luther, moreover, had a heart which was easily touched, and which suspected no evil. He therefore took up the pen, and, under a feeling of respect and good will, wrote to the cardinal as follows:[589]—

Most worthy Father in God,—I come once more, not with my voice, but by writing, to supplicate your paternal goodness to give me a favourable hearing. The reverend Doctor Staupitz, my very dear Father in Christ, has asked me to humble myself, to renounce my own opinion, and submit it [312] to the judgment of pious and impartial men. He also has lauded your paternal goodness, and convinced me of the favourable sentiments with which you are animated towards me. The tidings filled me with joy.

"Now, then, most worthy father, I confess, as I have already done, that I have not shown enough of modesty, enough of meekness, enough of respect for the name of the sovereign pontiff; and although I have been greatly provoked, I perceive it would have been far better for me to have treated the affair with more humility, good nature, and reverence, '*not answering a fool according to his folly, for fear of being like unto him*.' (Prov., xxvi, 4.)

"This grieves me very much; I ask pardon for it; and I am willing to announce it to the people from the pulpit, as indeed I have already often done. I will endeavour, by the grace of God, to speak differently. Moreover, I am ready to promise, that, unless I am asked, I will not say a single word on the subject of indulgences after this affair is arranged. But, in like manner, let those who led me to begin it be obliged hereafter to be moderate in their discourses, or to be silent.

"As regards the truth of my doctrine, the authority of St. Thomas and other doctors cannot satisfy me. If I am worthy of it, I must hear the voice of the spouse, who is the Church. For it is certain that she hears the voice of the Bridegroom who is Christ.

"With all humility and submission, therefore, I pray your paternal love to refer the whole of this matter, which to this hour is so uncertain, to our most holy lord, Leo X, in order that the Church may decide, pronounce, and ordain, thereby enabling men to retract with a good conscience, or to believe in sincerity."[590]

The reading of this letter suggests a reflection. It shows us that Luther was not acting on a premeditated system, but only in virtue of convictions which were successively impressed on his mind and his heart.

So far from having adopted a fixed system, or calculated opposition, he was sometimes, without suspecting it, at variance with himself. Old convictions still prevailed in his mind, even after contrary convictions had taken root. And yet, in these evidences of sincerity and truth, men have searched for weapons to assail the Reformation; because it followed the obligatory law of progress invariably imposed on the human mind, they have written the history of its variations; in the very traits which attest its sincerity, and consequently do it honour, one of the greatest [313] geniuses of Christendom has found his strongest objections to it.[591] Inconceivable is the waywardness of the human mind!

Luther received no answer to his letter. Cajetan and his courtiers, from being violently agitated, became all at once motionless. What could the reason be? Might it not be the calm which precedes the storm? Some are of the opinion of Pallavicini, who observes, that "the cardinal expected that the proud monk would, like inflated bellows, gradually lose the wind with which he was filled, and become quite humble."[592] Others, who thought themselves better acquainted with the ways of Rome, felt assured that the legate was preparing to seize Luther; but not daring, of his own accord, to proceed to such extremities in defiance of the imperial safe-conduct, was waiting for an answer from Rome. Others, again, could not admit that the cardinal would consent to wait so long. The Emperor, Maximilian, they said, (and this may indeed have been true,) would have no more scruple in delivering up Luther to the judgment of the Church, in spite of the safe-conduct, than Sigismund had in delivering up John Huss to the Council of Constance. Their conjecture, therefore, was, that the legate was negotiating with the emperor. The sanction of Maximilian might arrive at any hour. The greater the opposition he had formerly showed to the pope, the more disposed he now seemed to flatter him, until he should succeed in encircling the head of his grandson with the imperial crown. There was not an instant to be lost, "and, therefore," said the generous men around Luther, "prepare an appeal to the pope, and quit Augsburg without delay."

Luther, whose presence in the town had for four days been quite useless, and who, by remaining these four days after the departure of the Saxon counsellors whom the Elector had sent to watch over his safety, had sufficiently demonstrated that he feared nothing, and was ready to answer every charge, at length yielded to the urgent entreaties of his friends. Wishing to leave a notification to De Vio, he wrote him on Tuesday, the evening before his departure. This second letter is firmer in its tone than the former. It would seem that Luther, in perceiving that all his advances were vain, began to hold up his head, and show that he had a due sense both of his own rights, and of the injustice of his enemies.

"Most worthy Father in God," wrote he to De Vio, "your paternal goodness has seen, yes, I say, seen, and distinctly recognised my obedience. I have undertaken a distant journey, in the midst of [314] great dangers, in much bodily weakness, and notwithstanding of my extreme poverty, on the order of our most holy lord, Leo X. I have appeared personally before your Eminence; in fine, I have thrown myself at the feet of his Holiness, and am now waiting his pleasure, prepared to acquiesce in his judgment, whether he condemn or acquit me. I thus feel that I have omitted nothing which becomes an obedient son of the Church.

"Hence, I cannot see it to be my duty uselessly to prolong my sojourn here; indeed, it is impossible for me to do so. I want means, and your paternal goodness has commanded me, in peremptory terms, not again to show myself in your presence, unless I am willing to retract.

"I depart, therefore, in the name of the Lord, desiring, if it be possible, to repair to some spot where I may be able to live in peace. Several personages, of greater weight than I am, have urged me to appeal from your paternal goodness, and even from our most holy lord, Leo X, ill informed, to himself better informed. Although I know that such an appeal will be much more agreeable to our most serene Elector than a retractation, nevertheless, if I had only had myself to consult, I would not have taken it. Having committed no fault, I ought to have nothing to fear."

Luther, having written this letter, which was not sent to the legate till after his departure, prepared to quit Augsburg. God had kept him till this hour, and his heart praised Him for it; but he must not tempt God. He took leave of his friends, Peutinger, Langemantel, the Adelmanns, Auerbach, and the prior of the Carmelites, who had shown him so much Christian hospitality. On Wednesday before day-break he got up, and was ready to depart. His friends had advised him to use great precaution, lest his intention should be observed and frustrated, and he followed their counsels as much as he could. A pony, which Staupitz had left him, was brought to the gate of the convent, and once more bidding adieu to his brethren, he mounted and set off, without bridle, boots, or spurs, and unarmed. The magistrates had sent one of their officers on horseback, who was to accompany him, and who knew the roads perfectly. The servant led him in the darkness, through the silent streets of Augsburg, towards a small gate which was pierced in the city wall, and which counsellor Langemantel had given orders should be opened to him. He is still in the power of the legate, and the hand of Rome may still reach him. Doubtless, did the Italians know

that their prey was escaping, they would sally forth in fury with hue and cry. Who knows if the intrepid opponent of Rome will not yet be seized and immured in a dungeon?... At length Luther and his guide arrive at the little gate, and, passing through it, are out of Augsburg. Then, putting their horses to the gallop, they make off in all haste. [315]

Luther, on departing, had left his appeal to the pope in the hands of the prior of Pomesaw. His friends were of opinion that it should not be sent to the legate, and the prior was therefore charged to see to its being fixed up, two or three days after the doctor's departure, on the gate of the cathedral, in presence of a notary and witnesses. This was accordingly done.

In this document, Luther declares that he appeals from the most holy father the pope, ill informed, to the most holy lord and father in Christ, by name Leo X, by the grace of God, when better informed.[593] This appeal had been regularly drawn up and executed in due form by Gall de Herbrachtingen, the imperial notary, in presence of two Augustin monks, Bartholomew Utzmair and Wengel Steinbies. It was dated 16th October.

When the cardinal was informed of Luther's departure, he was astonished, and even, as he declares in a letter to the Elector, was frightened and amazed. In fact, he had grounds for irritation. This departure, which put so abrupt a termination to negotiation, disappointed the hopes which had so long flattered him. His ambition was to cure the wounds of the Church, and re-establish the pope's influence in Germany; and, lo! the heretic has escaped not only without having been punished, but even without having been humbled. The conference had only served to bring more prominently into view, on the one hand, the simplicity, uprightness, and firmness of Luther; and, on the other, the imperiousness and unreasonable conduct of the pope and his ambassador. Rome, having gained nothing, must have lost: her authority not having been strengthened, had, of necessity, experienced a new check. What will be said at the Vatican? What tidings will arrive at Rome? The difficulties of his situation will be forgotten, and the failure imputed to his want of skill. Serra-Longa and the Italians are furious at seeing persons of their ability outwitted by a German monk. De Vio is scarcely able to conceal his irritation. The affront cries for vengeance, and we shall soon see him giving vent to his wrath in a letter to the Elector.

CHAP. X. [316]

Luther's Flight—Admiration—Luther's Wish—The Legate to the Elector—The Elector to the Legate—Prosperity of the University.

Luther continued with his guide to flee from Augsburg. He urged his steed to the utmost speed that the poor animal's strength would permit. He thought of the real or supposed flight of John Huss, the manner in which he was laid hold of, and the assertion of his adversaries, who pretended that the flight annulled the Emperor's safe-conduct, and entitled them to condemn him to the flames.[594] These uneasy thoughts merely crossed Luther's mind. Escaped from the town, where he had passed ten days under the terrible hand of Rome, which had already crushed so many thousand witnesses of the truth, and drenched herself with blood—now that he is free, now that he breathes the pure air of the field, and traverses the villages and plains—now that he sees himself wonderfully delivered—his whole soul magnifies the Lord. Truly he may now say, "*Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*"[595] Luther's heart is thus filled with joy. But his thoughts also revert to De Vio. "The cardinal," says he, "would have liked to have me in his hands to send me to Rome. No doubt he is chagrined at my escape. He imagined that he was master of me at Augsburg—he thought he was sure of me; but he had an eel by the tail. Is it not a shame in these people to set so high a price upon me? They would give many crowns to have me; whereas, our Lord Jesus Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver."[596]

The first day Luther travelled fourteen leagues. In the evening, on arriving at the inn where he was to pass the night, he was so fatigued (his horse, says one of his biographers, had a very hard trot,) that, on dismounting, he could not stand erect, and stretched himself out upon the straw. He, nevertheless, enjoyed some sleep, and the next day continued his journey. At Nuremberg, he found Staupitz on a visit to the convents of his order, and, for the first time saw the brief which the pope had sent to Cajetan respecting him. He was indignant at it. In all probability, if he had read it before his departure from Wittemberg, he would never have appeared before the cardinal. [317] "It is impossible to believe," says he, "that any thing so monstrous could emanate from a sovereign pontiff."[597]

Throughout the journey, Luther was an object of general interest. He had not yielded a whit. Such a victory gained by a mendicant monk over a representative of Rome, excited universal admiration. Germany seemed avenged for the contempt of Italy. The eternal Word had been more honoured than the word of the pope; and that vast power which had domineered over the world for so many ages had received an important check. Luther's journey was a triumph. People were delighted with the obstinacy of Rome, hoping that it would hasten her downfall. Had she not chosen to keep fast hold of dishonest gains—had she been wise enough not to despise the Germans—had she reformed clamant abuses—perhaps, according to human views, things might

have returned to the state of death out of which Luther had aroused them. But the papacy chooses not to yield, and the doctor will see himself constrained to bring many other errors to light, and to advance in the knowledge and the manifestation of the truth.

On the 26th October Luther arrived at Græfenthal, situated at the extremity of the forests of Thuringia. Here he fell in with Count Albert of Mansfeld, who had so strongly dissuaded him from going to Augsburg. The count laughed heartily on seeing his singular equipage; and, laying hands on him, obliged him to become his guest. Shortly after Luther resumed his journey.

He made haste to be at Wittemberg by the 31st October, expecting that the Elector would be there at the Feast of All Saints, and that he would be able to see him. The brief which he had read at Nuremberg had made him fully aware of the danger of his situation. In fact, being already condemned at Rome, he could not hope either to remain at Wittemberg, or to obtain an asylum in a convent, or to be in peace and safety any where else. The protection of the Elector might, perhaps, defend him, but he was far from being able to calculate upon it. He could not expect any help from the two friends whom he had formerly had at the court. Staupitz, having lost the favour he long enjoyed, had quitted Saxony, Spalatin was loved by Frederick, but had no great influence over him. The Elector himself was not so well acquainted with the gospel as to encounter manifest perils on account of it. However, Luther saw nothing better which he could do than return to Wittemberg, and there await the decision of an almighty and merciful God. If, as several thought, he were left at liberty, his wish was to devote himself entirely to study and the education of youth.[598] [318]

Luther did arrive at Wittemberg by the 30th October; but his haste had been to no purpose, for neither the Elector nor Spalatin came to the festival. His friends were overjoyed on seeing him again among them. The very day of his arrival he hastened to announce it to Spalatin—"I came back to Wittemberg to-day, safe and sound, by the grace of God; but how long I shall remain is more than I know.... I am filled with joy and peace; so much so, that I cannot help wondering how the trial which I endure appears so great to so many great personages."

De Vio did not wait long, after Luther's departure, to vent all his indignation to the Elector. His letter breathes vengeance. In an assuming tone he gives Frederick an account of the conference. "Since friar Martin," says he, in conclusion, "cannot be brought by paternal methods to acknowledge his error, and remain faithful to the Catholic Church, I pray your Highness to send him to Rome, or banish him from your States. Be assured that this difficult, naughty, and venomous affair, cannot last longer; for, when I shall have acquainted our most holy lord with all the craft and malice, there will soon be an end of it." In a postscript, in his own hand, the cardinal entreats the Elector not to sully his own honour, and that of his illustrious ancestors, for a miserable paltry friar.[599]

Never, perhaps, was the soul of Luther filled with nobler indignation than on reading the copy of this letter which the Elector sent him. The thought of the sufferings which he is destined to endure, the value of the truth for which he is combating, the contempt he feels for the conduct of the legate of Rome, at once fill his heart. His reply, written under the influence of those feelings, is full of the courage, dignity, and faith, which he always manifested in the most difficult crisis of his life. He, in his turn, gives an account of the conference of Augsburg, and then, after exposing the conduct of the cardinal continues:—

"I should like to answer the legate in the Elector's stead.

"Prove that you speak with knowledge," I would say to him; "let the whole affair be committed to writing; then I will send Friar Martin to Rome, or rather, I myself will cause him to be seized and put to death. I will take care of my conscience and my honour, and allow no stain to sully my fame. But as long as your certain knowledge shuns the light, and manifests itself only by clamour, I cannot give credit to darkness.

"This, most excellent prince, would be my answer. [319]

"Let the reverend legate, or the pope himself, give a written specification of my errors; let them explain their reasons; let them instruct me who desire, who ask, and wish, and wait for instruction, in so much that even a Turk would not refuse to give it. If I retract not, and condemn myself after they shall have proved to me that the passages which I have cited ought to be understood differently from what I have done, then, O most excellent Elector, let your Highness be the first to pursue and chase me, let the university discard me, and load me with its anger. Nay, more, (and I call heaven and earth to witness,) let the Lord Jesus Christ reject and condemn me! The words which I speak are not dictated by vain presumption, but by immovable conviction. I am willing that the Lord God withdraw his grace from me, and that every creature of God refuse to countenance me, if, when a better doctrine shall have been shown to me, I embrace it not.

"If, on account of the humbleness of my condition, they despise me, a poor paltry mendicant friar, and if they refuse to instruct me in the way of truth, let your Highness pray the legate to point out to you in writing wherein I have erred; and, if they refuse this favour even to your Highness, let them write their views either to his Imperial Majesty, or to some Archbishop of Germany. What ought I, what can I say more?

"Let your Highness listen to the voice of your honour and your conscience, and not send me to Rome. No man can command you to do it, for it is impossible I can be in safety at Rome. The pope himself is not in safety there. It would be to order you to betray Christian blood. They have paper,

pens, and ink, and they have also notaries without number. It is easy for them to write, and show wherein and how I have erred. It will cost less to instruct me by writing while I am absent, than while present to accomplish my death by stratagem.

"I resign myself to exile. My enemies are so ensnaring me on all sides, that I can no where live in safety. In order that no evil may befall you on my account, I, in the name of God, abandon your territories; I will go wherever an almighty and merciful God wishes me to be. Let him do with me as seemeth to him good!

"Thus, then, most serene Elector, with veneration I bid you farewell. I commend you to Almighty God, and give you immortal thanks for all your kindness towards me. Whatever the people among whom I shall live in future, I will always remember you, and gratefully pray, without ceasing, for the happiness of you and yours.[600]... I am still, thank God, full of joy, and I bless him that Christ his Son counts me worthy of suffering in so holy a cause. May he eternally guard your illustrious Highness! Amen!" [320]

This letter, so replete with truth, made a profound impression on the Elector. "He was shaken by a very eloquent letter," says Maimbourg. He never would have thought of delivering an innocent man into the hands of Rome. Perhaps he would have asked Luther to remain for some time in concealment, but not even in appearance would he have yielded, in any way, to the menaces of the legate. He wrote to his counsellor Pfeffinger, who happened to be with the Emperor, to make him acquainted with the real state of matters, and beg him to request Rome either to put an end to the affair, or at least leave it to be decided in Germany by impartial judges.[601]

Some days after the Elector replied to the legate:—"Since Doctor Martin appeared before you at Augsburg, you ought to be satisfied. We did not expect that without having convicted him you would have thought of constraining him to retract. None of the learned in our dominions have told us that the doctrine of Martin is impious, antichristian, and heretical." The prince then refuses to send Luther to Rome, or banish him from his states.

This letter, which was communicated to Luther, filled him with joy. "Good God!" wrote he to Spalatin, "with what joy I have read it and re-read it. I know what confidence may be put in these words, so admirable at once for vigour and moderation. I fear the Romans will not comprehend all that is meant by them, but they will at least comprehend that what they thought already finished is not even begun. Have the goodness to present my thanks to the prince. It is strange that he, (De Vio,) who not long ago was a mendicant monk like me, is not afraid to accost the most powerful princes without respect, to interpel, threaten, and command them, and treat them with inconceivable pride. Let him learn that the temporal power is of God, and that it is not permitted him to trample its glory under foot."[602]

Frederick, in answering the legate in a tone which he had not expected, had doubtless been encouraged by an address which he had received from the university of Wittemberg. This university had good reason for declaring in the doctor's favour, in as much as it was flourishing more and more, and eclipsing all the other schools. Crowds of students flocked from all parts of Germany to hear the extraordinary man whose lessons seemed to open a new era to religion and science. These youths who came from all the provinces stopped at the moment when they perceived the steeples of Wittemberg in the distance, and raising their hands to heaven, thanked God for making the light of truth shine on this town as formerly on Zion, and send its rays even to the remotest countries.[603] A life and activity hitherto unknown animated the university. "They ply their studies here like ants," wrote Luther.[604] [321]

CHAP. XI.

Thoughts of Departure—Adieus to the Church—Critical Moment—Deliverance—Luther's Courage—Discontentment at Rome—Bull—Appeal to a Council.

Luther, thinking that he might soon be banished from Germany, employed himself in preparing the Acts of the Conference of Augsburg for publication. He wished these Acts to remain as evidence of the struggle which he had maintained with Rome. He saw the storm ready to burst, but feared it not. Day after day he expected the anathemas of Rome, and arranged and set every thing in order, that he might be ready when they arrived. "Having tucked up my coat, and girt my reins," said he, "I am ready to depart like Abraham; not knowing whither I shall go, or rather knowing well, since God is every where."[605] He intended to leave a farewell letter behind him. "Have the boldness, then," wrote he to Spalatin, "to read the letter of a man cursed and excommunicated."

His friends were in great fear and anxiety on his account, and begged him to enter himself prisoner in the hands of the Elector, in order that that prince might somewhere keep him in safe custody.[606]

His enemies could not understand what it was that gave him so much confidence. One day they were talking of him at the court of the Bishop of Brandenburg, and asking on what prop he could

be leaning. "It must be in Erasmus," said they, "or Capito, or some other of the learned, that he confides." "No! no!" replied the bishop, "the pope would give himself very little trouble with such folks as these. His trust is in the university of Wittemberg and the Duke of Saxony." Thus both were ignorant of the fortress in which the Reformer had taken refuge.

Thoughts of departure flitted across Luther's mind. They arose not from fear, but from the [322] foresight of continually recurring obstacles which the free profession of the truth must encounter in Germany. "If I remain here," said he, "the liberty of speaking and writing will, as to many things, be wrested from me. If I depart, I will freely unbosom the thoughts of my heart, and offer my life to Jesus Christ."[607]

France was the country in which Luther hoped he would be able, untramelled, to announce the truth. The liberty which the doctors and university of Paris enjoyed seemed to him worthy of envy. He was, besides, agreed with them on many points. What would have happened had he been transported from Wittemberg to France? Would the Reformation have taken place there as it did in Germany? Would the power of Rome have been dethroned; and would France, which was destined to see the hierarchical principles of Rome, and the destructive principles of an infidel philosophy, long warring in its bosom, have become one great focus of gospel light? It is useless to indulge in vain conjectures on this subject; but perhaps Luther at Paris might have somewhat changed the destinies of Europe and France.

Luther's soul was powerfully agitated. As he often preached at the town church in place of Simon Heyens Pontanus, pastor of Wittemberg, who was almost always sick, he thought it his duty, at all events, to take leave of a people to whom he had so often preached salvation. "I am," said he one day in the pulpit, "I am a precarious and uncertain preacher. How often already have I set out suddenly without bidding you farewell.... In case the same thing should happen again, and I not return, here receive my adieus." After adding a few words more, he thus meekly and modestly ended:—"I warn you, in fine, not to be alarmed though the papal censures let loose all their fury on me. Impute it not to the pope, and wish no ill either to him or any other mortal whatsoever, but commit the whole matter to God."[608]

The moment seemed to have at length arrived. The prince gave Luther to understand he was desirous of his removal to a distance from Wittemberg; and the wishes of the Elector were too sacred for him not to hasten to comply with them. He accordingly made preparations for his departure, without well knowing whither he should direct his steps. He wished, however, to have a last meeting with his friends, and for this purpose invited them to a farewell repast. Seated at table with them, he was still enjoying their delightful conversation, their tender and anxious friendship. A letter is brought to him.... It comes from the court. He opens and reads, and his [323] heart sinks; it is a new order to depart. The prince asks why he is so long of setting out. His soul was filled with sadness. Still, however, he took courage, and raising his head and looking around on his guests, said firmly and joyfully, "Father and mother forsake me, but the Lord will take me up."[609] There was nothing for it but to depart. His friends were deeply moved. What is to become of him? If Luther's protector rejects him, who will receive him? And the gospel, and the truth, and this admirable work ... ; all doubtless must fall with their illustrious witness. The Reformation apparently is hanging by a thread; and at the moment when Luther quits the walls of Wittemberg, will not the thread break? Luther and his friends spoke little. Stunned with the blow which was directed against their brother, they melt into tears. But some moments after a second message arrives, and Luther opens the letter, not doubting he is to find a renewal of the summons to depart. But, O powerful hand of the Lord! for this time he is saved. The whole aspect is changed. "As the new envoy of the pope hopes that every thing may be arranged by means of a conference, remain still."[610] So says the letter. How important an hour this was; and who can say what might have happened if Luther, who was always in haste to obey the will of his prince, had quitted Wittemberg immediately after the first message? Never were Luther and the work of the Reformation at a lower ebb than at this moment. Their destinies seemed to be decided; but an instant sufficed to change them. Arrived at the lowest point in his career, the doctor of Wittemberg rapidly reascended; and thenceforward his influence ceased not to increase. In the language of a prophet, "The Eternal commands, and his servants descend into the depths; again they mount up to heaven."

Spalatin having, by order of Frederick, invited Luther to Lichtenberg to have an interview with him, they had a long conversation on the situation of affairs. "If the censures of Rome arrive," said Luther, "I certainly will not remain at Wittemberg." "Beware," "of being too precipitate with your journey to France," replied Spalatin,[611] who, left telling him to wait till he heard from him. "Only recommend my soul to Christ," said Luther to his friends. "I see that my adversaries are strong in their resolution to destroy me, but at the same time Christ strengthens me in my resolution not to yield to them."[612]

Luther at this time published the "*Acts of the Conference at Augsburg*." Spalatin, on the part of [324] the Elector, had written him not to do it; but it was too late. After the publication had taken place the prince approved of it; "Great God!" said Luther in the preface, "what new, what astonishing crime, to seek light and truth! And more especially to seek them in the Church, in other words, in the kingdom of truth." In a letter to Link he says, "I send you my *Acts*. They are more cutting, doubtless, than the legate expected; but my pen is ready to give birth to far greater things. I know not myself whence those thoughts come. In my opinion the affair is not even commenced; [613] so far are the grandees of Rome from being entitled to hope it is ended. I will send you what

I have written, in order that you may see whether I have divined well in thinking that the Antichrist of which the Apostle Paul speaks is now reigning in the court of Rome. I believe I am able to demonstrate that it is at this day worse than the very Turks."

Ominous rumours reached Luther from all quarters. One of his friends wrote to him, that the new envoy of Rome had received orders to seize him, and deliver him up to the pope. Another told him, that in travelling he had fallen in with a courtier, and the conversation having turned on the affairs of Germany, the courtier declared that he had come under an obligation to deliver Luther into the hands of the sovereign pontiff. "But," wrote the Reformer, "the more their fury and violence increase, the less I tremble."[614]

At Rome there was great dissatisfaction with Cajetan. The chagrin which they felt at the failure of the affair at first turned upon him. The Roman courtiers thought themselves entitled to reproach him with a want of that prudence and finesse which, if they are to be believed, constitute the first quality of a legate, and with having failed on so important an occasion, to give pliancy to his scholastic theology. He is wholly to blame, said they. His lumbering pedantry has spoiled all. Of what use was it to irritate Luther by insults and menaces, instead of gaining him over by the promise of a good bishopric, or even of a Cardinal's hat.[615] These hirelings judged the Reformer by themselves. However, it was necessary to repair this blunder. On the one hand, Rome must give her decision, and, on the other, due court must be paid to the Elector, who might be of great use in the election of an emperor, an event which must shortly take place.

As it was impossible for Roman ecclesiastics to suspect what constituted the strength and [325] courage of Luther, they imagined that the Elector was much more implicated in the affair than he really was. The pope, therefore, resolved to follow another line of conduct. He caused his legate in Germany to publish a bull, confirming the doctrine of indulgences in the very points in which they were attacked, but without mentioning either the Elector or Luther. As the Reformer had always expressed his readiness to submit to the decision of the Roman Church, the pope thought that he must now either keep his word, or stand openly convicted as a disturber of the peace of the Church, and a contemner of the holy Apostolic See. In either case it seemed that the pope must gain. But nothing is gained by obstinately opposing the truth. In vain had the pope threatened to excommunicate every man who should teach otherwise than he ordered; the light was not arrested by such orders. The wise plan would have been to curb the pretensions of the venders of indulgences. This decree of Rome was therefore a new blunder. By legalising clamant errors, it irritated all the wise, and made it impossible for Luther to return. "It was thought," says a Roman Catholic historian, a great enemy of the Reformation,[616] "that this bull had been made solely for the interest of the pope and the mendicants, who began to find that nobody would give anything for their indulgences."

The Cardinal de Vio published the bull at Lintz, in Austria, on the 13th December, 1518, but Luther had already placed himself beyond its reach. On the 28th November, in the chapel of Corpus Christi at Wittemberg, he had appealed from the pope to a general council of the Church. He foresaw the storm which was gathering around him, and he knew that God alone could avert it. Still he did as duty called him. He must, no doubt, quit Wittemberg (were it only for the sake of the Elector) as soon as the Roman anathema should arrive; but he was unwilling to quit Saxony and Germany without a strong protestation. This he accordingly drew up; and, in order that it might be ready for circulation the moment the furies of Rome, as he expresses it, should reach him, he caused it to be printed, under the express condition that the bookseller Should deposit all the copies in his custody. But the bookseller, in his eagerness for gain, sold almost the whole, while Luther was quietly waiting to receive them. He felt annoyed, but the thing was done. This bold protestation spread every where. In it Luther declared anew that he had no intention to say any thing against the Holy Church, or the authority of the Apostolic See, or the pope well [326] advised. "But," continues he, "considering that the pope, who is the vicar of God upon earth, may, like any other vicar, err, sin, or lie, and that the appeal to a general council is the only safeguard against unjust proceedings which it is impossible to resist, I feel myself obliged to have recourse to it."[617]

Here, then, we see the Reformation launched on a new course. It is no longer made to depend on the pope and his decisions, but on an universal council. Luther addresses the whole Church, and the voice which proceeds from the chapel of Corpus Christi, must reach the whole members of Christ's flock. There is no want of courage in the Reformer, and here he gives a new proof of it. Will God fail him? The answer will be found in the different phases of the Reformation which are still to be exhibited to our view.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

William Collins, and Co., Printers, Glasgow.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] From ζαω, I live.

[2] Letter to Charles Bonnet.

[3] Discours sur l'Etude de l'Histoire du Christianisme, et son utilité pour l'époque actuelle. Paris, 1832, chez J. J. Risler.

[4] Οια τις ηλιου βολη. (Hist. Eccl., ii, 3.)

[5] "Suburbicaria loca," suburban places. See the Sixth Canon of the Council of Nice, which Rufinus (Hist. Eccl., x, 6) quotes thus: "Et ut apud Alexandriam et in urbe Roma, vetusta consuetudo servetur, ut vel ille Egypti, vel hic suburbicariarum ecclesiarum solicitudinem gerat," etc. And as at Alexandria, and in the city of Rome, an ancient custom is observed; viz., That the bishop of the former has charge of the churches in Egypt, and the latter of those in the suburbs.

[6] Julian., Or. 1.

[7] Claud. in Paneg. Stilic., lib. 3.

[8] Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 1. v, c. 24. Socrat. Hist. Eccl. c. 21. Cyprian, Ep. 59, 72, 75.

[9] 1 Cor. xv, 9. 1 Tim. iii, 15.

[10] 1 Cor. xvi, i. 2 Cor. viii, 1. Gal. i, 22. 1 Cor. xiv, 33.

[11] "Ubi ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei. Ubi Spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia." (Irenæus.) Where the Church, there too the Spirit of God. Where the Spirit of God, there the Church.

[12] See Canon, Sardic. VI; and also the Council of Chalcedon, Canons 8 and 18, οεξαρχος της διοικησεωςοεξαρχος της διοικησεως, the exarch of the diocese.

[13] Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, says of St. Stephen, Bishop of Rome:—"Magis ac magis ejus *errorem* denotabis, qui hæreticorum causam contra Christianos et contra *Ecclesiam Dei* asserere conatur ... qui unitatem et veritatem de divina lege venientem non tenens.... Consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est." (Epist. 74.) "You will more and more observe the error of him who is trying to maintain the cause of heretics against Christians and against the Church of God ... who not holding the unity and truth which come by the Divine law.... Custom without truth is the antiquity of error."... Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, also says after the middle of the third century: "Eos autem qui Romæ sunt, non ea in omnibus observare quæ sunt ab origine tradita, et frustra auctoritatem apostolorum prætendere.... Cæterum nos veritati et consuetudinem jungimus, et consuetudini Romanorum, consuetudinem sed veritatis opponimus; ab initio hoc tenentes quod a Christo et ab apostolo traditum est." (Cypr. Ep. 75.) "But they do not in all things observe what was originally delivered, and in vain pretend the authority of the apostles.... But we (the Bishops of the Churches of Asia, more ancient than those of Rome) to truth join custom also, and to the custom of the Romans oppose custom, but the custom of truth, holding from the beginning what was delivered by Christ and an apostle." These testimonies are of great weight.

[14] Rector totius Ecclesiæ.

[15] "Fremens ut leo, asserens omnes uno gladio jugulari." (Anastasius, Bibl. Vit. Pontif, p. 83.) Roaring like a lion, declaring that he would slaughter all with one sword.

[16] "Visum est et ipsi Apostolico Leoni, ... Ut ipsum Carolum imperatorem nominare debuisset, qui ipsam Romam tenebat, ubi semper Cæsares sedere soliti erant et reliquas sedes."... (Annalista Lambecianus; ad an. 801.) It seemed to Apostolic Leo that he ought to give Charles the name of Emperor, inasmuch as he was in possession of Rome herself, where the Cæsars were always wont to sit, and of their other possessions.

[17] See Ep. ad univer. Episc. Gall. (Mansi xv.)

[18] "Cujus quidem post adeptum sacerdotium, vita quam turpis, quam fœda, quamque execranda extiterit, horresco referre." (Desiderius, Abbot of Cassino, afterwards Victor III. De Miraculis a S. Benedicto, etc., lib. 3, init.) How base, how foul, and how execrable his life was, after he attained the priesthood, I shudder to relate.

[19] "Theophylactus, cum post multa adulteria et homicidia manibus suis perpetrata," etc. (Bonizo, Bishop of Sutri, afterwards of Plaisance. Liber ad amicum.) Theophylact, (Benedict,) after many adulteries, and many murders perpetrated by his own hand.

[20] "Hi quocumque prodeunt, clamores insultantium, digitos ostendentium, colaphos pulsantium, perferunt. Alii membris mutilati, alii per longos cruciatus superbe necati," etc. (Martene et Durand, Thesaurus Nov. Anecd. i, 23.) These, wherever they appear, are subjected to insulting cries, to pointed fingers, and to blows. Some are mutilated, others by long tortures cruelly slain.

[21] "Dilexi justitiam, et odivi iniquitatem, propterea morior in exilio."

[22] "Velle et esse ad hominem referenda sunt, quia de arbitrii fonte descendunt."—(Pelagius in Aug. de Gratia Dei, cap. 4.) To will and to be are properties of man, because they spring from the fountain of free will.

[23] Libri Duo de Ecclesiasticis Disciplinis.

[24] Myconius' History of the Reformation, and Seckendorf's History of Lutheranism.

[25] Muller's Reliquien, vol. iii, p. 22.

[26] Œcolampad. De Risu Paschali.

[27] Nicol de Clemangis, De Præsulibus Simoniacis.

[28] Words of Seb. Stor., Pastor of Leichstall in 1524.

[29] Füsslin Beytræge, ii, 224.

[30] Metern. Nederl. Hist. viii.

[31] Hottinger, Hist. Eccles. ix, 305.

[32] Order of 3rd March, 1517, by Hugo, Bishop of Constance.

[33] Müller's Reliq. iii, 251.

[34] Steubing. Gesch. der Nass. Oran Lande.

[35] "Uno anno ad se delata undecim millia sacerdotum palam concubinariorum." (Erasm. Op. tom. ix, p. 401.) In one year eleven thousand priests were reported to him as living in open concubinage.

[36] Schmidt, Gesch. der Deutschen. tom. iv.

[37] Infessura.

[38] "Amazzò il fratello Ducha di Gandia et lo fa butar nel Tevere." He assassinated his brother, the Duke of Gandia, and made him be thrown into the Tiber. (MS. of Capello, ambassador at Rome in 1500, extracted by Ranke.)

[39] Intro in camera ... fe ussir la moglie e sorella ... estrangolò dito zovene.—(Ibid.)

[40] Adeo il sangue il saltò in la faza del papa.—(Ibid.)

[41] E messe la scutola venenata avante il papa.—(Sanato.)

[42] Gordon, Tomasi Infessura, Guicciardini, etc.

[43] Da man an alle Wände, auf allerley zedel, zuletzt auf den Kartenspielen, Pfaffen, und Munche malete.—(L. Ep. ii, 674.)

[44] Apologia pro Rep. Christ.

[45] Müller's Reliq. tom. iii, p. 253.

[46] Felleri, Mon. ined., p. 400.

[47] Adrien Baillet. Hist. des Demêlés de Boniface VIII avec Philippe le Bel.—(Paris, 1708.)

[48] Guicciardini. History of Italy.

[49] I will destroy the name of Babylon.

[50] Scultet. Annal. ad. an. 1520.

[51] "Qui prœ multis pollebat principibus aliis auctoritate, opibus, potentia, liberalitate, et magnificentia.—(Cochlœns. Acta 1. p. 3.) He surpassed many other princes in authority, wealth, power, liberality, and magnificence.

[52] "Odium Romani nominis, penitus infixum esse multarum gentium animis opinor, ob ea, quæ vulgo de moribus ejus urbis jactantur." (Erasm. Ep., lib. xii, p. 634.) The hatred of the Roman name, which rankles in the minds of many nations, is owing, I suspect, to the prevailing rumours respecting the morals of that city.

[53] Luther to Brentius.

[54] Nobla Leyçon.

[55] Treatise of Antichrist, of the same age as the Nobla Leyçon.

[56] In Bohemian, Huss means "goose."

[57] Epist. J. Huss, Tempore Anathematis Scriptæ.

[58] Huss. Ep. sub. Temp. Concuii Scriptæ.

[59] Cur Deus homo?

[60] "Et sane mihi tutior donato quam innata." (De Erroribus Abelardi, cap. 6.) And it is certainly safer to me given than innate.

[61] "Credo quod tu, mi Domine Jesu Christe, solus es mea justitia et redemptio."... (Leibnitz, Script. Brunsw. iii, 396.)

[62] "Spes mea crux Christi; gratiam, non opera quæro."

[63] "Sciens posse me aliter non salvari, et tibi satisfacere nisi per meritum," etc. (For these and similar quotations, see Flacius, Catal. Test. Veritatis; Wolfii. Lect. Memorabiles; Miller's Reliquien, etc.)

[64] Bertrand d'Argentré, Histoire de Bretaigne, Paris, 1618, p. 788.

[65] "Ille summo vivit Olympo." (Baptista Mantuanus, de Beata Vita, in fin.) He lives in the highest heaven.

[66] "A sorbente gurgite damnationis, subtrahi." (J. H. Hottingeri, Hist. Eccl. Sæcul. xv, p. 347.)

[67] "Alium modum Altissimus procurabit, nobis quidem pro nunc incognitum, licet heu præ foribus existat, ut ad pristinum statum Ecclesia redeat." (J. H. Hottingeri, Hist. Eccl. Sæcul. xv, p. 413.)

[68] "Bonus es tu, et in bonitate tua doce me justificationes tuas." (Batesius, Vitæ Selectorum Virorum. Lond. 1681, p. 112.)

[69] Meditationes in Psalmos; Prediche sopra il Salmo. Quam bonus Israel, etc. Sermones

supra Archam Noe, etc.

[70] "Inter omnes vero persecutores, potissimum Ecclesiæ præsides." But among all persecutors, chiefly the prelates of the Church. (Batesius, p. 118.)

[71] D'Argentré, Collectio Judiciorum de Novis Erroribus, II, p. 340.

[72] Ibidem.

[73] "Et quem Deus vult damnare, Si omnes vellent hunc salvare, Adhuc iste damnaretur."

Who is condemned by God's decree, Assuredly condemned shall be, Whoe'er they be would save him.

(Paradoxa Damnata, etc., 1749, Moguntiæ.)

[74] "Antiquorum Patrum scripta tantum habent auctoritatis quantum canonicæ veritati sunt conformia." (Epist. Apologet. Anvers, 1521.)

[75] "Adeo spiritus utriusque concordat." (Farrago Wesseli, in Præf.)

[76] "Extentus totus, et propensus in eum quem amat, a quo credit, cupit, sperat, confidit, justificatur, nihil sibi ipsi tribuit, qui scit nihil habere ex se." (De Magnit. Passionis, cap. xlvi, Op. p. 553.)

[77] "Nemo magis Ecclesiam destruit, quam corruptus clerus. Destruentibus Ecclesiam omnes Christiani tenentur resistre." (De Potestate Eccles. Op. p. 769.)

[78] Wolfii Lect. Memorab. ii, p. 27.

[79] "Excitabit Dominus heroem ætate viribus...." (Flacii, Catal. Test. Verit., p. 843.)

[80] "Alius quidem veniet...." (Apologia Conf. Aug. xiii. De Votis Monasticis.)

[81] "Qui ne viventes quidem vivebant." (Politiani, Ep. ix, 3.)

[82] Parad., xxiv, 44.

[83] Orribil furon li peccati miei;
Ma la bontà infinita ha si gran braccia
Che prende ciò che si revolve a lei.

(Purgator. iii, 121-124.)

[84] Per lor maladizion si non si perde.
Che non possa tornar l'eterno amore,
Mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde?

(Ibid., 134-136.)

[85] De ementita Constantini donatione declamatio ad Papam." (Op. Basil., 1543.)

[86] De Immortalitate Animæ, de Predestinatione et Providentia, etc.

[87] Qui nullum Deum credens." (J. F. Pici de Fide, Op. ii, p. 820.) Who believing in God.

[88] "Ea de Christo fabula." (Mornæi, Hist. Papatus, p. 820.)

[89] Hamelmann, Relatio Hist. This first impulse has been erroneously attributed to Thomas à Kempis. (Delprat over G. Groote, p. 280.)

[90] "Fide justos esse." (Melancth. Decl., i, 602.)

[91] De Verbo Mirifico.

[92] De Arte Cabalistica.

[93] Mai Vita J. Reuchlin, (Francf. 1687,) Maynhoff, J. Reuchlin and Seine Zeit, (Berlin, 1830.)

[94] His proper name was Gerard, the same as that of his father. This Dutch name he translated into Latin, Desiderius (Desired,) and into Greek, Ερασμος, (Erasmus.)

[95] Εγκωμιον μωσιας. Seven editions of this work were disposed of in a few months.

[96] "A principibus facile mihi contingeret fortuna, nisi mihi nimium dulcis esset libertas." (Ep. ad Prich.) I might easily make my fortune by princes, were not liberty too dear to me.

[97] "Præcipue Deipara Virgo, cui vulgus hominum plus prope tribuit quam Filio." (Encomium Moriæ, Op. iv, p. 444.)

[98] "Non mali peribis si bene vixeris." (Encomium Moriæ, Op. iv, p. 444.)

[99] "Sic sculptus est hominis animus ut longe magis fucis quam veris capiatur." (Ibid., p. 450.)

[100] "Aut ipsum Christum." (Ibid.)

[101] "Quasi sint ulli hostes Ecclesiæ perniciosiores quam impii pontifices, qui et silentio Christum sinunt abolescere et quæstuariis legibus alligant et coactis interpretationibus adulterant et pestilente vita jugulent." (Ibid.)

[102] Ratio Veræ Theologiæ.

[103] Seu de Ratione Concionandi.

[104] Ad Servatium.

[105] Ad Joh. Slechtam,1519. "Hæc sunt animis hominum inculcanda, sic, ut velut in naturam transeant." (Er. Ep. i, p. 680.) These things are to be impressed on the minds of men, so that they may become as it were natural.

[106] "In templis vix vacat Evangelium interpretari." (Annot. ad Matth., xi, 30, "Jugum meum suave.") There is scarcely leisure in churches to interpret the gospel.

[107] "Malo hunc qualisqualis est rerum humanarum statum quam novos excitari tumultus," (Erasm. Ep. i, p. 953.) I had rather have the world as it is than have new tumults excited.

[108] "Semel admissum, non ea fertur qua destinaret admissor." (Erasm. Ep. i, p. 953.) Once admitted, it goes not where the admitter intended.

[109] "Præstat ferre principes impios, quam novatis rebus gravius malum accersere." (Ad Matth. xi, 30.) It is better to bear wicked princes, than invite a worse calamity by innovation.

[110] "Ingens aliquod et præsens remedium, certe meum non est." (Er. Ep. i, 653.) Some vast and present remedy assuredly is not for me.

[111] "Ego me non arbitror hoc honore dignum." (Er. Ep. i, p. 653.)

[112] Erasm. Ep. 274.

[113] "... Vigiliæ molestæ, somnus, irrequietus, cibus insipidus omnis, ipsum quoque musarum studium ... ipsa frontis me mœstitia, vultus pallor, oculorum subtristis dejectio." (Erasm, Ep. i, p. 1380.)

[114] The works of Erasmus were published by John Le Clerc at Liege, in 1703, in ten volumes folio. For his life, see Burigny, Vie D'Erasme, Paris, 1757; A Müller Leben des Erasmus, Hamb., 1828; and the Life inserted by Le Clerc in his Bibliothèque Choisie; see also the fine and faithful work of M. Nisard, (Revue des deux Mondes.) who, however, seems to me mistaken in his estimate of Erasmus and Luther.

[115] "Animus ingens et ferox, viribus pollens.... Nam si consilia et conatus Hütteni non defecissent quasi nervi copiarum, atque potentiæ, jam mutatio omnium rerum extitisset, et quasi orbis status publici fuisset conversus." (Camer. Vita Melancthonis.) Of a powerful, bold, and vigorous intellect.... For had not Hütten's plans and efforts (these being, as it were, the sinews of power) been defective, a general alteration had taken place, and the condition of the world been in a manner changed.

[116] "Exercitus Reuchlinistarum," at the head of a collection of letters addressed to Reuchlin on the subject.

[117] L. Ep. i. p. 37.

[118] Luth. Ep. i, p. 38.

[119] The works of Hütten have been published at Berlin by Manchen, 1822-1825, in five vols. 8vo.

[120] See Châteaubriand, Etudes Historiques.

[121] "Vetus familia est et late propagata mediocrium hominum." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) It is an old and wide spread family, consisting of individuals in humble circumstances.

[122] "Ego natus sum in Eisleben, baptizatusque apud Sanctum Petrum ibidem. Parentes mei de prope Isenaco illuc migrarunt." (Luth., Ep. i, p. 390.) I was born at Eisleben, and baptized in St. Peter's there. My parents came thither from near Isenach.

[123] "Intuebantur in eam cæteræ honestæ mulieres ut in exemplar virtutum." (Melancth. Vita Lutheri.) Other honest wives looked to her as a model of virtue.

[124] Ibid.

[125] "Drumb musste diese geistliche Schmelzer...." (Mathesius, Historien, 1565, p. 3.)

[126] "Ad agnitionem et timorem Dei, ... domestica institutione diligenter assuefecerunt." (Melancth. Vit. Luth.) By domestic instruction, they carefully trained him into the knowledge and fear of God.

[127] "Sed non poterant discernere ingenia secundum quæ essent temperandæ correctiones." (Luth. Op. W. xxii, p. 1785.) But they could not discriminate between minds, though these ought to regulate chastisement.

[128] "Was gross sol werden, muss klein angeben." (Mathesius, Hist. p. 3.)

[129] Luth. Op. Walch. ii, 2347.

[130] "Isenachum enim pene totam parentelam habet." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 390.) For almost all my relations live in Isenach.

[131] Lingk's Reisegesch, Luth.

[132] "Dieweil sic umb seines singen und herzlichen Gebets willen."... (Mathesius. p. 3.)

[133] "Cumque et vis ingenii acerrima esset, et imprimis ad eloquentiam idonea, celeriter æqualibus suis præcurrit," (Melancth. Vit. Luth.) As he was of a very powerful mind, and had a particular turn for eloquence, he soon got before his companions.

[134] "Degustata igitur literarum dulcedine natura, flagrans cupiditate discendi appetit

academiam." (Mel. Vit. Luth). Having thus tasted the sweets of literature, and having naturally an ardent desire of knowledge, he longs for a university.

[135] "Et fortassis ad leniendam vehementiam naturæ mitiora studia veræ philosophiæ." (Ibid.) Perhaps the milder studies of true philosophy might have served to soften the vehemence of his natural temper.

[136] "Et quidem inter primos, ut ingenio studioque multos coæqualium antecellebat." (Cochlœus, Acta Lutheri, p. 1.) And he was indeed among the first, excelling many of his fellow-students, both in genius and study.

[137] "Sic igitur in juventute eminebat, ut toti academiæ Lutheri ingenium admirationi esset." (Vita Luth.) So brilliant was he in youth, that the whole university were in admiration at his talents.

[138] "Fleissig gebet, ist uber die helft studirt." (Mathes. 3.)

[139] "Auff ein Zeit, wie er die Bücher fein nacheinander besieht.... kombt er uberdie lateinische Biblia."... (Mathes 3.)

[140] "Avide percurrit, cœpitque optare ut olim talem librum et ipse nancisci posset." (M. Adami, Vita Luth. p. 103.) He eagerly runs it over, and begins to wish that he himself might one day possess such a book.

[141] "Deus te virum faciet qui alios multos iterum consolabitur."

[142] Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, p. 2229.

[143] "Interitu sodalis sui contristatus." (Cochlœus, p. 1.)

[144] "Mit Erschrecken und Angst Ides Todes umgeben." (Luth., Ep. ii, 101.)

[145] "Cum esset in campo, fulminis ictu territus." (Cochlœ. i.) Being terrified by a thunderbolt when he was in the field.

[146] "Occasio autem fuit ingrediendi illud vitæ genus, quod pietati et studiis doctrinæ de Deo, existimavit esse convenientius." (Mel. Vita Luth.) He adopted this mode of life, because he thought it better adapted to piety and the study of divine truth.

[147] Some biographers say that Alexis was killed by the thunder-clap which terrified Luther; but two of his contemporaries, Mathesius, (p. 4,) and Selneccer, (in Orat. de Luth.) distinguish between the two events, and we might even corroborate their testimony by that of Melancthon, who says, "Sodalem nescio quo casu interfectum." (Vita Luth.) His companion being killed by an accident, I know not what.

[148] "Hujus mundi contemptu, ingressus est repente, multes admirantibus, monasterium." (Cochlœus, i.) From contempt of this world, he, to the wonder of many, suddenly entered a monastery.

[149] "In vita semi-mortua." (Melch. Adami. V. L. p. 102.) A half-dead life.

[150] "Gott geb das es nicht ein Betrug und teuflisch Gespenst sey." (Luth. Ep. ii, p. 101.)

[151] "Loca immunda purgare coactus fuit." (M. Adami, Vita Luth. p. 103.) He was obliged to clear away filth.

[152] Selnecceri Orat. de Luth. Mathesius, p. 5.

[153] "In disputationibus publicis, labyrinthos aliis inextricabiles, diserte, multis admirantibus explicabat." (Melanc. Vit. Luth.) In public disputations, he, to the admiration of many, clearly unravelled labyrinths which others found inextricable.

[154] "In eo vitæ, genere non famam ingenii, sed alimenta pietatis quærebat." In that course of life he sought not a reputation for genius, but the food of piety.

[155] "Et firmis testimoniis aleret timorem et fidem." (Melancth. Vit. Luth.) And by its sure testimonies nourish his fear and his faith.

[156] Gesch. d. deutsch, Bibelübersetzung.

[157] "Summa disciplinæ severitate se ipse regit, et omnibus exercitiis, lectionum, disputationum, jejuniorum, precum, omnes longe superat." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) He observes the utmost rigour of discipline, and in all the exercises of reading, discussion, fastings, and prayers, far surpasses all.

[158] "Erat enim natura, valde modici cibi et potus; vidi continuis quatuor diebus, cum quidem recte valeret, prorsus nihil edentem aut bibentem." (Ibid.) For he was naturally moderate in the use of meat and drink; I have seen him, no doubt, when in perfect health, neither eating nor drinking for four successive days.

[159] "Strenue in studiis et exercitiis spiritualibus militavit ibi Deo, annis quatuor." (Cochlœus, i.) There, in studies and spiritual exercises, he was a strenuous servant of God for four years.

[160] Luth. Op. (W.) xix, 2299.

[161] "Visus est fratribus non nihil singularitatis habere." (Cochlœus, i.) The friars thought him not a little eccentric.

[162] "Cum, ... repente ceciderit vociferans: 'Non sum! non sum!'" (Ibid.) When he suddenly fell down, crying out, "Not I! not I."

[163] "Ex occulto aliquo cum dæmone commercio." (Cochlœus, i.) From some hidden intercourse with a demon.

[164] "Sæpe eum cogitantem attentius de ira Dei, aut de mirandis pœnarum exemplis, subito tanti terrores concutiebant ut pene exanimaretur." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) Often when meditating more attentively on the wrath of God, or striking examples of punishment, he was suddenly shaken with such terror that he became like one dead.

[165] Seckend., p. 53.

[166] "Hoc studium ut magis expeteret, illis suis doloribus et pavoribus movebatur." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) His griefs and fears urged him to prosecute this study with greater eagerness.

[167] "A teneris unguiculis, generoso animi impetu, ad virtutem et eruditam doctrinam contendit." (Melanct. Adam. Vita Staupitzii.) From his earliest years, with generous intellectual impulse, he tended to virtue and learning.

[168] (Ibid.)

[169] "Corporis forma atque statura conspicuus." (Cochlœ., iii.) He was remarkably tall and handsome.

[170] Luth. Op. (W.) v, 2819.

[171] Mosellani Epist.

[172] Proverbs, xxvii, 19.

[173] Luth. Op. (W.) viii, 2725.

[174] Luth. Op. ii, 264.

[175] "Te velut e cœlo sonantem accepimus." (Luth. Ep. i, 115, ad Staupitzium, 30th May, 1518.) We have heard thee, as it were, speaking from heaven.

[176] "Pœnitentia vero non est, nisi quæ ab amore justitiæ et Dei incipit," etc. (Ibid.) There is no repentance save that which begins with the love of God and of righteousness.

[177] "Memini inter jucundissimas et salutares fabulas tuas, quibus me solet Dominus Jesus mirifice consolari." (Ibid.) I recollect during your most pleasing and salutary conversation, with which the Lord is wont wondrously to console me.

[178] "Hæsit hoc verbum tuum in me, sicut sagitta potentis acuta." (Ibid.) Your word stuck fast in me, like the sharp arrow of a mighty man.

[179] "Ecce jucundissimum ludum, verba undique mihi colludebant, planeque huic sententiæ arridebant et assultabant." (Luth. Ep. i, 115.) When, behold, a most pleasing sport! the words coming from all sides, sported with me, obviously smiling and leaping at the sentiment.

[180] "Nunc nihil dulcius aut gratius mihi sonet quam pœnitentia," etc. (Ibid.) Now nothing sounds sweeter or more agreeable to me than repentance.

[181] "Ita enim dulcescunt præcepta Dei, quando non in libris tantum, sed in vulneribus dulcissimi Salvatoris legenda intelligimus." (Ibid.) For thus do the divine precepts become sweet, when we understand that they are to be read not in books merely, but in the wounds of a most gracious Saviour.

[182] Luth. Op. (W.) xxii., p. 489.

[183] Seckendorf, p. 52.

[184] "Davidi aut Petro ... Sed mandatum Dei esse ut singuli homines, nobis remitti peccata credamus." (Melancth. Vit. Luth.) Not to David or Peter, but the command of God is, that every one of us believe that our sins are forgiven.

[185] "O blessed fault, to merit such a Redeemer." (Mathesius, p. 5.)

[186] Luth. Op. xvi, (Walch.) 1144.

[187] "Ei, hast du nicht auch gehort das man Eltern soll gehorsam seyn." (Luth. Ep. ii, 101.)

[188] "Es ist nicht Christus denn Christus schreckt nicht, sondern tröstet nur." (Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, pp. 513, 724.)

[189] Luth. Ep. i, p. 5, March 17, 1509.

[190] ... "Theologia quæ nucleum nucis et medullam tritici et medullam ossium serutatur." (Luth. Ep. i, 6.)

[191] "In studiis literarum, corpore ac mente indefessus." (Pallavicini, Hist. Conc. Trid. i, 16.) In literary pursuits, he was indefatigable in mind and body.

[192] Seckend., p. 55.

[193] Melch. Adam. Vita Lutheri, p. 104.

[194] Fabricius, Centifol. Lutheri, p. 33. Mathesius, p. 6.

[195] Myconius.

[196] Florimond Raymond, Hist. Hæres. cap. v.

[197] Hist. des Variat. l. 1.

[198] "Quod septem conventus a vicario in quibusdam dissentirent." (Cochlœus, 7.)

[199] "Quod esset acer ingenio et ad contradicendum audax et vehemens." (Cochlœus, ii.)

Because he was of a sharp wit, and bold and vehement in reply.

[200] Luth. Op. (W.) xx, p. 1468.

[201] Matth. Dresser. Hist. Lutheri.

[202] Op. (W.) xxii, pp. 2374, 2377.

[203] "Sancte Swizere! ora pro nobis." (Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, pp. 1314, 1332.)

[204] Luth. Op. (W.) Dedication of, 117 pages, vol. vi, L. G.

[205] (Ibid.)

[206] Luth. Op. (W.) xix, von der Winkelmesse, Mathesius, 6.

[207] "In quel tempo non pareva, fosse galantuomo, e buon cortegiano colui che de dogmi, della chiesa non aveva qualche opinion erronea ed heretica." (Carraciola, Vit. MS. Paul IV, quoted by Ranke.)

[208] Burigny, Vie d'Erasme, i, 139.

[209] "E medio Romanæ curiæ sectam juvenum ... qui asserebant, nostram fidem orthodoxam, potius quibusdam sanctorum astutiis subsistere." (Paul Canensius, Vita Pauli II.)

[210] Luth. Op. (W.) xix, von der Winkelmesse.

[211] "Das habe Ich zu Rom für gewiss gehört." (Luth. Op. (W.) xxii., 1322.)

[212] "Es nimmt mich wunder, das die Päbste solches Bild leiden können." (Ibid., p. 1320.)

[213] Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, p. 2376.

[214] "Ist irgend eine Hœlle, so muss Rom darauf gebaut seyn." (Ibid. p. 2377.)

[215] Dissertations on the first Decade of Titus Livy.

[216] 100,000 Gulden. (Luth. Op. xxii, p. 2374.)

[217] Seckend., p. 56.

[218] "Qua vos Deus misericors justificat per fidem ..." (Luth. Op. (L.) in Præf.) By which a merciful God justifies you through faith.

[219] "Hic me prorsus renatum esse sensi, et apertis portis in ipsum paradisum intrasse." (Ibid.) Here I felt that I was completely born again, and entered by open doors into paradise itself.

[220] Gloss on the Imperial Edict. 1531. (Luth. Op. (L.) tom. xx.)

[221] "Vim ingenii, nervos orationis, ac rerum bonitatem expositarum in concionibus admiratus fuerat." (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

[222] "Unter einem Baum, den er mir und andern gezeigt." (Mathes. 6.)

[223] "Multa præcedunt mutationes præsagia." (Vita Luth.)

[224] "Ihr lebet nun oder sterbet, so darff euch Gott in seinem Rathe." (Mathes. 6.)

[225] "Neminem nisi Spiritum Sanctum creare posse doctorem theologiæ." (Weismanni Hist. Eccl i, p. 1404.)

[226] Luth., Ep. i, p. 2.

[227] Weismanni Hist. Eccl., p. 1416.

[228] Ibid.

[229] "Jure me veritatem evangelicam viriliter defensurum." I swear that I will manfully defend evangelical truth."

[230] "Doctor Biblicus," *and not* "sententiarius." (Melancthon.)

[231] Luth., Op. (W.) xvi, p. 2061. Mathesius, p. 7.

[232] Luth. Op. (W.) xxi, 2061.

[233] "Aristotelem in philosophicis, sanctum Thomam in theologicis, evertendos susceperat." (Pallavicini, i, 16.) He had undertaken to overthrow Aristotle among the philosophers, and Thomas Aquinas among the theologians.

[234] "Perdita studia nostri sæculi." Ep. i, 15. (8th Feb., 1516.)

[235] Ep. i, 57. (18th May, 1517.)

[236] "Secundum genium heri sui." (Weismanni Hist. Eccl., i, p. 1434.)

[237] "Fideliter et sine strepitu fungens." (Weismanni Hist. Eccl. i, p. 1434.)

[238] "Qui sum principe in rheda sive lectico solitus est ferri." (Corpus Reformatorum, i, 33.)

[239] Melch. Ad. Vita Spalat. p. 100.

[240] "Foris sapere et domi desipere." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 8.) To be wise abroad and fools at home.

[241] Præf. ad Gal.

[242] "Non per speculationem, sed per hanc viam practicam."

[243] "Omnes filii Adæ sunt idololatræ." (Decem Præcepta Wittembergensi populo prædicata per R. P. D Martinum Lutherum, Aug. anno 1516.) These discourses were pronounced in German, but we quote from the Latin edition, i, p. 1.

[244] "Nisi ipse pro te mortuus esset, tequs servaret, nec tu, nec omnis creatura tibi posset prodesse." (Ibid.) Had he not died for thee, and did he not preserve thee, neither thyself nor any creature would be able to do thee good.

[245] "At Jesus est verus, unus, solus Deus, quem cum habes non habes alienum deum. (Ibid.) But Jesus is God, sole, only, and true; having him you have no strange god.

[246] "Revocavit igitur Lutherus hominum mentes ad Filium Dei." (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

[247] "Hujus doctrinæ dulcedine pii omnes valde capiebantur, et eruditis gratum erat." (Ibid.)

[248] "Quasi ex tenebris, carcere squalore, educi Christum, prophetas, apostolos." (Ibid.)

[249] "Oratio non in labris nasci, sed in pectore." (Ibid.)

[250] "Eique propter auctoritatem, quam sanctitate morum antea pepererat, adsenserunt." (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

[251] "Puto et hodie theologos omnes probos favere Luthero." (Erasmi, Ep. i, 652.)

[252] "Illis præfero mysticos et Biblia." (Luth. Ep. i, 107.)

[253] Die Deutsche Theologie, Strasbourg, 1519; Præf.

[254] "Tu, domine Jesu, es justitia mea; ego autem sum peccatum tuum: tu assumpsisti meum, et dedisti mihi tuum." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 17.)

[255] "Non enim justa agendo justi efficimur: sed justi fiendo et essendo, operamur justa." (Luth. Ep. i. p. 22.)

[256] "Humana prævalent in eo plusquam divina." The human prevails in him more than the divine.

[257] "Dabit ei Dominus intellectum suo forte tempore." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 52.)

[258] Τι ουν; δυνατον αναμαρτητον ειναι ηδη. What, is it possible then to be without sin? asks Epictetus, (iv, 12, 19.) Αμηχανον Impossible! he replies.

[259] ... "Sanctissimæ reliquiæ ... deificæ voluntatis suæ charitate amplexæ osculatæ." (Luth. Ep. i, 18.)

[260] "Sed etiam ultro adorabam." (Luth. Op. (L.) p. 50.)

[261] Luth. Op. (L) xvii. p. 142; and in the Latin Works, tom. i, p. 51.

[262] "Cum Credenti omnia sint, auctore Christo, possibilia, superstitiosum est, humano arbitrio, aliis sanctis, alia deputari auxilia." (Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 142.)

[263] Hilscher's Luther's Anwesenheit in Alt Dresden, 1728.

[264] 1st May 1516, Ep. i, p. 20.

[265] (Luth. Ep. i, p. 36.) "Non enim asper asperum, id est, non diabolus diabolum, sed suavis asperum, id est, digitus Dei ejicit dæmonia."

[266] "Tam cito enim crux cessat esse crux quam cito I tus dixeris: Crux benedicta! inter ligna nullum tale." (Ep. i, 27.)

[267] "Heiliglich, friedlich und züchtig." (Mathes. p. 10.)

[268] Ep. i, p. 41, to Lange, (26th Oct. 1516.)

[269] "Quo fugiam? Spero quod non corruet orbis, ruente fratre Martino." (Ibid.)

[270] "Multa placent principi tuo, quæ Deo displicent." (Luth. Ep. i, 25.)

[271] "li mihi maxime prosunt, qui mei pessime meminerint." (Ibid. 45.)

[272] Quo sunt aliqua salubriora eo minus placent." (Luth. Ep. i, p.46)

[273] "Quam amarum est quicquid nos sumus." (Ibid. p. 46.)

[274] Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, p. 1849.

[275] Ibid.

[276] "Has tres postea in aula principis a me notatas garrierunt." (Luth. Ep. i, 85.) It was afterwards prattled that I had alluded to three ladies of the court.

[277] Keith, Leb. Luth., p. 32.

[278] "Inter medias me insidias conjectum." (Luth. Ep. i, 85.) That I had fallen into a snare.

[279] "In me acriter et clamose invectus est." (Ibid.) He keenly and clamorously inveighed against me.

[280] "Super Aristotelis et Thomæ nugis." (Ibid.) On the trifles of Aristotle and Thomas.

[281] "Ne prodiret et in faciem meam spueret." (Luth. Ep. i, 85.) From coming forward and spitting in my face.

[282] "Enixe se excusavit." (Ibid.) Earnestly excused himself.

[283] "Cujus vellem hostes cito quam plurimos fieri." (Luth. Ep. i, 59.) Whose enemies I could

wish quickly to become as numerous as possible.

[284] "Optima et infallibilis ad gratiam præparatio et unice dispositio, est æterna Dei electio et prædestinatio." (Luth. Op. (L.) i, 56.) The best and infallible preparation, and the only predisposition for grace, is the eternal election and predestination of God.

[285] "Breviter, nec rectum dictamen habet natura nec bonam voluntatem." (Ibid.) Briefly, nature has neither a right dictate nor a good will.

[286] "Nulla forma syllogistica tenet in terminis divinis." (Luth. Op. (L.) i, 56.) No syllogistic form holds in divine terms.

[287] "Lex et voluntas sunt adversarii duo, sine gratia Dei implacabiles." (Ibid. 57.) Law and will are two adversaries implacable without the grace of God.

[288] "Lex est exactor voluntatis, qui non superatur nisi per Parvulum qui natus est nobis." (Ibid.)

[289] Luth. Op. Lips. xvii, p. 143, et Op. Lat. i.

[290] "Nec ideo sequitur quod sit naturaliter mala, id est natura mali, secundum Manichæos." (Ibid.) Nor does it therefore follow that it is naturally evil, *i.e.*, of the nature of evil, according to the Manichees.

[291] "Imo cacodoxa videri suspicor." (Luth. Ep. 60.) Nay, I suspect they will be thought cacodox, (false doctrine.)

[292] "Eccio nestro, eruditissimo et ingeniosissimo viro exhibete, ut audiam et videam quid vocet illas." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 63.) Show them to our most learned and ingenious Eck, that I may hear and see what he calls them.

[293] Luth. Op. (W.) xviii, 1944.

[294] "Mit weissen Stæblein." (Instructions of the Archbishop of Mentz to the Sub-commissaries of Indulgence, etc. Art. 8.)

[295] "Ingenio ferox, et corpore robustus." (Cochl. 5.) In mind fierce, and in body robust.

[296] "Welchen Churfürst Freiderich vom Sack, zu Inspruck erbeten hatte." (Mathes. 10.)

[297] Luth. Op. (W.) xv, 862.

[298] "Circumferuntur venales indulgentiæ in his regionibus a Tecelio Dominicano impudentissimo sycophanta." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) Indulgences for sale are carried about by the Dominican Tezel, a most impudent sycophant.

[299] Hist. du Luthéranisme par le P. Maimbourg, de la Compagnie du Jésus, 1681, p. 21.

[300] Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, p. 1393.

[301] Tezel defends and reiterates this assertion in his Anti-Theses published the same year. (Th. 99, 100, and 101.) "Sub-commissariis in super ac prædicatoribus veniarum imponere, ut si quis per impossibile Dei Genitricem semper Virginem violasset, quod eumdem indulgentiarum vigore absolvere possent, luce clarius est." (Positiones fratris J. Tezelii quibus defendit indulgentias contra Lutherum.) Moreover, to enjoin the sub-commissaries and preachers of pardon, that if any one should, by impossibility, have violated the Mother of God, always Virgin, they could absolve him in virtue of indulgences, is clearer than day.

[302] "Quot peccata mortalia committuntur in die...." (Löscher's Reformations, Acten i, p. 418.) How many mortal sins are committed in a day?

[303] "Si contingat aliquem ire Romam, vel ad alias periculosas partes, mittit pecunias suas in banco, et ille pro quolibet centum dat quinque aut sex aut decem...." (Ibid.)

[304] Theses, 56. (Positiones fratris J. Tezelii quibus defendit indulgentias contra Lutherum.)

[305] Instruction of the Archbishop of Mentz, etc.

[306] Resolut. on Theses, 32.

[307] Tenztel, Reformationsgesch; Myconii, Ref. Hist.; Instruction of the Archbishop of Mentz, etc.; Luther's Theses.

[308] Instruction, etc., 5, 69.

[309] Ibid., 19.

[310] Ibid., 30.

[311] Ibid., 35.

[312] "Auch ist nicht nothig dass sie in dem Herzen zerknirscht sind, und mit dem Mund gebeichtet haben." (Ibid., 38.).

[313] "Nach den Sätzen der gesunden vernunft, nach ihrer Magnificenz und Freigebigkeit." (Instruction, etc., 26.)

[314] Müller's Reliq., iii, p. 264.

[315] Instr. 27. "Wieder, den Willen ihres Mannes."

[316] Ibid., 87, 90, et 91.

[317] Luth., Op. Leipz., xvii, 79.

[318] "Dreimal gelind auf den Rücken." (Instruction.)

[319] Instr. 9.

[320] Ibid., 69.

[321] Ibid., 4.

[322] Sarpi, Conc. di Trent, p. 5.

[323] Schröck. K. G. v, d. R., i, 116.

[324] Scultet. Annal. Evangel., p. 4.

[325] Loscher's Ref. Acten, i, 404, Luth. Op. xv, 443, etc.

[326] Musculi Loci Communes, p. 362.

[327] Hoffman's Reformationsgesch, v, Leipz., p. 32.

[328] "Si tantum tres homines essent salvandi per sanguinem Christi, certo statueret unum se esse ex tribus illis." (Melch. Adam. Vita Mycon.)

[329] "Si nummis redimatur a pontifice Romano." (Melch. Adam.)

[330] Clausurum januam cœli." (Ibid.)

[331] "Stentor pontificius." (Ibid.)

[332] Letter of Myconius to Eberus in Hechtii Vita Tezelii. Wittemb., p. 114.

[333] Albinus Meissn. Chronick. L. W. (W.) xv, 446, etc., Hechtius in Vita Tezelii.

[334] Luth. Op. (Leips.) xvii, pp. 111 et 116.

[335] Luther's Theses on Indulgences, (Th. 82, 83, et 84.)

[336] Luth. Op. (Leips.) xvi, 79.

[337] "Fessi erant Germani omnes, ferendis explicationibus, nundinationibus, et infinitis imposturis Romanensium nebulonum." (Luth. Op. Lat. in Præf.) All the Germans were weary with the windings, traffickings, and endless impostures of Roman spendthrifts.

[338] Ranke, Rœmische Pæbste, i, 71.

[339] Council of Trent, p. 4. Pallavicini, while pretending to refute Sarpi, confirms, and even heightens his testimony. "Suo plane officio defuit, (Leo) ... venationes, facetias, pompas adeo frequentes."... (Conc. Trid. Hist. i, pp. 8, 9.) Leo was plainly wanting to his duty, so frequent were his shows his amusements, and hunting parties.

[340] Seckendorf, 42.

[341] Lingke, Reisegesch. Luther's, p. 27.

[342] "Instillans ejus pectori frequentes indulgentiarum abusus." (Coch. 4.) Impressing him with the frequent abuse of indulgences.

[343] In German, to thrash like grain, dreschen. (Luth. Op. xvii.)

[344] In Præf. Op. (Witt. i.) "Monachum, et Papistam insanissimum, ita ebrium, imo submersum in dogmatibus papæ," etc.

[345] Luth. Op. (W.) xxii.

[346] "Cœpi dissuadere populis et eos dehortari ne indulgentiariorum clamoribus aurem præberent, ..." (Luth Op. Lat. in Præf.)

[347] "Wütet, schilt und maledeit græulich auf dem Predigtstuhl." (Myconius, Reformationsgesch.)

[348] "Hæc initia fuerunt hujus controversiæ in qua Lutherus nihil adhuc suspicans aut somnians de futura mutatione rituum." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) Such was the beginning of this controversy in which Luther was not yet thinking or dreaming of a future change of ritual.

[349] "Die verseurte Lehr durch den ofen gehen," (p. 10.)

[350] "Falsum est consuevisse hoc munus injungi Ermitanis S. Augustini."... (p. 14.) It is not true that this office was wont to be assigned to the Eremites of St. Augustine.

[351] Säuberlich.

[352] "Sondern in ihren löcherichen, und zerrissenen opinien, viel nahe verwessen." (Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 119.)

[353] It occurs also in Löscher, i, 46, etc.; Teuzel's Anfund Fortg. der Ref.; Jünker's Ehrenged, p. 148; Lehmann's Beschr. d. Meissn. Erzgeb., etc., and in a manuscript of the Archives of Weimar, taken down from the statement of Spalatin. Our account of the dream is conformable to this manuscript, which was republished at the last jubilee of the Reformation, (1817).

[354] Leo X.

[355] John Huss. This circumstance may perhaps have been afterwards added in allusion to the saying of John Huss, which we have quoted. See the First Book.

[356] "Cujus impiis et nefariis concionibus incitatus Lutherus, studio pietatis ardens, edidit

propositiones de indulgentiis." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) Luther, stimulated by his impious and nefarious harangues, and glowing with pious zeal, published his Theses on Indulgences.

[357] "Et in iis certus mihi videbar, me habiturum patronum papam, cujus fiducia tune fortiter nitebar." (Luth. Op. Lat. in Præf.) And in these I thought myself certain that I would have the patronage of the pope, in whom I had then great confidence.

[358] "... Quas magnifico apparatu publicè populis ostendi curavit." (Cochlœus, 4.)

[359] "Cum hujus disputationis nullu etiam intimorum amicorum fuerit conscius." (Luth., Ep. i, p. 186.)

[360] "Wenn man die Lehre angriefft, so wird die Gans am Kragen gegriffen." (Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, p. 1369.)

[361] Harms de Kiel.

[362] Luth. Op. Leips. vi, p. 518.

[363] "Casu enim, non voluntate nec studio, in has turbas incidi, Deum ipsum testor." (Luth. Op. Lat. in Præf.) For I got involved in these disturbances by accident, not by will or zeal. God is my witness.

[364] "Domino suo et pastori in Christo venerabiliter metuendo." To his reverently to be feared Lord and pastor in Christ. (Address of the letter, Ep. i, p. 68.)

[365] Fex hominum. (Ibid.)

[366] "Ut populus Evangelium discat atque charitatem Christi." (Ibid.)

[367] Vehementer præcipit." (Ibid.) Earnestly commands.

[368] "Er sollte still halten; es wäre eine grosse Sache." (Matthes. 13.)

[369] Walthahr. v. Luther, p. 45.

[370] Myconius, Hist. of the Ref., p. 23.

[371] "Das Lied wollte meiner stimme zu hochwerden." (Luth. Op.)

[372] "In alle hohe Schullen und Klöster." (Mathes. 13.)

[373] "Ad hoc præstandum mihi videbatur ille, et natura compositus et accensus studio." (Erasm. Ep. Campegio Cardinali, i, p. 650.) For accomplishing this, he seemed to me both fitted by nature, and inflamed by zeal.

[374] Müller's Denkw, iv, 256.

[375] "Alle welt von diesem, Weissenberg, Weissheit holen und bekommen." (p. 13)

[376] "Dass er uns den Munch Luther fleisig beware." (Mathes. 15.)

[377] Schmidt Brand Reformationsgesch, p. 124.

[378] "Che frate Martino Luthero haveva un bellissimo ingegnoe che coteste erano invidie fratesche." (Brandelli, contemporary of Leo, and a Dominican, Hist. Trag. Pars 3.)

[379] Melch. Adami Vita Myconii.

[380] "Legit tunc cum Joanne Voite, in angulum abdtius, libellos Lutheri." (Ibid.)

[381] "Qui potuit quod voluit."

[382] "Darvon Magister Johann. Huss, geweissaget." (Mathes. 13.)

[383] He adds, "Totque uxorum vir," The husband of so many wives, (Heumann Documenta lit. p. 167.)

[384] "Frater, abi in cellam, et dic: Miserere mei." (Lindner in Luther's Leben, p. 93.)

[385] "Bene sum contentus: mala obedire quam miracula facere, etiam si possem." (Ep. i, 71.)

[386] "Suumque dolorem sæpe significavit, metuens discordias majores." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) And often expressed his sorrow, fearing worse dissension.

[387] Luth. Op. (L.) vi, p. 518.

[388] "Finge enim ipsam humilitatem nova conari, statim superbiæ subjicietur ab iis qui aliter sapiunt." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 73.)

[389] "Solus primo eram." (Luth. Op. Lat. in Præf.) At first I was alone.

[390] "Consilium immanis audaciæ plenum." (Pallavicini, i, 17.) A measure of infinite daring.

[391] "Miserrimus tunc fraterculus, cadaveri similior quam homini." (Luth. Op. Lat. i, p. 49.)

[392] "Et cum omnia argumenta superassem per Scripturas, hoc unum cum summa difficultate et angustia, tandem Christo favente, vix superavi, Ecclesiam scilicet esse audiendam." (Luth. Op. Lat. i, p. 49.)

[393] "Hi furores Tezelii et ejus satellitum imponunt necessitatem Luthero, de rebus iisdem copiosius, disserendi et tuendæ veritatis." (Melancth. Vita Luth.) The fury of Tezel and his satellites compelled Luther to treat these subjects more copiously, and to defend the truth.

[394] "Dass er die Schrift, unsern Trost, nicht anders behandelt wie die Sau einen Habersack."

[395] Luth. Op. Leips. xvii, 132.

[396] "Tibi gratias ago; imo quid tibi non debeo?" (Luth. Ep. i, p. 74.)

[397] "Quanto magis conamur ex nobis ad sapientiam, tanto amplius appropinquamus insipientiæ." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 74.)

[398] "Sed salvum est nunc etiam jurare, quod sine scitu Ducis Frederici exierint." (Ibid., p. 76.) But now it is safe even to swear, that they have gone forth without the knowledge of Duke Frederick.

[399] "Primum id certissimum est, sacras literas non posse vel studio, vel ingenio penetrari. Ideo primum officium est, ut ab oratione incipias."

[400] "Igitur de tuo studio desperes oportet omnino, simul et ingenio. Deo autem soli confidas, et influxui Spiritus. Experto crede ista." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 88, 18th Jan.)

[401] "Luther writes him:—"Literæ tuæ animum tuum erga meam parvitatem candidum et longe ultra merita benevolentissimum probaverunt." (Ibid., p. 79.) Your letter proves your candid opinion of me, and your most kind affection for me, both to a degree far exceeding my deserts.

[402] "Non fuit consilium neque votum eas evulgari, sed cum paucis apud et circum nos habitantibus primum super ipsis conferri." (Ibid., p. 95.)

[403] "Ut me pœniteat hujus fœturæ." (Ibid.)

[404] "Quæ istis temporibus pro summa blasphemia et abominatione habeo et execror." (Luth. Op. Lat. Wit. in Præf.)

[405] "Accepi simul et donum insignis viri Alberti Durer." (Luth., Ep. i, 95.)

[406] "Mein Hofkleid verdienen." (Luth. Ep. Lat. i, pp. 77, 78.)

[407] Ibid., p. 283.

[408] "Suum senatum convocat; monachos aliquot et theologos sua sophistica utcunque tinctos."(Melancth. Vita Luth.) He assembles his own senate; some monks and theologians imbued with his own sophistry.

[409] "Quisquis ergo dicit, non citius posse animam volare, quam in fundo cistæ denarius possit tinnire, errat." (Positiones Fratris Joh. Tezelii, Pos. 56, Luth. Op. i, p. 94.) Whosoever says that the soul cannot fly off sooner than the money can tinkle in the bottom of the chest, errs.

[410] "Pro infamibus sunt tenendi, qui etiam per juris capitula terribiliter multis plectentur pœnis omnium hominum terrorem." (Positiones Fratris Joh. Tezelii, Pos. 56, Luth. Op. i, p. 98.)

[411] Spieker, Gesch. Dr. M. Luthers. Beckmani Notitia Univ. Francofurt, viii, etc.

[412] "Fulmina in Lutherum torquet; vociferatur ubique hunc hereticum igni perdendum esse; propositiones etiam Lutheri in concionem de indulgentiis publice conjicit in flammas." (Melancth. Vita Luth.)

[413] "Eo furunt usque, ut Universitatem Wittembergensem propter me infamem conantur facere et hæreticam." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 92.)

[414] Luth. Ep. i, p. 92.

[415] "Nisi maledicerer, non crederem ex Deo esse quæ tracto." (Luth. Ep. i, 85.)

[416] In language full of energy he continues:—"Mortem emptum est, mortibus vulgatum, mortibus servatum, mortibus quoque servandum aut referendum est." It was bought by death, published by deaths, preserved by deaths, by deaths also must be preserved or published.

[417] "Inter tantos principes dissidii origo esse valde horreo et timeo." (Luth. Ep. 1, p. 93.)

[418] "Hæc inscio principe, senatu, rectore, denique omnibus nobis" (Luth. Ep. i, p. 99.)

[419] "Fit ex ea re ingens undique fabula." (Ibid.)

[420] "Omnes omnibus omnia redunt de me." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 109.)

[421] (Luth Ep. i, 98.)

[422] "Quid vel Deus vel ipsi sumus." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 224.)

[423] "Ein voller trunkener Deutscher." (Luth. Op. (W.) xxii, p. 1337.)

[424] "An ferreum nasum aut caput æneum gerat iste Lutherus, ut effringi non possit." (Sylv. Prieratis Dialogus.)

[425] See Joh. Gersonis Propositiones de Sensu Literali S. Scripturæ. (Op. tom. i.)

[426] "A qua etiam Sacra Scriptura robur trahit et auctoritatem, hæreticus est (Fundamentum tertium.")

[427] "Si mordere canum est proprium, vereor ne tibi pater canis fuerit." (Sylvestri Prieratis Dial.)

[428] "Seculari brachio potest eos compescere, nec tenetur rationibus certare ad vincendos protervientes." (Ibid.)

[429] "Convenit inter nos, esse personatum aliquem Sylvestrum ex obscuris viris, qui tantas

ineptias in hominem luserit ad provocandum me adversus eum." (Ep., i, p. 87, 14th Jan.)

[430] T. i, Witt. Lat., p. 170.

[431] "Ego ecclesiam virtualiter non scio nisi in Christo, representative non nisi in concilo." (Luth. Op. Lat., p. 174.) I do not know the Church virtually, except in Christ, nor representatively, except in a Council.

[432] "Quando hanc pueri in omnibus plateis urbis cantant: Denique nunc facta est fœdissima Roma." (Ibid., p. 183.)

[433] "Si occidor, vivit Christus. Dominus meus et omnium." (Ibid., p. 186.)

[434] De Juridica et Irrefragabili Veritate Romanæ Ecclesiæ, lib. tertius, cap. 12.

[435] Luth., Op. Leip. xvii, p. 140.

[436] "Et quod magis urit, antea mihi magna recenterque contracta amicitia conjunctus." (Luth., Ep. i, p. 100.)

[437] "Quo furore ille amicitias recentissimas et jucundissimas solveret." (Ibid.)

[438] "Volui tamen hanc offam Cerbero dignam absorbere patientia." (Ibid.)

[439] "Omnia scholastissima, opiniosissima, meraque somnia." (Asterisci, Op. (L.) Lat. i, p. 145.) The whole most scholastic, most opinionative, mere dreams.

[440] "Indignor rei et misereor hominis." (Ibid., p. 150.) I am indignant at the thing, and I pity the man.

[441] "Homo est summus pontifex, falli potest, sed veritas est Deus, qui falli non potest. (Ibid., p. 155.)

[442] "Longe ergo impudentissima omnium temeritas est, aliquid in ecclesia asserere, et inter Christianos, quod non docuit Christus." (Ibid., p. 156.)

[443] "Cum privatim dederim Asteriscos meos non fit ei respondendi necessitas." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 126.) Since I have circulated my Asterisks privately, he is under no necessity of replying.

[444] "Diligimus hominis igenium et admiramur eruditionem." (Luth. Ep. ad Scheurlum, 15th June, 1518, i, p. 125.)

[445] "Quod ad me attinet, scripsi ad eum has, ut vides, amicissimas et plenas literas humanitate, erga eum." (Ibid.) As far as regards myself, I have, as you see, written him in the most kindly and friendly terms.

[446] "Nihil neque literarum, neque verborum ne participem fecit." (Ibid.) I have had no communication from him, either by word or writing.

[447] Luth. Op. Leips. vii, p. 1086.

[448] "Nicht die Werke treiben die Sünde aus; sondern die Anstreibung der Sünde thut gute Werke," (Luth. Op. (Lat.) xvii, p. 162.)

[449] "Christus dein Gott wird dir nicht lugen: noch wanken." (Ibid.)

[450] "Ob es schon ein Weib oder ein kind ware." (Ibid.)

[451] "Also siehst du dass die ganze Kirche voll von Vergebung der Süden ist." (Ibid.)

[452] "Und Hauptmann im Felde bleibe." (Ibid.)

[453] Ibid., Ep. i, p. 98.

[454] "Pedester veniam." I will come on foot. (Luth., Ep. i, p. 98.)

[455] Ibid., p. 105.

[456] Ibid., p. 104.

[457] Ibid., p. 106.

[458] "Ihr habt bei Gott einen köstlichen Credenz." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 111.)

[459] "Justorum opera essent mortalia nisi pio Dei timore, ab ipsismet justis, ut mortalia timerentur." (Luth. Op. Lat. i, 55.)

[460] "Lex iram Dei operatur, occidit, maledicit reum facit, judicat, damnat, quicquid non est in Christo." (Ibid.)

[461] "Lex dicit: Fac hoc! et nunquam fit. Gratia dicit: Crede in hunc! et jam facta sunt omnia." (Ibid.)

[462] "Amor Dei non inventit sed creat suum diligibile; amor hominis fit a suo diligibili." (Ibid.)

[463] Bucer, in Seultetet, Annal. Evangel. Renovat." p. 22.

[464] "Si rustici hæc audirent, certe lapidibus vos obruerent et interficerent." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 111.)

[465] "Prudentioribus monachis spem de se præclaram excitavit;" (Melch. Adam. Vita Buceri, p. 211.)

[466] "Cum doctrinam in eis traditam cum sacris litteris contullisset quædam in pontificia religione suspecta habere cœpit." (Ibid.) When he had compared the doctrine delivered in them with the Sacred Scriptures, he began to have some suspicions of the pope's

religion.

[467] "Primam lucem purioris sententiæ de justificatione in suo pectore sensit." (Melch. Adam. Vita Buceri, p. 211.) He felt the first dawn of a purer opinion on justification rising in his breast.

[468] "Ingens Dei beneficium lætus Brentius agnovit, et grata mente amplexus est." (Ibid.) Brentius joyfully recognised the inestimable gift of God, and with grateful mind embraced it.

[469] "Crebris interpellationibus eum voti quod de nato ipso fecerat, admoneret; et a studio juris ad theologiam quasi conviciis avocaret." (Melch. Adami, Snepfii Vita.) She frequently interposed to remind him of the vow which she had made at his birth, and, as it were, by her reproaches drew him off from the study of law to theology.

[470] Gerdesius, Monument. Antiq., etc.

[471] Luth. Ep. i, p. 412.

[472] Luth. Ep. i, p. 112.

[473] "Veni autem curru qui ieram pedester." (Ibid., p. 110.) I went on foot, but returned in a chariot.

[474] "Omnibus placitis meis nigrum theta præfigit." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 111.) He puts a black theta before all my opinions.

[475] Ibid.

[476] "Nisi dictamine rationis naturalis, quod apud nos idem est, quod chaos tenebratum, qui non prædicamus aliam lucem, quam Christum Jesum lucem veram et solam." (Ibid.)

[477] "Ita ut nonnullis videar factus habitior et corpulentior!" (Ibid.) So that some think me fuller in habit, and more corpulent.

[478] Luth. Op., (Leips.) xvii, pp. 29-113.

[479] On the First Thesis.

[480] Thesis 26.

[481] Ibid. 80.

[482] Thesis 37.

[483] "Non ut disputabilia sed asserta acciperentur." (Luth., Ep. i. 214.)

[484] Ineptias.

[485] He adds: "Sed cogit necessitas me anserem strepere inter olores." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 121.) But necessity forces me, a goose, to hiss among the swans.

[486] "Quam pure simpliciterque ecclesiasticam potestatem et reverentiam clavium quæsierim et coluerim." (Ibid.)

[487] "Quarè beatissime Pater, prostratum me pedibus tuæ Beatitudinis offero, cum omnibus quæ sum et habeo; vivifica, occide voca, revoca, approba, reproba, ut placuerit. Vocem tuam, vocem Christi in te præsidentis et loquentis agnoscam; si mortem merui, mori non recusabo." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 121.)

[488] His Solutions.

[489] "Qui pauper est nihil timet, nihil potest perdere." (Ibid., p. 118.)

[490] Luth. Op. (W.) xv, p. 339.

[491] "Nec profana judicia sequens quæ tenera initia omnium mutationum celerrime opprimi jubent." (Melanc. Vita Luth.)

[492] "Deo cessit, et ea quæ vera esse judicavit, deleri non voluit." (Ibid.)

[493] "Rarescebant manus largentium." (Cochlœus, 7.) The hands of contributors grew few.

[494] "Luthero autem contra augebatur auctoritas, favor, fides existimatio, fama; quod tam liber acerque videbatur veritatis assertor." (Ibid.) On the contrary, Luther's authority, influence, credit, reputation, and fame, increased, because he seemed so free and bold an assertor of the truth.

[495] Schröck, K. Gesch. n. d. R. i, p. 156.

[496] "Defensores et patrones etiam potentes quos dictus frater consecutus est." (Raynald, ad an. 1518.)

[497] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 169.

[498] "Uterus Rebecca est; parvulos in eo collidi necesse est, etiam usque ad periculum matris." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 138.)

[499] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 173.

[500] Ibid. i, 183, 184; xvii, 171, 172.

[501] "Dictum Lutherum hæreticum per prædictum auditorem jàm declaratum." (Breve Leonis X ad Thomam.)

[502] "Brachio cogas atque compellas, et eo in potestate tua redacto cum sub fideli custodia retineas, ut coram nobis sistatur." (Ibid.)

[503] "Infamiæ et inhabilitatis ad omnes actus legitimos ecclesiasticæ sepulturæ, privationis quoque feudorum." (Breve Leonis X ad Thomam.)

[504] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 176.

[505] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 173.

[506] "Almosen geben armt nicht, etc. Wer mehr will verzehren, etc. (Müller's Reliquien.)

[507] "Dilixit me ut filium, et ego eum ut patrem; et conveniemus, spero, in vita æterna." (Melancth. Explicat. Evang.)

[508] "Quiescere non poterat, sed quærebat ubique aliquem cum quo de auditis disputaret." (Camerarius, Vita Melancth. p. 7.)

[509] Camerar. Vita Philip Melancth. p. 16.

[510] "Ille prorsus obscurabit Erasmum." (Er. Ep. i, p. 405.)

[511] "Cohorresco quando cogito quomodo ipse accesserim ad statuas in papatu." (Explicat Evangel.)

[512] "Meum opus et meum solatium." (Corp. Ref., i, 33.)

[513] "Des Wegs un der Orte unbekannt." (Corp. Ref., i, 30.)

[514] Camer. Vita Melancth., 26.

[515] "Puer et adolescentulus, si ætatem consideres." (Luth. Ep. i, 141.) A boy, and mere youth, if you consider his age.

[516] Luth. Ep. i, 135.

[517] "Ut Wittembergam literatis ac bonis omnibus conciliem." (Corp. Ref., i, 51.)

[518] "Summos cum mediis et infimis, studiosos facit Græcitatis." (Luth., Ep. i, 140.)

[519] "Martinum, si omnino in rebus humanis quidquam vehementissime diligio et animo integerrimo complector." (Melancth. Ep. i, 411.)

[520] Calvin wrote to Sleidan: "Dominus cum fortiore spiritu instruat, ne gravem ex ejus timiditate jacturam sentiat posteritas." May the Lord supply him with a more resolute spirit, that posterity may not, through his timidity, sustain some grievous loss.

[521] Plank.

[522] Luth. Ep. i, p. 139.

[523] Jen. Aug. i, p. 384.

[524] "Contra omnium amicorum consilium comparui." I appeared contrary to the advice of all my friends.

[525] Ep. i, 61.

[526] "Ult vel stanguler, vel baptizer ad mortem." (Ibid. 129.) That I am either to be strangled or ducked to death.

[527] "Uxor mea et liberi mei provisi sunt." (Luth. Ep. i, 129.)

[528] "Sic enim sponsus noster, sponsus sanguinum nobis est." (Ibid.) See Exodus, iv, 25.

[529] "Veni igitur pedester et pauper Augustam." (Luth. Op. Lat, in Præf.)

[530] "Ibi Myconius primum vidit Lutherum: Sed ab accessu et colloquio ejus tunc est prohibitus." (M. Adami, Vita Mycon. p. 176.)

[531] "Profecto in ignem te conjicient et flammis exurent." (Melch. Adam. Vita Mycon. p. 176; Mycon. Hist. Ref. p. 30.)

[532] "Vivat Christus, moriatur Martinus.... "(Weismanni, Hist. Secr. Nov. Test. p. 165.) Weismann had seen this letter in MS., but it is not in M. de Wette's Collection.

[533] Luth. Ep. i, p. 144.

[534] Divi Thomæ Summa cum Commentariis Thomæ de Vio. Lugduni, 1587.

[535] Bull of the pope. (Luth Op. (L.) xvii, p. 174.)

[536] "Et nutu solo omnia abrogare, etiam ea quæ fidei essent." (Luth. Ep. i, 144.)

[537] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 179.

[538] "Hunc Sinonem parùm cousulte instructum arte pelasga." (Luth. Ep. i, 144.) See Virgil's Æneid, Book II.

[539] "Mediator ineptus." (Ibid.)

[540] "Sciunt enim eum in me exacerbatissimum intus, quicquid simulet foris.... (Ibid., p. 143.)

[541] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 201.

[542] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 203.

[543] Seckend., p. 144.

[544] Ibid., p. 130.

[545] Luth. Op. (L.) 179.

[546] 9th October.

[547] "Omnes cupiunt videre hominem, tanti incendii Erostratum." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 146.)

[548] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 205.

[549] "Et ubi manebis?... Respondi: Sub cœlo." (Luth. Op. in Præf.) And where will you remain?... I answered, under heaven.

[550] "Ego pro illis et vobis vado immolari."... (Luth. Ep. i, 148.)

[551] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 183.

[552] Tuesday, 11th October.

[553] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 180.

[554] The name given to certain papal constitutions, collected and added to the body of the canon law.

[555] "Salva Scriptura."

[556] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 180.

[557] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, pp. 180, 183, 206, etc.

[558] Luth. Op. (L.) p. 209.

[559] Luth. Ep. i, p. 173.

[560] "Darinn ihn Dr. Staupitz von dem Kloster-Gehorsam absolvitr." (Math. 15.)

[561] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, 201.

[562] Wednesday 12th October.

[563] Seckend., p. 137.

[564] Löscher, ii, 463; Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 181, 209.

[565] "Digladiatum," battled. (Luth. Ep. i, p. 181.)

[566] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii. pp. 181, 209. "Decies fere cœpi ut loquerer, toties rursus tonabat et solus regnabat." I began almost ten times to speak, but he again as often thundered and reigned alone.

[567] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p.186.

[568] Ibid. p.185.

[569] Luth Op. (L.) xvii, p. 187.

[570] "Ostendit in materia fidei, non modo generale concilium esse super papam, sed etiam quemlibet fidelium, si melioribus nitatur auctoritate et ratione quam papa." (Luth. Op. Lat. p. 209.) He shows that, in matter of faith, not only a general council is above the pope, but also any one of the faithful whatever, if he leans on better authority and reason than the pope.

[571] Psalm cxliii, 2.

[572] Confes. ix.

[573] "Justitia justi et vita ejus, est fides ejus." (Luth. Op. Lat. i, p. 211.)

[574] "Legit fervens et anhelans." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 145.)

[575] "Acquisivit," (Ibid.)

[576] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 197.

[577] Ibid. (W.) xxii, p. 1331.

[578] "Revoca, aut non revertere." Ibid. p. 202.

[579] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 210.

[580] Ibid., p. 204.

[581] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 185.

[582] "Ego nolo amplius cum hac bestia disputare. Habet enim profundos oculos et mirabiles speculationes in capite suo" (Myconius, p. 33.)

[583] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 210.

[584] Luth. Ep. i. 149.

[585] Luth. Ep. i. p. 159.

[586] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 178.

[587] Saturday, 15th

[588] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 182.

[589] The letter is dated 17th October.

[590] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 198.

[591] Bosuet, Hist. des Variations. (Livre i, pp. 25, etc.)

[592] "Ut follis ille ventosa elatione distentus." (P. 40.)

[593] "Melius informandum." (Luth. Op. Lat. I, p. 219.)

[594] Weissmann, Hist. Eccl., i, p. 1237.

[595] Psalm cxxiv. 7, 8.

[596] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 202.

[597] Luth. Ep. i, p. 166.

[598] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 183.

[599] Ibid. p. 203.

[600] "Ego enim ubicunque ero gentium, illustrissimæ Dominationis tuæ nusqum non ero memor...." (Luth. Ep. i. p. 187.)

[601] Luth. Op. (L.) xvii, p. 244.

[602] Luth. Ep. i, p. 198.

[603] Scultet. Annal. i, p. 17.

[604] "Studium nostrum more formicarum fervet." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 193.)

[605] "Quia Deus ubique." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 188.)

[606] "Ut principi me in captivatem darem." (Ibid. p. 189.)

[607] "Si icro totum effundam et vitam offeram Christo." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 190.)

[608] "Deo rem committerent." (Ibid., p. 191.)

[609] "Vater und Mutter verlassen mich, aber der Herr nimmt mich auf."

[610] Luth. Op. xv, 824.

[611] "Ne tam cito in Galliam irem." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 195.)

[612] "Firma Christus propositum non cendi in me." (Ibid.)

[613] "Res ista necdum habet initium suum meo judicio." (Luth. Ep. i, p. 19.)

[614] "Quo illi magis furunt, et vi affectant viam, eo minus ego terreor." (Ibid., p. 191.)

[615] Sarpi, Council of Trent, p. 8.

[616] Maimbourg, p. 38.

[617] Löscher. Ref. Act.

Transcriber's note:

Archaic words, variations in spelling, punctuation and hyphenation have been retained except in obvious cases of typographical error.

The following footnotes had no anchors and hence were added by the transcriber:

> Footnote 11: "Ego me non arbitror hoc honore dignum." (Er. Ep. i, p. 653.)
>
> Footnote 112: Erasm. Ep. 274.
>
> Footnote 128: "Was gross sol werden, muss klein angeben." (Mathesius, Hist. p. 3.)
>
> Footnote 563: There was no anchor for the footnote "Seckend. p. 137." The transcriber has supplied it.

On page 47 there is a footnote anchor with no matching footnote at "Promise me that you will always think so." The transcriber has placed an asterisk at the location.

Table of Contents incorrectly lists Book II Chapter IX as beginning on page 94. The transcriber has changed the number to 93. Likewise the page number for Chapter X has been changed from 168 to 167. For Book III Chapter V, the page number has been changed from 204 to 203.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, VOLUME 1 ***

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