

THE HISTORY  
OF  
PROTESTANTISM .

BY THE  
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ILLUSTRATED.

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"PROTESTANTISM, THE SACRED CAUSE OF GOD'S LIGHT AND TRUTH AGAINST THE DEVIL'S FALSITY AND DARKNESS."—*Carlyle*.

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## Book Ninth.

### HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM FROM THE DIET OF WORMS, 1521, TO THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION, 1530.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE GERMAN NEW TESTAMENT.

Man Silenced—God about to Speak—Political Complications—Truth in the Midst of Tempests—Luther in the Wartburg—Lessons taught him—Soliman—Relation of the Turk to the Reformation—Leo X. Dies—Adrian of Utrecht—What the Romans think of their New Pope—Adrian's Reforms—Luther's Idleness—Commences the Translation of the New Testament—Beauty of the Translation—A Second Revelation—Phantoms.

THE history of the Reformation in Germany once more claims our consideration. The great movement of the human soul from bondage, which so grandly characterised the sixteenth century, we have already traced in its triumphant march from the cell of the Augustine monk to the foot of the throne of Charles V., from the door of the Schlosskirk at Wittenberg to the gorgeous hall of Worms, crowded with the powers and principalities of Western Europe.

The moment is one of intensest interest, for it has landed us, we feel, on the threshold of a new development of the grand drama. On both sides a position has been taken up from which there is no retreat; and a collision, in which one or other of the parties must perish, now appears inevitable. The new forces of light and liberty, speaking through the mouth of their chosen champion, have said, "Here we stand, we cannot go back." The old forces of superstition and despotism, interpreting themselves through their representatives, the Pope and the emperor, have said with equal emphasis, "You shall not advance."

The hour is come, and the decisive battle which is to determine whether liberty or bondage awaits the world cannot be postponed. The lists have been set, the combatants have taken their places, the signal has been given; another moment and we shall hear the sound of the terrible blows, as they echo and re-echo over the field on which the champions close in deadly strife. But instead of the shock of battle, suddenly a deep stillness descends upon the scene, and the combatants on both sides stand motionless. He who looketh on the sun and it shineth not has issued His command to suspend the conflict. As of old "the cloud" has removed and come between the two hosts, so that they come not near the one to the other.

But why this pause? If the battle had been joined that moment, the victory, according to every reckoning of human probabilities, would have re-

mained with the old powers. The adherents of the new were not yet ready to go forth to war. They were as yet immensely inferior in numbers. Their main unfitness, however, did not lie there, but in this, that they lacked their weapons. The arms of the other were always ready. They leaned upon the sword, which they had already unsheathed. The weapon of the other was knowledge—the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That sword had to be prepared for them: the Bible had to be translated; and when fully equipped with this armour, then would the soldiers of the Reformation go forth to battle, prepared to withstand all the hardships of the campaign, and finally to come victorious out of the “great fight of afflictions” which they were to be called, though not just yet, to wage.

If, then, the great voice which had spoken in Germany, and to which kings, electoral princes, dukes, prelates, cities and universities, had listened, and the mighty echoes of which had come back from far-distant lands, was now silent, it was that a Greater voice might be heard. Men must be prepared for that voice. All meaner sounds must be hushed. Man had spoken, but in this silence God Himself was to speak to men, directly from His own Word.

Let us first cast a glance around on the political world. It was the age of great monarchs. Master of Spain, and of many other realms in both the Eastern and the Western world, and now also possessor of the imperial diadem, was the taciturn, ambitious, plodding, and politic Charles V. Francis I., the most polished, chivalrous, and war-like knight of his time, governed France. The self-willed, strong-minded, and cold-hearted Henry VIII. was swaying the sceptre in England, and dealing alternate blows, as humour and policy moved him, to Rome and to the Reformation. The wise Frederick was exercising kingly power in Saxony, and by his virtues earning a lasting fame for himself, and laying the foundation of lasting power for his house. The elegant, self-indulgent, and sceptical Leo X. was master of the ceremonies at Rome. Asia owned the sceptre of Soliman the Magnificent. Often were his hordes seen hovering, like a cloud charged with lightning, on the frontier of Christendom. When a crisis arose in the affairs of the Reformation, and the kings obedient to the Roman See had united their swords to strike, and with blow so decisive that they should not need to strike a second time, the Turk, obeying One Whom he knew not, would straightway present himself on the eastern limits of Europe, and in so menacing an attitude, that the swords unsheathed against the poor Protestants had to be turned in another quarter. The Turk was the lightning-rod that drew off the tempest. Thus did Christ cover His little flock with the shield of the Moslem.

The material resources at the command of these potentates were immense. They were the lords of the nations and the leaders of the armies of Christendom. It was in the midst of these ambitions and policies, that it seemed good to the Great Disposer that the tender plant of Protestantism

should grow up. One wonders that in such a position it was able to exist a single day. The Truth took root and flourished, so to speak, in the midst of a hurricane. How was this? Where had it defence? The very passions that warred like great tempests around it, became its defence. Its foes were made to check and counter-check each other. Their furious blows fell not upon the truth at which they were aimed, and which they were meant to extirpate; they fell upon themselves. Army was dashed against army; monarch fell before monarch; one terrible tempest from this quarter met another terrible tempest from the opposite quarter, and thus the intrigues and assaults of kings and statesmen became a bulwark around the principle, which it was the object of these mighty ones to undermine and destroy. Now it is the arm of her great persecutor, Charles V., that is raised to defend the Church, and now it is beneath the shadow of Soliman the Turk that she finds asylum. How visible the hand of God! How marvellous His providence !

Luther never wore sword in his life, except when he figured as Knight George in the Wartburg, and yet he never lacked sword to defend him when he was in danger. He was dismissed from the Diet at Worms with two powerful weapons unsheathed above his head—the excommunication of the Pope and the ban of the emperor. One is enough surely; with both swords bared against him, how is it possible that he can escape destruction? Yet amid the hosts of his enemies, when they are pressing round him on every side, and are ready to swallow him up, he suddenly becomes invisible; he passes through the midst of them, and enters unseen the doors of his hiding-place.

This was Luther's second imprisonment. It was a not less essential part of his training for his great work than was his first. In his cell at Erfurt he had discovered the foundation on which, as a sinner, he must rest. In his prison of the Wartburg he is shown the one foundation on which the Church must be reared—the Bible.

Other lessons was Luther here taught. The work appointed him demanded a nature strong, impetuous, and fearless; and such was the temperament with which he had been endowed. His besetting sin was to under-estimate difficulties, and to rush on, and seize the end before it was matured, How different from the prudent, patient, and circumspect Zwingli! The Reformer of Zurich never moved a step till he had prepared his way by instructing the people, and carrying their understandings and sympathies with him in the changes he proposed for their adoption. The Reformer of Wittenberg, on the other hand, in his eagerness to advance, would not only defy the strong, he at times trampled upon the weak, from lack of sympathy and considerateness for their infirmities. He assumed that others would see the point as clearly as he himself saw it. The astonishing success that had attended him so far—the Pope defied, the emperor vanquished, and nations rallying to him—was developing these strong characteristics to the neglect of those

gentler, but more efficacious qualities, without which enduring success in a work like that in which he was engaged is unattainable. The servant of the Lord must not strive. His speech must distil as the dew, It was light that the world needed. This enforced pause was more profitable to the Reformer, and more profitable to the movement, than the busiest and most successful year of labour which even the great powers of Luther could have achieved. He was now led to examine his own heart, and distinguish between what had been the working of passion, and what the working of the Spirit of God. Above all he was led to the Bible. His theological knowledge was thus extended and ripened. His nature was sanctified and enriched, and if his impetuosity was abated, his real strength was in the same proportion increased. The study of the Word of God revealed to him likewise, what he was apt in his conflicts to overlook, that there was an edifice to be built up as well as one to be pulled down, and that this was the nobler work of the two.

The sword of the emperor was not the only peril from which the Wartburg shielded Luther. His triumph at Worms had placed him on a pinnacle where he stood in the sight of all Christendom. He was in danger of becoming giddy and falling into an abyss, and dragging down with him the cause he represented. Therefore was he suddenly withdrawn into a deep silence, where the plaudits with which the world was ringing could not reach him; where he was alone with God; and where he could not but feel his insignificance in the presence of the Eternal Majesty.

While Luther retires from view in the Wartburg, let us consider what is passing in the world. All its movements revolve around the one great central movement, which is Protestantism. The moment Luther entered within the gates of the Wartburg the political sky became overcast, and dark clouds rolled up in every quarter. First Soliman, "whom thirteen battles had rendered the terror of Germany,"<sup>1</sup> made a sudden irruption into Europe. He gained many towns and castles, and took Belgrad, the bulwark of Hungary, situated at the confluence of the Danube and the Save. The States of the Empire, stricken with fear, hastily assembled at Nuremberg to concert measures for the defence of Christendom, and for the arresting of the victorious march of its terrible invader.<sup>2</sup> This was work enough for the princes. The execution of the emperor's edict against Luther, with which they had been charged, must lie over till they had found means of compelling Soliman and his hordes to return to their own land. Their swords were about to be unsheathed above Luther's head, when lo, some hundred thousand Turkish scimitars are unsheathed above theirs !

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<sup>1</sup> Müller, vol. iii., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, p. 51.

While this danger threatened in the East, another suddenly appeared in the South. News came from Spain that seditions had broken out in that country in the emperor's absence; and Charles V., leaving Luther for the time in peace, was compelled to hurry home by sea in order to compose the dissensions that distracted his hereditary dominions. He left Germany not a little disgusted at finding its princes so little obsequious to his will, and so much disposed to fetter him in the exercise of his imperial prerogative.

Matters were still more embroiled by the war that next broke out between Charles and Francis I. The opening scenes of the conflict lay in the Pyrenees, but the campaign soon passed into Italy, and the Pope joining his arms with those of the emperor, the French lost the Duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Milan, which they had held for six years, and the misfortune was crowned by their being driven out of Lombardy. And now came sorrow to the Pope! Great was the joy of Leo X. at the expulsion of the French. His arms had triumphed, and Parma and Piacenza had been restored to the ecclesiastical State.<sup>1</sup> He received the tidings of this good fortune at his country seat of Malliana. Coming as they did on the back of the emperor's edict proscribing Luther, they threw him into an ecstasy of delight. The clouds that had lowered upon his house appeared to be dispersing. "He paced backwards and forwards, between the window and a blazing hearth, till deep into the night—it was the month of November."<sup>2</sup> He watched the public rejoicings in honour of the victory. He hurried off to Rome, and reached it before the *fetes* there in course of celebration had ended. Scarce had he crossed the threshold of his palace when he was seized with illness. He felt that the hand of death was upon him. Turning to his attendants he said, "Pray for me, that I may yet make you all happy." The malady ran its course so rapidly that he died without the Sacrament. The hour of victory was suddenly changed into the hour of death, and the *feux-de-joie* were succeeded by funeral bells and mourning plumes. Leo had reigned with magnificence—he died deeply in debt, and was buried amid manifest contempt. The Romans, says Ranke, never forgave him "for dying without the Sacraments. They pursued his corpse to its grave with insult and reproach. 'Thou hast crept in like a fox,' they exclaimed, 'like a lion hast thou ruled us, and like a dog hast thou died.'"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson, *Hist. of Charles F.*, vol. i., p. 115; Edin., 1829.

<sup>2</sup> Ranke, *Hist. of Popes*, vol. i., p. 66; Bohn's ed., 1847.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 67. "He has died like a heretic without confession and without the Sacrament," said the populace. The celebrated Italian poet, Sannazaro, made the following distich upon the occurrence:—

"Sacra, sub extrema, si forte requiris, hora, Cur Leo non potuit sumere? Vendiderat."

(Are you curious to know why Pope Leo could not receive the Sacrament in his last hour? The reason is, he had sold it.)

The nephew of the deceased Pope, Cardinal Giulio de Medici, aspired to succeed his uncle. But a more powerful house than that of Medici now claimed to dispose of the tiara. The monarchs of Spain were more potent factors in European affairs than the rich merchant of Florence. The conclave had lasted long, and Giulio de Medici, despairing of his own election, made a virtue of necessity, and proposed that the Cardinal of Tortosa, who had been Charles's tutor, should be elevated to the Pontificate. The person named was unknown to the cardinals. He was a native of Utrecht.<sup>1</sup> He was entirely without ambition, aged, austere. Eschewing all show, he occupied himself wholly with his religious duties, and a faint smile was the nearest approach he ever made to mirth. Such was the man whom the cardinals, moved by some sudden and mysterious impulse, or it may be responsive to the touch of the imperial hand, united in raising to the Papal chair. He was in all points the opposite of the magnificent Leo.<sup>2</sup>

Adrian VI.—for under this title did he reign—was of humble birth, but his talents were good and his conduct was exemplary. He began his public life as professor at Louvain. He next became tutor to the Emperor Charles, by whose influence, joined to his own merits, he was made Cardinal of Tortosa. He was in Spain, on the emperor's business, when the news of his election reached him. The cardinals, who by this time were alarmed at their own deed, hoped the modest man would decline the dazzling post. They were disappointed. Adrian, setting out for Rome with his old housekeeper, took possession of the magnificent apartments which Leo had so suddenly vacated. He gazed with indifference, if not displeasure, upon the ancient masterpieces, the magnificent pictures, and glowing statuary, with which the exquisite taste and boundless prodigality of Leo had enriched the Vatican. The "Laocoon" was already there; but Adrian turned away from that wonderful group, which some have pronounced the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the chisel, with the cold remark, "They are the idols of the heathen." Of all the curious things in the vast museum of the Papal Palace, Adrian VI. was esteemed the most curious by the Romans. They knew not what to make of the new master the cardinals had given them. His coming (August, 1522) was like the descent of a cloud upon Rome; it was like an eclipse at noonday. There came a sudden collapse in the gaieties and spectacles of the Eternal City. For songs and masquerades, there were prayers and beads. "He will be the ruin of us," said the Romans of their new Pope.<sup>3</sup>

The humble, pious, sincere Adrian aspired to restore, not to overthrow the Papacy. His predecessor had thought to extinguish Luther's movement

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, tom. i., lib. ii., cap. 2, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, p. 56. Kanke, vol. i., pp. 68, 69.

<sup>3</sup> Pallavicino, tom. i., lib. ii., cap. 3, p. 126. Kanke, vol. i., p. 70. D'Aubigné, vol. iii., p. 122.

by the sword; the Hollander judged that he had found a better way. He proposed to suppress one Reformation by originating another. He began with a startling confession: “It is certain that the Pope may err in matters of faith in defending heresy by his opinions or decretals.”<sup>1</sup> This admission, meant to be the starting-point of a moderate reform, is perhaps even more inconvenient at this day than when first made. The world long afterwards received the “Encyclical and Syllabus” of Pius IX., and the “Infallibility Decree” of July 18, 1870, which teach the exactly opposite doctrine, that the Pope cannot err in matters of faith and morals. If Adrian spoke true, it follows that the Pope may err; if he spoke false, it equally follows that the Pope may err; and what then are we to make of the decree of the Vatican Council of 1870, which, looking backwards as well as forwards, declares that error is impossible on the part of the Pope?

Adrian wished to reform the Court of Rome as well as the system of the Papacy.<sup>2</sup> He set about purging the city of certain notorious classes, expelling the vices and filling it with the virtues. Alas! he soon found that he would leave few in Rome save himself. His reforms of the system fared just as badly, as the sequel will show us. If he touched an abuse, all who were interested in its maintenance—and they were legion—rose in arms to defend it. If he sought to loosen but one stone, the whole edifice began to totter. Whether these reforms would save Germany was extremely problematical: one thing was certain, they would lose Italy. Adrian, sighing over the impossibilities that surrounded him on every side, had to confess that this middle path was impracticable, and that his only choice lay between Luther’s Reform on the one hand, and Charles V.’s policy on the other. He cast himself into the arms of Charles.

Our attention must again be directed to the Wartburg. While the Turk is thundering on the eastern border of Christendom, and Charles and Francis are fighting with one another in Italy, and Adrian is attempting impossible reforms at Rome, Luther is steadily working in his solitude. Seated on the ramparts of his castle, looking back on the storm from which he had just escaped, and feasting his eyes on the quiet forest glades and well-cultivated valleys spread out beneath him, his first days were passed in a delicious calm. By-and-by he grew ill in body and troubled in mind, the result most probably of the sudden transition from intense excitement to profound inaction. He bitterly accused himself of idleness. Let us see what it was that Luther denominated idleness. “I have published,” he writes on the 1st of November, “a little volume against that of Catharinus on Antichrist, a treatise in German on confession, a commentary in German on the 67th Psalm, and a consolation

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<sup>1</sup> Comm, m iv., *Sententiarum Quest, de Sacr. Confirm.*; Komae, 1522; apud D’Aubigné, bk. x., chap.

<sup>2</sup> Pallavicino, tom. i., cap. 4. Platina, *Vit. Ad. VI. No. 222, Som. Pont.*



to the Church of Wittenberg. Moreover, I have in the press a commentary in German on the Epistles and Gospels for the year; I have just sent off a public reprimand to the Bishop of Mainz on the idol of Indulgences he has raised up again at Halle;<sup>1</sup> and I have finished a commentary on the Gospel story of the Ten Lepers. All these writings are in German.”<sup>2</sup> This was the indolence in which he lived. From *the region of the air*, from *the region of the birds*, from *the mountain*, from *the Isle of Patmos*, from which he dated his letters, the Reformer saw all that was passing in the world beneath him. He scattered from his mountain-top, far and wide over the Fatherland, epistles, commentaries, and treatises, counsels and rebukes. It is a proof how alive he had become to the necessities of the times, that almost all his books in the Wartburg were written in German.

But a greater work than all these did Luther by-and-by set himself to do in his seclusion. There was one Book—the Book of books—specially needed at that particular stage of the movement, and that Book Luther wished his countrymen to possess in their mother tongue. He set about translating the New Testament from the original Greek into German; and despite his other vast labours, he prosecuted with almost superhuman energy this task, and finished it before he left the Wartburg. Attempts had been made in 1477, in 1490, and in 1518 to translate the Holy Bible from the Vulgate; but the rendering was so obscure, the printing so wretched, and the price so high, that few cared to procure these versions.<sup>3</sup> Amid the harassments of Wittenberg, Luther could not have executed this work; here he was able to do it. He had intended translating also the Old Testament from the original Hebrew, but the task was beyond his strength; he waited till he should be able to command learned assistance; and thankful he was that the same day that opened to him the gates of the Wartburg, found his translation of the New Testament completed.

But the work required revision, and after Luther’s return to Wittenberg he went through it all, verse by verse, with Melanchthon. By September 21, 1522, the whole of the New Testament in German was in print, and could be purchased at the moderate sum of a florin and a half. The more arduous task of translating the Old Testament was now entered upon. No source of information was neglected in order to produce as perfect a rendering as possible, but some years passed away before an entire edition of the Sacred Volume

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<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Mainz had resumed the sale of indulgences. The money raised was to be devoted to combating the Mussulman hordes. Luther, from the Wartburg, sent a severe letter to the archbishop, to which he returned a meek reply, promising amendment touching the matter which had drawn upon him Luther’s reprimand.

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, *Life of Luth.*, pp. 103, 104; Lond., 1846.

<sup>3</sup> These versions were published, says Seckendorf, at Nuremberg, in the years stated in the text, but they were wholly useless, for not only was the typography of the versions execrable, but the people were not permitted to read them. (Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 51, p. 204.)

in. German was forthcoming. Luther's labours in connection with the Scriptures did not end here. To correct and improve his version was his continual care and study till his life's end. For this he organised a synod or Sanhedrim of learned men, consisting of John Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Melanchthon, Cruciger, Aurogallus, and George Rover, with any scholar who might chance to visit Wittenberg.<sup>1</sup> This body met once every week before supper in the Augustine convent, and exchanged suggestions and decided on the emendations to be adopted. When the true meaning of the original had been elicited, the task of clothing it in German devolved on Luther alone.

The most competent judges have pronounced the highest eulogiums on Luther's version. It was executed in a style of exquisite purity, vigour, and beauty. It fixed the standard of the language. In this translation the German tongue reached its perfection as it were by a bound. But this was the least of the benefits Luther's New Testament in German conferred upon his nation. Like another Moses, Luther was taken up into this Mount, that he might receive the Law, and give it to his people. Luther's captivity was the liberation of Germany. Its nations were sitting in darkness when this new day broke upon them from this mountain-top. For what would the Reformation have been without the Bible?—a meteor which would have shone for one moment, and the next gone out in darkness.<sup>2</sup>

"From the innumerable testimonies to the beauty of Luther's translation of the Bible," says Seckendorf, "I select but one, that of Prince George of Anhalt, given in a public assembly of this nation. 'What words,' said the prince, 'can adequately set forth the immense blessing we enjoy in the whole Bible translated by Dr. Martin Luther from the original tongues? So pure, beautiful, and clear is it, by the special grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit, both in its words and its sense, that it is as if David and the other holy prophets had lived in our own country, and spoken in the German tongue. Were Jerome and Augustine alive at this day, they would hail with joy this translation, and acknowledge that no other tongue could boast so faithful and perspicuous a version of the Word of God. We acknowledge the kindness of God in giving us the Greek version of the Septuagint, and also the Latin Bible of Jerome. But how many defects and obscurities are there in the Vulgate! Augustine, too, being ignorant of the Hebrew, has fallen into not a few mistakes. But from the version of Martin Luther, many learned doctors have acknowledged that they had understood better the true sense of the Bible than from all the commentaries which others have written, upon it.'"<sup>3</sup>

These manifold labours, prosecuted without intermission in the solitude of the Castle of the Wartburg, brought on a complete derangement of the

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 51, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 51, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 51; Additio.

bodily functions, and that derangement in turn engendered mental hallucinations. Weakened in body, feverishly excited in mind, Luther was oppressed by fears and gloomy terrors. These his dramatic idiosyncrasy shaped into Satanic forms. Dreadful noises in his chamber at night would awake him from sleep. Howlings as of a dog would be heard at his door, and on one occasion as he sat translating the New Testament, an apparition of the Evil One, in the form of a lion, seemed to be walking round and round him, and preparing to spring upon him. A disordered system had called up the terrible phantasm; yet to Luther it was no phantasm, but a reality. Seizing the weapon that came first to his hand, which happened to be his inkstand,<sup>1</sup> Luther hurled it at the unwelcome intruder with such force, that he put the fiend to flight, and broke the plaster of the wall. We must at least admire his courage.

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<sup>1</sup> The cicerone of the Wartburg was careful to draw the author's attention, as he does that of every visitor, to the indentation in the wall produced, as he affirms, by Luther's inkstand. The plaster, over against the spot where Luther must have sat, is broken and blackened as if by the sharp blow of some body of moderate weight.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ABOLITION OF THE MASS.

Friar Zwilling—Preaches against the Mass—Attacks the Monastic Orders—Bodenstein of Carlsstadt—Dispenses the Supper—Fall of the Mass at Wittenberg—Other Changes—The Zwickau Prophets—Nicholas Stork—Thomas Munzer—Infant Baptism Denounced—The New Gospel—Disorders at Wittenberg—Rumours wafted to the Wartburg—Uneasiness of Luther—He Leaves the Wartburg—Appears at Wittenberg—His Sermon—A Week of Preaching—A Great Crisis—It is Safely Passed.

THE master-spirit was withdrawn, but the work did not stop. Events of great importance took place at Wittenberg during Luther's ten months' sojourn in the Wartburg. The Reformation was making rapid advances. The new doctrine was finding outward expression in a new and simpler worship.<sup>1</sup>

Gabriel Zwilling, an Augustine friar, put his humble hand to the work which the great monk had begun. He began to preach against the mass in the convent church—the same in which Luther's voice had often been heard. The doctrine he proclaimed was substantially the same with that which Zurich was teaching in Switzerland, that the Supper is not a sacrifice, but a memorial. He condemned private masses, the adoration of the elements, and required that the Sacrament should be administered in both kinds. The friar gained converts both within and outside the monastery. The monks were in a state of great excitement. Wittenberg was disturbed. The court of the elector was troubled, and Frederick appointed a deputation consisting of Justus Jonas, Philip Melancthon, and Nicholas Amsdorf, to visit the Augustine convent and restore peace. The issue was the conversion of the members of the deputation to the opinions of Friar Gabriel.<sup>2</sup> It was no longer a few obscure monks only who were calling for the abolition of the mass; the same cry was raised by the University, the great school of Saxony. Many who had listened calmly to Luther so long as his teaching remained simply a doctrine, stood aghast when they saw the practical shape it was about to take. They saw that it would change the world of a thousand years past, that it would sweep away all the ancient usages, and establish an order of things which neither they nor their fathers had known. They feared as they entered into this new world.

The friar, emboldened by the success that attended his first efforts, attacked next the monastic order itself. He denounced the "vow" as without warrant in the Bible, and the "cloak" as covering only idleness and lewdness. "No one," said he, "can be saved under a cowl." Thirteen friars left the

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<sup>1</sup> Melan.j *Vit. Luth.*, p. 19; Vratislaviae, 1819.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i., p. 214; Add. i. 216. Sleidan, iii. 49.

convent, and soon the prior was the only person within its walls. Laying aside their habit, the emancipated monks betook them, some to handicrafts, and others to study, in the hope of serving the cause of Protestantism. The ferment at Wittenberg was renewed. At this time it was that Luther's treatise on "Monastic Vows" appeared. He expressed himself in it with some doubtfulness, but the practical conclusion was that all might be at liberty to quit the convent, but that no one should be obliged to do so.

At this point, Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt, commonly called Carlstadt, Archdeacon of Wittenberg, came forward to take a prominent part in these discussions. Carlstadt was bold, zealous, honest, but not without a touch of vanity. So long as Luther was present on the scene, his colossal figure dwarfed that of the archdeacon; but the greater light being withdrawn for the time, the lesser luminary aspired to mount into its place. The "little sallow tawny man" who excelled neither in breadth of judgment, nor in clearness of ideas, nor in force of eloquence, might be seen daily haranguing the people, on theological subjects, in an inflated and mysterious language, which, being not easily comprehensible, was thought by many to envelope a rare wisdom. His efforts in the main were in the right direction. He objected to clerical and monastic celibacy, he openly declared against private masses, against the celebration of the Sacrament in one kind, and against the adoration of the Host.

Carlstadt took an early opportunity of carrying his views into practice. On Christmas Day, 1521, he dispensed the Sacrament in public in all the simplicity of its Divine institution. He wore neither cope nor chasuble. With the dresses he discarded also the genuflexions, the crossings, kissings, and other attitudinising of Rome; and inviting all who professed to hunger and thirst for the grace of God, to come and partake, he gave the bread and the wine to the communicants, saying, "This is the body and blood of our Lord." He repeated the act on New Year's Day, 1522, and continued ever afterwards to dispense the Supper with the same simplicity.<sup>1</sup> Popular opinion was on his side, and in January, the Town Council, in concurrence with the University, issued their order, that henceforward the Supper should be dispensed in accordance with the primitive model. The mass had fallen.

With the mass fell many things which grew out of it, or leaned upon it. No little glory and power departed from the priesthood. The Church festivals were no longer celebrated. In the place of incense and banners, of music and processions, came the simple and sublime worship of the heart. Clerical celibacy was exchanged for virtuous wedlock. Confessions were carried to that Throne from which alone comes pardon. Purgatory was first doubted, then denied, and with its removal much of the bitterness was taken out of death.

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 54; Additio i.

The saints and the Virgin were discarded, and lo! as when a veil is withdrawn, men found themselves in the presence of the Divine Majesty. The images stood neglected on their pedestals, or were torn down, ground to powder, or cast into the fire. The latter piece of reform was not accomplished without violent tumults.

The echoes of these tumults reverberated in the Wartburg. Luther began to fear that the work of Reformation was being converted into a work of demolition. His maxim was that these practical reforms, however justifiable in themselves, should not outrun the public intelligence; that, to the extent to which they did so, the reform was not real, but fictitious: that the error in the heart must first be dethroned, and then the idol in the sanctuary would be cast out. On this principle he continued to wear the frock of his order, to say mass, to observe his vow as a celibate, and to do other things the principle of which he had renounced, though the time, he judged, had not arrived for dropping the form. Moderation was a leading characteristic of all the Reformers. Zwingli, as we have already seen, followed the same rule in Switzerland. His naive reply to one who complained of the images in the churches, showed considerable wisdom. "As for myself," said Zwingli, "they don't hurt me, for I am short-sighted." In like manner Luther held that external objects did not hurt faith, provided the heart did not hang upon them. Immensely different, however, is the return to these things after having been emancipated from them.<sup>1</sup>

At this juncture there appeared at Wittenberg a new set of reformers, who seemed bent on restoring human traditions, and the tyranny of man from a point opposite to that of the Pope. These men are known as the "Zwickau Prophets," from the little town of Zwickau, in which they took their rise. The founder of the new sect was Nicholas Stork, a weaver. Luther had restored the authority of the Bible; this was the corner-stone of his Reformation. Stork sought to displace this cornerstone. "The Bible," said he, "is of no use." And what did he put in the room of it? A new revelation which he pretended had been made to himself. The angel Gabriel, he affirmed, had appeared to him in a vision, and said to him, "Thou shalt sit on my throne." A sweet and easy way, truly, of receiving Divine communications! as Luther could not help observing, when he remembered his own agonies and terrors before coming to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>2</sup>

Stork was joined by Mark Thomas, another weaver of Zwickau; by Mark Stubner, formerly a student at Wittenberg; and by Thomas Munzer, who was the preacher of the "new Gospel." That Gospel comprehended whatever Stork was pleased to say had been revealed to him by the angel Gabriel. He

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. iii., p. 52. Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 49, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, *Life of Luth.*, p. 114.

especially denounced infant baptism as an invention of the devil, and called on all disciples to be re-baptised, hence their name “Anabaptists.” The spread of their tenets was followed by tumults in Zwickau.<sup>1</sup> The magistrates interfered: the new prophets were banished: Munzer went to Prague; Stork, Thomas, and Stubner took the road to Wittenberg.

Stork unfolded gradually the whole of that revelation which he had received from the angel, but which he had deemed it imprudent to divulge all at once. The “new Gospel,” when fully put before men, was found to involve the overthrow of all established authority and order in Church and State; men were to be guided by an inward light, of which the new prophets were the medium. They foretold that in a few years the present order of things would be brought to an end, and the reign of the saints would begin.<sup>2</sup> Stork was to be the monarch of the new kingdom. Attacking Protestantism from apparently opposite poles, there was nevertheless a point in which the Romanists and the Zwickau fanatics met—namely, the rejection of Divine revelation, and the subjection of the conscience to human reason—the reason of Adrian VI., the son of the Utrecht mechanic, on the one side, and the reason of Nicholas Stork, the Zwickau weaver, on the other.

These men found disciples in Wittenberg. The enthusiasm of Carlstadt was heated still more; many of the youth of the University forsook their studies, deeming them useless in presence of an internal illumination, which promised to teach them all they needed to know without the toil of learning. The Elector was dismayed at this new outbreak: Melanchthon was staggered, and felt himself powerless to stem the torrent. The enemies of the Reformation were exultant, believing that they were about to witness its speedy disorganisation and ruin. Tidings reached the Wartburg of what was going on at Wittenberg. Dismay and grief seized Luther to see his work on the point of being wrecked. He was distracted between his wish to finish his translation of the New Testament, and his desire to return to Wittenberg, and combat on the spot the new-sprung fanaticism. All felt that he alone was equal to the crisis, and many voices were raised for his return. Every line he translated was an additional ray of light, to fall in due time upon the darkness of his countrymen. How could he tear himself from such a task? And yet every hour that elapsed, and found him still in the Wartburg, made the confusion and mischief at Wittenberg worse. At last, to his great joy, he finished his German version of the New Testament, and on the morning of the 3rd March, 1522, he passed out at the portal of his castle. He might be entering a world that would call for his blood; the ban of the Empire was suspended over him; the horizon was black with storms; nevertheless he must go and drive away

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i., sec. 48; *Additio*, pp. 192, 193.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk., iii., p. 52.

the wolves that had entered his fold. He travelled in his knight's incognito—a red mantle, trunk-hose, doublet, feather, and sword—not without adventures by the way. On Friday, the 7th of March, he entered Wittenberg.

The town, the University, the council, were electrified by the news of his arrival. "Luther is come," said the citizens, as with radiant faces they exchanged salutations with one another in the streets. A tremendous load had been lifted off the minds of all. The vessel of the Reformation was drifting upon the rocks; some waited in terror, others in expectation for the crash, when suddenly the pilot appeared and grasped the helm.

At Worms was the crisis of the Reformer: at Wittenberg was the crisis of the Reformation. Is it demolition, confusion, and ruin only which Protestantism can produce? Is it only wild and unruly passions which it knows to let loose? Or can it build up? Is it able to govern minds, to unite hearts, to extinguish destructive principles, and plant in their stead reorganising and renovating influences? This was to be the next test of the Reformation. The disorganisation reigning at Wittenberg was a greater danger than the sword of Charles V. The crisis was a serious one.

On the Sunday morning after his arrival, Luther entered the parish church, and presented himself with calm dignity and quiet self-composure in the old pulpit. Only ten short months had elapsed since he last stood there; but what events had been crowded into that short period! The Diet at Worms: the Wartburg: the funeral of a Pope: the irruption of the Turk: the war between France and Spain; and, last and worst of all, this outbreak at Wittenberg, which threatened ruin to that cause which was the one hope of a world menaced by so many dangers.

Intense excitement, yet deep stillness, reigned in the audience. No element of solemnity was absent. The moment was very critical. The Reformation seemed to hang trembling in the balance. The man was the same, yet chastened, and enriched. Since last he stood before them, he had become invested with a greater interest, for his appearance at Worms had shed a halo not only around himself, but on Germany also: the invisibility in which he had since dwelt, where, though they saw him not, they could hear his voice, had also tended to increase the interest. And now, issuing from his concealment, he stood in person before them, like one of the old prophets who were wont to appear suddenly at critical moments of their nation.

Never had Luther appeared grander, and never was he more truly great. He put a noble restraint upon himself. He who had been as an "iron wall" to the emperor, was tender as a mother to his erring flock. He began by stating, in simple and unpretending style, what he said were the two cardinal doctrines of revelation—the ruin of man, and the redemption in Christ. "He who believes on the Saviour," he remarked, "is freed from sin." Thus he returned with them to his first starting-point, salvation by free grace in opposition to



salvation by human merit, and in doing so he reminded them of what it was that had emancipated them from the bondage of penances, absolutions, and so many rites enslaving to the conscience, and had brought them into liberty and peace. Coming next to the consideration of the abuse of that liberty into which they were at that moment in some danger of falling, he said faith was not enough, it became them also to have charity. Faith would enable each freely to advance in knowledge, according to the gift of the Spirit and his own capacity; charity would knit them together, and harmonise their individual progress with their corporate unity. He willingly acknowledged the advance they had made in his absence; nay, some of them there were who excelled himself in the knowledge of Divine things; but it was the duty of the strong to bear with the weak. Were there those among them who desired the abolition of the mass, the removal of images, and the instant and entire abrogation of all the old rites? He was with them in principle. He would rejoice if this day there was not one mass in all Christendom, nor an image in any of its churches; and he hoped this state of things would speedily be realised. But there were many who were not able to receive this, who were still edified by these things, and who would be injured by their removal. They must proceed according to order, and have regard to weak brethren. "My friend," said the preacher, addressing himself to the more advanced, "have you been long enough at the breast? It is well. But permit your brother to drink as long as yourself."

He strongly insisted that the "Word" which he had preached to them, and which he was about to give them in its written form in their mother tongue, must be their great leader. By the Word, and not the sword, was the Reformation to be propagated. "Were I to employ force," he said, "what should I gain? Grimace, formality, apings, human ordinances, and hypocrisy, but sincerity of heart, faith, charity, not at all. Where these three are wanting, all is wanting, and I would not give a pear-stalk for such a result."<sup>1</sup>

With the apostle he failed not to remind his hearers that the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but spiritual. The Word must be freely preached; and this Word must be left to work in the heart; and when the heart was won, then the man was won, but not till then. The Word of God had created heaven and earth, and all things, and that Word must be the operating power, and "not we poor sinners." His own history he held to be an example of the power of the Word. He declared God's Word, preached and wrote against indulgences and Popery, but never used force; but this Word, while he was sleeping, or drinking his tankard of Wittenberg ale with Philip and Amsdorf, worked with so mighty a power, that the Papacy had been

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<sup>1</sup> *Luth. Opp.* (L) xviii. 225; *apud* D'Aubigné iii. 67, 68.

weakened and broken to such a degree as no prince or emperor had ever been able to break it. Yet he had done nothing: the Word had done all.

This series of discourses was continued all the week through. All the institutions and ordinances of the Church of Rome, the preacher passed in review, and applied the same principle to them all. After the consideration of the question of the mass, he went on to discuss the subject of images, of monasticism, of the confessional, of forbidden meats, showing that these things were already abrogated in principle, and all that was needed to abolish them in practice, without tumult, and without offence to any one, was just the diffusion of the doctrine which he preached. Every day the great church was crowded, and many flocked from the surrounding towns and villages to these discourses.

The triumph of the Reformer was complete. He had routed the Zwickau fanatics without even naming them. His wisdom, his moderation, his tenderness of heart, and superiority of intellect carried the day, and the new prophets appeared in comparison small indeed. Their “revelations” were exploded, and the Word of God was restored to its supremacy. It was a great battle—greater in some respects than that which Luther had fought at Worms. The whole of Christendom was interested in the result. At Worms the vessel of Protestantism was in danger of being dashed upon the Scylla of Papal tyranny: at Wittenberg it was in jeopardy of being engulfed in the Charybdis of fanaticism. Luther had guided it past the rocks in the former instance: in the present he preserved it from being swallowed up in the whirlpool.

## CHAPTER III.

### POPE ADRIAN AND HIS SCHEME OF REFORM.

Calm Returns—Labours of Luther—Translation of Old Testament—Melancthon's *Common-places*—First Protestant System—Preachers—Books Multiplied—Rapid Diffusion of the Truth—Diet at Nuremberg—Pope Adrian Afraid of the Turk—Still more of Lutheranism—His Exhortation to the Diet—His Reforms put before the Diet—They are Rejected—The “Hundred Grievances”—Edict of Diet permitting the Gospel to be Preached—Persecution—First Three Martyrs of Lutheran Reformation—Joy of Luther—Death of Pope Adrian.

THE storm was quickly succeeded by a calm. All things resumed their wonted course at Wittenberg. The fanatics had shaken the dust from their feet and departed, predicting woe against a place which had forsaken the “revelations” of Nicholas Stork to follow the guidance of the Word of God. The youth resumed their studies, the citizens returned to their occupations; Luther went in and out of his convent, busied with writing, preaching, and lecturing, besides that which came upon him daily, “the care of all the churches.” One main business that occupied him, besides the revision of his German New Testament, and the passing of it through the press, was the translation, now undertaken, of the Old Testament. This was a greater work, and some years passed away before it was finished. When at last, by dint of Herculean labour, it was given to the world, it was found that the idiomatic simplicity and purity of the translation permitted the beauty and splendour of Divine truth to shine through, and its power to be felt. Luther had now the satisfaction of thinking that he had raised an effectual barrier against such fanaticism as that of Zwickau, and had kindled a light which no power on earth would be able to put out, and which would continue to wax brighter and shine ever wider till it had dispelled the darkness of Christendom.

In 1521 came another work, the *Common-places* of Melancthon, which, next after the German translation of the Bible, contributed powerfully to the establishment of Protestantism. Scattered through a hundred pamphlets and writings were the doctrines of the Reformation—in other words, the recovered truths of Scripture. Melancthon set about the task of gathering them together, and presenting them in the form of a system. It was the first attempt of the kind. His genius admirably fitted him for this work. He was more of the theologian than Luther, and the grace of his style lent a charm to his theology, and enabled him to find readers among the literary and philosophical classes. The only systems of divinity the world had seen, since the close of the primitive age, were those which the schoolmen had given to it. These had in them neither light nor life; they were dry and sapless, a wilderness of subtle distinctions and doubtful speculations. The system of Melancthon,

drawn from the Bible, exhibiting with rare clearness and beauty the relationships of truth, contrasted strikingly with the dark labyrinth of scholasticism. The Reformation theology was not a chaos of dogmas, as some had begun to suppose it, but a majestic unity.

In proportion as Protestantism strengthened itself at its centre, which was Wittenberg, it was diffused more and more widely throughout Germany, and beyond its limits. The movement was breaking out on all sides, to the terror of Rome, and the discomfiture of her subservient princes. The Augustine convents sent numerous recruits to carry on the war. These had been planted, like Papal barracks, all over Germany, but now Rome's artillery was turned against herself. This was specially the case in Nuremberg, Osnabrück, Ratisbon, Strasburg, Antwerp, and in Hesse and Würtemberg. The light shone into the convents of the other orders also, and their inmates, laying down their cowls and frocks at the gates of their monasteries, joined their brethren and became preachers of the truth. Great was the wrath of Rome when she saw her soldiers turning their arms against her. A multitude of priests became obedient to the faith, and preached it to their flocks. In other cases flocks forsook their priests, finding that they continued to inculcate the old superstitions and perform the old ceremonies. A powerful influence was acting on the minds of men, which carried them onward in the path of the Reformed faith, despite threats and dangers and bitter persecutions. Whole cities renounced the Roman faith and confessed the Gospel. The German Bible and the writings of Luther were read at all hearths and by all classes, while preachers perambulated Germany proclaiming the new doctrines to immense crowds, in the market-place, in burial-grounds, on mountains, and in meadows. At Goslar a Wittenberg student preached in a meadow planted with lime-trees, which procured for his hearers the designation of the "Lime-tree Brethren."

The world's winter seemed passing rapidly away. Everywhere the ice was breaking up; the skies were filling with light; and its radiance was refreshing to the eyes and to the souls of men! The German nation, emerging from torpor and ignorance, stood up, quickened with a new life, and endowed with a marvellous power. A wondrous and sudden enlightenment had overspread it. It was astonishing to see how the tastes of the people were refined, their perceptions deepened, and their judgments strengthened. Artisans, soldiers—nay, even women—with the Bible in their hand, would put to flight a whole phalanx of priests and doctors who strove to do battle for Rome, but who knew only to wield the old weapons. The printing-press, like a battering-ram of tremendous force, thundered night and day against the walls of the old fortress. "The impulse which the Reformation gave to popular literature in Germany," says D'Aubigné, "was immense. Whilst in the year 1513 only thirty-five publications had appeared, and thirty-seven in 1517, the number

of books increased with astonishing rapidity after the appearance of Luther's 'Theses.' In 1518, we find seventy-one different works; in 1519, one hundred and eleven; in 1520, two hundred and eight; in 1521, two hundred and eleven; in 1522, three hundred and forty-seven; and in 1523, four hundred and ninety-eight. These publications were nearly all on the Protestant side, and were published at Wittenberg. In the last-named year (1523) only twenty Roman Catholic publications appeared."<sup>1</sup> It was Protestantism that called the literature of Germany into existence.

An army of book-hawkers was extemporised. These men seconded the efforts of publishers in the spread of Luther's writings, which, clear and terse, glowing with the fire of enthusiasm, and rich with the gold of truth, brought with them an invigoration of the intellect as well as a renewal of the heart. They were translated into French, English, Italian, and Spanish, and circulated in all these countries. Occupying a middle point between the first and second cradles of the Reformation, the Wittenberg movement covered the space between, touching the Hussites of Bohemia on the one side, and the Lollards of England on the other.

We must now turn our eyes on those political events which were marching alongside of the Protestant movement. The Diet of Regency which the emperor had appointed to administer affairs during his absence in Spain was now sitting at Nuremberg. The main business which had brought it together was the inroads of the Turk. The progress of Soliman's arms was fitted to strike the European nations with terror. Rhodes had been captured; Belgrad had fallen; and the victorious leader threatened to make good his devastating march into the very heart of Hungary. Louis, the king of that country, sent his ambassador to the Diet to entreat help against the Asiatic conqueror. At the Diet appeared, too, Chierigato, the nuncio of the Pope.

Adrian VI., when he cast his eyes on the Tartar hordes on the eastern frontier, was not without fears for Rome and Italy; but he was still more alarmed when he turned to Germany, and contemplated the appalling spread of Lutheranism.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, he instructed his ambassador to demand two things—first, that the Diet should concert measures for stopping the progress of the Sultan of Constantinople; but, whatever they might do in this affair, he emphatically demanded that they should cut short the career of the monk of Wittenberg.

In the brief which, on the 25th of November, 1522, Adrian addressed to the "Estates of the sacred Roman Empire, assembled at Nuremberg," he urged his latter and more important request, "to cut down this pestilential plant that was spreading its boughs so widely . . . to remove this gangrened

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<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigné, bk. ix., chap. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. iii., p. 55.

member from the body,” by reminding them that “the omnipotent God had caused the earth to open and swallow up alive the two schismatics, Dathan and Abiram; that Peter, the prince of apostles, had struck Ananias and Sapphira with sudden death for lying against God . . . that their own ancestors had put John Huss and Jerome of Prague to death, who now seemed risen from the dead in Martin Luther.”<sup>1</sup>

But the Papal nuncio, on entering Germany, found that this document, dictated in the hot air of Italy, did not suit the cooler latitude of Bavaria. As Chieregato passed along the highway on his mule, and raised his two fingers, after the usual manner, to bless the wayfarer, the populace would mimic his action by raising theirs, to show how little they cared either for himself or his benediction. This was very mortifying, but still greater mortifications awaited him. When he arrived at Nuremberg, he found, to his dismay, the pulpits occupied by Protestant preachers, and the cathedrals crowded with most attentive audiences. When he complained of this, and demanded the suppression of the sermons, the Diet replied that Nuremberg, was a free city, and that the magistrates mostly were Lutheran. He next intimated his intention of apprehending the preachers by his own authority, in the Pontiff’s name; but the Archbishop of Mainz, and others, in consternation at the idea of a popular tumult, warned the nuncio against a project so fraught with danger, and told him that if he attempted such a thing, they would quit the city without a moment’s delay, and leave him to deal with the indignant burghers as best he could.

Baffled in these attempts, and not a little mortified that his own office and his master’s power should meet with so little reverence in Germany, the nuncio began, but in less arrogant tone, to unfold to the Diet the other instructions of the Pope; and more especially to put before its members, the promised reforms which Adrian had projected when elevated to the Papedom. The Popes have often pursued a similar line of conduct when they really meant nothing; but Adrian was sincere. To convince the Diet that he was so, he made a very ample confession of the need of a reform. “We know,” so ran the instructions put into the hands of his nuncio on setting out for the Diet, “that for a considerable time many abominable things have found a place beside the Holy Chair—abuses in spiritual things—exorbitant straining at prerogatives—evil everywhere. From the head the malady has proceeded to the limbs; from the Pope it has extended to the prelates; we are all gone astray, there is none that hath done rightly, no, not one.”<sup>2</sup>

At the hearing of these words the champions of the Papacy hung their heads; its opponents held up theirs. “We need hesitate no longer,” said the

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, tom. i., lib. ii., cap. 7, p. 140. Sleidan, iii. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan. bk. iv., p. 59. Pallavicino, tom. i., lib. ii., cap. 7, p. 141.

Lutheran princes of the Diet; “it is not Luther only, but the Pope, that denounces the corruptions of the Church: reform is the order of the day, not merely at Wittenberg, but at Rome also.”

There was all the while an essential difference between these two men, and their reforms: Adrian would have lopped off a few of the more rotten of the branches; Luther was for uprooting the evil tree, and planting a good one in its stead. This was a reform little to the taste of Adrian, and so, before beginning his own reform, he demanded that Luther’s should be put down. It was needful, Adrian doubtless thought, to apply the pruning-knife to the vine of the Church, but still more needful was it to apply the axe to the tree of Lutheranism. For those who would push reform with too great haste, and to too great a length, he had nothing but the stake, and accordingly he called on the Diet to execute the imperial edict of death upon Luther, whose heresy he described as having the same infernal origin, as disgraced by the same abominable acts, and tending to the same tremendous issue, as that of Mahomet.<sup>1</sup> As regarded the reform which he himself meditated, he took care to say that he would guard against the two evils mentioned above; he would neither be too extreme nor too precipitate; “he must proceed gently, and by degrees,” step by step—which Luther, who translated the brief of Adrian into German, with marginal notes, interpreted to mean, a few centuries between each step.<sup>2</sup>

The Pope had communicated to the Diet, somewhat vaguely, his projected measure of reformation, and the Diet felt the more justified in favouring Adrian with their own ideas of what that measure ought to be. First of all they told Adrian that to think of executing the Edict of Worms against Luther would be madness. To put the Reformer to death for denouncing the abuses Adrian himself had acknowledged, would not be more unjust than it would be dangerous. It would be sure to provoke an insurrection that would deluge Germany with blood. Luther must be refuted from Scripture, for his writings were in the hands and his opinions were in the hearts of many of the population. They knew of but one way of settling the controversy—a General Council, namely; and they demanded that such a Council should be summoned, to meet in some neutral German town, within the year, and that the laity as well as the clergy should have a seat and voice in it. To this not very palatable request the princes appended another still more unpalatable—the “Hundred Grievances,” as it was termed, and which was a terrible catalogue of the exactions, frauds, oppressions, and wrongs that Germany had endured at the hands of the Popes, and which it had long silently groaned under, but the redress of which the Diet now demanded, with certification that if within a

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, tom. i., p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 60.

reasonable time a remedy was not forthcoming, the princes would take the matter into their own hands.<sup>1</sup>

The Papal nuncio had seen and heard sufficient to convince him that he had stayed long enough at Nuremberg. He hastily quitted the city, leaving it to some other to be the bearer of this ungracious message to the Pontiff.

Till the Diet should arrange its affairs with the Pontiff, it resolved that the Gospel should continue to be preached. What a triumph for Protestantism! But a year before, at Worms, the German princes had concurred with Charles V. in the edict of death passed on Luther. Now, not only do they refuse to execute that edict, but they decree that the pure Gospel shall be preached.<sup>2</sup> This indicates rapid progress. Luther hailed it as a triumph, and the echoes of his shout came back from the Swiss hills in the joy it awakened among the Reformers of Helvetia.

In due course the recess, or decree, of the Diet of Nuremberg reached the Seven-hilled City, and was handed in at the Vatican. The meek Adrian was beside himself with rage. Luther was not to be burned! a General Council was demanded! a hundred grievances, all duly catalogued, must be redressed! and there was, moreover, a quiet hint that if the Pope did not look to this matter in time, others would attend to it. Adrian sat down, and poured out a torrent of invectives and threatenings, than which nothing more fierce and bitter had ever emanated from the Vatican.<sup>3</sup> Frederick of Saxony, against whom this fulmination was thundered, put his hand upon his sword's hilt when he read it. "No," said Luther, the only one of the three who was able to command his temper, "we must have no war. No one shall fight for the Gospel." Peace was preserved.

The rage of the Papal party was embittered by the checks it was meeting with. War had been averted, but persecution broke out. At every step the Reformation gathered new glory. The courage of the Reformer and the learning of the scholar had already illustrated it, but now it was to be glorified by the devotion of the martyr. It was not in Wittenberg that the first stake was planted. Charles V. would have dragged Luther to the pile, nay, he would have burned the entire Wittenberg school in one fire, had he had the power; but he could act in Germany only so far as the princes went with him. It was

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, bk. iv., p. 63. Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Che in questo tempo si predicasse piamente e mansuetamente il puro Evangelio e la Scrittura approvata Secondo l'esposizione approvata e ricevuta dalla Chiesa"—"That in the meantime the pure Gospel be preached piously and soberly, according to the exposition of Scripture received and approved by the Church." (Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 8, p. 146.) The decree was ambiguous, remarks Pallavicino. Each put his own interpretation upon the phrase "the pure Gospel." The phrase "exposition hitherto in use" was also variously interpreted. According, said some, to the manner of Thomas Aquinas and other mediaeval doctors; according, said others, to that of the more ancient, Cyprian, Augustine, &c. The decree, nevertheless, helped to shield the Protestant preachers.

<sup>3</sup> See Adrian's energetic epistle, in D'Aubigné, pp. 132–135; Edin., 1846.



otherwise in his hereditary dominions of the Low Countries; there he could do as he pleased; and there it was that the storm, after muttering awhile, at last burst out. At Antwerp the Gospel had found entrance into the Augustine convent, and the inmates not only embraced the truth, but in some instances began to preach it with power. This drew upon the convent the eyes of the inquisitors who had been sent into Flanders. The friars were apprehended, imprisoned, and condemned to death. One recanted; others managed to escape; but three—Henry Voes, John Esch, and Lambert Thorn—braved the fire. They were carried in chains to Brussels, and burned in the great square of that city on the 1st of July, 1523.<sup>1</sup> They behaved nobly at the stake. While the multitude around them were weeping, they sang songs of joy. Though about to undergo a terrible death, no sorrow darkened their faces; their looks, on the contrary, bespoke the gladness and triumph of their spirits. Even the inquisitors were deeply moved, and waited long before applying the torch, in the hope of prevailing with the youths to retract and save their lives. Their entreaties could extort no answer but this—“We will die for the name of Jesus Christ.” At length the pile was kindled, and even amid the flames the psalm ascended from their lips, and joy continued to light up their countenances. So died the first martyrs of the Reformation—illustrious heralds of those hundreds of thousands who were to follow them by the same dreadful road—not dreadful to those who walk by faith—to the everlasting mansion of the sky.<sup>2</sup>

Three confessors of the Gospel had the stake consumed; in their place it had created hundreds. “Wherever the smoke of their burning blew,” said Erasmus, “it bore with it the seeds of heretics.” Luther heard of their death with thanksgiving. A cause which had produced martyrs bore the seal of Divine authentication, and was sure of victory.

Adrian of Rome, too, lived to hear of the death, of these youths. The persecutions had begun, but Adrian’s reforms had not yet commenced. The world had seen the last of these reforms in the lurid light that streamed from the stake in the great square of Brussels. Adrian died on the 14th of September of the same year, and the estimation in which the Romans held him may be gathered from the fact that, during the night which succeeded the day on which he breathed his last, they adorned the house of his physician with garlands, and wrote over its portals this inscription—“*To the saviour of his country.*”

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<sup>1</sup> The execution of the third, Lambert Thorn, followed that of the first two by a few days.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., pp. 63, 64.

## CHAPTER IV.

### POPE CLEMENT AND THE NUREMBERG DIET.

The New Pope—Policy of Clement—Second Diet at Nuremberg—Campeggio—His Instructions to the Diet—The “Hundred Grievances”—Rome’s Policy of Dissimulation—Surprise of the Princes—They are Asked to Execute the Edict of Worms—Device of the Princes—A General Council—Vain Hopes—The Harbour—Still at Sea—Protestant Preaching in Nuremberg—Proposal to hold a Diet at Spires—Disgust of the Legate—Alarm of the Vatican—Both Sides Prepare for the Spires Diet.

ADRIAN was dead. His scheme for the reform of the Papacy, with all the hopes and fears it had excited, descended with him to the grave. Cardinal Guilio de Medici, an unsuccessful candidate at the last election, had better fortune this time, and now mounted the Pontifical throne. The new Pope, who took the title of Clement VII., made haste to reverse the policy of his predecessor. Pallavicino was of opinion that the greatest evils and dangers of the Papacy had arisen from the choice of a “saint” to fill the Papal chair. Clement VII. took care to let the world know that its present occupant was a “man of affairs”—no austere man, with neither singing nor dancing in his palace; no senile dreamer of reforms; but one who knew both to please the Romans and to manage foreign courts. “But it is in the storm that the pilot proves his skill,” says Ranke.<sup>1</sup> Perilous times had come. The great winds had begun to blow, and the nations were labouring, as the ocean heaves before a tempest. Two powerful kings were fighting in Italy; the Turk was brandishing his scimitar on the Austrian frontier; but the quarter of the sky that gave Clement VII. the greatest concern was Wittenberg. There a storm was brewing which would try his seamanship to the utmost. Leo X. had trifled with this affair. Adrian VI. had imagined that he had only to utter the magic word “reform,” and the billows would subside and the winds sink to rest. Clement would prove himself an abler pilot; he would act as a statesman, as a Pope.

Early in the spring of 1524, the city of Nuremberg was honoured a second time with the presence of the Imperial Diet within its walls. The Pope’s first care was to send a right man as legate to this assembly. He selected Cardinal Campeggio, a man of known ability, of great experience, and of weight of character—the fittest, in short, his court could furnish. His journey to the Italian frontier was like a triumphal march. But when he entered upon German soil all these tokens of public enthusiasm forsook him, and when he arrived at the gates of Nuremberg he looked in vain for the usual procession of magistrates and clergy, marshalled under cross and banner, to bid him welcome. Alas! how the times had changed! The proud ambassador of

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<sup>1</sup> Ranke, vol. i., p. 75.

Clement passed quietly through the streets, and entered his hotel, as if he had been an ordinary traveller.<sup>1</sup>

The instructions Campeggio had received from his master directed him to soothe the Elector Frederick, who was still smarting from Adrian's furious letter; and to withhold no promise and neglect no art which might prevail with the Diet, and make it subservient. This done, he was to strike at Luther. If they only had the monk at the stake, all would be well.

The able and astute envoy of Clement acted his part well. He touched modestly on his devotion to Germany, which had induced him to accept this painful mission when all others had declined it. He described the tender solicitude and sleepless care of his master, the Pope, whom he likened now to a pilot, sitting aloft, and watching anxiously, while all on board slept; and now to a shepherd, driving away the wolf, and leading his flock into good pastures. He could not refrain from expressing "his wonder that so many great and honourable princes should suffer the religion, rites, and ceremonies wherein they were born and bred, and in which their fathers and progenitors had died, to be abolished and trampled upon." He begged them to think where all this would end, namely, in a universal uprising of peoples against their rulers, and the destruction of Germany. As for the Turk, it was unnecessary for him to say much. The mischief he threatened Christendom with was plain to all men.<sup>2</sup>

The princes heard him with respect, and thanked him for his good will and his friendly counsels; but to come to the matter in hand, the German nation, said they, sent a list of grievances in writing to Rome; they would like to know if the Pope had returned any answer, and what it was.

Campeggio, though he assumed an air of surprise, had expected this interrogatory to be put to him, and was not unprepared for the part he was to act. "As to their demands," he said, "there had been only three copies of them brought privately to Rome, whereof one had fallen into his hands; but the Pope and college of cardinals could not believe that they had been framed by the princes; they thought that some private persons had published them in hatred to the court of Rome; and thus he had no instructions as to that particular."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cochläus, p. 82. D'Aubigné, vol. iii., p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, bk. iv., p. 69. Fra-Paolo Sarpi, livr. i., pp. 64, 65. "It is evident," says the French translator and editor (Pierre Francois le Courayer) of Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*, "that both the Pope and the legate believed themselves justified in this falsehood for the good of the cause. For it is not doubted that the 'Hundred Grievances' had been received at the court of Rome, and Pallavicino even does not leave us ignorant that the legate was instructed to dissemble the fact of their reception, in order to treat on more favourable terms with the princes."

The surprise the legate's answer gave the Diet, and the indignation it kindled among its members, may be imagined.

The Emperor Charles, whom the war with Francis kept in Spain, had sent his ambassador, John Hunnaart, to the Diet to complain that the decree of Worms, which had been enacted with their unanimous consent, was not observed, and to demand that it be put in execution—in other words, that Luther be put to death, and that the Gospel be proscribed in all the States of the Empire.<sup>1</sup> Campeggio had made the same request in his master's name.

“Impossible!” cried many of the deputies; “to attempt such a thing would be to plunge Germany into war and bloodshed.”

Campeggio and Hunnaart insisted, nevertheless, that the princes should put in force the edict against Luther and his doctrines, to which they had been consenting parties. What was the Diet to do?

It could not repeal the edict, and it dared not enforce it. The princes hit upon a clever device for silencing the Pope who was pushing them on, and appeasing the people who were holding them back. They passed a decree saying that the Edict of Worms should be vigorously enforced, *as far as possible*.<sup>2</sup> Œdipus himself could hardly have said what this meant. Practically it was the repeal of the edict; for the majority of the States had declared that to enforce it *was not possible*.

Campeggio and Hunnaart, the Spanish envoy from Charles V., had gained what was a seeming victory, but a real defeat. Other defeats awaited them.

Having dexterously muzzled the emperor's ban, the next demand of the Nuremberg Diet was for a General Council. There was a traditional belief in the omnipotency of this expedient to correct all abuses and end all controversies. When the sky began to lower, and a storm appeared about to sweep over Christendom, men turned their eyes to Council, as to a harbour of refuge: once within it, the labouring vessel would be at rest—tossed no longer upon the billows. The experiment had been tried again and again, and always with the same result, and that result failure—signal failure. In the recent past were the two Councils of Constance and Basle. These had ended, like all that preceded them, in disappointment. Much had been looked for from them, but nothing had been realised. They appeared in the retrospect like goodly twin trees, laden with leaves and blossoms, but they brought no fruit to perfection. With regard to Constance, if it had humiliated three Popes, it had exalted a fourth, and he the haughtiest of them all; and as for Reformation, had not the Council devoted its whole time and power to devising measures for the extinction of that reforming spirit which alone could have remedied the evils

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 10, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Cochläus, p. 84. D'Aubigné, vol. iii., p. 145.

complained of? There was one man there worth a hundred Councils: how had they dealt with him? They had dragged him to the stake, and all the while he was burning, cursed him as a heretic! And what was the consequence? Why, that the stream of corruption, dammed up for a moment, had broken out afresh, and was now blowing with torrent deeper, broader, and more irresistible than ever. But the majority of the princes convened at Nuremberg were unable to think of other remedy, and so, once again, the old demand was urged—a General Council, to be held on German soil.

However, the princes will concert measures in order that this time the Council shall not be abortive; now at last, it will give the world a Pope who shall be a true father to Christendom, together with a pious, faithful, and learned hierarchy, and holy and laborious priests—in short, the “golden age,” so long waited for. The princes will summon a Diet—a national and lay Diet—to meet at Spires, in November of this year. And, further, they will take steps to evoke the real sentiments of Germany on the religious question, and permit the wishes of its several cities and States to be expressed in the Diet; and, in this way, a Reformation will be accomplished such as Germany wishes. The princes believed that they were ending their long and dangerous navigation, and were at last in sight of the harbour.

So had they often thought before, but they had awakened to find that they were still at sea, with the tempest lowering overhead, and the white reefs gleaming pale through the waters below. They were destined to repeat this experience once more. The very idea of such a Diet as was projected was an insult to the Papacy. For a secular assembly to meet and discuss religious questions, and settle ecclesiastical reforms, was to do a great deal more than paving the way for a General Council; it was to assume its powers and exercise its functions; it was to be that Council itself—nay, it was to go further still, it was to seat itself in the chair of the Pontiff, to whom alone belonged the decision in all matters of faith. It was to pluck the sceptre from the hands of the man who held himself divinely invested with the government of the Church.

The Papal legate and the envoy of Charles V. offered a stout resistance to the proposed resolution of the princes. They represented to them what an affront that resolve would be to the Papal chair, what an attack upon the prerogatives of the Pontiff. The princes, however, were not to be turned from their purpose. They decreed that a Diet should assemble at Spires, in November, and that meanwhile the States and free towns of Germany should express their mind as regarded the abuses to be corrected and the reforms to be instituted, so that, when the Council met, the Diet might be able to speak in the name of the Fatherland, and demand such Reformation of the Church as the nation wished.

Meanwhile the Protestant preachers redoubled their zeal; morning and night they proclaimed the Gospel in the churches. The two great cathedrals of Nuremberg were filled to overflowing with an attentive audience. The Lord's Supper was dispensed according to the apostolic mode, and 4,000 persons, including the emperor's sister, the Queen of Denmark, and others of rank, joined in the celebration of the ordinance. The mass was forsaken; the images were turned out of doors; the Scriptures were explained according to the early Fathers; and scarce could the Papal legate go or return from the imperial hall, where the Diet held its meetings, without being jostled in the street by the crowds hurrying to the Protestant sermon. The tolling of the bells for worship, the psalm pealed forth by thousands of voices, and wafted across the valley of the Pegnitz to the imperial chateau on the opposite height, sorely tried the equanimity of the servants of the Pope and the emperor. Campeggio saw Nuremberg plunging every day deeper into heresy; he saw the authority of his master set at nought, and the excommunicated doctrines every hour enlisting new adherents, who feared neither the ecclesiastical anathema nor the imperial ban. He saw all this with indignation and disgust, and yet he was entirely without power to prevent it.

Germany seemed nearer than it had been at any previous moment to a national Reformation. It promised to reach the goal by a single bound. A few months, and the Alps will do more than divide between two countries, they will divide between two Churches. No longer will the bulls and palls of the Pope cross their snows, and no longer will the gold of Germany flow back to swell the wealth and maintain the pride of the city whence they come. The Germans will find for themselves a Church and a creed, without asking humbly the permission of the Italians. They will choose their own pastors, and exercise their own government; and leave the Shepherd of the Tiber to care for his flock on the south of the mountains, without stretching his crosier to the north of them. This was the import of what the Diet had agreed to do.

We do not wonder that Campeggio and Hunnaart viewed the resolution of the princes with dismay. In truth, the envoy of the emperor had about as much cause to be alarmed as the nuncio of the Pope. Charles's authority in Germany was tottering as well as Clement's; for if the States should break away from the Roman faith, the emperor's sway would be weakened—in fact, all but annihilated; the imperial dignity would be shorn of its splendour; and those great schemes, in the execution of which the emperor had counted confidently on the aid of the Germans, would have to be abandoned as impracticable.

But it was in the Vatican that the resolution of the princes excited the greatest terror and rage. Clement comprehended at a glance the full extent of the disaster that threatened his throne. All Germany was becoming Lutheran; the half of his kingdom was about to be torn from him. Not a stone must be

left unturned, not an art known in the Vatican must be neglected, if by any means the meeting of the Diet at Spires may be prevented.

To Spires all eyes are now turned, where the fate of the Popedom is to be decided. On both sides there is the bustle of anxious preparation. The princes invite the cities and States to speak boldly out, and declare their grievances, and say what reforms they wish to have enacted. In the opposite camp there is, if possible, still greater activity and preparation. The Pope is sounding an alarm, and exhorting his friends, in prospect of this emergency, to unite their counsels and their arms. While both sides are busy preparing for the eventful day, we shall pause, and turn our attention to the city where the Diet just breaking up had held its sittings.

## CHAPTER V.<sup>1</sup>

### NUREMBERG.

Three Hundred Years Since—Site of Nuremberg—Depot of Commerce in Middle Ages—  
Its Population—Its Patricians and Plebeians—Their Artistic Skill—Nuremberg a Free  
Town—Its Burgraves—Its Oligarchy—Its Subject Towns—Fame of its Arts—Albert  
Dürer—Hans Sachs—Its Architecture and Marvels—Enchantment of the Place—Rath-  
Haus—State Dungeons—Implements of Torture.

NUREMBERG three hundred years ago was one of the more famous of the cities of Europe. It invites our study as a specimen of those few fortunate communities which, preserving a feeble intelligence in times of almost universal ignorance and barbarism, and enjoying a measure of independence in an age when freedom was all but unknown, were able, as the result of the exceptional position they occupied, to render services of no mean value to the civilisation and religion of the world.

The distinction and opulence which Nuremberg enjoyed, in the fifteenth century and onward to the time of the Reformation, it owed to a variety of causes. Its salubrious air; the sweep of its vast plains, on all sides touching the horizon, with a single chain of purple hills to redeem the landscape from monotony; and the facilities for hunting and other exercises which it afforded, made it a pleasant residence, and often drew thither the emperor and his court. With the court came, of course, other visitors. The presence of the emperor in Nuremberg helped to assemble men of genius and culture within its walls, and invested it, moreover, with no little political importance.

Nuremberg owed more to another cause, namely, its singularly central position. Being set down on one of the world's greatest highways, it formed the centre of a network of commercial routes, which ramified over a large part of the globe, and embraced the two hemispheres.

Situated on the great Franconian plain—a plain which was the Mesopotamia of the West, seeing that, like the Oriental Mesopotamia, it lay between two great rivers, the Danube and the Rhine—Nuremberg became one of the great emporiums of the commerce carried on between Asia and Europe. In those ages, when roads were far from common, and railways did not exist at all, rivers were the main channels of communication between nation and nation, and the principal means by which they effected an interchange of their commodities. The products of Asia and the Levant entered the mouths of the Danube by the Black Sea, and, ascending that stream into Germany, they were carried across the plain to Nuremberg. From Nuremberg this

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is founded on notes made on the spot by the author in 1871.



merchandise was sent on its way to the Rhine, and, by the numerous outlets of that river, diffused among the nations of the north-west of Europe. The commerce of the Adriatic reached Nuremberg by another route which crossed the Tyrol. Thus many converging lines found here their common meeting-place, and from hence radiated over the West. Founded in the beginning of the tenth century, the seat of the first Diet of the Empire, the meeting-place moreover of numerous nationalities, the depot of a vast and enriching commerce, and inhabited by a singularly quick and inventive population, Nuremberg rose steadily in size and importance. The fifteenth century saw it a hive of industry, a cradle of art, and a school of letters.

In the times we speak of, Nuremberg had a population of 70,000. This, in our day, would not suffice to place a city in the first rank; but it was different then, when towns of only 30,000 were accounted populous. Frankfort-on-the-Main could not boast of more than half the population of Nuremberg. But though large for its day, the number of its population contributed but little to the city's eminence. Its renown rested on higher grounds—on the enterprise, the genius, and the wealth of its inhabitants.

Its citizens were divided into two classes, the patrician and the plebeian. The line that separated the two orders was immovable. No amount of wealth or of worth could lift up the plebeian into the patrician rank. In the same social grade in which the cradle of the citizen had been placed must the evening of life find him. The patricians held their patents of nobility from the emperor, a circumstance of which they were not a little proud, as attesting the descent of their families from very ancient times. They inhabited fine mansions, and expended the revenues of their estates in a princely splendour and a lavish hospitality, delighting greatly in *fetes* and tournaments, but not unmindful the while of the claims to patronage which the arts around them possessed, and the splendours of which invested their city with so great a halo.

The plebeians were mostly craftsmen, but craftsmen of exceeding skill. No artificers in all Europe could compete with them. Since the great sculptors of Greece, there had arisen no race of artists which could wield the chisel like the men of Nuremberg. Not so bold perhaps as their Greek predecessors, their invention was as prolific and their touch as exquisite. They excelled in all manner of cunning workmanship in marble and bronze, in metal and ivory, in stone and wood. Their city of Nuremberg they filled with their creations, which strangers from afar came to gaze upon and admire. The fame of its artists was spread throughout Europe, and scarce was there a town of any note in any kingdom in which the "Nuremberg hand" was not to be seen

unmistakably certified in some embodiment of quaintness, or of beauty, or of utility.<sup>1</sup>

A more precious possession still than either its exquisite genius or its unrivalled art did Nuremberg boast: liberty, namely—liberty, lacking which genius droops, and the right hand forgets its cunning. Nuremberg was one of the free cities of Germany. In those days there were not fewer than ninety-three such towns in the Empire. They were green oases in the all but boundless desert of oppression and misery which the Europe of those days presented. They owed their rise in part to war, but mainly to commerce. When the emperors on occasion found themselves hard pushed, in the long war which they waged with the Popes, when their soldiers were becoming few and their exchequer empty, they applied to the towns to furnish them with the means of renewing the contest. They offered them charters of freedom on condition of their raising so many men-at-arms, or paying over a certain sum to enable them to continue their campaigns. The bargain was a welcome one on both sides. Many of these towns had to buy their enfranchisement with a great sum, but a little liberty is worth a great deal of gold. Thus it was on the red fields of the period that their freedom put forth its earliest blossoms; and it was amid the din of arms that the arts of peace grew up.

But commerce did more than war to call into existence such towns as Nuremberg. With the prosecution of foreign trade came wealth, and with wealth came independence and intelligence. Men began to have a glimpse of higher powers than those of brute force, and of wider rights than any included within the narrow circle of feudalism. They bought with their money, or they wrested by their power, charters of freedom from their sovereigns, or their feudal barons. They constituted themselves into independent and self-governed bodies. They were, in fact, republics on a small scale, in the heart of great monarchies. Within the walls of their cities slavery was abolished, laws were administered, and rights were enjoyed. Such towns began to multiply as it drew towards the era of the Reformation, not in Germany only, but in France, in Italy, and in the Low Countries, and they were among the first to welcome the approach of that great moral and social renovation.

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<sup>1</sup> One is surprised to learn how many of the arts in daily use were invented in Nuremberg. The oldest specimens of stained glass are said to be here. Playing-cards were manufactured here as early as 1380. In 1390 a citizen of Nuremberg built a paper-mill, undoubtedly the first in Germany. There are records of cannon being cast here as early as 1356. Previously cannon were constructed of iron bars placed lengthwise and held together by hoops. The celebrated cannon "Mons Meg," at Edinburgh Castle, is constructed after that fashion. The common opinion, supported by Polydore Virgil and other learned writers, is that gunpowder was also invented at Nuremberg, by a Franciscan friar named Berthold Schwartz, in 1378. Here the first watches were made, in 1500; they were called "Nuremberg eggs." Here the air-gun was invented, 1560; the clarionet, 1690. Here Erasmus Ebner, in 1556, hit upon that particular alloy of metals which forms brass. The brass of former times was a different combination.

Nuremberg, which held so conspicuous a place in this galaxy of free towns, was first of all governed by a Burgrave, or Stadtholder. It is a curious fact that the royal house of Prussia make their first appearance in history as the Burgraves of Nuremberg. That office they held till about the year 1414, when Frederick IV. sold his right, together with his castle, to the Nurembergers, and with the sum thus obtained purchased the Marquisate of Brandenburg. This was the second stage in the advance of that house to the pinnacle of political greatness to which it long afterwards attained.

When the reign of the burgrave came to an end, a republic, or rather oligarchy, next succeeded as the form of government in Nuremberg. First of all was a Council of Three Hundred, which had the power of imposing taxes and contributions, and of deciding on the weighty question of peace and war. The Council of Three Hundred annually elected a smaller body, consisting of only thirty members, by whom the ordinary government of the city was administered. The Great Council was composed of patricians, with a sprinkling of the more opulent of the merchants and artificers. The Council of Thirty was composed of patricians only.

Further, Nuremberg had a considerable territory around it, of which it was the capital, and which was amply studded with towns. Outside its walls was a circuit of some hundred miles, in which were seven cities, and 480 boroughs and villages, of all of which Nuremberg was mistress. When we take into account the fertility of the land, and the extensiveness of the trade that enriched the region, and in which all these towns shared, we see in Nuremberg and its dependencies a principality far from contemptible in either men or resources. "The kingdom of Bohemia," says Gibbon, "was less opulent than the adjacent city of Nuremberg."<sup>1</sup> Lying in the centre of Southern Germany, the surrounding States in defending themselves were defending Nuremberg, and thus it could give its undivided attention to the cultivation of those arts in which it so greatly excelled, when its less happily situated neighbours were wasting their treasure and pouring out their blood on the battle-field.

The "Golden Bull," in distributing the imperial honours among the more famous of the German cities, did not overlook this one. If it assigned to Frankfort the distinction of being the place of the emperor's "election," and if it yielded to Augsburg the honour of seeing him crowned, it required that the emperor should hold his first court in Nuremberg. The castle of the mediæval emperors is still to be seen. It crowns the height which rises on the northern bank of the Pegnitz, immediately within the city-gate, on the right, as one enters from the north, and from this eminence it overlooks the town which lies at its feet, thickly planted along the stream that divides it into two

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<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. ix., p. 216; Edin., 1832.

equal halves. The builder of the royal chateau obviously was compelled to follow, not the rules of architecture, but the angles and irregularities of the rock on which he placed the castle, which is a strong, uncouth, unshapely fabric, forming a striking contrast to the many graceful edifices in the city on which it looks down.

In this city was the Diet at this time assembled. It was the seat (938) of the first Diet of the Empire, and since that day how often had the grandees, the mailed chivalry, and the spiritual princedoms of Germany gathered within its walls. One can imagine how gay Nuremberg was on these occasions, when the banner of the emperor floated on its castle, and warders were going their rounds on its walls, and sentinels were posted in its flanking towers, and a crowd of lordly and knightly company, together with a good deal that was neither lordly nor knightly, were thronging its streets, and peering curiously into its studios and workshops, and ransacking its marts and warehouses, stocked with the precious products of far-distant climes. Nor would the Nurembergers be slow to display to the eyes of their visitors the marvels of their art and the products of their enterprise, in both of which they were at that time unequalled on this side the Alps. Nuremberg was, in its way, on these occasions an international exhibition, and not without advantage to both exhibitor and visitor, stimulating, as no doubt it did, the trade of the one, and refining the taste of the other. The men who gathered at these times to Nuremberg were but too accustomed to attach glory to nothing save tournaments and battle-fields; but the sight of this city, so rich in achievements of another kind, would help to open their eyes, and show them that there was a more excellent way to fame, and that the chisel could win triumphs which, if less bloody than those of the sword, were far more beneficial to mankind, and gave to their authors a renown that was far purer and more lasting than that of arms.

Now it was the turn of the Nurembergers themselves to wonder. The Gospel had entered their gates, and many welcomed it as a “pearl” more to be esteemed than the richest jewel or the finest fabric that India or Asia had ever sent to their markets. It was to listen to the new wonders now for the first time brought to their knowledge, that the citizens of Nuremberg were day by day crowding the Church of St. Sebaldus and the Cathedral of St. Lawrence. Among these multitudes, now hanging on the lips of Osiander and other preachers, was Albert Dürer, the great painter, sculptor, and mathematician. This man of genius embraced the faith of Protestantism, and became a friend of Luther. His house is still shown, near the old imperial castle, hard by the northern gate of the city. Of his great works, only a few remain in Nuremberg; they have mostly gone to enrich other cities, that were rich enough to buy what Albert Durer’s native town was not wealthy enough in these latter times to retain.

In Nuremberg, too, lived Hans Sachs, the poet, also a disciple of the Gospel and a friend of Luther. The history of Sachs is a most romantic one. He was the son of a tailor in Nuremberg, and was born in 1494, and named Hans after his father. Hans adopted the profession of a shoemaker, and the house in which he worked still exists, and is situated in the same quarter of the town as that of Albert Durer. But the workshop of Hans Sachs could not hold his genius. Quitting his stall one day, he sallied forth bent on seeing the world. He passed some time in the brilliant train of the Emperor Maximilian. He returned to Nuremberg and married. The Reformation breaking forth, his mind opened to the glory of the truth, and then it was that his poetic imagination, invigorated and sanctified, burst out in holy songs, which resounded through Germany, and helped to prepare the minds of men for the mighty revolution that was going forward. "The spiritual songs of Hans Sachs," says D'Aubigné, "and his Bible in verse, were a powerful help to this great work. It would perhaps be hard to decide who did the most for it—the Prince-Elector of Saxony, administrator of the Empire, or the Nuremberg shoemaker!"

Here, too, and about the same period, lived Peter Vischer, the sculptor and caster in bronze; Adam Craft, the sculptor, whose "seven pillars" are still to be seen in the Church of St. Claire; Veit Stoss, the carver in wood; and many besides, quick of eye and cunning of hand, whose names have perished, now live in their works alone, which not only served as models to the men of their own age, but have stimulated the ingenuity and improved the taste of many in ours.

On another ground Nuremberg is worth our study. It is perhaps the best-preserved mediæval town north of the Alps. To visit it, then, though only in the page of the describer, is to see the very scenes amid which some of the great events of the Reformation were transacted, and the very streets on which their actors walked and the houses in which they lived. In Spain there remain to this day cities of an age still more remote, and an architecture still more curious. There is Toledo, whose seven-hilled site, washed by the furious torrent of the Tagus, lifts high in the air, and sets in bold relief against the sky, its many beautiful structures—its lovely Alcazar, its cathedral roofs, its ruined synagogues, its Moorish castles—the whole looking more like the creation of a magician than the work of the mason. There is Cordova, with its wonderful mosque, fashioned out of the *spolia opima* of Africa and the Levant, and spread around this unique temple is perhaps the greatest labyrinth of narrow and winding lanes that anywhere exists. There is Granada, whose streets and fountains and gardens are still redolent of the Moor, and which borrows a further glory from the two magnificent objects by which it is overhung—the one of art, the Alhambra, whose unique and dazzling beauty it has defied the spoiler to destroy; and the other of nature, the Sierra Nevada, which towers aloft in snowy grandeur, and greets its brother Atlas

across the Straits. And, not to multiply instances, there is Malaga, a relic of a still more ancient time than the Moorish age, showing us how the Phoenicians built, and what sort of cities were upon the earth when civilisation was confined to the shores of the Mediterranean, and the mariner had not yet ventured to steer his bark beyond the "Pillars of Hercules."

But there is no city in Northern Europe—no relic of the architecture of the Germanic nations, when that architecture was in its prime, or had but recently begun to decline, at all to be compared with Nuremberg. As it was when the emperor trod its streets, and the magnificence of Germany was gathered into it, and the flourish of trumpets and the roll of drums blended with the peaceful din of its chisels and hammers, so is it now. The same portals with their rich carvings; the same windows with their deep mullions; the same fountains with their curious emblematic devices and groups, in bronze or in stone; the same peaked and picturesque gables; the same lofty roofs, running up into the sky and presenting successive rows of attic windows, their fronts all richly embellished and hung with draperies of wreathed work, wrought in stone by the hands of cunning men—in short, the same assemblage of curious, droll, beautiful, and majestic objects which were before the eyes of the men who have been four centuries in their grave, meet the eye of the traveller at this day.

In the middle of the city is the depression or valley through which the stream of the Pegnitz flows. There the buildings cluster thickly together, forming a perfect labyrinth of winding lanes, with no end of bridges and canals, and while their peaked roofs tower into the air, their bases dip into the water. The rest of the city lies on the two slopes that run up from the Pegnitz, on either bank, forming thus two divisions which look at each other across the intervening valley. In this part of Nuremberg the streets are spacious, the houses of stone, large and massy, and retaining the remarkable feature we have already mentioned—exceedingly lofty roofs; for in some instances six storeys of upright mason-work are surmounted by other six storeys of slanting roof, with their complement of attic windows, suggesting the idea of a house upon a house, or of two cities, the one upon the ground, the other in the air, and forming no unmeet emblem of the ancient classification of the citizens of Nuremberg into plebeian and patrician.

To walk through Nuremberg with the hasty step and cursory eye with which a mere modern town may be surveyed is impossible. The city, amid all its decay, is a cabinet of rare curiosities, a gallery of master-pieces. At every step one is brought up by some marvel or other—a witty motto; a quaint device; a droll face; a mediaeval saint in wood, lying as lumber, it may be, in some workshop; a bishop, or knight, or pilgrim, in stone, who has seen better days; an elegant fountain, at which prince or emperor may have stopped to drink, giving its waters as copiously as ever; a superb portal, from

which patrician may have walked forth when good Maximilian was emperor; or rich oriel, at which bright eyes looked out when gallant knight rode past; or some palatial mansion that speaks of times when the mariner's compass was unknown, and the stream of commerce on its way to the West flowed through Nuremberg, and not as now round the Cape, or through the Straits of Gibraltar.<sup>1</sup>

After a time the place, so full of fanciful and droll and beautiful imaginings, begins to act upon one like an enchantment. The spirit that lives in these creations is as unabated as if the artist had just laid down his chisel. One cannot persuade one's self that the hands that fashioned them have long ago mouldered into dust. No; their authors are living still, and one looks to see them walk out at their doors, and feels sure that one would know them—those cunning men, that race of geniuses, whose wit and wisdom, whose humour and drollery and mirth burst out and overflowed till the very stones of their city laughed along with them. Where are all these men now? All sleeping together in the burial-ground, about a mile and a half outside the city gate, each in his narrow cell, the skill of their right hand forgotten, but the spell of their power still lingering on the city where they lived, to fascinate and delight and instruct the men of after times.

Of the edifices of Nuremberg we shall visit only one—the Rath-Haus, or Hotel de Ville, where the Diets of the Empire held their sittings, and where, of course, the Diet that had just ended in the resolution which so exasperated Campeggio and terrified the Vatican had held its deliberations. It is a magnificent pile, in the Italian style, and externally in perfect preservation. A lofty portal gives admission to a spacious quadrangle. This building was erected in 1619, but it includes an older town-hall of date 1340. To this older portion belongs the great saloon, variously used in former times as a banqueting hall, an audience chamber, and a place of conference for the Diet. Its floor looks as if it would afford standing-room for all the citizens of Nuremberg. But vastness is the only attribute now left it of its former splendour. It is long since emperor trod that floor, or warrior feasted under that roof, or

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<sup>1</sup> The discovery of the mariner's compass gave a great blow to the prosperity of Nuremberg. The mariner's compass, as every one knows, revolutionised the carrying trade of the world, closing old channels of commerce and opening new. After this invention, ships freighted in the harbours of the East unloaded only when they reached the ports of the Western world. The commerce that had flowed for centuries across the plain on which Nuremberg stands, making it one of its main depots, was after this carried through the Straits or round the Cape; and Nuremberg would have become like a stranded galleon from which the tide had receded, but for the scientific and artistic genius of her sons. They still continued, by their skill and industry, to supply the other cities of Europe with those necessary or luxurious articles which they had not yet learned to create for themselves. The railroad is bringing back, in part at least, the trade and wealth that Nuremberg lost by the mariner's compass. It is the centre of the trade between Southern and Northern Germany; besides, it has not wholly lost the artistic skill and mechanical industry for which it was so famous in olden times.

Diet assembled within those walls. Time's effacing finger has been busy with it, and what was magnificence in the days of the emperor, is in ours simply tawdriness. The paintings on its walls and roof, some of which are from the pencil of Albert Dürer, have lost their brilliance, and are now little better than mere patches of colour. The gloss has passed from the silks and velvets of its furniture; the few chairs that remain are rickety and worm-eaten, and one fears to trust one's self to them. A magnificent chandelier still hangs suspended from the roof, its gilding sadly tarnished, its lights burned out; and suggesting, as it does, to the mind the gaiety of the past, makes the dreariness and solitariness of the present to be only the more felt. So passes the glory of the world, and so has passed the imperial grandeur which often found in this hall a stage for its display.

Let us visit the dungeons immediately below the building. This will help us to form some idea of the horrors through which Liberty had to pass in her march down to modern times. Our guide leaves us for a few minutes, and when he returns he is carrying a bunch of keys in one hand and a lantern in the other. We descend a flight of stairs, and stand before a great wooden door. It is fastened crosswise with a heavy iron bar, which the guide removes. Then, selecting a key from the bunch, he undoes one lock, then another, and heaving back the ponderous door, we enter and take our first step into the gloom. We traverse a long dark corridor; at the end of it we come to another massy door, secured like the first by a heavy cross-beam. The guide undoes the fastenings, and with a creak which echoes drearily through the vaulted passage, the door is thrown open and gives us admittance. We descend several flights of stairs. The last ray of light has forsaken us a long while ago, but we go forward by the help of the lantern. What a contrast to the gilded and painted chambers above!

On either hand as we go on are the silent stone walls; overhead is the vaulted roof; at every other pace the guide stops, and calls our attention to doors in the wall on either hand, which open into numerous side chambers, or vaulted dungeons, for the reception of prisoners. To lie here, in this living grave, in utter darkness, in cold and misery, was dreadful enough; but there were more horrible things near at hand, ready to do their terrible work, and which made the unhappy occupants of these cells forget all the other horrors of their dismal abode.

Passing on a pace or two further, we come to a roomier cell. We enter it, and the guide throws the glare of his lantern all round, and shows us the apparatus of torture, which rots here unused, though not unused in former days. It is a gaunt iron frame, resembling a long and narrow bedstead, fitted from end to end with a series of angular rollers. The person who was to undergo the torture was laid on this horizontal rack. With every motion of his body to and fro, the rolling prisms on which he rested grazed the vertebra?



of his back, causing great suffering. This was one mode of applying the rack, the next was still more frightful. The feet of the poor victim were fastened to one end of the iron frame; his arms were raised, over his head, and tied with a rope, which wound round a windlass. The windlass was worked by a lever; the executioner put his hand on the lever; the windlass revolves; the rope tightens; the limbs of the victim are stretched. Another wrench: his eyes flash, his lips quiver, his teeth are clenched; he groans, he shrieks; the joints start from their sockets; and now the livid face and the sinking pulse tell that the torture has been prolonged to the furthest limit of physical endurance. The sufferer is carried back to his cell. In the course of a few weeks, when his mangled body has regained a little strength, he is brought out a second time, and laid upon the same bed of torture, to undergo yet again the same dreadful ordeal.

Let us go forward a little farther into this subterranean realm. We come at length to the central chamber. It is much more roomy than the others. Its air is dank and cold, and the water is filtering through the rock overhead. It is full of darkness, but there are worse things in it than darkness, which we can see by the help of our guide's lantern. Against the wall leans what seems a ladder; it is a machine of torture of the kind we have already described, only used vertically instead of horizontally. The person is hauled up by a rope, with a weight attached to his feet, and then he is let suddenly down, the rolling prisms grazing, as before, his naked back in his rapid descent.

There is yet another "torture" in this horrible chamber. In the centre of the roof is an iron ring. Through the ring passes a strong iron chain, which hangs down and is attached to a windlass. On the floor lies a great block of stone with a ring in it. This block was attached to the feet of the victim; his hands were tied behind his back with the iron chain; and, thus bound, he was pulled up to the roof, and suddenly let fall to within a foot or so of the floor. The jerk of the descending block was so severe as commonly to dislocate his limbs.

The unhappy man when suspended in this fashion could be dealt with as his tormentors chose. They could tear his flesh with pincers, scorch his feet with live coals, insert burning matches beneath his skin, flay him alive, or practise upon him any barbarity their malignity or cruelty suggested. The subject is an ungrateful one, and we quit it. These cells were reserved for political offenders. They were accounted too good for those tainted with heretical pravity. Deeper dungeons, and more horrible instruments of torture, were prepared for the confessors of the Gospel. The memorials of the awful cruelties perpetrated on the Protestants of the sixteenth century are to be seen in Nuremberg at this day. The "Holy Offices" of Spain and Italy have been dismantled, and little now remains save the walls of the buildings in which the business of the Inquisition was carried on; but, strange to say, in

Nuremberg, as we can testify from actual observation, the whole apparatus of torture is still shown in the subterranean chambers that were used by the agents of the “Holy Office.” We reserve the description of these dungeons, with their horrible instruments, till we come to speak more particularly of the Inquisition. Even the political prisons are sufficiently dismal. It is sad to think that such prisons existed in the heart of Germany, and in the free town of Nuremberg, in the sixteenth century. The far-famed “prisons of Venice”—and here too we speak from actual inspection—are not half so gloomy and terrible. These dungeons in Nuremberg show us how stern a thing government was in the Middle Ages, before the Reformation had come with its balmy breath to chase away the world’s winter, and temper the rigours of law, by teaching mercy as well as vengeance to the ruler. Verily it was no easy matter to be a patriot in the sixteenth century!

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RATISBON LEAGUE AND REFORMATION.

Protestantism in Nuremberg—German Provinces Declare for the Gospel—Intrigues of Campeggio—Ratisbon League—Ratisbon Scheme of Reform—Rejected by the German Princes—Letter of Pope Clement to the Emperor—The Emperor's Letter from Burgos—Forbids the Diet at Spires—German Unity Broken—Two Camps—Persecution—Martyrs.

NUREMBERG had thrown itself heartily into the tide of the Reform movement. It was not to be kept back either by the muttered displeasure of the Pope's legate, or the more outspoken threatenings of the emperor's envoy. The intelligent citizens of Nuremberg felt that Protestantism brought with it a genial air, in which they could more freely breathe. It promised a re-invigoration to their city, the commerce of which had begun to wane, and its arts to decline, as the consequence of the revolutions which the mariner's compass had brought with it. Their preachers appeared daily in the pulpit; crowded congregations daily assembled in the large Church of St. Sebald, on the northern bank of the Pegnitz, and in the yet more spacious Cathedral of St. Lawrence, in the southern quarter of the city. The tapers were extinguished; the images stood neglected in their niches, or were turned out of doors; neither pyx, nor cloud of incense, nor consecrated wafer was to be seen; the altar had been changed into a table; bread and wine were brought forth and placed upon it: prayer was offered, a psalm sung, and the elements were dispensed, while some 4,000 communicants came forward to partake. The spectacle caused infinite disgust to Campeggio, but how to prevent it he knew not. Hunnaart thought, doubtless, that had his master been present, these haughty citizens would not have dared to flaunt their heresy in the face of the emperor. But Charles detained by his quarrels with Francis I. and the troubles in Spain, heresy flourished unchecked by the imperial frown.

From the hour the Diet broke up, both sides began busily to prepare for the meeting at Spires in November. The princes, on their return to their States, began to collect the suffrages of their people on the question of Church Reform; and the legate, on his part, without a day's delay, began his intrigues to prevent the meeting of an assembly which threatened to deliver the heaviest blow his master's authority had yet received.

The success of the princes friendly to the Reformed faith exceeded their expectations. The all but unanimous declaration of the provinces was, "We will serve Rome no longer." Franconia, Brandenburg, Henneburg, Windsheim, Wertheim, and Nuremberg declared against the abuses of the mass, against the seven Popish Sacraments, against the adoration of images, and,

reserving the unkindest cut for the last, against the Papal supremacy.<sup>1</sup> These dogmatic changes would draw after them a host of administrative reforms. The pretext for the innumerable Romish exactions, of which the Germans so loudly complained, would be swept away. No longer would come functions and graces from Rome, and the gold of Germany would cease to flow thither in return. The Protestant theologians were overjoyed. A few months, and the national voice, through its constituted organ the Diet, will have pronounced in favour of Reform. The movement will be safely piloted into the harbour.

The consternation of the Romish party was in proportion. They saw the gates of the North opening a second time, and the German hosts in full march upon the Eternal City. What was to be done? Campeggio was on the spot; and it was fortunate for Rome that he was so, otherwise the subsequent intervention of the Pope and the emperor might have come too late. The legate adopted the old policy of “divide and conquer.”

Withdrawing from a Diet which contemplated usurping the most august functions of his master, Campeggio retired to Ratisbon, and there set to work to form a party among the princes of Germany. He succeeded in drawing around him Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, the Dukes of Bavaria, the Archbishop of Salzburg, and the Bishops of Trent and Ratisbon. These were afterwards joined by most of the bishops of Southern Germany. Campeggio represented to this convention that the triumph of Wittenberg was imminent, and that with the fall of the Papacy was bound up the destruction of their own power, and the dissolution of the existing order of things. To avert these terrible evils, they resolved, the 6th of July, to forbid the printing of Luther’s books; to permit no married priests to live in their territories; to recall the youth of their dominions who were studying at Wittenberg; to tolerate no change in the mass or public worship; and, in fine, to put into execution the Edict of Worms against Luther. They concluded, in short, to wage a war of extermination against the new faith.<sup>2</sup>

As a set-off against these stern measures, they promised a few very mild reforms. The ecclesiastical imposts were to be lightened, and the Church festivals made somewhat less numerous. And, not able apparently to see that they were falling into the error which they condemned in the proposed Diet at Spire, they proceeded to enact a standard of orthodoxy, consisting of the first four Latin Fathers—Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory—whose opinions were to be the rule according to which all preachers were to interpret Scripture. Such was the Ratisbon Reformation, as it came afterwards to be called.

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<sup>1</sup> D’Aubigné, bk. x., chap. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 11. Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 74. Fra-Paolo Sarpi, livr. i. p. 67; Basle, 1738.

The publication of the legate's project was viewed as an insult by the princes of the opposite party. "What right," they asked, "have a few princes and bishops to constitute themselves the representatives of the nation, and to make a law for the whole of Germany? Who gave them this authority? Besides, what good will a Reformation do us that removes only the smaller abuses, and leaves the great altogether untouched? It is not the humbler clergy, but the prelates and abbots who oppress us, and these the Ratisbon Convention leaves flourishing in their wealth and power. Nor does this Reformation give us the smallest hope that we shall be protected in future from the manifold exactions of the Roman court. In condemning the lesser evils, does not the League sanction the greater?" Even Pallavicino has acknowledged that this judgment of the princes on the Ratisbon Reformation was just, when he says that "the physician in the cure of his patient ought to begin not with the small, but the great remedies."<sup>1</sup>

The legate had done well, and now the Pope, who saw that he must grasp the keys more firmly, or surrender them altogether, followed up with vigour the measures of Campeggio. Clement VII. wrote in urgent terms to Charles V., telling him that the Empire was in even greater danger from these audacious Germans than the tiara. Charles did not need this spur. He was sufficiently alive to what was due to him as emperor. This proposal of the princes to hold a Diet irrespective of the emperor's authority stung him to the quick.

The Pope's letter found the emperor at Burgos, the capital of Old Castile. The air of the place was not favourable to concessions to Lutheranism. Everything around Charles—a cathedral of unrivalled magnificence, the lordly priests by which it was served, the devotion of the Castilians, with other tokens of the pomp and power of Catholicism—must have inspired him with even more than his usual reverence for the old religion, and made the project of the princes appear in his eyes doubly a crime. He wrote in sharp terms to them, saying that it belonged to him as emperor to demand of the Pope that a Council should be convoked; that he and the Pope alone were the judges when it was a fitting time to convoke such an assembly, and that when he saw that a Council could be held with profit to Christendom, he would ask the Pope to summon one; that, meanwhile, till a General Council should meet, it was their duty to acquiesce in the ecclesiastical settlement which had been made at Worms; that at that Diet all the matters which they proposed to bring again into discussion at Spire had been determined, and that to meet to discuss them over again was to unsettle them. In fine, he reminded them of the Edict of Worms against Luther, and called on them to put it in execution. He forbade the meeting of the Diet at Spire, under penalty of high treason and ban of the Empire. The princes eventually submitted, and thus the

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<sup>1</sup> Fra-Paolo Sarpi, livr. i., p. 68. Pallavicino, lib. cap. 11.

projected Diet, which had excited so great hopes on the one side and so great alarm on the other, never met.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of the affair was that the unity of Germany was broken. From this hour, there were a Catholic Diet and a Protestant Diet in the Empire—a Catholic Germany and a Protestant Germany. The rent was made by Campeggio, and what he did was endorsed and completed by Charles V. The Reformation was developing peacefully in the Empire; the majority of the Diet was on its side; the several States and cities were rallying to it; there was the promise that soon it would be seen advancing under the aegis of a united Fatherland: but this fair prospect was suddenly and fatally blighted by the formation of an Anti-Protestant League. The unity thus broken has never since been restored. It must not be overlooked that this was the doing of the Romanist party.

“What a deplorable event!”<sup>77</sup> exclaims the reader. And truly it was. It had to be expiated by the wars, the revolutions, the political and religious strifes of three centuries. Christendom was entering on the peaceful and united rectification of the errors of ages—the removal of those superstitious beliefs which had poisoned the morals of the world, and furnished a basis for ecclesiastical and political despotisms. And, with a purified conscience, there would have come an enlarged and liberated intellect, the best patron of letters and art, of liberty and of industry. With the rise of these two hostile camps, the world’s destinies were fatally changed. Henceforward Protestantism must advance by way of the stake. But, lacking these many heroic deaths, these hundreds of thousands of martyrs, what a splendour would have been lacking to Protestantism!

The conferences at Ratisbon lasted a fortnight, and when at length they came to an end, the Archduke Ferdinand and the Papal legate journeyed together to Vienna. On the road thither, they came to an understanding as to the practical steps for carrying out the league. The sword must be unsheathed. Gaspard Tauber, of Vienna, whose crime was the circulating of Luther’s books, was among the first to suffer. An idea got abroad that he would recant. Two pulpits were erected in the churchyard of St. Stephen’s. From the one Tauber was to read his recantation, and from the other a priest was to magnify the act as a new trophy of the power of the Roman Church. Tauber rose in presence of the vast multitude assembled in the grave-yard, who awaited in deep silence the first words of recantation. To their amazement he made a bolder confession of his faith than ever. He was immediately dragged to execution, decapitated, and his body thrown into the fire and consumed. His Christian intrepidity on the scaffold made a deep impression on his

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., pp. 75, 76. Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 10. Fra-Paolo Sarpi, livr. i., pp. 69, 70.

townsmen. At Buda, in Hungary, a Protestant bookseller was burned with his books piled up around him. He was heard amid the flames proclaiming the joy with which he suffered for the sake of Christ. An inquisitor, named Reichler, traversed Württemberg, hanging Lutherans on the trees, and nailing the Reformed preachers to posts by the tongue, and leaving them to die on the spot, or set themselves free at the expense of self-mutilation, and the loss of that gift by which they had served Christ in the ministry of the Gospel. In the territories of the Archbishop of Salzburg, a Protestant who was being conducted to prison was released by two peasants, while his guards were carousing in an alehouse. The peasants were beheaded outside the walls of the city without form of trial. There was a Reign of Terror in Bavaria. It was not on those in humble life only that the storm fell; the magistrate on the bench, the baron in his castle found no protection from the persecutor. The country swarmed with spies, and friend dared not confide in friend.

This fanatical rage extended to some parts of Northern Germany. The tragical fate of Henry van Zutphen deserves a short notice. Escaping from the monastery at Antwerp in 1523, when the converts Esch and Voes were seized and burned, he preached the Gospel for two years in Bremen. His fame as a preacher extending, he was invited to proclaim the Reformed doctrine to the uninstructed people of the Ditmarches country. He repaired thither, and had appeared only once in the pulpit, when the house in which he slept was surrounded at midnight by a mob, heated by the harangues of the prior of the Dominicans and the fumes of Hamburg beer. He was pulled out of bed, beaten with clubs, dragged on foot over many miles of a road covered with ice and snow, and finally thrown on a slow fire and burned.<sup>1</sup> Such were the means which the "Ratisbon Reformers" adopted for repressing Protestantism, and upholding the old order of things. "The blood he is shedding," exclaimed Luther, on being told of these proceedings, "will choke the Pope at last, with his kings and kingdoms."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 75. *Luth. Opp.*, lib. xix., p. 330. D'Aubigné, vol. iii., pp. 151–155; Glas., 1855.

<sup>2</sup> Luther to Hausmann, 1524, p. 563.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LUTHER'S VIEWS ON THE SACRAMENT AND IMAGE-WORSHIP.

New Friends—Philip, Landgrave of Hesse—Meeting between him and Melanchthon—Joins the Reformation—Duke Ernest, &c.—Knights of the Teutonic Order—Their Origin and History—Royal House of Prussia—Free Cities—Services to Protestantism—Division—Carlstadt Opposes Luther on the Sacrament—Luther's Early Views—Recoil—Essence of Paganism—*Opus Operatum*—Calvin and Zwingli's View—Carlstadt Leaves Wittenberg and goes to Orlamünde—Scene at the Inn at Jena—Luther Disputes at Orlamünde on Image-Worship—Carlstadt Quits Saxony—Death of the Elector Frederick.

WHILE its enemies were forming leagues and unsheathing their swords against the Reformation, new friends were hastening to place themselves on its side. It was at this hour that some of the more powerful princes of Germany stepped out from the ranks of the Romanists, and inscribed the "evangel" on their banners, declaring that henceforward under this "sign" only would they fight. Over against the camp formed by Austria and Bavaria was pitched that of the Landgrave of Hesse and the free cities.

One day in June, 1524, a knightly cavalcade was passing along the high-road which traverses the plain that divides Frankfort from the Taunus mountains. The party were on their way to the games at Heidelberg. As they rode along, two solitary travellers on horseback were seen approaching. On coming nearer, they were recognised to be Philip Melanchthon and his friend. The knight at the head of the first party, dashing forward, placed himself by the side of the illustrious doctor, and begged him to turn his horse's head, and accompany him a short way on the road. The prince who accosted Melanchthon was the young Landgrave of Hesse. Philip of Hesse had felt the impulses of the times, and was inquiring whether it was not possible to discover a better way than that of Rome. He had been present at the Diet of Worms; had been thrilled by the address of Luther; he had begged an interview with him immediately after, and ever since had kept revolving the matter in his heart. A chance, as it seemed, had now thrown Melanchthon in his way. He opened his mind to him as he rode along by his side, and, in reply, the doctor gave the prince a clear and comprehensive outline of the Reformed doctrine. This oral statement Melanchthon supplemented, on his return to Wittenberg, by a "written epitome of the renovated doctrines of Christianity," the study of which made the landgrave resolve to cast in his lot with Protestantism. He embraced it with characteristic ardour, for he did nothing by halves. He made the Gospel be preached in his dominions, and as he brought to the cause the whole energy of his character, and the whole



influence of his position, he rendered it no ordinary services. In conflicts to come, his plume was often seen waving in the thick of the battle.<sup>1</sup>

About the same time, other princes transferred the homage of their hearts and the services of their lives to the same cause. Among these were Duke Ernest of Luneburg, who now began to promote the reformation of his States; the Elector of the Palatinate; and Frederick I. of Denmark, who, as Duke of Schleswig and Holstein, ordained that all under him should be free to worship God as their consciences might direct.

These accessions were followed by another, on which time has since set the print of vast importance. Its consequences continue to be felt down to our own days. The knight who now transferred his homage to the cause of Protestantism was the head of the house of Prussia, then Margrave of Brandenburg.

The chiefs of the now imperial house of Prussia were originally Burgraves of Nuremberg. They sold, as we have already said, this dignity, and the price they received for it enabled them to purchase the Margraveship of Brandenburg. In 1511, Albert, the then head of the house of Brandenburg, became Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. This was perhaps the most illustrious of all those numerous orders of religious knights, or monks, which were founded during the frenzy of the Crusades,<sup>2</sup> in defence of the Christian faith against heathens and infidels. They wore a white cross as their badge. Albert, the present Grand Master, while attending the Diet at Nuremberg, had listened to the sermons of Osiander, and had begun to doubt the soundness of the Roman creed, and, along with that, the lawfulness of his vow as Grand Master of the Teutonic monks. He obtained an interview with Luther, and asked his advice. "Renounce your Grand-Mastership; dissolve the order," said the Reformer; "take a wife; and erect your quasi-religious domain into a secular and hereditary duchy." Albert, adopting the counsel of Luther, opened to himself and his family the road that at a future day was to conduct to the imperial crown. He renounced his order of monkhood, professed the Reformed faith, married a princess of Denmark, and declared Prussia an hereditary duchy, doing homage for it to the crown of Poland. He was put under the ban of the Empire; but retained, nevertheless, possession of his dominions. In process of time this rich inheritance fell to the possession of the electoral branch of his family; all dependence on the crown of Poland was cast off; the duchy was converted into a kingdom, and the title of duke exchanged for the loftier one of king. The fortunes of the house continued to grow till at last its head took his place among the great sovereigns of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Another

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<sup>1</sup> Camerarius, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> The order was instituted in a.d. 1190, and the first Master was chosen in the camp before Ptolemais. (Sleidan.)

<sup>3</sup> Robertson, *Hist. Charles V.*, bk. iv. Sleidan, bk. v., pp. 98, 99.

and higher step awaited him. In 1870, at the close of the Franco-German war, the King of Prussia became Emperor of Germany.

In the rear of the princes, and in some instances in advance of them, came the free cities. We have spoken of their rise in a former chapter. They eminently prepared the soil for the reception of Protestantism. They were nurseries of art, cultivators of knowledge, and guardians of liberty. We have already seen that at Nuremberg, during the sittings of the Diet, and despite the presence of the legate of the Pope and the ambassador of the emperor, Protestant sermons were daily preached in the two cathedral churches; and when Campeggio threatened to apprehend and punish the preachers in the name of his master, the municipality spiritedly forbade him to touch a hair of their heads. Other towns followed the example of Nuremberg. The Municipal Diets of Ulm and Spire (1524) resolved that the clergy should be sustained in preaching the pure Gospel, and bound themselves by mutual promise to defend each other against any attempt to execute the Edict of Worms.

At the very moment that Protestantism was receiving these powerful accessions from without, a principle of weakness was being developed within. The Reformers, hitherto a united phalanx, began to be parted into two camps—the Lutheran and the Reformed. It is now that we trace the incipient rise of the two powerful parties which have continued, down to our day, to divide the Protestant world, and to retard the march of the Reformation.

The difference was at first confined to two men. Luther and Carlstadt had combated by the side of each other at Leipsic against Dr. Eck; unhappily they differed in their views on the Sacrament of the Supper, and began to do battle against each other. Few there are who can follow with equal steps the march of Truth, as she advances from the material and the symbolical to the position of a pure principle. Some lag behind, laying fully as much stress upon the symbol as upon the verity it contains; others outstrip Truth, as it were, by seeking to dissociate her from that organisation which God has seen to be necessary for her action upon the world. The fanatics, who arose at this stage of the Reformation, depreciated the Word and the Sacraments, and, in short, all outward ordinances, maintaining that religion was a thing exclusively of spiritual communion, and that men were to be guided by an inward light. Luther saw clearly that this theory would speedily be the destruction not of what was outward only in religion, but also of what was inward and spiritual. A recoil ensued in his sentiments. He not only paused in his career, he went back; and the retrogression which we henceforth trace in him was not merely a retrogression from the new mystics, but from his former self. The clearness and boldness which up till this time had characterised his judgment on theological questions now forsook him, and something of the old haze began to gather round him and cloud his mind.

At an earlier period of his career (1520), in his work entitled the *Babylonian Captivity*, he had expressed himself in terms which implied that the spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament was the only presence he recognised there, and that faith in Christ thus present was the only thing necessary to enable one to participate in all the benefits of the Lord's Supper. This doctrine is in nowise different from that which was afterwards taught on this head by Calvin, and which Luther so zealously opposed in the case of Zwingli and the theologians of the Swiss Reformation. Unhappily, Luther having grasped the true idea of the Lord's Supper, again lost it. He was unable to retain permanent possession of the ground which he had occupied for a moment, as it were; he fell back to the old semi-materialistic position, to the arrestment of his own career, and the dividing of the Protestant army.

It is a grand principle in Protestantism that the ordinances of the Church become to us "effectual means" of salvation, not from "any virtue in them," or "in him that administers them," but solely by the "blessing of God," and the "working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them." This draws a clear line of distinction between the institutions of the Reformed Church and the rites of Paganism and Romanism. It was a doctrine of Paganism that there was a magical or necromantic influence in all its observances, in virtue of which a purifying change was effected upon the soul of the worshipper. This idea was the essence of Paganism. In the sacrifice, in the lustral water, in every ceremony of its ritual, there resided an invisible but potent power, which of itself renewed or transformed the man who did the rite, or in whose behalf it was done. This doctrine descended to Romanism. In all its priests, and in all its rites, there was lodged a secret, mysterious, superhuman virtue, which regenerated and sanctified men. It was called the "*opus operatum*," because, according to this theory, salvation came simply by the performance of the rite—the "doing of the work." It was not the Spirit that regenerated man, nor was faith on his part necessary in order to his profiting; the work was accomplished by the sole and inherent potency of the rite. This doctrine converts the ordinances of the Gospel into spells, and makes their working simply magical.

Luther was on the point of fully emancipating himself from this belief. As regards the doctrines of Christianity, he did fully emancipate himself from it. His doctrine of justification by faith alone implied the total renunciation of this idea; but, as regards the Sacraments, he did not so fully vindicate his freedom from the old beliefs. With reference to the Supper, he lost sight of the grand master-truth which led to the emancipation of himself and Christendom from monkish bondage. He could see that faith alone in Christ's obedience and death could avail for the justification, the pardon, and the eternal salvation of the sinner; and yet he could not see that faith alone in Christ, as spiritually present in the Supper, could avail for the nourishment of the

believer. Yet the latter is but another application of Luther's great cardinal doctrine of justification by faith.

The shock Luther received from the extremes to which the Anabaptists proceeded in good part accounts for this result. He saw, as he thought, the whole of Christianity about to be spiritualised, and to lose itself a second time in the mazes of mysticism. He retreated, therefore, into the doctrine of impanation or consubstantiation, which the Dominican, John of Paris, broached in the end of the thirteenth century. According to this tenet, the body and blood of Christ are really and corporeally present in the elements, but the substance of the bread and wine also remains. Luther held that in, under, or along with the elements was Christ's very body; so that, after consecration, the bread was both bread and the flesh of Christ, and the wine both wine and the blood of Christ. He defended his belief by a literal interpretation of the words of institution, "This is my body." "I have undergone many hard struggles," we find him saying, "and would fain have forced myself into believing a doctrine whereby I could have struck a mighty blow at the Papacy. But the text of Scripture is too potent for me; I am a captive to it, and cannot get away. "

Carlstadt refused to bow to the authority of the great doctor on this point. He agreed with the Lusher of 1520, not with the Luther of 1524. Carlstadt held that there was no corporeal presence of Christ in the elements; that the consecration effects no change upon the bread and wine; that the Supper is simply commemorative of the death of Christ, and nourishes the communicant by vividly representing that transaction to his faith. Carlstadt's views differed widely from those of Luther, but they fell short of the doctrine of the Supper, as it came afterwards to be settled in the controversies that ensued, and finally held by Zwingli and Calvin.

Carlstadt finding himself fettered, as may well be conceived, in the declaration of his opinions at Wittenberg, sought a freer stage on which to ventilate them. Early in 1524 he removed to Orlamünde, and there began to propagate his views. We do not at this stage enter on the controversy. It will come before us afterwards, when greater champions than Carlstadt shall have stepped into the arena, and when accordingly we can review, with much greater profit and advantage, the successive stages of this great war, waged unhappily within the camp of the Reformation.

One passage at arms we must however record. No longer awed by Luther's presence, Carlstadt's boldness and zeal waxed greater every day. Not content with opposing the Wittenberg doctrine of the Supper, he attacked Luther on the subject of images. The old leaven of monkhood—the strength of which was shown in the awful struggles he had to undergo before he found his way to the Cross—was not wholly purged out of the Reformer. Luther not only tolerated the presence of images in the churches, like Zwingli, for

the sake of the weak; he feared to displace them even when the worshippers desired their removal. He believed they might be helpful. Carlstadt denounced these tendencies and weaknesses as Popery. The minds of the men of Orlamünde were getting inflamed by the violence of his harangues; commotions were rising, and the Elector sent Luther to Orlamünde to smooth the troubled waters. A little reflection might have taught Frederick that his presence was more likely to bring on a tempest; for the Reformer was beginning to halt in that equanimity and calm strength which, up till this time, he had been able to exercise in the face of opposition.

Luther on his way to Orlamünde travelled by Jena, where he arrived on the 21st August, 1524. From this city he wrote to the Elector and Duke John, exhorting them to employ their power in curbing that fanatical spirit, which was beginning to give birth to acts of violence. The exhortation was hardly needed, seeing he was at that moment on a mission from the Elector for that very end. It shows, however, that in Luther's opinion the Reformation ran more risk from the madness of the fanatic than from the violence of the persecutor. "The fanatic," he said in his letter, "hates the Word of God, and exclaims, 'Bible, Bubel, Babel!'"<sup>1</sup> What kind of tree is that which bears such fruit as the breaking open of churches and cloisters, and the burning of images and saints? Christians ought to use the *Word*, not the *hand*. The New Testament method of driving out the devil is to convert the heart, and then the devil falls and all his works."<sup>1</sup>

Next day he preached against insurrectionary tumults, iconoclast violence, and the denial of the real presence in the Eucharist. Afterwards, as he was seated at dinner with the pastor of Jena and the city functionaries, a paper was handed in to him from Carlstadt. "Let him come in," said Luther. Carlstadt entered. "You attacked me today," said Carlstadt to the Reformer, "as an author of sedition and assassination; it is false!" "I did not name you," rejoined Luther; "nevertheless, if the cap fits you, you may put it on." "I am able to show," said Carlstadt, "that you have taught contradictions on the subject of the Eucharist." "Prove your assertion," rejoined Luther. "I am willing to dispute publicly with you," replied Carlstadt, "at Wittenberg or at Erfurt, if you will grant me a safe-conduct." "Never fear that," said Luther. "You tie my hands and my feet and then you strike me!" exclaimed Carlstadt with warmth. "Write against me," said Luther, "I would," said the other, "if I knew you to be in earnest." "Here," exclaimed Luther, "take that in token of my earnestness," holding out a gold florin. "I willingly accept the gage," said Carlstadt. Then holding it out to the company, "Ye are my witnesses," said he, "that this is my authority to write against Martin Luther." He bent the florin and put it into his purse. He then extended his hand to Luther, who

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. i<sup>m</sup> sec. 61, p. 304.

pledged him in some wine. "The more vigorously you assail me," said Luther, "the better you will please me." "It shall not be my fault," answered Carlstadt, "if I fail." They drank to one another, and again shaking hands, Carlstadt withdrew.

The details of this interview are found only in the records of the party adverse to the Reformer, and Luther has charged them with gross exaggeration.

From Jena, Luther continued his journey, and arrived at Orlamünde in the end of August. The Reformer himself has given us no account of his disputation with Carlstadt. The account which historians commonly follow is that of Reinhard, a pastor of Jena, and an eye-witness. Its accuracy has been challenged by Luther, and, seeing Reinhard was a friend of Carlstadt, it is not improbably coloured. But making every allowance, Luther appears to have been too much in haste to open this breach in the Protestant army, and he took the responsibility too lightly, forgetful of the truth which Melchior Adam has enunciated, and which experience has a thousand times verified, "that a single spark will often suffice to wrap in flames a whole forest." As regards the argument Luther won no victory; he found the waters ruffled, and he lashed them into tempest.

Assembling the town council and the citizens of Orlamünde, Luther was addressing them when Carlstadt entered. Walking up to Luther, Carlstadt saluted him: "Dear doctor, if you please, I will induct you." "You are my antagonist," Luther replied, "I have pledged you with a florin." "I shall ever be your antagonist," rejoined the other, "so long as you are an antagonist to God and His Word." Luther on this insisted that Carlstadt should withdraw, seeing that he could not transact the business on which he had come at the Elector's command, in his presence. Carlstadt refused, on the ground that it was a free meeting, and if he was in fault why should his presence be feared? On this Luther turned to his attendant, and ordered him to put to the horses at once, for he should immediately leave the town, whereupon Carlstadt withdrew. Being now alone with the men of Orlamünde, Luther proceeded with the business the Elector had sent him to transact, which was to remove their iconoclast prejudices, and quiet the agitation of their city. "Prove to me," said Luther, opening the discussion, "prove to me by Scripture that images ought to be destroyed."

"Mr. Doctor," rejoined a councillor, "do you grant me thus much—that Moses knew God's commandments?" Then opening a Bible he read these words: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or the likeness of anything." This was as much as to say, Prove to me from Scripture that images ought to be worshipped.

“That passage refers to images of idols only,” responded Luther. “If I have hung up in my room a crucifix which I do not worship, what harm can it do me?”

This was Zwingli’s ground; but Luther was not yet able fully to occupy it.

“I have often,” said a shoemaker, “taken off my hat to an image in a room or on the road; to do so is an act of idolatry, which takes from God the glory that is due to Him alone.”

“Because of their being abused, then,” replied Luther, “we ought to destroy women, and pour out wine into the streets.”

“No,” was the reply; “these are God’s creatures, which we are not commanded to destroy.”

It is easy to see that images were not things of mere indifference to Luther. He could not divest himself of a certain veneration for them. He feared to put forth his hand and pull them down, nor would he permit those that would. Immediately on the close of the discussion he left Orlamünde, amid very emphatic marks of popular disfavour. It was the one field, of the many on which he contended, from which he was fated to retire with dishonour.

Carlstadt did not stop here. He began to throw his influence into the scale of the visionaries, and to declaim bitterly against Luther and the Lutherans. This was more than the Elector Frederick could endure. He ordered Carlstadt to quit his dominions; and the latter, obeying, wandered southward, in the direction of Switzerland, propagating wherever he came his views on the Supper; but venting, still more zealously and loudly, his hatred of Luther, whom he accused as the author of all his calamities. The aged Elector, at whose orders he had quitted Saxony, was beginning to fear that the Reformation was advancing too far. His faith in the Reformed doctrine continued to grow, and was only the stronger the nearer he came to his latter end, which was now not far off; but the political signs dismayed him. The unsettling of men’s minds, and the many new and wild notions that were vented, and which were the necessary concomitants of the great revolution in progress, caused him alarm. The horizon was darkening all round, but the good Frederick went to his grave in peace, and saw not those tempests which were destined to shake the world at the birth of Protestantism.

All was peace in the chamber where Frederick the Wise breathed his last. On the 4th of May (1525) he dictated to an amanuensis his last instructions to his brother John, who was to succeed him, and who was then absent with the army in Thuringia. He charged him to deal kindly and tenderly with the peasantry, and to remit the duties on wine and beer. “Be not afraid,” he said, “Our Lord God will richly and graciously compensate us in other ways.”<sup>1</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 2.

the evening Spalatin entered the prince's apartment. "It is right," said his old master, a smile lighting up his face, "that you should come to see a sick man." His chair was rolled to the table, and placing his hand in Spalatin's, he unburdened his mind to him touching the Reformation. His words showed that the clouds that distressed him had rolled away. "The hand of God," said he, "will guide all to a happy issue."

On the morning of the following day he received the Sacrament in both kinds. The act was witnessed by his domestics, who stood around dissolved in tears. Imploring their forgiveness if in anything he had offended them, he bade them all farewell. A will which had been prepared some years before, and in which he had confided his soul to the "Mother of God," was now brought forth and burned, and another dictated, in which he placed his hopes solely on "the merits of Christ." This was the last of his labours that pertained to earth; and now he gave all his thoughts to his departure, which was near. Taking into his hand a small treatise on spiritual consolation, which Spalatin had prepared for his use, he essayed to read; but the task was too much for him. Drawing near his couch, his chaplain recited some promises from the Word of God, of which the Elector, in his latter years, had been a diligent and devout student. A serenity and refreshment of soul came along with the words; and at five of the afternoon he departed so peacefully, that it was only by bending over him that his physician saw he had ceased to breathe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 2.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### WAR OF THE PEASANTS.

A New Danger—German Peasantry—Their Oppressions—These grow Worse—The Reformation Seeks to Alleviate them—The Outbreak—The Reformation Accused—The Twelve Articles—These Rejected by the Princes—Luther's Course—His Admonitions to the Clergy and the Peasantry—Rebellion in Suabia—Extends to Franconia, &c.—The Black Forest—Peasant Army—Ravages—Slaughterings—Count Louis of Helfenstein—Extends to the Rhine—Universal Terror—Army of the Princes—Insurrection Arrested—Weinsberg—Retaliation—Thomas Munzer—Lessons of the Outbreak.

THE sun of the Reformation was mounting into the sky, and promising to fill the world with light. In a moment a cloud gathered, overspread the firmament, and threatened to quench the young day in the darkness of a horrible night.

The troubles that now arose had not been foreseen by Luther. That the Pope, whom the Reformation would despoil of the triple crown, with all the spiritual glory and temporal power attendant thereon, should anathematise it; that the emperor, whose schemes of policy and ambition it thwarted, should make war against it; and that the numerous orders of the mitre and the cowl should swell the opposition, was to be expected; but that the people, from whose eyes it was to tear the bandage of spiritual darkness, and from whose arms it was to rend the fetters of temporal bondage, should seek to destroy it, had not entered into Luther's calculations. Yet now a terrible blow—the greatest the Reformation had as yet sustained—came upon it, not from the Pope, nor from the emperor, but from the people.

The oppressions of the German peasantry had been growing for centuries. They had long since been stripped of the rude privileges their fathers enjoyed. They could no longer roam their forests at will, kill what game they pleased, and build their hut on whatever spot taste or convenience dictated. Not only were they robbed of their ancient rights, they were compelled to submit to new and galling restrictions. Tied to their native acres, in many instances, they were compelled to expend their sweat in tilling the fields, and spill their blood in maintaining the quarrels of their masters. To temporal oppression was added ecclesiastical bondage. The small portion of earthly goods which the baron had left them, the priest wrung from them by spiritual threats, thus filling their cup of suffering to the brim. The power of contrast came to embitter their lot. While one part of Germany was sinking into drudgery and destitution, another part was rising into affluence and power. The free towns were making rapid strides in the acquisition of liberty, and their example taught the peasants the way to achieve a like independence—by combination. Letters and arts were awakening thought and prompting to

effort. Last of all came the Reformation, and that great power vastly widened the range of human vision, by teaching the essential equality of all men, and weakening the central authority, or key-stone in the arch of Europe—namely, the Papacy.<sup>1</sup>

It was now evident to many that the hour had fully come when these wrongs, which dated from ancient times, but which had been greatly aggravated by recent events, must be redressed. The patience of the sufferers was exhausted; they had begun to feel their power; and if their fetters were not loosed by their masters, they would be broken by themselves, and with a blind rage and a destructive fury proportioned to the ignorance in which they had been kept, and the degradation into which they had been sunk. In the words of an eloquent writer and philosopher who flourished in an after-age, “they would break their chains on the heads of their oppressors.”<sup>2</sup>

Mutterings of the gathering storm had already been heard. Premonitory insurrections and tumults had broken out in several of the German countries. The close of the preceding century had been marked by the revolt of the Bours in Holland, who paraded the country under a flag, on which was blazoned a gigantic cheese. The sixteenth century opened amid similar disturbances. Every two or three years there came a “new league,” followed by a popular insurrection.” These admonished the princes, civil and spiritual, that they had no alternative, as regarded the future, but reformation or revolution. Spires, Wurtemberg, Carinthia, and Hungary were the successive theatres of these revolts, which all sprang from one cause—oppressive labour, burdens which were growing ever the heavier, and privileges which were waxing ever the narrower. The poor people, de-humanised by ignorance, knew but of one way of righting themselves—demolishing the castles, wasting the lands, spoiling the treasures, and in some instances slaying the persons of their oppressors.

It was at this hour that the Reformation stepped upon the stage. It came with its healing virtue to change the hearts and tame the passions of men, and so to charm into repose the insurrectionary spirit which threatened to devastate the world. It accomplished its end so far; it would have accomplished it completely, it would have turned the hearts of the princes to their subjects, and the hearts of the people to their rulers, had it been suffered to diffuse itself freely among both classes. Even as it was, it brought with it a pause in these insurrectionary violences, which had begun to be common. But soon its progress was arrested by force, and then it was accused as the author of those evils which it was not permitted to cure. “See,” said Duke George of Saxony, “what an abyss Luther has opened. He has reviled the Pope; he has spoken evil of dignities; he has filled the minds of the people with lofty

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson, *Hist. Charles V.*, bk. iv., p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Sir James Mackintosh, in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*.

notions of their own importance; and by his doctrines he has sown the seeds of universal disorder and anarchy. Luther and his Reformation are the cause of the Peasant war." Many besides Duke George found it convenient to shut their eyes to their own misdeeds, and to make the Gospel the scape-goat of calamities of which they themselves were the authors. Even Erasmus upbraided Luther thus—"We are now reaping the fruits that you have sown."

Some show of reason was given to these accusations by Thomas Munzer, who imported a religious element into this deplorable outbreak. Munzer was a professed disciple of the Reformation, but he held it to be unworthy of a Christian to be guided by any objective authority, even the Word of God. He was called to "liberty," and the law or limit of that "liberty" was his own inward light. Luther, he affirmed, by instituting ordinances and forms, had established another Popedom; and Munzer disliked the Popedom of Wittenberg even more than he did the Popedom of Rome. The political opinions of Munzer partook of a like freedom with his religious ones. To submit to princes was to serve Belials. We have no superior but God. The Gospel taught that all men were equal; and this he interpreted, or rather misinterpreted, into the democratic doctrine of equality of rank, and community of goods. "We must mortify the body," said he, "by fasting and simple clothing, look gravely, speak little, and wear a long beard." "These and such-like things," says Sleidan, "he called the cross."<sup>1</sup> Such was the man who, girding on "the sword of Gideon," put himself at the head of the revolted peasantry. He inoculated them with his own visionary spirit, and taught them to aim at a liberty of which their own judgments or passions were the rule.

The peasants put their demands (January, 1525) into twelve articles. Considering the heated imaginations of those who penned them, these articles were reasonable and moderate. The insurgents craved restitution of certain free domains which had belonged to their ancestors, and certain rights of hunting and fishing which they themselves had enjoyed, but which had been taken from them. They demanded, further, a considerable mitigation of taxes, which burdened them heavily, and which were of comparatively recent imposition. They headed their claim of rights with the free choice of their ministers; and it was a further peculiarity of this document, that each article in it was supported by a text from Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

An enlightened policy would have conceded these demands in the main. Wise rulers would have said, "Let us make these millions free of the earth, of the waters, and of the forests, as their fathers were; from serfs let us convert them into free men. It is better that their skill should enrich, and their valour defend our territories, than that their blood should water them." Alas!

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. v., p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

there was not wisdom enough in the age to adopt such a course. Those on whom these claims were pressed said, “*No*,” with their hands upon their swords.

The vessel of the Reformation was now passing between the Scylla of established despotism and the Charybdis of popular lawlessness. It required rare skill to steer it aright. Shall Luther ally his movement with that of the peasantry? We can imagine him under some temptation to essay ruling the tempest, in the hope of directing its fury to the overthrow of a system, which he regarded as the parent of all the oppressions and miseries that filled Christendom, and had brought on at last this mighty convulsion. One less spiritual in mind, and with less faith in the inherent vitalities of the Reformation, might have been seduced into linking his cause with this tempest. Luther shrank from such a course. He knew that to ally so holy a cause as the Reformation with a movement at best but political, would be to profane it; and that to borrow the sword of men in its behalf was the sure way to forfeit the help of that mightier sword which alone could win such a battle. The Reformation had its own path and its own weapons, to which if it adhered, it would assuredly triumph in the end. It would correct all wrongs, would explode all errors, and pacify all feuds, but only by propagating its own principles, and diffusing its own spirit among men. Luther, therefore, stood apart.

But this enabled him all the more, at the right moment, to come in effectively between the oppressor and the oppressed, and to tell a little of the truth to both.<sup>1</sup> Turning to the princes he reminded them of the long course of tyranny which they and their fathers had exercised over the poor people. To the bishops he spoke yet more plainly. They had hidden the light of the Gospel from the people; they had substituted cheats and fables for the doctrines of Revelation; they had fettered men by unholy vows, and fleeced them by unrighteous impositions, and now they were reaping as they had sowed. To be angry at the peasants, he told them, was to be guilty of the folly of the man who vents his passion against the rod with which he is struck instead of the hand that wields it. The peasantry was but the instrument in the hand of God for their chastisement.

Luther next addressed himself to the insurgents. He acknowledged that their complaints were not without cause, and thus he showed that he had a heart which could sympathise with them in their miseries, but he faithfully told them that they had taken the wrong course to remedy them. They would never mitigate their lot by rebellion; they must exercise Christian submission, and wait the gradual but certain rectification of their individual wrongs, and those of society at large, by the Divine, healing power of the Gospel. He sought to enforce his admonition by his own example. He had not taken the

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 3, pp. 7, 8.

sword; he had relied on the sole instrumentality of the Gospel, and they themselves knew how much it had done in a very few years to shake the power of an oppressive hierarchy, with the political despotism that upheld it, and to ameliorate the condition of Christendom. No army could have accomplished half the work in double the time. He implored them to permit this process to go on. It is preachers, not soldiers—the Gospel, not rebellion, that is to benefit the world. And he warned them that if they should oppose the Gospel in the name of the Gospel, they would only rivet the yoke of their enemies upon their neck.<sup>1</sup>

The courage of the Reformer is not less conspicuous than his wisdom, in speaking thus plainly to two such parties at such an hour. But Luther had but small thanks for his fidelity. The princes accused him of throwing his shield over rebellion, because he refused to pronounce an unqualified condemnation of the peasantry; and the peasants blamed him as truckling to the princes, because he was not wholly with the insurrection. Posterity has judged otherwise. At this, as at every other crisis, Luther acted with profound moderation and wisdom. His mediation failed, however, and the storm now burst.

The first insurrectionary cloud rolled up in Suabia, from beside the sources of the Danube. It made its appearance in the summer of 1524. The insurrectionary spirit ran like wildfire along the Danube, kindling the peasantry into revolt, and filling the towns with tumults, seditions, and terrors. By the end of the year Thuringia, Franconia, and part of Saxony were in a blaze. When the spring of 1525 opened, the conflagration spread wider still. It was now that the “twelve articles,” to which we have referred above, were published, and became the standard for the insurgents to rally round. John Muller, of Bulbenbach, traversed the region of the Black Forest, attired in a red gown and a red cap, preceded by the tricolour—red, black, and white—and followed by a herald, who read aloud the “twelve articles,” and demanded the adherence of the inhabitants of the districts through which he passed. The peasant army that followed him was continually reinforced by new accessions. Towns too feeble to resist these formidable bands, opened their gates at their approach, and not a few knights and barons, impelled by terror, joined their ranks.

The excitement of the insurgents soon grew into fury. Their march was no longer tumultuous simply, it had now become destructive and desolating. The country in their rear resembled the track over which an invading and plundering host had passed. Fields were trampled down, barns and storehouses were rifled, the castles of the nobility were demolished, and the convents were burned to the ground.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. v., pp. 90–95. D'Aubigné, vol. iii., pp. 185, 186.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, *Hist. Charles V.*, bk. iv., p. 151.

More cruel violences than these did this army of insurgents inflict. They now began to dye their path with the blood of unhappy victims. They slaughtered mercilessly those who fell into their power. On Easter Day (April 16th, 1525) they surprised Weinsberg, in Suabia. Its garrison they condemned to death. The fate of its commander, Count Louis of Helfenstein, was heart-rending in the extreme. His wife, the natural daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, threw herself at the feet of the insurgents, and, holding her infant son in her arms, besought them, with a flood of tears, to spare her husband.<sup>1</sup> It was in vain. They lowered their pikes, and ran him through.<sup>2</sup> He fell pierced by innumerable wounds.

It seemed as if this conflagration was destined to rage till it had devoured all Christendom; as if the work of destruction would go on till all the fences of order were torn down, and all the symbols of authority defaced, and pause in its career only when it had issued in a universal democracy, in which neither rank nor property would be recognised. It extended on the west to the Rhine, where it stirred into tumult the towns of Spire, Worms, and Cologne, and infected the Palatinate with its fever of sanguinary vengeance. It invaded Alsace and Lorraine. It convulsed Bavaria, and Würtemberg as far as the Tyrol. Its area extended from Saxony to the Alps. Bishops and nobles fled before it. The princes, taken by surprise, were without combination and without spirit,<sup>3</sup> and, to use the language of Scripture, were “chased as the rolling thing before the whirlwind.”

But soon they recovered from their stupor, and got together their forces. Albert, Count of Mansfeld, was the first to take the field. He was joined, with characteristic spirit and gallantry, by Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, who was soon followed by John, Elector of Saxony, and Henry, Duke of Brunswick, who all joined their forces to oppose the rebel boors. Had the matter rested with the Popish princes, the rebellion would have raged without resistance. On the 15th May, 1525, the confederate army came upon the rebel camp at Frankenhausen, where Munzer presided. Finding the rebels poorly armed, and posted behind a miserable barricade of a few wagons, they sent a messenger with an offer of pardon, on condition of laying down their arms. On Munzer's advice, the messenger was put to death. Both sides now prepared for battle. The leader of the peasant army, Munzer, addressed them in an enthusiastic and inflammatory harangue, bidding them not fear the army of tyrants they were about to engage that the sword of the Lord and of Gideon would fight for them; and that they would this day experience a like miraculous deliverance as the Israelites at the Red Sea, as David when he encountered Goliath, and Jonathan when he attacked the garrison of the Philistines.

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 4, p. 9

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

“Be not afraid,” said he, “of their great guns, for in my coat will I catch all the bullets which they shall shoot at you. See ye not how gracious God is unto us? Lift up your eyes, and see that rainbow in the clouds; for, seeing we have the same painted on our banner, God plainly declares by that representation which He shows us from on high that He will stand by us in the battle, and that He will utterly destroy our enemies. Fall on them courageously.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite this assurance of victory, the rebel host, at the first onset, fled in the utmost confusion. Munzer was among the first to make his escape. He took refuge in a house near the gate, where he was discovered after the battle, hid in the garret. He was committed to the custody of Duke George. In this encounter 5,000 of the peasantry were slain, and thus the confederates were at liberty to move their forces into Franconia, where the insurrection still raged with great fury. The insurgents here burned above 200 castles, besides noblemen’s houses and monasteries. They took the town of Wirtzburg, and besieged the castle; but Trusches coming upon them charged, discomfited, and put them to flight.

Luther raised his voice again, but this time to pronounce an unqualified condemnation on a movement which, from a demand for just rights, had become a war of pillage and murder. He called on all to gird on the sword and resist it. The confederate princes made George von Trusches general of their army. Advancing by the side of the Lake of Constance, and dividing his soldiers into three bodies, Trusches attacked the insurgents with vigour. Several battles were fought, towns and fortresses were besieged; the peasantry contended with a furious bravery, knowing that they must conquer or endure a terrible revenge; but the arms of the princes triumphed. The campaign of this summer sufficed to suppress this formidable insurrection; but a terrible retaliation did the victors inflict upon the fanaticised hordes. They slaughtered them by tens of thousands on the battle-field; they cut them down as they fled; and not unfrequently did they dispatch in cold blood those who had surrendered on promise of pardon. The lowest estimate of the number that perished is 50,000, other accounts raise it to 100,000. When we consider the wide area over which the insurrection extended, and the carnage with which it was suppressed, we shall probably be of opinion that the latter estimate is nearer the truth.

A memorable vengeance was inflicted on Weinsberg, the scene of the death of Count Helfenstein. His murderers were apprehended and executed. The death of one of them was singularly tragic. He was tied to the stake with a chain, that was long enough to permit him to run about. Trusches and other persons of quality then fetched wood, and, strewing it all about, they kindled it into a cruel blaze. As the wretched man bounded wildly round and round

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. v., pp. 85, 86. Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 4, pp. 9, 10.

amid the blazing faggots, the princes stood by and made sport of his tortures.<sup>1</sup> The town itself was burned to the ground. Munzer, the ecclesiastical leader, who had fired the peasantry by harangues, by portents, by assurances that their enemies would be miraculously destroyed, and by undertaking “to catch all the bullets in his sleeve,”<sup>2</sup> after witnessing the failure of his enterprise, was taken and decapitated. Prior to execution he was taken before George, Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave Philip. On being asked why he had misled so many poor people to their ruin, he replied that “he had done only his duty.” The landgrave was at pains to show him that sedition and rebellion are forbidden in the Scriptures, and that Christians are not at liberty to avenge their wrongs by their own private authority. To this he was silent. On the rack he shrieked and laughed by turns; but when about to die he openly acknowledged his error and crimes. By way of example his head was stuck upon a pole in the open fields.<sup>3</sup>

Such horrible ending had the insurrection of the peasants. Ghastly memorials marked the provinces where this tempest had passed; fields wasted, cities overturned, castles and dwellings in ruins, and, more piteous still, corpses dangling from the trees, or gathered in heaps in the fields. The gain remained with Rome. The old worship was in some places restored, and the yoke of feudal bondage was more firmly riveted than before upon the necks of the people.

Nevertheless, the outbreak taught great lessons to the world, worth a hundredfold all the sufferings endured, if only they had been laid to heart. The peasant war illustrated the Protestant movement by showing how widely it differed from Romanism, in both its origin and its issues. The insurrection did not manifest itself, or in but the mildest type, at Wittenberg and in the places permeated by the Wittenberg movement. When it touched ground which the Reformation had occupied, it became that instant powerless. It lacked air to fan it; it found no longer inflammable materials to kindle into a blaze. The Gospel said to this wasting conflagration, “Thus far, but no farther.” Could any man doubt that if Bavaria and the neighbouring provinces had been in the same condition with Saxony, there would have been no peasant war?

This outbreak taught the age, moreover, that Protestantism could no more be advanced by popular violence than it could be suppressed by aristocratic tyranny. It was independent of both; it must advance by its own inherent might along its own path. In fine, this terrible outbreak gave timely warning to the world of what the consequences would be of suppressing the Reformation. It showed that underneath the surface of Christendom there was an

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *Luth. Opp.*, lib. xix., p. 297. D'Aubigné, vol. iii., p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. v., p. 87.



abyss of evil principles and fiendish passions, which would one day break through and rend society in pieces, unless they were extinguished by a Divine influence. Munzer and his “inward light” was but the precursor of Voltaire and the “illuminati” of his school. The peasants’ war of 1525 was the first opening of “the fountains of the great deep.” The “Terror” was first seen stalking through Germany. It slumbered for two centuries while the religious and political power of Europe was undergoing a process of slow emasculation. Then the “Terror” again awoke, and the blasphemies, massacres, and wars of the French Revolution overwhelmed Europe.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BATTLE OF PAVIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PROTESTANTISM.

The Papacy Entangles itself with Earthly Interests—Protestantism stands Alone—Monarchy and the Popedom—Which is to Rule?—The Conflict a Defence to Protestantism—War between the Emperor and Francis I.—Expulsion of the French from Italy—Battle of Pavia—Capture and Captivity of Francis I.—Charles V. at the Head of Europe—Protestantism to be Extirpated—Luther Marries—The Nuns of Nimptsch—Catherine von Bora—Antichrist about to be Born—What Luther's Marriage said to Rome.

THERE was one obvious difference between that movement of which Rome was the headquarters, and that of which Wittenberg was the centre. The Popedom mixed itself up with the politics of Europe; Protestantism, on the other hand, stood apart, and refused to ally itself with earthly confederacies. The consequence was that the Papacy had to shape its course to suit the will of those on whom it leaned. It rose and fell with the interests with which it had cast in its lot. The loss of a battle or the fall of a statesman would, at times, bring it to the brink of ruin. Protestantism, on the other hand, was free to hold its own course and to develop its own principles. The fall of monarchs and the changes in the political world gave it no uneasiness. Instead of fixing its gaze on the troubled ocean around it, its eye was lifted to heaven.

At this hour intrigues, ambitions, and wars were rife all round Protestantism. The Kings of Spain and France were striving with one another for the possession of Italy. The Pope thought, of course, that he had a better right than either to be master in that country. He was jealous of both monarchs, and shaped his policy so as to make the power of the one balance and check that of the other. He hoped to be able one day to drive both out of the peninsula, if not by arms, yet by arts; but till that day should come, his safety lay in appearing to be the friend of both, and in taking care that the one should not be very much stronger than the other. All three—the Emperor, the King of France, and the Pope—in whatever else they differed, were the enemies of the Reformation; and had they united their arms they would have been strong enough, in all reckoning of human chances, to put down the Protestant movement. But their dynastic ambitions, fomented largely by the personal piques and crafty and ambitious projects of the men around them, kept them at almost perpetual feud. Each aspired to be the first man of his time. The Pope was still dreaming of restoring to the Papal See the supremacy which it possessed in the days of Gregory VII. and Innocent III., and of dictating to both Charles and Francis. These sovereigns, on the other hand, were determined not to let go the superiority which they had at last achieved over the tiara. The struggle of monarchy to keep what it had got, of the tiara to regain what it had lost, and of all three to be uppermost, filled their lives with

disquiet, their kingdoms with misery, and their age with war. But these rivalries were a wall of defence around that Divine principle which was growing up into majestic stature in a world shaken by the many furious storms that were raging on it.

Scarce had the young emperor Charles V. thrown down the gage of battle to Protestantism, when these tempests broke in from many quarters. He had just fulminated the edict which consigned Luther to destruction, and was drawing his sword to execute it, when a quarrel broke out between himself and Francis I. The French army, crossing the Pyrenees, overran Navarre and entered Castile. The emperor hastened back to Spain to take measures for the defence of his kingdom. The war, thus begun, lasted till 1524, and ended in the expulsion of the French from Milan and Genoa, where they had been powerful ever since the day of Charles VIII. Nor did hostilities end here. The emperor, indignant at the invasion of his kingdom, and wishing to chastise his rival on his own soil, sent his army into France. The chivalry of Francis I., and the patriotic valour of his subjects, drove back the invaders. But the French king, not content with having rid himself of the soldiers of Spain, would chastise the emperor in his turn. He followed the Spanish army into Italy, and sought to recover the cities and provinces whereof he had recently been despoiled, and which were all the dearer to him that they were situated in a land to which he was ever exceedingly desirous of stretching his sceptre, but from which he was so often compelled, to his humiliation, again to draw it back.

The winter of 1525 beheld the Spanish and French armies face to face under the walls of Pavia. The place was strongly fortified, and had held out against the French for now two months, although Francis I. had employed in its reduction all the engineering expedients known to the age. Despite the obstinacy of the defenders, it was now evident that the town must fall. The Spanish garrison, reduced to extremity, sallied forth, and joined battle with the besiegers with all the energy of despair.

This day was destined to bring with it a terrible reverse in the fortunes of Francis I. Its dawn saw him the first warrior of his age; its evening found him in the abject condition of a captive. His army was defeated under the walls of that city which they had been on the point of entering as conquerors. Ten thousand, including many a gallant knight, lay dead on the field, and the misfortune was crowned by the capture of the king himself, who was taken prisoner in the battle, and carried to Madrid as a trophy of the conqueror. In Spain, Francis I. dragged out a wretched year in captivity. The emperor, elated by his good fortune, and desirous not only of humiliating his royal prisoner, but of depriving him of the power of injuring him in time to come, imposed very hard conditions of ransom. These the French king readily subscribed, and all the more so that he had not the slightest intention of fulfilling

them. "In the treaty of peace, it is stipulated among other things," says Sleidan, "that the emperor and king shall endeavour to extirpate the enemies of the Christian religion, and the heresies of the sect of the Lutherans. In like manner, that peace being made betwixt them, they should settle the affairs of the public, and make war against the Turk and heretics excommunicated by the Church; for that it was above all things necessary, and that the Pope had often solicited and advised them to bestir themselves therein. That, therefore, in compliance with his desires, they resolved to entreat him that he would appoint a certain day when the ambassadors and deputies of all kings and princes might meet, in a convenient place, with full power and commission to treat of such measures as might seem proper for undertaking a war against the Turk, and also for rooting out heretics and the enemies of the Church."<sup>1</sup> Other articles were added of a very rigorous kind, such as that the French king should surrender Burgundy to the emperor, and renounce all pretensions to Italy, and deliver up his two eldest sons as hostages for the fulfilment of the stipulations. Having signed the treaty, early in January, 1526, Francis was set at liberty. Crossing the frontier near Irun, and touching French soil once more, he waved his cap in the air, and shouting aloud, "I am yet a king!" he put spurs to his Turkish horse, and galloped along the road to St. Jean de Luz, where his courtiers waited to welcome him.<sup>2</sup>

The hour was now come, so Charles V. thought,, when he could deal his long-meditated blow against the Wittenberg heresy. Never since he ascended the throne had he been so much at liberty to pursue the policy to which his wishes prompted. The battle of Pavia had brought the war in Italy to a more prosperous issue than he had dared to hope. France was no longer a thorn in his side. Its monarch, formerly his rival, he had now converted into his ally, or rather, as Charles doubtless believed, into his lieutenant, bound to aid him in his enterprises, and specially in that one that lay nearer his heart than any other. Moreover, the emperor was on excellent terms with the King of England,, and it was the interest of the English minister, Cardinal Wolsey, who cherished hopes of the tiara, through the powerful influence of Charles, that that good understanding should continue. As regarded Pope Clement, the emperor was on the point of visiting Rome to receive the imperial' crown from the Pontiffs hands, and in addition, doubtless, the apostolic benediction on the enterprise which Charles had in view against an enemy that Clement abhorred more than he did the Turk.

This was a most favourable juncture for prosecuting the battle of the Papacy. The victory of Pavia had left Charles the most puissant monarch in Europe. On all sides was peace, and having vanquished so many foes, surely

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., pp. 102, 103. Robertson, bk. iv., pp. 149, 150.

it would be no difficult matter to extinguish the monk, who had neither sword nor buckler to defend him. Accordingly, Charles now took the first step toward the execution of his design. Sitting down (May 24, 1525) in the stately Alcazar of Toledo,<sup>1</sup> whose rocky foundations are washed by the Tagus, he indited his summons to the princes and States of Germany to meet at Augsburg, and take measures “to defend the Christian religion, and the holy rites and customs received from their ancestors, and to prohibit all pernicious doctrines and innovations.” This edict the emperor supplemented by instructions from Seville, dated March 23, 1526, which, in effect, enjoined the princes to see to the execution of the Edict of Worms.<sup>2</sup> Every hour the tempest that was gathering over Protestantism grew darker.

If at no previous period had the emperor been stronger, or his sword so free to execute his purpose, at no time had Luther been so defenceless as now. His protector, the Elector Frederick, whose circumspection approached timidity, but whose purpose was ever resolute and steady, was now dead. The three princes who stood up in his room — the Elector John, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, and Albert of Prussia—were new to the cause; they lacked the influence which Frederick possessed; they were discouraged, almost dismayed, by the thickening dangers—Germany divided, the Ratisbon League rampant, and the author of the Edict of Worms placed by the unlooked-for victory of Pavia at the head of Europe. The only man who did not tremble was Luther. Not that he did not see the formidable extent of the danger, but because he was able to realise a Defender whom others could not see. He knew that if the Gospel had been stripped of all earthly defence it was not because it was about to perish, but because a Divine hand was about to be stretched out in its behalf, so visibly as to give proof to the world that it had a Protector, though “unseen,” more powerful than all its enemies. While dreadful fulminations were coming from the other side of the Alps, and while angry and mortal menaces were being hourly uttered in Germany, what did Luther do? Run to his cell, and do penance in sackcloth and ashes to turn away the ire of emperor and Pontiff? No. Taking Catherine von Bora by the hand he led her to the altar, and made her his wife.<sup>3</sup>

Catherine von Bora was the daughter of one of the minor nobles of the Saxon Palatinate. Her father’s fortune was not equal to his rank, and this circumstance disabling him from giving Catherine a dowry, he placed her in the convent of Nimptsch, near Grimma, in Saxony. Along with the eight nuns who were the companions of her seclusion, she studied the Scriptures, and from them the sisters came to see that their vow was not binding. The Word

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. v., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* bk. vi., p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. v., p. 97.

of God had unbarred the door of their cell. The nine nuns, leaving the convent in a body, repaired to Wittenberg, and were there maintained by the bounty of the elector, administered through Luther. In process of time all the nuns found husbands, and Kate alone of the nine remained unmarried. The Reformer thus had opportunity of knowing her character and virtues, and appreciating the many accomplishments which were more rarely the ornament of the feminine intellect in those days than they are in ours. The marriage took place on the 11th of June. On the evening of that day, Luther, accompanied by the pastor Pomeranus, whom he had asked to bless the union, repaired to the house of the burgomaster, who had been constituted Kate's guardian, and there, in the presence of two witnesses—the great painter, Lucas Cranach, and Dr. John Apella—the marriage took place. On the 15th of June, Luther says, in a letter to Ruhel, "I have made the determination to retain nothing of my Papistical life, and thus I have entered the state of matrimony, at the urgent solicitation of my father."<sup>1</sup> The special purport of the letter was to invite Ruhel to the marriage-feast, which was to be given on Tuesday, the 27th of June. The old couple from Mansfeld—John and Margaret Luther—were to be present. Ruhel was wealthy, and Luther, with characteristic frankness, tells him that any present he might choose to bring with him would be acceptable. Wenceslaus Link, of Nuremberg, whose nuptials Luther had blessed some time before, was also invited: but, being poor, it was stipulated that he should bring no present. Spalatin was to send some venison, and come himself. Amsdorf also was of the number of the guests. Philip Melancthon, the dearest friend of all, was absent. We can guess the reason. The bold step of Luther had staggered him. To marry while so many calamities impended! Philip went about some days with an anxious and clouded face, but when the clamour arose his brow cleared, his eye brightened, and he became the warmest defender of the marriage of the Reformer, in which he was joined by not a few wise and moderate men in the Romish Church.<sup>2</sup>

The union was hardly effected when, as we have already hinted, a shout of indignation arose, as if Luther had done some impious and horrible thing. "It is incest!" exclaimed Henry VIII. of England. "From this marriage will spring Antichrist," said others, remembering with terror that some nameless astrologer of the Middle Ages had foretold that Antichrist would be the issue of a perjured nun and an apostate monk. "How many Antichrists," said Erasmus, with that covert but trenchant irony in which he was so great a master,

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 5, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> The portraits of Kate, from originals by Lucas Cranach, represent her with a round full face, a straight pointed nose, and large eyes. Romanist writers have been more complimentary to her, as regards beauty, than Protestants, who generally speak of her as plain.

“How many Antichrists must there be then in the world already!”<sup>1</sup> What was Luther’s crime? He had obeyed an ordinance which God has instituted, and he had entered into a state which an apostle has pronounced “honourable in all.” But he did not heed the noise. It was his way of saying to Rome, “This is the obedience I give to your ordinances, and this is the awe in which I stand of your threatenings.” The rebuke thus tacitly given sank deep. It was another inexpressible offence, added to many former ones, for which, as Rome fondly believed, the hour of recompense was now drawing nigh. Even some of the disciples of the Reformation were scandalised at Luther’s marrying an ex-nun, so slow are men to cast off the trammels of ages.

With Catherine Bora there entered a new light into the dwelling of Luther. To sweetness and modesty, she added a more than ordinary share of good sense. A genuine disciple of the Gospel, she became the faithful companion and help-meet of the Reformer in all the labours and trials of his subsequent life. From the inner circle of that serenity and peace which her presence diffused around him, he looked forth upon a raging world which was continually seeking to destroy him, and which marvelled that the Reformer did not sink, not seeing the Hand that turned aside the blows which were being ceaselessly aimed at him.

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<sup>1</sup> Melch. Adam., *Vit. Luth.*, p. 131. Seckendorf, ii. 5, p. 18.

## CHAPTER X.

### DIET AT SPIRES, 1526, AND LEAGUE AGAINST THE EMPEROR.

A Storm—Rolls away from Wittenberg—Clement Hopes to Restore the Mediæval Papal Glories—Forms a League\* against the Emperor—Changes of the Wind.—Charles turns to Wittenberg—Diet at Spires—Spirit of the Lutheran Princes—Duke John—Landgrave Philip—''The Word of the Lord endureth for ever''—Protestant Sermons—City Churches Deserted—The Diet takes the Road to Wittenberg—The Free Towns—The Reforms Demanded—Popish Party Discouraged—The Emperor's Letter from Seville—Consternation.

THE storm had been coming onward for some time. The emperor and the Pope, at the head of the confederate kings and subservient princes of the Empire, were advancing against the Reformation, to strike once and for all. Events fell out in the Divine appointment that seemed to pave the way of the assailing host, and make their victory sure. Frederick, who till now had stood between Luther and the mailed hand of Charles, was at that moment borne to the tomb. It seemed as if the crusades of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were about to be repeated, and that the Protestantism of the sixteenth century was to be extinguished in a tempest of horrors, similar to that which had swept away the Albigensian confessors. However, despite the terrible portents now visible in every quarter of the sky, the confidence of Luther that all would yet go well was not to be disappointed. Just as the tempest seemed about to burst over Wittenberg, to the amazement of all men, it rolled away, and discharged itself with terrific violence on Rome. Let us see how this came about.

Of the potentates with whom Charles had contracted alliance, or with whom he was on terms of friendship, the one he could most thoroughly depend on, one would have thought, was the Pope. In the affair the emperor had now in hand, the interest, and policy of Charles and of Clement were undoubtedly identical. On what could the Pope rely for deliverance from that host of heretics that Germany was sending forth, but on the sword of Charles V.? Yet at this moment the Pope suddenly turned against the emperor, and, as if smitten with infatuation, wrecked the expedition that Charles meditated for the triumph of Rome and the humiliation of Wittenberg just as the emperor was on the point of beginning it. This was passing strange. What motive led the Pope to adopt a policy so suicidal? That which misled Clement was his dream of restoring the lost glories of the Popedom, and making it what it had been under Gregory VII. We have already pointed out the change effected in the European system by the wars of the fifteenth century, and how much that change contributed to pave the way for the advent of Protestantism. The Papacy was lowered and monarchy was lifted up; but the Popes



long cherished the hope that the change was only temporary, that Christendom would return to its former state—the true one they deemed it—and that all the crowns of Europe would be once more under the tiara. Therefore, though Clement was pleased to see the advancement of Charles V. so far as it enabled him to serve the Roman See, he had no wish to see him at the summit. The Pope was especially jealous of the Spanish power in Italy. Charles already possessed Naples; the victory of Pavia had given him a firm footing in Lombardy. Thus, both in the north and in the south of the Italian peninsula, the Spanish power hemmed in the Pontiff. Clement aspired to erect Italy into an independent kingdom, and from Rome, its old capital, govern it as its temporal monarch, while he swayed his sceptre over all Christendom as its spiritual chief. The hour was favourable, he thought, for the realisation of this fine project. There was a party of literary men in Florence and Rome who were full of the idea of restoring Italy to her old place among the kingdoms. This idea was the result of the literary and artistic progress of the Italians during the half-century which had just elapsed;<sup>1</sup> and the result enables us to compare the relative forces of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The first engendered in the bosoms of the Italians a burning detestation of the yoke of their foreign masters, but left them entirely without power to free themselves. The last brought both the love of liberty and the power of achieving it.

Knowing this feeling on the part of his countrymen, Pope Clement, thinking the hour was come for restoring to the Papacy its mediæval glories, opened negotiations with Louisa of Savoy, who administered the government of France during the captivity of her son, and afterwards with Francis I. himself when he had recovered his liberty. He corresponded with the King of England, who favoured the project; with Venice, with Milan, with the Republic of Florence. And all these parties, moved by fear of the overgrown power of the emperor, were willing to enter into a league with the Pope against Charles V. This, known as the “Holy League,” was subscribed at Cognac, and the King of England was put at the head of it.<sup>2</sup> Thus suddenly did the change come. Blind to everything beyond his immediate object—to the risks of war, to the power of his opponent, and to the diversion he was creating in favour of Wittenberg—the Pope, without loss of time, sent his army into the Duchy of Milan, to begin operations against the Spaniards.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ranke, bk. i., chap. 3, p. 77; Lond., 1847.

<sup>2</sup> Bullar, *Mag. Rom.*, x. 55; Luxem., 1741. The bull of Clement styles the league *Confederatio atque Sanctissimum Fædus*,” and names “Our dear son in Christ, Henry, King of England and Lord of Ireland, Defender of the Faith,” “protector and conservator of it.”

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 105—where the reader will find a summary of the conditions of the league between the Pope and his confederates. Kanke, bk. i., chap. 3, pp. 77, 78. D’Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 10.

While hostilities are pending in the north of Italy, let us turn our eyes to Germany. The Diet, which, as we have already said, had been summoned by Charles to meet at Augsburg, was at this moment assembled at Spires. It had met at Augsburg, agreeably to the imperial command, in November, 1525, but it was so thinly attended that it adjourned to midsummer next year, to be held at Spires, where we now find it. It had been convoked in order to lay the train for the execution of the Edict of Worms, and the suppression of Protestantism. But between the issuing of the summons and meeting of the assembly the politics of Europe had entirely changed. When the emperor's edict passed out of the gates of the Alcazar of Toledo the wind was setting full toward the Vatican, the Pope was the emperor's staunchest ally, and was preparing to place the imperial crown on his head; but since then the wind had suddenly veered round toward the opposite quarter, and Charles must turn with it—he must play off Luther against Clement. This complete reversal of the political situation was as yet unknown in Germany, or but vaguely surmised.

The Diet assembled at Spires on the 25th of June, 1526, and all the electoral princes were present, except the Prince of Brandenburg.<sup>1</sup> The Reformed princes were in strong muster, and in high spirits. The fulminations from Spain had not terrified them. Their courage might be read in the gallantry of their bearing as they rode along to Spires, at the head of their armed retainers, with the five significant letters blazoned on their banners, and shown also on their escutcheons hung out on the front of their hotels, and even embroidered on the liveries of their servants, V. D. M. I. Æ., that is, *Verbum Domini manet in Æternum* The word of the Lord endureth for ever “).<sup>2</sup>

Theirs was not the crestfallen air of men who were going to show cause why they dared be Lutherans when it was the will of the emperor that they should be Romanists. Charles had thundered against them in his ban; they had given their reply in the motto which they had written upon their standards, “The Word of God.” Under this sign would they conquer. Their great opponent was advancing against them at the head of kingdoms and armies; but the princes lifted their eyes to the motto on their ensigns, and took

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> “The command of God endures through Eternity, *Verbum Dei Manet In Æternum*,’ was the Epigraph and Life-motto which John the Steadfast had adopted for himself; V. D. M. I. Æ., these initials he had engraved on all the furnitures of his existence, on his standards, pictures, plate, on the very sleeves of his lackeys, and I can perceive, on his own deep heart first of all. V.D.M. Æ. or might it not be read withal, as Philip of Hessen sometimes said (Philip, still a young fellow, capable of sport in his magnanimous scorn), ‘*Verbum Diaboli Manet in Episcopis*, The Devil’s Word sticks fast in the Bishops’?” (Carlyle, *Frederick the Great*, bk. iii., chap. 5.)

courage: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."<sup>1</sup>

Whoever in the sixteenth century would assert rank and challenge influence, must display a corresponding magnificence. John, Duke of Saxony, entered Spires with a retinue of 700 horsemen. The splendour of his style of living far exceeded that of the other electors, ecclesiastical and lay, and gained for him the place of first prince of the Empire. The next after Duke John to figure at the Diet was Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. His wealth did not enable him to maintain so numerous a retinue as Duke John, but his gallant bearing, ready address, and skill in theological discussion gave him a grand position. Bishops he did not fear to encounter in debate. His arsenal was the Bible, and so adroit was he in the use of his weapons, that his antagonist, whether priest or layman, was sure to come off only second best. Both Duke John and Landgrave Philip understood the crisis that had arrived, and resolved that nothing should be wanting on their part to ward off the dangers that from so many quarters, and in a combination so formidable, threatened at this hour the Protestant cause.

Their first demand on arriving at Spires was for a church in which the Gospel might be preached. The Bishop of Spires stood aghast at the request. Did the princes know what they asked? Was not Lutheranism under the ban of the Empire? Had not the Diet been assembled to suppress it, and uphold the old religion? If then he should open a Lutheran conventicle in the city, and set up a Lutheran pulpit in the midst of the Diet, what would be thought of his conduct at Rome? No! while the Church's oil was upon him he would listen to no such proposal. Well, replied the princes in effect, if a church cannot be had, the Gospel will lose none of its power by being preached outside cathedral. The elector and landgrave, who had brought their chaplains with them, opened their hotels for worship.<sup>2</sup> On one Sunday, it is said, as many as 8,000 assembled to the Protestant sermon. While the saloons of the princes were thronged, the city churches were deserted. If we except Ferdinand and the Catholic princes, who thought it incumbent upon them to countenance the old worship, scarce in nave or aisle was there worshipper to be seen. The priests were left alone at the foot of the altars. The tracts of Luther, freely distributed in Spires, helped too to make the popular tide set yet more strongly in the Reformed direction; and the public feeling, so unequivocally declared, reacted on the Diet.

The Reformed princes and their friends were never seen at mass; and on the Church's fast-days, as on other days, meat appeared at their tables. Perhaps they were a little too ostentatious in letting it be known that they gave

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm xx. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 9.

no obedience to the ordinance of “forbidden meats.” It was not necessary on “magro” day, as the Italians call it, to carry smoking joints to Lutheran tables in full sight of Romanist assemblies engaged in their devotions, in order to show their Protestantism.<sup>1</sup> They took other and more commendable methods to distinguish between themselves and the adherents of the old creed. They strictly charged their attendants to an orderly and obliging behaviour; they commanded them to eschew taverns and gaming-tables, and generally to keep aloof from the roistering and disorderly company which the Diets of the Empire commonly drew into the cities where they were held.<sup>2</sup> Their preachers proclaimed the doctrines, and their followers exhibited the fruits of Lutheranism. Thus all undesignedly a powerful Protestant propaganda was established in Spires. The heaven was spreading in the population.

Meanwhile the Diet was proceeding with its business. Ferdinand of Austria it was suspected had very precise instructions from his brother, the emperor, touching the measures he wished the Diet to adopt. But Ferdinand, before delivering them, waited to see how the Diet would incline. If it should hold the straight road, so unmistakably traced out in the Edict of Worms, he would be spared the necessity of delivering the harsh message with which he had been charged; but if the Diet should stray in the direction of Wittenberg, then he would make known the emperor’s commands.

The Diet had not gone far till it was evident that it had left the road in which Ferdinand and the emperor desired that it should walk. Not only did it not execute the Edict of Worms—declaring this to be impossible, and that if the emperor were on the spot he too would be of this mind—but it threw on Charles the blame of the civil strife which had lately raged in Germany, by so despotically forbidding in the Decree of Burgos the assembling of the Diet at Spires, as agreed on at Nuremberg, and so leaving the wounds of Germany to fester, till they issued in “seditions and a bloody civil war.” It demanded, moreover, the speedy convocation of a general or national council to redress the public grievances. In these demands we trace the rising influence of the free towns in the Diet. The lay element was asserting itself, and challenging the sole right of the priests to settle ecclesiastical affairs. The Popish members, perceiving how the tide was setting, became discouraged.<sup>3</sup>

Nor was this all. A paper was given in (August 4th) to the princes by the representatives of several of the cities of Germany, proposing other changes in opposition to the known will and policy of the emperor. In this paper the cities complained that poor men were saddled with Mendicant friars, who “wheedled them, and ate the bread out of their mouths; nor was that all—

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<sup>1</sup> Cochläus complains of this as a tempting of the faithful by the savour of wines and meats (p. 138).

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., pp. 103,104.

many times they hooked in inheritances and most ample legacies.” The cities demanded that a stop should be put to the multiplication of these fraternities; that when any of the friars died their places should not be filled by new members; that those among them who were willing to embrace another calling should have a small annual pension allowed them; and that the rest of their revenues should be brought into the public treasury. It was not reasonable, they further maintained, that the clergy should be exempt from all public burdens. That privilege had been granted them of old by the bounty of kings; but then they were “few in number” and “low in fortune;” now they were both numerous and rich. The exemption was the more invidious that the clergy shared equally with others in the advantages for which money and taxes were levied. They complained, moreover, of the great number of holidays. The severe penalties which forbade useful labour on these days did not shut out temptations to vice and crime, and these periods of compulsory idleness were as unfavourable to the practice of virtue as to the habit of industry. They prayed, moreover, that the law touching forbidden meats should be abolished, and that all men should be left at liberty as regarded ceremonies till such time as a General Council should assemble, and that meanwhile no obstruction should be offered to the preaching of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

It was now that the storm really burst. Seeing the Diet treading the road that led to Wittenberg, and fearing that, should he longer delay, it would arrive there, Ferdinand drew forth from its repose in the recesses of his cabinet the emperor’s letter, and read it to the deputies. The letter was dated Seville, March 26, 1526.<sup>2</sup> Charles had snatched a moment’s leisure in the midst of his marriage festivities to make known his will on the religious question, in prospect of the meeting of the Diet. The emperor informed the princes that he was about to proceed to Rome to be crowned; that he would consult with the Pope touching the calling of a General Council; that meanwhile he “willed and commanded that they should decree nothing contrary to the ancient customs, canons, and ceremonies of the Church, and that all things should be ordered within his dominions according to the form and tenor of the Edict of Worms.”<sup>3</sup> This was the Edict of Worms over again. It meted out to the disciples of Protestantism chains, prisons, and stakes.

The first moments were those of consternation. The check was the more severe that it came at a time when the hopes of the Protestants were high. Landgrave Philip was triumphing in the debate; the free towns were raising their voices; the Popish section of the Diet was maintaining a languid fight; all Germany seemed on the point of being carried over to the Lutheran side;

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., pp. 103, 104.

<sup>2</sup> At that time the Pope had not concluded his alliance with France.

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 103. Fra-Paolo Sarpi, livr. i., p. 71.

when, all at once, the Protestants were brought up before the powerful man who, as the conqueror of Pavia, had humbled the King of France, and placed himself at the summit of Europe. In his letter they heard the first tramp of his legions advancing to overwhelm them. Verily they had need to lift their eyes again to their motto, and draw fresh courage from it—"The Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SACK OF ROME.

A Great Crisis—Deliverance Dawns—Tidings of Feud between the Pope and Emperor—Political Situation Reversed—Edict of Worms Suspended—Legal Settlement of Toleration in Germany—The Tempest takes the Direction of Rome—Charles's Letter to Clement VII—An Army Raised in Germany for the Emperor's Assistance—Freundsberg—The German Troops Cross the Alps—Junction with the Spanish General—United Host March on Rome—The City Taken—Sack of Rome—Pillage and Slaughter—Rome never Retrieves the Blow.

WHAT were the Protestant princes to do? On every hand terrible dangers threatened their cause. The victory of Pavia, as we have already said, had placed Charles at the head of Christendom: what now should prevent his giving effect to the Edict of Worms? It had hung, like a naked sword, above Protestantism these five years, threatening every moment to descend and crush it. Its author was now all-powerful: what should hinder his snapping the thread that held it from falling? He was on his way to concert measures to that effect with the Pope. In Germany, the Ratisbon League was busy extirpating Lutheranism within its territories. Frederick was in his grave. From the Kings of England and France no aid was to be expected. The Protestants were hemmed in on every hand.

It was at that hour that a strange rumour reached their ears. The emperor and the Pope were, it was whispered, at strife! The news was hardly credible. At length came detailed accounts of the league that Clement VII. had formed against the emperor, with the King of England at its head. The Protestants, when these tidings reached them, thought they saw a pathway beginning to open through the midst of tremendous dangers. But a little before, they had felt as the Israelites did on the shore of the Red Sea, with the precipitous cliffs of Aba Deraj on their right, the advancing war-chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh on their left, while behind them rose the peaks of Atakah, and in front rolled the waters of the broad, deep, and impassable gulf. No escape was left the terror-stricken Israelites, save through the plain of Badiya, which opened in their rear, and led back into the former house of their bondage. So of the men who were now essaying to flee from a gloomier prison, and a more debasing as well as more lengthened bondage than that of the Israelites in Egypt, "they" were "entangled in the land, the wilderness" had "shut them in." Behind them was the Ratisbon League; in front were the emperor and Pope, one in interest and policy, as the Protestant princes believed. They had just had read to them the stern command of Charles to abolish no law, change no doctrine, and omit no rite of the Roman Church, and to proceed in accordance with the Edict of Worms; which was as much as to say, "Unsheathe

your swords, and set about the instant and complete purgation of Germany from Luther and Lutheranism, under penalty of being yourselves visited with a like infliction by the arms of the Empire.” How they were to escape from this dilemma, save by a return to the obedience of the Pope, they could not at that moment see. As they turned first to one hand, then to another, they could descry nothing but unscaleable cliffs, and fathomless abysses. At length deliverance appeared to dawn in the most unexpected quarter of all. They had never looked to Rome or to Spain, yet there it was that they began to see escape opening to them. The emperor and the Pope, they were told, were at variance: so then they were to march through the sundered camp of their enemies. With feelings of wonder and awe, not less lively than those of the Hebrew host when they saw the waves beginning to divide, and a pathway to open from shore to shore, did the Lutheran chiefs and their followers see the host of their foes, gathered in one mighty confederacy to overwhelm them, begin to draw apart, and ultimately form themselves into two opposing camps, leaving a pathway between, by which the little Protestant army, under their banner with its sacred emblazonry—”The Word of the Lord endureth for ever”—might march onwards to a place of safety. The influence that parted the hearts and councils of their enemies, and turned their arms against each other, they no more could see than the Israelites could see the Power that divided the waters and made them stand upright, but that the same Power was at work in the latter as in the former case they could not doubt. The Divine Hand has never been wanting to the Gospel and its friends, but seldom has its interposition been more manifest than at this crisis.

The emperor’s ukase from Seville, breathing death to Lutheranism, was nearly as much out of date and almost as little to be regarded as if it had been fulminated a century before. A single glance revealed to the Lutheran princes the mighty change which had taken place in affairs. Christendom was now in arms against the man who but a few months ago had stood at its summit; and, instead of girding himself to fight against Lutheranism for the Pope, Charles must now ask the aid of Lutheranism in the battle that he was girding himself to fight against the Pope and his confederate kings. It was even whispered in the Diet that conciliatory instructions of later date had arrived from the emperor.<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand, it was said, was bidden in these later letters to draw toward Duke John and the other Lutheran princes, to cancel the penal clauses in the Edict of Worms, and to propose that the whole religious controversy should be referred to a General Council; but he feared, it was said, to make these instructions known, lest he should alienate the Popish members of the Diet.

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 103.



Nor was it necessary he should divulge the new orders. The astounding news of the “League of Cognac,” that “most holy confederation” of which Clement VII. was the patron and promoter, had alone sufficed to sow distrust and dismay among the Popish members of the Diet. They knew that this strange league had “broken the bow” of the emperor, had weakened the hands of his friends in the Council; and that to press for the execution of the Edict of Worms would result only in damage to the man and the party in whose interests it had been framed.

In the altered relations of the emperor to the Papacy, the Popish section of the Diet—among the more prominent of whom were the Dukes of Brunswick and Pomerania, Prince George of Saxony, and the Dukes of Bavaria—dared not come to an open rupture with the Reformers. The peasant-war had just swept over Germany, leaving many parts of the Fatherland covered with ruins and corpses, and to begin a new conflict with the Lutheran princes, and the free and powerful cities which had espoused the cause of the Reformation, would be madness. Thus the storm passed away. Nay, the crisis resulted in great good to the Reformation. “A decree was made at length to this purpose,” says Sleidan, “that for establishing religion, and maintaining peace and quietness, it was necessary there should be a lawful General or Provincial Council of Germany held within a year; and, that no delay or impediment might intervene, that ambassadors should be sent to the emperor, to pray him that he would look upon the miserable and tumultuous state of the Empire, and come into Germany as soon as he could, and procure a Council. As to religion and the Edict of Worms,” continued the Diet—conferring by a simple expedient one of the greatest of blessings—“As to religion and the Edict of Worms, in the meanwhile till a General or National Council can be had, all shall so behave themselves in their several provinces as that they may be able to render an account of their doings both to God and the emperor”<sup>1</sup>—that is, every State was to be free to act in religion upon its own judgment.

Most historians have spoken of this as a great epoch. “The legal existence of the Protestant party in the Empire,” says Ranke, “is based on the Decree of Spires of 1526.”<sup>2</sup> “The Diet of 1526,” says D’Aubigné, “forms an important epoch in history: an ancient power, that of the Middle Ages, is shaken; a new power, that of modern times, is advancing; religious liberty boldly takes its stand in front of Romish despotism; a lay spirit prevails over the sacerdotal spirit.”<sup>3</sup> This edict was the first legal blow dealt at the supremacy and infallibility of Rome. It was the dawn of toleration in matters of

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Ranke, bk. i., chap. 3, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> D’Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 12.

conscience to nations: the same right had still to be extended to individuals. A mighty boon had been won. Campaigns have been fought for less blessings: the Reformers had obtained this without unsheathing a single sword.

But the storm did not disperse without first bursting. As the skies of Germany became clear those of Rome became overcast. The winter passed away in some trifling affairs between the Papal and the Spanish troops in Lombardy; but when the spring of 1527 opened, a war-cloud began to gather, and in due time it rolled down from the Alps, and passing on to the south, it discharged itself in terrible violence upon the city and chair of the Pontiff.

Before having recourse to arms against the "Holy Father," who, contrary to all the probabilities of the case, and contrary also to his own interest, had conspired against his most devoted as well as most powerful son, the emperor made trial of his pen. In a letter of the 18th September, written in the gorgeous halls of the Alhambra, Charles reminded Clement VII. of the many services he had rendered him, for which, it appeared, he must now accept as payment the league formed against him at his instigation. "Seeing," said the emperor to the Pope, "God hath set us up as two great luminaries, let us endeavour that the world may be enlightened by us, and that no eclipse may happen by our dissensions. But," continued the emperor, having recourse to what has always been the terror of Popes, "if you will needs go on like a warrior, I protest and appeal to a Council."<sup>1</sup> This letter was without effect in the Vatican, and these "two luminaries," to use the emperor's metaphor, instead of shedding light on the world began to scorch it with fire. The war was pushed forward.

The emperor had requested his brother Ferdinand to take command of the army destined to act against the Pope. Ferdinand, however, could not, at this crisis, be absent from Germany without great inconvenience, and accordingly he commissioned Freundsberg, the same valorous knight who, as we have related, addressed the words of encouragement to Luther when he entered the imperial hall at Worms, to raise troops for the emperor's assistance, and lead them across the Alps. Freundsberg was a genuine lover of the Gospel, but the work he had now in hand was no evangelical service, and he set about it with the coolness, the business air, and the resolution of the old soldier. It was November (1526); the snows had already fallen on the Alps, making it doubly hazardous to climb their precipices and pass their summits. But such was the ardour of both general and army, that this host of 15,000 men in three days had crossed the mountains and joined the Constable of Bourbon, the emperor's general, on the other side of them. On effecting a junction, the combined German and Spanish army, which now amounted to

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 107; see the correspondence between the emperor, the Pope, and the cardinals in his pages.

20,000, set out on their march on Rome. The German general carried with him a great iron chain, wherewith, as he told his soldiers, he intended to hang the Pope. Rome, however, he was never to see, a circumstance more to be regretted by the Romans than by the Germans; for the kindly though rough soldier would, had he lived, have restrained the wild licence of his army, which wrought such woes to all in the ill fated city. Freundsberg fell sick and died by the way, but his soldiers pressed forward. On the evening of the 5th of May, 1527, the invaders sighted, through a thin haze, those venerable walls, over which many a storm had lowered, but few more terrible than that now gathering round them. What a surprise to a city which, full of banquettings and songs and all manner of delights, lived carelessly, and never dreamt that war would approach it! Yet here were the spoilers at her gates. Next morning, under cover of a dense fog, the soldiers approached the walls, the scaling-ladders were fixed, and in a few hours the troops were masters of Rome. The Pope and the cardinals fled to the Castle of St. Angelo. A little while did the soldiers rest on their arms, till the Pope should come to terms. Clement, however, scouted the idea of surrender. He expected deliverance every moment from the arms of the Holy League. The patience of the troops was soon exhausted, and the sack began.

We cannot, even at this distance of time, relate the awful tragedy without a shudder. The Constable Bourbon had perished in the first assault, and the army was left without any leader powerful enough to restrain the indulgence of its passions and appetites. What a city to spoil! There was not at that era another such on earth. At its feet the ages had laid their gifts. Its beauty was perfect. Whatever was rare, curious, or precious in the world was gathered into it. It was ennobled by the priceless monuments of antiquity; it was enriched with the triumphs of recent genius and art; the glory lent it by the chisel of Michael Angelo, the pencil of Raffaello, and the tastes and munificence of Leo X. was yet fresh upon it. It was full to overflowing with the riches of all Christendom, which for centuries had been flowing into it through a hundred avenues—dispensations, pardons, jubilees, pilgrimages, annats, palls, and contrivances innumerable. But the hour had now come to her “that spoiled and was not spoiled.” The hungry soldiers flung themselves upon the prey. In a twinkling there burst over the sacerdotal city a mingled tempest of greed and rage, of lust and bloodthirsty vengeance.

The pillage was unsparing as pitiless. The most secret places were broken open and ransacked. Even the torture was employed, in some cases upon prelates and princes of the Church, to make them disgorge their wealth. Not only were the stores of the merchant, the bullion of the banker, and the hoards of the usurer plundered, the altars were robbed of their vessels, and the churches of their tapestry and votive offerings. The tombs were rifled, the relics of the canonised were spoiled, and the very corpses of the Popes were

stripped of their rings and ornaments. The plunder was piled up in heaps in the market-places—gold and silver cups, jewels, sacks of coin, pyxes, rich vestments—and the articles were gambled for by the soldiers, who, with abundance of wine and meat at their command, made wassail in the midst of the stricken and bleeding city.

Blood, pillage, and grim pleasantries were strangely and hideously mixed. Things and persons which the Romans accounted “holy,” the soldiery took delight in exposing to ridicule, mockery, and outrage. The Pontifical ceremonial was exhibited in mimic pomp. Camp-boys were arrayed in cope and stole and chasuble, as if they were going to consecrate. Bishops and cardinals—in some cases stripped nude, in others attired in fantastic dress—were mounted on asses and lean mules, their faces turned to the animal’s *croupe*, and led through the streets, while ironical cheers greeted the unwelcome dignity to which they had been promoted. The Pope’s robes and tiara were brought forth, and put upon a lansquenet, while others of the soldiers, donning the red hats and purple gowns of the cardinals, went through the form of a Pontifical election. The mock-conclave, having traversed the city in the train of the pseudo-Pope, halted before the Castle of St. Angelo, and there they deposed Clement VII., and elected “Martin Luther” in his room. “Never,” says D’Aubigné, “had Pontiff been proclaimed with such perfect unanimity.”

The Spanish soldiers were more embittered against the ecclesiastics than the Germans were, and their animosity, instead of evaporating in grim humour and drollery, like that of their Tramontane comrades, took a practical and deadly turn. Not content with rifling their victims of their wealth, they made them in many cases pay the forfeit of their lives. Some Church dignitaries expired in their hands in the midst of cruel tortures. They spared no age, no rank, no sex. “Most piteous,” says Guiciardini, “were the shrieks and lamentations of the women of Rome, and no less worthy of compassion the deplorable condition of nuns and novices, whom the soldiers drove along by troops out of their convents, that they might satiate their brutal lust . . . . Amid this female wail, were mingled the hoarser clamours and groans of unhappy men, whom the soldiers subjected to torture, partly to wrest from them unreasonable ransom, and partly to compel the disclosure of the goods which they had concealed.”<sup>1</sup>

The sack of Rome lasted ten days. “It was reported,” says Guiciardini, “that the booty taken might be estimated at a million of ducats; but the ransoms of the prisoners amounted to a far larger sum.” The number of victims is estimated at from 5,000 to 10,000. The population on whom this terrible

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<sup>1</sup> The authorities consulted for this account of the sack of Rome are Sleidan, bk. vi., p. III; Guiciardini, *Wars of Italy*, ii. 723; Ranke, vol. i., pp. 80–83; D’Aubigné, vol. iv., pp. 14–20.

calamity fell were, upon the testimony of their own historians, beyond measure emasculated by effeminacy and vice. Vettori describes them as “proud, avaricious, murderous, envious, luxurious, and hypocritical.”<sup>1</sup> There were then in Rome, says Ranke, “30,000 inhabitants capable of bearing arms. Many of these men had seen service.” But, though they wore arms by their side, there was neither bravery nor manhood in their breasts. Had they possessed a spark of courage, they might have stopped the enemy in his advance to their city, or chased him from their walls after he appeared.

This stroke fell on Rome in the very prime of her mediæval glory. The magnificence then so suddenly and terribly smitten has never revived. A few days sufficed to wellnigh annihilate a splendour which centuries were needed to bring to perfection, and which the centuries that have since elapsed have not been able to restore.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Ranke, vol. i., p. 82 (footnote). For a picture of the Rome of the early part of the sixteenth century, see the *Memoirs of a Roman of that age*—Benvenuto Cellini.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ORGANISATION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

A Calm of Three Years—Luther Begins to Build—Christians., but no Christian Society—  
Old Foundations—Gospel Creates Christians—Christ their Centre—Truth their  
Bond—Unity—Luther's Theory of Priesthood—All True Christians Priests—Some  
Elected to Discharge its Functions—Difference between Romish Priesthood and  
Protestant Priesthood—Commission of Visitation—Its Work—Church Constitution of  
Saxony.

AFTER the storm there came a three years' calm: not indeed to that world over which the Pope and the emperor presided. The Christendom that owned the sway of these two potentates continued still to be torn by intrigues and shaken by battles. It was a sea on which the stormy winds of ambition and war strove together. But the troubles of the political world brought peace to the Church. The Gospel had rest only so long as the arms of its enemies were turned against each other. The calm of three years—from 1526 to 1529—now vouchsafed to that new world which was rising in the midst of the old, was diligently occupied in the important work of organising and upbuilding. From Wittenberg,, the centre of this new world, there proceeded a mighty plastic influence, which was daily enlarging its limits and multiplying its citizens. To that we must now turn.

The way was prepared for the erection of the new edifice by the demolition of the old. How this came about we have said in the preceding chapter. The emperor had convoked the Diet at Spires expressly and avowedly to construct a defence around the old and now tottering edifice of Rome, and to raze to its foundations the new building of Wittenberg by the execution of the Edict of Worms of 1521: but the bolt forged to crush Wittenberg fell on Rome. Before the Diet had well begun their deliberations, the political situation around the emperor had entirely changed. Western Europe, alarmed at the vast ambition of Charles, was confederate against him. He could not now execute the Edict of Worms, for fear of offending the Lutheran princes, on whom the League of Cognac compelled him to cast himself; and he could not repeal it, for fear of alienating from him the Popish princes. A middle path was devised, which tided over the emperor's difficulty, and gave a three years' liberty to the Church. The Diet decreed that, till a General Council should assemble, the question of religion should be an open one, and every State should be at liberty to act in it as it judged right. Thus the Diet, the assembling of which the friends of the Reformation had seen with alarm, and its enemies with triumph, seeing it was to ring the death-knell of Protestantism, achieved just the opposite result. It inflicted a blow which broke in

pieces the theocratic sovereignty of Rome in the German States of the Empire, and cleared the ground for the building of a new spiritual temple.

Luther was quick to perceive the opportunity that had at length arrived. The edict of 1526 sounded to him as a call to arise and build. When the Reformer came down from the Wartburg, where doubtless he had often meditated on these things, there was a Reformation, but no Reformed Church; there were Christians, but no visible Christian society. His next work must be to restore such. The fair fabric which apostolic hands had reared, and which primitive times had witnessed, had been cast down long since, and for ages had lain in ruins: it must be built up from its old foundations. The walls had fallen, but the foundations, he knew, were eternal, like those of the earth. On these old foundations, as still remaining in the Scriptures, Luther now began to build.

Hitherto the Reformer's work had been to preach the Gospel. By the preaching of the Gospel, he had called into existence a number of believing men, scattered throughout the provinces and cities of Germany, who were already actually, though not as yet visibly, distinct from the world, and to whom there belonged a real, though not as yet an outward, unity. They were gathered by their faith round one living centre, namely, Christ; and were knit by a great spiritual bond, namely, the truth, to one another. But the principle of union in the heart of each of these believing men must work itself into an outward unity—a unity visible to the world. Unless it does so, the inward principle will languish and die—not, indeed, in those hearts in which it already exists, but in the world: it will fail to propagate itself. These Christians must be gathered into a family, and built up into a kingdom—a holy and spiritual kingdom.

The first necessity in the organisation of the Church—the work to which Luther now put his hand—was an order of men, by whatever name called—priests, presbyters, or bishops—to preach and to dispense the Sacraments. Cut off from Rome—the sole fountain, as she held herself to be, of sacred offices and graces—how did the Reformer proceed in the re-constitution of the ministry? He assumed that functions are lodged inalienably in the Church, or company of believing men, or brotherhood of priests; for he steadfastly held to the priesthood of all believers. The express object for which the Church existed, he reasoned, was to spread salvation over the earth. How does she do this? She does it by the preaching of the Gospel and the dispensation of Sacraments. It is therefore the Church's duty to preach and to dispense the Sacraments. But duty, Luther reasoned, implies right and function. That function is the common possession of the Church—of all believers. But it is not to be exercised, in point of fact, by all the Church's members; it is to be exercised by some only. How are these some, then, to be chosen? Are they to enter upon the exercise of this function at their own pleasure—simply self-

appointed? No; for what is the function of all cannot be specially exercised by any, save with the consent and election of the rest. The call or invitation of these others—the congregation, that is—constituted the right of the individual to discharge the office of “minister of the Word;” for so did the Reformer prefer to style those who were set apart in the Church to preach the Gospel and dispense the Sacraments. “In cases of necessity,” says he, “all Christians may exercise all the functions of the clergy, but order requires the devolving of the office upon particular persons.”<sup>1</sup> An immediate Divine call was not required to give one a right to exercise office in the Church: the call of God came through the instrumentality of man. Thus did Luther constitute the ministry. Till this had been done, the ministry could not have that legitimate part which belongs to it in the appointing of those who are to bear office in the Church.<sup>2</sup>

The clergy of the Lutheran Church stood at the opposite pole from the clergy of the Roman Church. The former were democratic in their origin; the latter were monarchical. The former sprang from the people, by whom they were chosen, although that choice was viewed as being indirectly the call of God, who would accompany it with the gifts and graces necessary for the office; the latter were appointed by a sacerdotal monarch, and replenished for their functions by Sacramental ordination. The former differed in no essential point from the other members of the Church; the latter were a hierarchy, they formed a distinct order, inasmuch as they were possessed of exclusive qualities and powers. The ministrations of the former were effectual solely by faith in those who received them and the working of the Spirit which accompanied them. Very different was it in the case of the Roman clergy; their ministrations, mainly sacrificial, were effectual by reason of the inherent efficacy of the act, and the official virtue of the man who performed it. “Wherever there is a line of sacramentally ordained men, there and there only is the Church,” said Rome. “Wherever the Word is faithfully preached, and the Sacraments purely administered, there is the Church,” said the Reformation.

In providing for her order, the Church did not surrender her freedom. The power with which she clothed those whom she elected to office was not autocratic, but ministerial: those who held that power were the Church’s servants, not her lords. Nor did the Church corporate put that power beyond her own reach: she had not parted with it once for all, so that she should be required to yield a passive or helpless submission to her own ministers. That power was still hers—hers to be used for her edification—hers to be recalled if abused or turned to her destruction. It never can cease to be the Church’s

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<sup>1</sup> Luther, *Theologie*, ii. 126–135. Dorner, *Hist. Protest. Theol.*, vol. i., p. 174; Clark, Edin., 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Dorner, vol. i., pp. 172–175.



duty to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. No circumstances, no formality, no claim of office can ever relieve her from that obligation. But this implies that she has ever the right of calling to account or deposing from office those who violate the tacit condition of their appointment, and defeat its great end. Without this the Church would have no power of reforming herself; once corrupt, her cure would be hopeless; once enslaved, her bondage would be eternal.

From the consideration of these principles Luther advanced to the actual work of construction. He called the princes to his aid as his fellow labourers in this matter. This was a departure in some measure from his theory, for undoubtedly that theory, legitimately applied, would have permitted none to take part in ecclesiastical arrangements and appointments save those who were members of the Church. But Luther had not thought deeply on the question touching the limits of the respective provinces of Church and State, or on how far the civil authority may go in enacting ecclesiastical arrangements, and planting a country with the ordinances of the Gospel. No one in that day had very clear or decided views on this point. Luther, in committing the organising of the Church so largely into the hands of the princes, yielded to a necessity of the times. Besides, it is to be borne in mind that the princes were, in a sense, members of the Church; that they were not less prominent by their religious intelligence and zeal than by their official position, and that if Zwingli, who had more stringent opinions on the point of limiting Church action to Church agencies than Luther, made the Council of Two Hundred the representative of the Church in Zurich, the latter might be held excusable in making the princes the representative of the Church in Germany, more especially when so many of the common people were as yet too ignorant or too indifferent to take part in the matter.

On the 22nd October, 1526, Luther moved the Elector John of Saxony to issue a commission of visitation of his dominions, in order to the reinstitution of the Church, that of Rome being now abolished. Authorised by the elector, four commissioners began the work of Church visitation. Two were empowered to inquire into the temporalities of the Church, and two into her ecclesiastical condition, touching schools, doctrine, pastors. The paper of instructions, or plan according to which the Church in the Electorate of Saxony was to be reinstituted, was drawn up by Melanchthon.

Luther, Melanchthon, Spalatin, and Thuring were the four chief commissioners, to each of whom colleagues, lay and clerical, were attached. To Luther was assigned the electorate; the others visited the provinces of Altenburg, Thuringia, and Franconia.

Much ignorance, many errors and mistakes, innumerable abuses and anomalies did the visitation bring to light. The Augean stable into which the Papacy had converted Germany, not less than the rest of Christendom, was

not to be cleansed in a day. All that could be done was to make a beginning, and even that required infinite tact and firmness, great wisdom and faith. From the living waters of the sanctuary only could a real purification be looked for, and the care of the visitors was to open channels, or remove obstructions, that this cleansing current might freely pervade the land.

Ministers were chosen, consistories were appointed, ignorant and immoral pastors were removed, but provided for. In some cases priests were met with who were trying to serve both Rome and the Reformation. In one church they had a pulpit from which they preached the doctrines of free grace, in another an altar at which they used to say mass. The visitors put an end to such dualisms. The doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers did not comport, Luther thought, with a difference of grade among the ministers of the Gospel, but the pastors of the greater cities were appointed, under the title of superintendents, to supervise the others, and to watch over both congregations and schools.

The one great want everywhere, Luther found to be want of knowledge. He set himself to remedy the deficiency by compiling popular manuals of the Reformed doctrine, and by issuing plain instructions to the preachers to qualify them more fully for teaching their flocks. He was at pains, especially, to show them the indissoluble link between the doctrine of a free justification and holiness of life. His "Larger" and "Smaller" Catechisms, which he published at this time, were among the most valuable fruits of the Church visitation. By spreading widely the truth they did much to root the Reformation among the people, and to rear a bulwark against the return of Popery.

Armed with the authority of the elector, the visitors suppressed the convents; the inmates were restored to society, the buildings were converted into schools and hospitals, and the property was divided between the maintenance of public worship and national uses. Ministers were encouraged to marry, and their families became centres of moral and intellectual life throughout the Fatherland.

The plan of Church reform, as drawn by Melanchthon, was a retrogression. As he wrote he saw on the one hand the fanatics, on the other a possible rapprochement, at a future day, to Rome, and he framed his instructions in a conservative spirit. The antagonistic points in the Reformation doctrine he discreetly veiled; and as regarded the worship of the Church, he aimed at conserving as much and altering as little as possible.<sup>1</sup> Some called this moderation, others termed it trimming; the Romanists thought that the Reformation troops had begun their march back; the Wittenbergers were not without a suspicion of treachery. Luther would have gone further; for he grasped too thoroughly the radical difference between Rome and Wittenberg to

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<sup>1</sup> *Corpus Ref.*, ii. 990—D'Aubigné., vol. iv., p. 35.

believe that these two would ever again be one; but when he reflected on the sincerity of Melanchthon, and his honest desire to guard the Reformation on all sides, he was content.

So far as the forms of worship and the aspect of the churches were concerned, the change resulting from this visitation was not of a marked kind. The Latin liturgy was retained, with a mixture of Lutheran hymns. The altar still stood, though now termed the table; the same toleration was vouchsafed the images, which continued to occupy their niches; vestments and lighted tapers were still made use of, especially in the rural churches. The great towns, such as Nuremberg, Ulm, Strasburg, and others, purged their temples of a machinery more necessary in the histrionic worship of Rome than in that of the Reformation. "There is no evil in these things,"<sup>1</sup> said Melanchthon, "they will do no harm to the worshipper," but the soundness of his inference is open to question. With all these drawbacks this visitation resulted in great good. The organisation now given the Church permitted a combination of her forces. She could henceforth more effectually resist the attacks of Rome. Besides, at the centre of this organisation was placed the preaching of the Word as the main instrumentality. That great light shone apace, and the tolerated superstitions faded away. A new face began to appear on Germany.

On the model of the Church of Saxony, were the Churches of the other German States re-constituted. Franconia, Luneburg, East Friesland, Schleswig and Holstein, Silesia, and Prussia received Reformed constitutions by the joint action of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

The same course was pursued in many of the principal cities of the German Empire. Their inhabitants had received the Reformation with open arms, and were eager to abolish all the traces of Romish domination. The more intelligent and free the city, the more thoroughly was this Reformation carried out. Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm, Strasburg, Brunswick, Hamburg, Bremen, Magdeburg, and others placed themselves in the list of the Reformed cities, without even availing themselves, of the permission given them by Melanchthon of halting at a middle stage in this Reformation. "We have the torch of the Bible," said they, "in our churches, and have no need of the light of a taper."

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<sup>1</sup> *Corpus Ref*— D'Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 35.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF HESSE.

Francis Lambert—Quits his Monastery at Avignon—Comes to Zurich—Goes on to Germany—Luther Recommends him to Landgrave Philip—Invited to frame a Constitution for the Church of Hesse—His Paradoxes—The Priest's Commentary—Discussion at Homburg—The Hessian Church constituted—Its Simplicity—Contrast to Romish Organisation—General Ends gained by Visitation—Moderation of Luther—Monks and Nuns—Stipends of Protestant Pastors—Luther's Instructions to them—Deplorable Ignorance of German Peasantry—Luther's Smaller and Larger Catechisms—Their Effects.

HESSE was an exception, not in lagging behind, but in going before the others. This principality enjoyed the labours of a remarkable man. Francis Lambert had read the writings of Luther in his cell at Avignon. His eyes opened to the light, and he fled. Mounted on an ass, his feet almost touching the ground, for he was tall as well as thin, wearing the grey gown of the Franciscans, gathered round his waist with the cord of the order, he traversed in this fashion the countries of Switzerland and Germany, preaching by the way, till at last he reached Wittenberg, and presented himself before Luther. Charmed with the decision of his character and the clearness of his knowledge, the Reformer brought the Franciscan under the notice of Philip of Hesse. Between the thorough-going ex-monk and the chivalrous and resolute landgrave, there were not a few points of similarity fitted to cement them in a common action for the good of the Church. Francis was invited by the landgrave to frame a constitution for the Churches of Hesse. Nothing loth, Lambert set to work, and in one hundred and fifty-eight "Paradoxes" produced a basis broad enough to permit of every member exercising his influence in the government of the Church.

We are amazed to find these propositions coming out of a French cell. The monk verily must have studied other books than his breviary. What a sudden illumination was it that dispelled the darkness around the disciples of the sixteenth century! Passing, in respect of their spiritual knowledge, from night to noon-day, without an intervening twilight, what a contrast do they present to nearly all those who in after-days left the Romish Communion to enrol themselves in the Protestant ranks! Were the intellects of the men of that age more penetrating or was the Spirit more largely given? But to pass on to the propositions of the ex-monk.

Conforming to a custom which had been an established one since the days of the Emperor Justinian, who published his Pandects in the Churches, Francis Lambert, of Avignon, nailed up his "Paradoxes" on the church doors of Hesse. Scarce were they exposed to the public gaze, when eager hands

were stretched out to tear them down. Not so, however, for others and friendly ones are uplifted to defend them from desecration. “Let them be read,” say several voices. A young priest fetches a stool—mounts it; the crowd keep silence, and the priest reads aloud.

“All that is deformed ought to be reformed.” So ran the first Paradox. It needed, thinks Boniface Dornemann, the priest who acted as reader, no runagate monk, no “spirit from the vasty depth” of Lutheranism to tell us this.

“The Word of God is the rule of all true Reformation,” says Paradox second. That may be granted as part of the truth, thinks priest Dornemann, but it looks askance on tradition and on the infallibility of the Church. Still, with a Council to interpret the Bible, it may pass.

The crowd listens and he reads Paradox the third. “It belongs to the Church to judge on matters of faith.” Now the ex-monk has found the right road, doubtless thinks Dornemann, and bids fair to follow it. The Church is the judge.

“The Church is the congregation of those who are united by the same spirit, the same faith, the same God, the same Mediator, the same Word, by which alone they are governed.” So runs Paradox the fourth. A dangerous leap! thinks the priest; the ex-monk clears tradition and the Fathers at a bound. He will have some difficulty in finding his way back to the orthodox path.

The priest proceeds to Paradox fifth. “The Word is the true key. The kingdom of heaven is open to him who believes the Word, and shut against him who believes it not. Whoever, therefore, truly possesses the power of the Word of God, has the power of the keys.” The ex-monk, thinks Dornemann, upsets the Pope’s throne in the little clause that gives right to the Word alone to govern.

“Since the priesthood of the law has been abolished,” says the sixth proposition, “Christ is the only immortal and eternal Priest; and He does not, like men, need a successor.” There goes the whole hierarchy of priests. Not an altar, not a mass in all Christendom that this proposition does not sweep away. Tradition, Councils, Popes, and now priests, all are gone, and what is left in their room? Let us read proposition seventh.

“All Christians, since the commencement of the Church, have been and are participators in Christ’s priesthood.” The monk’s Paradoxes are opening the flood-gates to drown the Church and world in a torrent of democracy.<sup>1</sup>

At that moment the stool was pulled from under the feet of the priest, and, tumbling in the dust, his public reading was suddenly brought to an end. We have heard enough, however; we see the ground plan of the spiritual temple; the basis is broad enough to sustain a very lofty structure. Not a select

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<sup>1</sup> *Paradoxa Lamberti*—Scultet., *Annal.*

few only, but all believers, are to be built as living stones into this “holy house.” With the ex-Franciscan of Avignon, as with the ex-Augustinian of Wittenberg, the corner-stone of the Church’s organisation is the “universal priesthood” of believers.

This was a catholicity of which that Church which claims catholicity as her exclusive possession knew nothing. The Church of Rome had lodged all priesthood primarily in one man, St. Peter—that is, in the Pope—and only a select few, who were linked to him by a mysterious chain, were permitted to share in it. What was the consequence? Why, this, that one part of the Church was dependent upon another part for salvation; and instead of a heavenly society, all whose members were enfranchised in an equal privilege and a common dignity, and all of whom were engaged in offering the same spiritual sacrifices of praise and obedience, the Church was parted into two great classes; there were the oligarchs and there were the serfs; the first were holy, the others were profane; the first monopolised all blessings, and the others were their debtors for such gifts as they chose to dole out to them.

The two ex-monks, Luther and Lambert, put an end to this state of things. They abolished the one priest, plucking from his brow his impious mitre, and from his hands his blasphemous sacrifice, and they put the one Eternal Priest in heaven in his room. Instead of the hierarchy whose reservoir of power was on the Seven Hills, whence it was conveyed downward through a mystic chain that linked all other priests to the Pope, much as the cable conveys the electric spark from continent to continent, they restored the universal priesthood of believers. Their fountain of power is in heaven; faith like a chain links them to it; the Holy Spirit is the oil with which they are anointed; and the sacrifices they present are not those of expiation, which has been accomplished once for all by the Eternal Priest, but of hearts purified by faith, and lives which the same divine grace makes fruitful in holiness. This was a great revolution. An ancient and established order was abolished; an entirely different one was introduced. Who gave them authority to make this change? That same apostle, they answered, which the Church of Rome had made her chief and corner-stone. St. Peter, said the Church of Rome, is the one priest: he is the reservoir of all priesthood. But St. Peter himself had taught a very different doctrine; speaking, not through his successor at Rome, but in his own person, and addressing all believers, he had said, “Ye are a royal priesthood.” So then that apostle, whom Romanists represented as concentrating the whole priestly function in himself, had made the most unreserved and universal distribution of it among the members of the Church.

In this passage we hear a Divine voice speaking, and calling into being another society than a merely natural one. We behold the Church coming into existence, and the same Word that summons her forth invests her in her powers and functions. In her cradle she is pronounced to be “royal” and

“holy.” Her charter includes two powers, the power of spiritual government and the power of holy service. These are lodged in the whole body of believers, but the exercise of them is not the light of all, but the right only of the fittest, whom the rest are to call to preside over them in the exercise of powers which are not theirs, but the property of the whole body. Such were the conclusions of Luther and the ex-Franciscan of Avignon; and the latter now proceeded to give effect to these general principles in the organisation of the Church of Hesse.

But first he must submit his propositions to the authorities ecclesiastical and civil of Hesse, and if possible obtain their acceptance of them. The Landgrave Philip issued his summons, and on the 21st October knights and counts, prelates and pastors, with deputies from the towns, assembled in the Church of Homburg, to discuss the propositions of Lambert. The Romish party vehemently assailed the Paradoxes, with equal vigour Lambert defended them. His eloquence silenced every opponent; and, after three days’ discussion, his propositions were carried, and the Churches of Hesse constituted in accordance therewith.

The Church constitution of Hesse is the first to which the Reformation gave birth; it was framed in the hope that it might be a model to others, and it differs in some important points from all of subsequent enactment in Germany. It took its origin exclusively from the Church; its authority derived from the same quarter; for in its enactment mention was made neither of State nor of landgrave, and it was worked by a Church agency. Every member of the Church, of competent learning and piety, was eligible to the ministerial office; each congregation was to choose its own pastor. The pastors were all equal; they were to be ordained by the laying on of the hands of three others; they were to meet with their congregations every Sabbath for the exercise of discipline; and an annual synod was to supervise the whole body. The constitution of the Hessian Church very closely resembled that which was afterwards adopted in Switzerland and Scotland.<sup>1</sup> But it was hardly to be expected that it should retain its popular vigour in the midst of Churches constituted on the Institutions of Melancthon: the State gradually encroached upon its liberties, and in 1528 it was remodelled upon the principles of the Church constitutions of Saxony.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the labours that occupied the three years during which the winds were held that they should not blow on the young vine which was now beginning to stretch its boughs over Christendom.

This visitation marks a new epoch in the history of Protestantism. Hitherto, the Reformation had been simply a principle, standing unembodied

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<sup>1</sup> See details of the Hessian Church constitution in D’Aubigné, vol. iv., pp. 24–30, taken from the *Monumenta Hassiaca*, vol. ii., p. 588.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Kurtz, D.D., *Hist. of the Christian Church*, p. 30; Edin., 1864.

before its opponents, and fighting at great disadvantage against an established and organised system. It was no longer so. It was not less a spiritual principle than before, but it had now found a body in which to dwell, and through which to act. It could now wield all the appliances that organisation gives for combining and directing its efforts, and making its presence seen and its power felt by men. This organisation it did not borrow from tradition, or from the existing hierarchy, which bore a too close resemblance to that of the pagan temples, but from the pages of the New Testament, finding its models whence it had drawn its doctrines. It was the purity of apostolic doctrine, equipped in the simplicity of apostolic organisation. Thus it disposed of the claims of the Romish Church to antiquity by attesting itself as more ancient than it. But though ancient, it was not like Rome borne down by the corruptions and decrepitudes of age; it had the innate celestial vigour of the primitive Church whose representative it claimed to be. Young itself, it promised to bestow a second youth on the world.

Besides the main object of this visitation, which was the planting of churches, a number of subsidiary but still important ends were gained. We are struck, first of all, by the new light in which this visitation presents the character of the Reformer. Luther as a controversialist and Luther as an administrator seem two different men. In debate the Reformer sweeps the field with an impetuosity that clears his path of every obstruction, and with an indignation that scathes and burns up every sophist and every sophism which his logic has overturned. But when he goes forth on this tour of visitation we hardly know him. He clothes himself with considerateness, with tenderness, and even with pity. He is afraid of going too far, and in some cases he leaves it open to question whether he has gone far enough. He is calm—nay, cautious—treading softly, lest unwittingly he should trample on a prejudice that is honestly entertained, or hurt the feelings of any weak brother, or do an act of injustice or severity to any one. The revenues of the abbeys and cathedrals he touches no further than to order that they shall contribute a yearly sum for the salaries of the parish ministers, and the support of the schools. Vacant benefices, of course, he appropriates; here no personal plea appeals to his commiseration. Obstinate Romanists find forbearance at his hands. There was a clause in the Visitation Act which, had he chosen to enforce it, would have enabled him to banish such from Saxony; but in several instances he pleads for them with the elector, representing that it would be wiser policy to let them alone, than to drive them into other countries, where their opportunities of mischief would be greater.<sup>1</sup> If indulgent to this class, he could not be other than beneficent to nuns and monks. He remembered that he had been

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<sup>1</sup> “*Alibi licentius ageret.*” (Letter to John, Duke of Saxony, April 23, 1529—Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 13; Additio i.)



a monk himself. Nuns, in many instances, were left in their convents, and old monks in their chimney- corners, with a sufficient maintenance for the rest of their lives. “Commended to God”<sup>1</sup> was the phrase by which he designated this class, and which showed that he left to time and the teaching of the Spirit the dissolution of the conventual vow, and the casting-off of the monastic cowl. To expel the nun from her cell, and strip the monk of his frock, while the fetter remained on the soul, was to leave them captives still. It was a Higher who had been anointed to “proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound?”

Not less considerate were his instructions to preachers. He counselled a moderate and wise course in the pulpit, befitting the exigencies of the age. They were to go forth into the wilderness that Christendom had become with the doctrine of the Baptist, “Repent.” But in their preaching they were never to disjoin Repentance from Faith. These were two graces which worked together in a golden yoke; in vain would the former pour out her tears, unless the latter was near with her pardon. There was forgiveness, not in the confessor’s box, but in the throne of Christ, but it was only faith that could mount into the skies and bring it down.

In the pulpit they were to occupy themselves with the same truths which the apostles and early evangelists had preached: they were not to fear that the Gospel would lose its power; they “were not to fling stones at Romanism;” the true light would extinguish the false, as the day quenches the luminosity that putrid bodies wear in the darkness.

With the spiritual inability of the will they were to teach the moral freedom of the will; the spiritual incapacity which man has contracted by the Fall was not to be pleaded to the denial of his responsibility. Man can abstain, if he chooses, from lying, from theft, from murder, and from other sins, according to St. Paul’s declaration—”The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law.” Man can ask the power of God to cure the impotency of his will; but it was God, not the saints, that men were to supplicate. The pastors were further instructed to administer the Sacrament in both kinds, unless in some exceptional cases, and to inculcate the doctrine of the real presence.

In his tour, the Reformer was careful to examine the peasantry personally, to ascertain the exact state of their knowledge, and how to shape his instructions. One day, as Mathesius relates, he asked a peasant to repeat the Creed. “I believe in God Almighty—” began the peasant. “Stop,” said Luther. “What do you mean by ‘Almighty?’” “I cannot tell,” replied the man. “Neither can I,” said Luther, “nor all the learned men in the world. Only believe that God is thy dear and true Father, and knows, as the All-wise Lord, how to help thee, thy wife, and children, in time of need. That is enough.”

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 13; Additio i.

Two things this visitation brought to light. First, it showed how very general was the abandonment of the Romish doctrines and ceremonies throughout Saxony; and, secondly, how deplorable the ignorance into which the Church of Rome, despite her rich endowments, her numerous fraternities, and her array of clergy, had permitted the body of the common people to descend. Schools, preachers, the Bible, all withheld. She had made them “naked to their shame.” In some respects this made the work of Luther the easier. There was little that was solid to displace. There were no strong convictions to root up: crass ignorance had cleared the ground to his hand. In other respects, this made his work the more difficult; for all had to be built up from the foundations; the very first elements of Divine knowledge had to be instilled into the lower orders. With the higher ranks things were not so bad; with them Lutheranism was more a reality—a distinctly apprehended system of truth—than it had yet come to be with the classes below them. In the Altenburg district of the Saxon Electorate, only one nobleman now adhered to the Church of Rome. In the city the Gospel had been preached seven years, and now there were hardly ten men to be found in it who adhered to the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup> Of one hundred parishes, only four continued to celebrate mass.<sup>2</sup> The priests, abandoning the concubinage in which the Pope had allowed them to live, contracted marriage, in the majority of instances, with those with whom they had previously maintained relations of a less honourable kind.<sup>3</sup> Over against these gratifying proofs of the progress of the movement, others of a less satisfactory character had to be placed. The Lutheranism which had superseded the Romanism was, in many instances, interpreted to mean simply a release from the obligation to pay ecclesiastical dues, and to give attendance on church ceremonies. Nor does one wonder that the peasants should so have regarded it, when one recalls the spectacles of oppression which met the eyes of the visitors in their progress: fields abandoned and houses deserted from the pressure of the religious imposts.<sup>4</sup> From a people so completely fleeced, and whose ignorance was as great as their penury, the Protestant pastor could expect only inadequate and precarious support. The ministers eked out the miserable contributions of their flocks by cultivating each his little patch of land. While serving their Master in straits, if not in poverty, they saw without a murmur the bulk of the wealthy Popish foundations grasped by the barons, or used by the canons and other ecclesiastics who chose still to remain within the pale of the Roman Church. These hardships, they knew, were the inevitable attendants of the great transition now being effected from one order of things to another. Piety alone could open

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 13; Additio i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

the fountains of liberality among the people, and piety must be the offspring of knowledge, of true knowledge of the Word of God. Pastors and schools were the want. "Everywhere we find," said Luther, "poverty and penury. The Lord send labourers into His vineyard! Amen." "The face of the Church is everywhere most wretched," he wrote to Spalatin. "Sometimes we have a collection for the poor pastors, who have to till their two acres, which helps them a little. The peasants have nothing, and know nothing: they neither pray, confess, nor communicate, as if they were exempted from every religious duty. What an administration, that of the Papistical bishops!"

The Reformer had seen the nakedness of the land: this was the first step toward the remedying of it. The darkness was Cimmerian. He could not have believed, unless he had had personal knowledge of it, how entirely without intellectual and spiritual culture the Church of Rome had left the German peasant. Here was another misdeed for which Rome would have to account at the bar of future ages: nor was this the least of the great crimes of which he held her guilty. Her surpassing pride he already knew: it was proclaimed to the world in the exceeding loftiness of the titles of her Popes. The tyranny of her rule he also knew: it was exhibited in the statutes of her canon law and the edicts of her Councils. Her intolerance stood confessed in the slaughter of the Albigenses and the stake of Huss: her avarice in the ever-multiplying extortions under which Germany groaned, and of which he had had new and recent proofs in the neglected fields and unoccupied dwellings that met his eye on his visitation tour. What her indulgence boxes meant he also knew. But here was another product of the Romish system. It had covered the nations with a darkness so deep that the very idea of a God was almost lost. The closer he came to this state of things, the more appalling and frightful he saw it to be. The German nations were, doubtless, but a sample of the rest of Christendom. It was not Romanism only, but all religion that was on the point of perishing. "If," said Luther, writing to the Elector of Saxony soon thereafter, "the old state of things had been suffered to reach its natural termination, the world must have fallen to pieces, and Christianity have been turned into Atheism."<sup>1</sup>

The Reformer made haste to drive away the night which had descended on the world. This, in fact, had been the object of his labours ever since he himself had come to the knowledge of the truth; but he now saw more clearly how this was to be done. Accordingly the moment he had ended his visitation and returned to Wittenberg, he sat down, not to write a commentary or a controversial tract, but a catechism for the German peasantry. This manual of rudimentary instruction was ready early next spring (1529). It was published in two forms, a Shorter and a Larger Catechism. The former comprised

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 14, p. 130.

a brief and simple exposition of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments, with forms of prayer for night and morning, and grace before and after meals, with a "House-table" or series of Scripture texts for daily use; his Larger Catechism contained a fuller and more elaborate exposition of the same matters. Few of his writings have been more useful.

His Commentaries and other works had enlightened the nobility and instructed the more intelligent of the townspeople; but in his Catechisms the "light was parted" and diffused over the "plains," as it had once been over the "mountain-tops." When the earth is a parched desert, its herbs burned up, it is not the stately river rolling along within its banks that will make the fields to flourish anew. Its floods pass on to the ocean, and the thirsty land, with its drooping and dying plants, tasting not of its waters, continues still to languish. But with the dew or the raincloud it is not so. They descend softly, almost unseen and unheard by man, but their effects are mighty. Their myriad drops bathe every flower, penetrate to the roots of every herb, and soon hill and plain are seen smiling in fertility and beauty. So with these rudiments of Divine knowledge, parted in these little books, and sown like the drops of dew, they penetrated the understandings of the populations among which they were cast, and wherever they entered they awoke conscience, they quickened the intellect, and evoked a universal outburst, first of the spiritual activities, and next of the intellectual and political powers; while the nations that enjoyed no such watering lay unquickened, their slumber became deeper every century, till at last they realised their present condition in which they afford to Protestant nations a contrast that is not more melancholy than it is instructive.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### POLITICS AND PRODIGES.

Wars—Francis I. Violates his Treaty with Charles—The Turk—The Pope and the Emperor again become Friends—Failure of the League of Cognac—Subjection of Italy to Spain—New League between the Pope and the Emperor—Heresy to be Extinguished—A New Diet summoned—Prodigies—Otto Pack—His Story—The Lutheran Princes prepare for War against the Popish Confederates—Luther Interposes—War Averted—Martyrs.

WHILE within the inner circle formed by that holy society which we have seen rising there was peace, outside of it, on the open stage of the world, there raged furious storms. Society was convulsed by wars and rumours of wars. Francis I., who had obtained his liberty by signing the Treaty of Madrid, was no sooner back in France, breathing its air and inhaling the incense of the Louvre, than he declared the conditions which had opened to him escape from captivity intolerable, and made no secret of his intention to violate them. He applied to the Pope for a dispensation from them. The Pope, now at open feud with the emperor, released Francis from his obligations. This kindled anew the flames of war in Europe. The French king, instead of marching under the banner of Charles, and fighting for the extinction of heresy, as he had solemnly bound himself to do, got together his soldiers, and sent them across the Alps to attack the emperor in Italy. Charles, in consequence, had to fight over again for the possessions in the peninsula, which the victory of Pavia he believed had securely given him. In another quarter trouble arose. Henry of England, who till now had been on the most friendly terms with the emperor, having moved in the matter of his divorce from his queen, Catherine, the emperor's aunt, was also sending hostile messages to the Spanish monarch. To complete the embroilment, the Turk was thundering at the gates of Austria, and threatening to march right into the heart of Christendom. Passing Vienna, Soliman was pouring his hordes into Hungary; he had slain Louis, the king of that country, in the terrible battle of Mohacz; and the Arch-Duke Ferdinand of Austria, leaving the Reformers at liberty to prosecute their work of upbuilding, had suddenly quitted the Diet of Spires and gone to contest on many a bloody field his claim to the now vacant throne of Hungary. On every side the sword was busy. Armies were continually on the march; cities were being besieged; Europe was a sea on whose bosom the great winds from the four quarters of the heavens were contending in all their fury.

Continual perplexity was the lot of the monarchs of that age. But all their perplexities grew out of that mysterious movement which was springing up in the midst of them, and which possessed the strange, and to them terrible,

faculty of converting everything that was meant for its harm into the means of its advancement. The uneasiness of the monarchs was shown in their continual shiftings. Scarcely had one combination been formed, when it was broken in pieces, and another and a different one put in its place. We have just seen the Pope and the emperor at feud. We again behold them becoming confederates, and joining their swords, so recently pointed at each other, for the extinction of the heresy of Wittenberg. The train of political events by which this came about may be told in a few words.

The expedition of the French king into Italy, in violation, as we have seen, of the Treaty of Madrid, was at first successful. His general, Lautrec, sweeping down from the Alps, took the cities of Alessandria and Pavia. At the latter place Francis I. had been defeated and made captive, and his soldiers, with a cruelty that disgraced themselves more than it avenged their master, plundered it, having first put its inhabitants to the sword. Lautrec crossed the Apennines, intending to continue his march to Rome, and open the doors of the Castle of St. Angelo, where Clement VII. still remained shut up. The Pope meanwhile, having paid the first instalment of a ransom of 400,000 crowns, and having but little hope of being able to pay the remainder, wearied with his imprisonment, disguised himself as a merchant, and escaped, with a single attendant, to Orvieto. The French general pressed on to Naples, only to find that victory had forsaken his banners. Smitten by the plague rather than the Spanish sword, his army melted away, his conquests came to nothing, and the emperor finally recovered his power both in Naples and Lombardy, and again became unchallenged master of Italy, to the terror of the Pope and the chagrin of the Italians. Thus the war which Italy had commenced under the auspices of Clement VII., and the vague aspirations of the Renaissance, for the purpose of raising itself to the rank of an independent sovereignty, ended in its thorough subjection to the foreigner, not again to know emancipation or freedom till our own times, when independence dawned upon it in 1848, and was consummated in 1870, when the Italian troops, under the broad ægis of the new German Empire, entered Rome, and Victor Emmanuel was installed in the Quirinal as monarch from the Alps to Sicily.

Thus the League of Cognac had utterly failed; the last hopes of the Renaissance expired; and Charles once more was master.

Finding that the emperor was the stronger, the Pope tacked about, cast Francis I. overboard, and gave his hand to Charles V. The emperor's ambition had alarmed the Pontiff aforetime; he was now stronger than ever. The pope consoled himself by reflecting that Charles was a devoted son of Catholicism, and that the power which he had not the strength to curb he had the craft to use.

Accordingly, on the 29th June, 1528, Clement concluded a peace with the emperor at Barcelona, on the promise that Charles would do his utmost to root out that nest of heretics which had been formed at Wittenberg, and to exalt the dominion and glory of the Roman See.<sup>1</sup>

The moment seemed opportune for finishing with heresy. Italy was now at the feet of the emperor; Francis I. and his kingdom had been chastised, and were not likely soon again to appear in arms on the south of the Alps; the tide of Turkish invasion had been rolled back; the Pope was again the friend of the emperor, and all things seemed to invite Charles to an enterprise which he had been compelled to postpone, and at times to dissemble, but which he had never abandoned.

It was not his intention, however, to draw the sword in the first instance. Charles was naturally humane; and though intent on the extinction of the Reformed movement, foreseeing that it would infallibly break up his vast Empire, he preferred accomplishing his purpose by policy, if that were possible. He would convoke a Diet: he would get the Wittenberg heresy condemned, in which case he hoped that the majority of the princes would go along with him, and that the leaders of the Protestant movement would defer to this display of moral power. If still they should prove intractable, why, then he would employ force; but in that case, he argued, the blame would not lie at his door. The emperor, by letters dated Valladolid, August 1st, 1528, convoked a Diet to meet at Spires, on the 21st February, 1529.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, vague rumours of what was on the carpet reached the Reformers in Germany. They looked with apprehension to the future. Other things helped to deepen these gloomy forebodings. The natural atmosphere would seem to have been not less deranged than the political. Portentous meteors shot athwart the sky, marking their path in lines of fire, and affrighting men with their horrid noise. The hyper-borean lights, in sudden bursts and flashing lines, like squadrons rushing to combat, illumined the nocturnal heavens. Rivers rising in flood overflowed their banks, and meadows, corn-fields, and in some instances whole provinces, lay drowned beneath their waters. Great winds tore up ancient trees; and, as if the pillars of the world were growing feeble and tottering, earthquakes shook kingdoms, and engulfed castles and towns. "Behold," said the men who witnessed these occurrences, "Behold the prognostics of the dire calamities which are about to overwhelm the world." Even Luther partook of the general terror. "Dr. Hess," says he, "writes me word that in December last the whole heavens were seen on fire above the Church of Breslau, and another day there were witnessed, in the same place, two circles of fire, one within the other, and in

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<sup>1</sup> Ranke., vol. i. p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 115.

the centre of them a blazing pillar. These signs announce, it is my firm opinion, the approach of the Last Day. . . . The Roman Empire tends nearly to its ruin; the Turk has attained the summit of his power; the Papal splendour is fast becoming eclipsed; the world cracks in every direction as though about to fall in pieces.”<sup>1</sup>

While so many real dangers disturbed the age, a spurious or doubtful one had wellnigh precipitated the Reformation upon its ruin. A nobleman of Misnia, Otto Pack by name—a greedy, dissipated, and intriguing character, who had been some time vice chancellor to Duke George of Saxony—came one day to Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, and, looking grave, professed to be in possession of a terrible secret, which much concerned him and his Lutheran confederate, the Elector of Saxony.<sup>2</sup> On being pressed to explain himself, he declared his readiness, on payment of a certain sum, to reveal all. The landgrave’s fears being thoroughly aroused, he agreed to pay the man the reward demanded. Pack went on to say that a diabolical plot had been hatched among the Popish princes, headed by the Archduke Ferdinand, to attack by arms the two heretical princes, John of Saxony and Philip of Hesse, strip them of their territories, seize upon Luther and all his followers, and, having disposed of them by summary means, to re-establish the ancient worship.<sup>3</sup>

Pack was unable to show to the landgrave the original of this atrocious league, but he produced what bore to be a copy, and which, having attached to it all the ducal and electoral seals, wore every appearance of being authentic, and the document convinced the landgrave that Pack’s story was true.

Astounded at the danger thus strangely disclosed, and deeming that they had not a moment to lose before the mine exploded, the elector and the landgrave hastily raised an army to avert from themselves and their subjects what they believed to be impending destruction. The two princes entered into a formal compact (March 9th, 1528) “to protect with body, dignity, and possession, and every means in their power, the sacred deposit of God’s word for themselves and their subjects.” They next looked around for allies. They hoped through the Duke of Prussia to incite the King of Poland against Ferdinand of Austria, and to keep the Franconian bishops in check by the arms of George of Brandenburg. They reckoned on having as auxiliaries the Dukes of Luneburg, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and the city of Magdeburg. For themselves they agreed to equip a force of 6,000 cavalry, and 20,000 infantry.<sup>4</sup> They had in view also a league with the King of Denmark. They resolved to anticipate their opponents by striking the first blow. All Germany

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<sup>1</sup> Werke, ix. 542. Michelet, Luther, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 13, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 13, pp. 95–98.



was in commotion. It was now the turn of the Popish princes to tremble. The Reformers were flying to arms, and before their own preparations could be finished, they would be assailed by an overwhelming host, set on by the startling rumours of the savage plot formed to exterminate them. The Reformation was on the point of being dragged into the battlefield. Luther shuddered when he saw what was about to happen. He stood up manfully before the two chiefs who were hurrying the movement into this fatal path, and though he believed in the reality of the plot, despite the indignant denial of Duke George and the Popish princes, he charged the elector and landgrave not to strike the first blow, but to wait till they had been attacked. "There is strife enough uninvited," said he, "and it cannot be well to paint the devil over the door, or ask him to be godfather. Battle never wins much, but always loses much, and hazards all; meekness loses nothing, hazards little, and wins all."

Luther's counsels ultimately prevailed, time was given for reflection, and thus the Lutheran princes were saved from the tremendous error which would have brought after it, not triumph, but destruction.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Reformation was winning victories a hundred times more glorious than any that armed hosts could have achieved for it. One martyr is worth more than a thousand soldiers. Such were the champions the Reformation was now sending forth. Such were the proofs it now began to give of its prowess—better, surely, than fields heaped with the slain, which even the worst of causes can show.

In Bavaria, Leonard Caspar at this time sealed his testimony with his blood. He was apprehended at the instance of the Bishop of Passau, and condemned for maintaining that man is justified by faith alone; that there are but two Sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper; that the mass is not a sacrifice, and avails not for the quick and the dead; and that Christ alone hath made satisfaction for us.<sup>2</sup> In Bavaria, where the Reformed doctrines dared not be preached, no better way could the bishop have taken for promulgating them than by burning this man for holding them. At Munich, George Carpenter was led to the stake for denying that the baptism of water can by its inherent virtue save men. "When you are in the fire," said his friends, "give us a token that you abide steadfast." "So long," replied he, "as I am able to

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<sup>1</sup> See details in Sleidan, bk. vi.; Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 13; D'Aubigné, bk. xiii., chap. 4; Michelet, *Luther*, bk. iii., chap. 1. Some mystery rests on this affair still, but when we take into account the league formed at Ratisbon four years before, the principles and practices of the men at whose door this design was laid, and the fact that the most of the Popish princes agreed to pay a large sum as an indemnity to the Lutheran princes for the expense to which they had been put in raising armaments to defend themselves, we may be disposed to think that Luther's opinion was not far from the truth, that the league if not concluded had been conceived.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 110.

open my mouth I will confess my Saviour.”<sup>1</sup> The executioner took him and bound him, and cast him into the flames. “Jesus, Jesus!” exclaimed the martyr. The executioner, with an iron hook, turned him round and round amid the blazing coals. “Jesus, Jesus!” the martyr continued to exclaim, and so confessing the name of his Lord he gave up the ghost in the fire. Thus another blazing torch was kindled in the midst of the darkness of Bavaria.

Other martyrs followed in those German provinces which still owned the jurisdiction of Popish princes. At Landsberg nine persons suffered in the fire, and at Munich twenty-nine were drowned in the Iser. In the case of others the more summary dispatch of the poignard was employed. In the spring of 1527, George Winkler, preacher at Halle, was summoned before Albert, Cardinal of Mainz. Being dismissed from the archbishop’s tribunal, he was mounted on the horse of the court fool, and made to set out on his journey homeward. His way led through a forest; suddenly a little troop of horsemen dashed out of the thicket, struck their swords into him, and again plunged into the wood. Booty was plainly not the object of the assassins, for neither money nor other article of value was taken from his person; it was the suspicion of heresy that drew their daggers upon him. Luther hoped that “his murdered blood, like Abel’s, might cry to God; or rather be as seed from which other preachers would spring.” “The world,” said he, “is a tavern, of which Satan is the landlord, and the sign over the doorway is murder and lying.” He almost envied these martyrs. “I am,” said he, “but a wordy preacher in comparison with these great doers.”

In the piles of these martyrs we hear the Reformation saying to the Lutheran princes, some of whom were so eager to help it with their swords, and thought that if they did not fight for it, it must perish, “Dismiss your armed levies. I will provide my own soldiers. I myself will furnish the armour in which they are to do battle; I will gird them with patience, meekness, heroism, and joy; these are the weapons with which they will combat. With these weapons they will break the power, foil the arts, and stain the pride of the enemy.”

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<sup>1</sup> Scultet., ii. 110.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE GREAT PROTEST.

Diet of 1529—The Assembling of the Popish Princes—Their Numbers and high Hopes—Elector of Saxony—Arrival of Philip of Hesse—The Diet Meets—The Emperor's Message—Shall the Diet Repeal the Edict (1526) of Toleration?—The Debate—A Middle Motion proposed by the Popish Members—This would have Stifled the Reformation in Germany—Passed by a Majority of Votes—The Crisis—Shall the Lutheran Princes Accept it?—Ferdinand hastily Quits the Diet—Protestant Princes Consult together—Their Protest—Their Name—Grandeur of the Issues.

SUCH were the times that preceded the meeting of the famous Diet of Spires:—in the sky unusual portents, on the earth the smoke of martyr-piles, kings girding on the sword, and nations disturbed by rumours of intrigue and war, heaving like the ocean before the tempest sets in. Meanwhile the time approached for the Diet to assemble. It had been convoked for February, but was not able to meet till the middle of March. At no former Diet had the attendance, especially on the Catholic side, been so numerous.<sup>1</sup> The Popish princes came first. The little town was all astir as each magnate announced his arrival at its gates, and rode through its streets, followed by an imposing display of armed followers.<sup>2</sup> First in rank was King Ferdinand, who was to preside in the absence of his brother Charles V., and came attended by 300 armed knights. After him came the Dukes of Bavaria with an equally large retinue; then followed the ecclesiastical electors of Mainz and Treves, and the Bishops of Trent and Hildesheim, each with a troop of horsemen.<sup>3</sup> Their haughty looks, and the boastful greetings they exchanged with one another, proclaimed the confident hopes they cherished of being able to carry matters in the Diet their own way. They had come to bury the Reformation.<sup>4</sup>

The last to arrive were the Reformed princes. On the 13th of March came Elector John of Saxony, the most powerful prince of the Empire. His entrance was the most modest of all. There rode by his side none but Melanchthon.<sup>5</sup> Philip of Hesse followed on the 18th of March. With characteristic pomp he passed in with sound of trumpet, followed by a troop of 200 horsemen. It was on the eve of Palm Sunday that the elector, with Melanchthon by his side, entered Spires. On the following day he had public worship in his hotel, and as an evidence that the popular favour for the Word of God had not abated, not fewer than 8,000 attended sermon both forenoon and afternoon.<sup>6</sup> When

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 14, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, i. 1040—D'Aubigné, bk. xiii., chap. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 14; Additio.

the deputies of the cities had arrived, the constituent members of the Diet were complete, and the business was opened.

The Diet was not long left in suspense as to the precise object of the emperor in convoking it, and the legislation which was expected from it. Scarcely had it met when it received the intimation from commissioners that it was the emperor's will and command that the Diet should repeal the Edict of Spires (1526).<sup>1</sup> This was all. The members might dispatch their business in an hour, and return in peace to their homes.

But let us see how much was included in that short message, and how much the Diet was asked to do—what a revolution it was bidden inaugurate, when it was asked to repeal the edict of 1526. That edict guaranteed the free exercise of their religion to the several States of the Empire till a General Council should meet. It was, as we have already said, the first legal establishment of the Reformation. Religious freedom, then, so far as enjoyed in Germany, the Diet was now asked to abolish. But this was not all. The edict of 1526 suspended legally the execution of the Edict of Worms of 1521, which proscribed Luther and condemned the Reformation. Abolish the edict of 1526, and the edict of 1521 would come into operation; Luther must be put to death; the Reformed opinions must be rooted out of all the countries where they had taken root; in short, the floodgates of a measureless persecution would be opened in Germany. This was the import of the curt and haughty message with which Charles startled the Diet at its opening. The sending of such a message even was a violation of the constitutional rights of the several States, and an assumption of power which no former emperor had dared to make. The message, if passed into law, would have laid the rights of conscience, the independence of the Diet, and the liberties of Germany, all three in the dust.

The struggle now began. Shall the Edict of Spires (1526) be repealed? The Popish members of the Diet strenuously insisted that it should at once be repealed. It protected, they affirmed, all kinds of abominable opinions; it fostered the growth of heretical and disloyal communities, meaning the Churches which the three years of peace enjoyed under the edict had permitted to be organised. In short, it was the will of the emperor, and whoever opposed its repeal was not the friend of Charles.

The Reformed princes, on the other side, maintained that this edict was now the constitution of the Empire, that it had been unanimously sworn to by all the members of the Diet; that to repeal it would be a public breach of national faith, and that to the Lutheran princes would remain the right of resisting such a step by force of arms.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

The majority of the Diet, though exceedingly anxious to oblige the emperor, felt the force of these strong arguments. They saw that the ground of the oppositionists was a constitutional and legal one. Each principality had the right of regulating its own internal affairs. The faith and worship of their subjects was one of these. But a majority of the Diet now claimed the right to decide that question for each separate State. If they should succeed, it was clear that a new order of things would be introduced into Germany. A central authority would usurp the rights of the local administrations, and the independence of the individual States would be destroyed. To repeal the edict was to inaugurate revolution and war.

They hit on a middle path. They would neither abolish nor enforce the edict of 1526. The Popish members tabled a proposition in the Diet to the effect that whatever was the law and the practice in the several States at this hour, should continue to be the law and the practice till a General Council should meet. In some of the States the edict of 1521 was the law and the practice; that is, the preaching of the Gospel was forbidden, and its professors were burned. In other States the edict of 1526 was the law and the practice; that is, they acted in the matter of religion as their judgment dictated. The proposition now tabled in the Diet practically meant the maintenance of the *status quo* in each of the States, with certain very important modifications in those of them that at present enjoyed religious liberty. These modifications were that the Popish hierarchy should be re-established, that the celebration of the mass should be permitted, and that no one should be allowed to abjure Popery and embrace Lutheranism till such time as a Council had met and framed a general arrangement.<sup>1</sup>

How crafty! This proposition did not exact from a single Protestant a renunciation of his faith. It had no pains and penalties for existing converts. But what of those whom the light might reach afterwards? They must stifle their convictions, or abide the penalty, the dungeon and the stake. And what of States that might wish to throw off the yoke of Rome, and pass over to the side of the Reformation? The proposal, if passed into law, made this impossible. The State no more than the individual dare change its religious profession. The proposal drew a line around the Reformation, and declared that beyond this boundary there must be no advance, and that Lutheranism had reached its utmost limits of development. But not to advance was to recede, and to recede was to die. This proposition, therefore, professedly providing for the maintenance of the Reformation, was cunningly contrived to strangle

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 18. Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 118. Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 14, p. 127. The edict contained other articles, such as that Sacramentarians or Zwinglians should be banished from all the lands of the Empire, and that Anabaptists should be punished with death. (Pallavicino, lib. ii., cap. 18.)

it. Nevertheless, Ferdinand and the Popish princes and prelates hurried on the measure, which passed the Diet by a majority of votes.<sup>1</sup>

Shall the chiefs of the Reformation submit and accept the edict? How easily might the Reformers at this crisis, which was truly a tremendous one, have argued themselves into a wrong course! How many plausible pretexts and fair reasons might they have found for submission! The Lutheran princes were guaranteed the free exercise of their religion. The same boon was extended to all those of their subjects who, prior to the passing of the measure, had embraced the Reformed views. Ought not this to content them? How many perils would submission avoid! On what unknown hazards and conflicts would opposition launch them! Who knows what opportunities the future may bring? Let us embrace peace; let us seize the olive-branch Rome holds out, and close the wounds of Germany. With arguments like these might the Reformers have justified their adoption of a course which would have assuredly issued in no long time in the overthrow of their cause.

Happily they looked at the principle on which this arrangement was based, and they acted in faith. What was that principle? It was the right of Rome to coerce conscience and forbid free inquiry. But were not themselves and their Protestant subjects to enjoy religious freedom? Yes, as a favour, specially stipulated for in the arrangement, but not as a right. As to all outside that arrangement, the great principle of authority was to rule; conscience was out of court, Rome was infallible judge, and must be obeyed. The acceptance of the proposed arrangement would have been a virtual admission that religious liberty ought to be confined to Reformed Saxony; and as to all the rest of Christendom, free inquiry and the profession of the Reformed faith were crimes, and must be visited with the dungeon and the stake. Could they consent to localise religious liberty? to have it proclaimed that the Reformation had made its last convert? had subjugated its last acre? and that wherever Rome bore sway at this hour, there her dominion was to be perpetuated? Could the Reformers have pleaded that they were innocent of the blood of those hundreds and thousands who, in pursuance of this arrangement, would have to yield up their lives in Popish lands? This would have been to betray, at that supreme hour, the cause of the Gospel, and the liberties of Christendom.

The Reformed members of the Diet—the Lutheran princes and many of the deputies of the cities—assembled for deliberation. The crisis was a

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<sup>1</sup> The date of this edict is variously given. Seckendorf says it passed on the 4th April; D'Aubigné says the 7th, on the authority of Sleidan, but this is a mistake, for Sleidan gives no date. The continuator of M. Fleury makes the date of the edict the 13th April. Sleidan says that the Protest of the princes against it was read on the 19th April, while Pallavicino makes the date of the edict the 23rd April. The most probable reconciliation of these differences is, that the edict was passed on the 13th April, published on the 23rd, and that the Protest was given in on the 19th.

momentous one. From the consultations of an hour would come the rising or the falling of the Reformation—liberty or slavery to Christendom. The princes comprehended the gravity of their position. They themselves were to be let alone, but the price they were to pay for this ignominious ease was the denial of the Gospel, and the surrender of the rights of conscience throughout Christendom. They resolved not to adopt so dastardly a course.

The Diet met again on the 18th April. King Ferdinand, its president, eager apparently to see the matter finished, thanked the Diet for voting the proposition, adding that its substance was about to be embodied in an imperial edict, and published throughout the Empire. Turning to the Elector of Saxony and his friends, Ferdinand told them that the Diet had decided; that the resolution was passed, and that now there remained to them nothing but submission to the majority.

The Protestant members, not anticipating so abrupt a termination, retired to an adjoining chamber to frame their answer to this haughty summons. Ferdinand would not wait; despite the entreaty of the elector he left the Diet,<sup>1</sup> nor did he return on the morrow to hear the answer of the Lutheran princes. He had but one word, and he had spoken it —*Submit*. So, too, said Rome, speaking through his mouth—*Submit*.

On the morrow, the 19th April, the Diet held its last and fateful meeting.

The Elector of Saxony and his friends entered the hall. The chair was empty, Ferdinand being gone; but that took neither from the validity nor from the moral grandeur of the transaction. The princes knew that they had for audience, not the States now present only, but the emperor, Christendom, and the ages to come.

The elector, for himself, the princes, and the whole body of the Reformed party, now proceeded to read a Declaration, of which the following are the more important passages:—

“We cannot consent to its [the edict of 1526] repeal . . . . Because this would be to deny our Lord Jesus Christ, to reject His Holy Word, and thus give Him just reason to deny us before His Father, as He has threatened . . . . Moreover, the new edict declaring the ministers shall preach the Gospel, explaining it according to the writings accepted by the holy Christian Church; we think that, for this regulation to have any value, we should first agree on what is meant by the true and holy Church. Now seeing that there is great diversity of opinion in this respect; that there is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the Word of God: that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; that this holy book is in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 129.

darkness: we are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His Holy Word, such as it is contained in the Biblical books of the Old and New Testament, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This Word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, whilst all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.

“For these reasons, most dear lords, uncles, cousins, and friends, we earnestly entreat you to weigh carefully our grievances and our motives. If you do not yield to our request, we protest by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and for our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatsoever to the proposed decree, in anything that is contrary to God, to His Holy Word, to our right conscience, to the salvation of our souls, and to the last decree of Spires.”

This protest, when we consider the long dominancy and formidable character of the tyranny to which it was opposed, and the lofty nature and vast range of the rights and liberties which it claimed, is one of the grandest documents in all history, and marks an epoch in the progress of the human race second only to that of Christianity itself.

At Worms, Luther stood alone; at Spires, the one man has grown into a host. The “No” so courageously uttered by the monk in 1521 is now in 1529 taken up and repeated by princes, cities, and nations. Its echoes travel onwards, till at last their murmurs are heard in the palaces of Barcelona and the basilicas of Rome. Eight years ago the Reformation was simply a doctrine, now it is an organisation, a Church. This little seed, which on its first germination appeared the smallest of all seeds, and which Popes, doctors, and princes beheld with contempt, is a tree, whose boughs, stretched wide in air, cover nations with their shadow.

The princes renewed their Protest at the last sitting of the Diet, Saturday, 24th April. It was subscribed by John, Elector of Saxony; Philip, Landgrave of Hesse; George, Margrave of Brandenburg; Ernest and Francis, Dukes of Luneburg, and the Count of Anhalt. Some of the chief cities joined the princes in their protestation, as Strasburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Constance, Reutlingen, Windsheim, Lindau, Kempten, Memmingen, Nordlingen, Heilbronn, Isny, St. Gall, and Weissenburg.<sup>1</sup> From that day the Reformers were called Protestants.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Pallavicino thinks that they would have been more truly named had they been called “Rebels against the Pope and Cæsar”—*Ribella al Papa ed al Cesare* (lib. ii., cap. 18).



On the following Sabbath, 25th April, the chancellors of the princes and of the Protestant cities, with two notaries and several witnesses, met in a small house in St. John's Lane, belonging to Peter Muterstatt, Deacon of St. John's,<sup>1</sup> to draw up an appeal. In that document they recite all that had passed at the Diet, and they protest against its decree, for themselves, their subjects, and all who receive or shall hereafter receive the Gospel, and appeal to the emperor, and to a free and general Council of Christendom.<sup>2</sup> On the morning after their appeal, the 26th, the princes left Spire. This sudden departure was significant. It proclaimed to all men the firmness of their resolve. Ferdinand had spoken his last word and was gone. They, too, had spoken theirs, and were gone also. Rome hoists her flag; over against hers the Protestants display theirs; henceforward there are two camps in Christendom.

Even Luther did not perceive the importance of what had been done. The Diet he thought had ended in nothing. It often happens that the greatest events wear the guise of insignificance, and that grand eras are ushered in with silence. Than the principle put forth in the protest of the 19th April, 1529, it is impossible to imagine one that could more completely shield all rights, and afford a wider scope for development. Its legitimate fruit must necessarily be liberty, civil and religious. What was that principle? This Protest overthrew the lordship of man in religious affairs, and substituted the authority of God. But it did this in so simple and natural a way, and with such an avoidance of all high-sounding phraseology, that men could not see the grandeur of what was done, nor the potency of the principle. The protesters assumed the Bible to be the Word of God, and that every man ought to be left at liberty to obey it. This modest affirmation falls on our ear as an almost insipidity. Compared with some modern charters of rights, and recent declarations of independence, how poor does it look! Yet let us see how much is in it. "The Word," say the protesters, "is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life;" and "each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts." Then what becomes of the pretended infallibility of Rome, in virtue of which she claims the exclusive right of interpreting the Scriptures, and binding down the understanding of man to believe whatever she teaches? It is utterly exploded and overthrown. And what becomes of the emperor's right to compel men with his sword to practise whatever faith the Church enjoins, assuming it to be the true faith, simply because the Church has enjoined it? It too is exploded and overthrown. The principle, then, so quietly lodged in the Protest, lays this two-fold tyranny in the dust. The chair of the Pontiff and the sword of the emperor pass away, and conscience comes in their room. But the Protest does not leave conscience her own mistress;

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<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigné, bk. xiii., chap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 120. D'Aubigné, bk. xiii., chap. 6.

conscience is not a law to herself. That were anarchy—rebellion against Him who is her Lord. The Protest proclaims that the Bible is the law of conscience, and that its Author is her alone Lord. Thus steering its course between the two opposite dangers, avoiding on this hand anarchy, and on that tyranny, Protestantism comes forth unfurling to the eyes of the nations the flag of true liberty. Around that flag must all gather who would be free.

Of the three centuries that have since elapsed, there is not a year which has not borne its testimony to the essential grandeur and supreme importance of the act, so simple outwardly, done by the princes at Spires. “We protest,” said they, “that God speaking in His Word, and not Rome speaking through her priests, is the One Supreme Law of the human race.” The upper springs of Divine influence thus brought to act upon the soul and conscience of man, the nether springs of philosophy, art, and liberty began to flow. The nations that rallied round this Protest are now marching in the van of civilisation; those that continued under the flag of Romanism lie benumbed in slavery and are rotting in decay.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CONFERENCE AT MARBURG.

Landgrave Philip—His Activity—Elector John and Landgrave Philip the Complement of each other—Philip's Effort for Union—The One Point of Disunion among the Protestants—The Sacrament—Luther and Zwingli—Their Difference—Philip undertakes their Reconciliation—He proposes a Conference on the Sacrament—Luther Accepts with difficulty—Marburg—Zwingli's Journey thither—Arrival of Wittenberg Theologians—Private Discussions—Public Conference—"This is my Body"—A Figure of Speech—Luther's Carnal Eating and Spiritual Eating—Æcolampadius and Luther—Zwingli and Luther—Can a Body be in more Places than One at the Same Time?—Mathematics—The Fathers—The Conference Ends—The Division not Healed—Imperiousness of Luther—Grief of Zwingli—Mortification of Philip of Hesse—The Plague.

THE camp had been pitched, the Protestant flag displayed, and the campaign was about to open. No one then living suspected how long and wasting the conflict would be—the synods that would deliberate, the tomes that would be written, the stakes that would blaze, and the fields on which, alas! the dead would be piled up in ghastly heaps, before that liberty which the protesters had written up on their flag should be secured as the heritage of Christendom. But one thing was obvious to all, and that was the necessity to the Reformers of union among themselves.

Especially did this necessity appear to Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. This young prince was the most chivalrous of all the knightly adherents of Protestantism. His activity knew no pause. Day and night it was his thought how to strengthen the Protestant front. "Unite, fall into one army, and march as a united phalanx against the foe," was the advice he was constantly urging upon the Protestants. And certainly, in the prospect of such combinations as were now forming for their destruction, worse advice might have been given them. But the zeal of the landgrave was not quite to the taste of Luther; it at times alarmed him; his activity took too much a military direction to be altogether wise or safe; the Reformer therefore made it a point to curb it; and it must be confessed that Philip looked more to leagues and arms for the defence and success of the Reformation than to those higher forces that were bearing it onwards, and to that unseen but omnipotent Arm whose interpositions were so visible to Luther in the sudden shiftings of the vast and complicated drama around him.

But with all his defects the landgrave was of great use to the cause. His rough, fiery, impetuous energy was fitted for the times. In truth, the Elector John and Landgrave Philip were made for each other. John was prudent and somewhat timid; Philip was impulsive and altogether fearless. The same danger that made John hang back, made Philip rush forward. We see in the two

an equipoise of opposite qualities, which if brought together in one man would have made a perfect knight. John and Philip were in the political department of the movement what Luther and Melanchthon were in the theological and religious. They were the complement of each other.

There was one great division in the Protestant camp. The eye of Philip had long rested upon it with profound regret. Unless speedily healed it would widen with years, and produce, he felt, innumerable mischiefs in time to come. One circumstance in connection with this division encouraged hope; it existed on only one point—the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. On all the great fundamental truths of revelation the whole body of the Protestants were at one—on the origin of salvation, the grace of God; the accomplishment of salvation, the atoning death of Christ; the bestowal of salvation, the agency of the Holy Spirit; the channels of its conveyance, the Word and Sacraments; and the instrument by which the sinner receives it, faith in the righteousness of Christ—on all these points were the Reformers of Germany and the Reformers of Switzerland agreed. Along the whole of the royal road of truth could they walk side by side. On one point only did they differ, namely, the manner in which Christ is present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist—corporeally or spiritually? That question parted into two the Sacramental host.

Philip had grieved more over the breach than even Luther and Melanchthon. The landgrave believed that at bottom there were not two really different opinions among the disciples of the Gospel, but only one opinion differently apprehended, and variously stated, and that could he bring the leaders together, a free interchange of sentiments, and some sifting discussion, would succeed in removing the misapprehension. What a blessed thing to close this gulf! What a gain to unite the chivalry of knightly Germany with the bravery of republican Helvetia—the denizens of the plain with the sons of the mountain! And especially now, when they were waiting for the fiercest onset their foes had yet made upon them. They had just flung their flag upon the winds; they had unfurled it in the face of all Christendom, in the face of Rome; they had said as a body what Luther said as an individual at Worms—”Here we stand; we can do no otherwise, so help us God.” Assuredly the gage would be taken up, and the blow returned, by a power too proud not to feel, and too strong in armies and scaffolds not to resent the defiance. To remain disunited with such a battle in prospect, with such a tempest lowering over them, appeared madness. No doubt the landgrave was mainly anxious to unite the arms of the Protestants; but if Philip laboured for this object with a zeal so great, and it must be admitted so praiseworthy, not less anxious ought the Lutheran doctors to have been to unite the hearts and the prayers of the children of the Reform.

Ere this several pamphlets had passed between Luther and Zwingli on the question of the Lord's Supper. Those from the pen of Luther were so violent that they left an impression of weakness. The perfect calmness of Zwingli's replies, on the other hand, produced a conviction of strength. Zwingli's calmness stung Luther to the quick. It humiliated him. Popes and emperors had lowered their pretensions in his presence; the men of war whom the Papacy had sent forth from the Vatican to do battle with him, had returned discomfited. He could not brook the thought of lowering his sword before the pastor of Zurich. Must he, the doctor of Christendom, sit at the feet of Zwingli? A little more humility, a little less dogmatism, a stronger desire for truth than for victory, would have saved Luther from these explosions, which but tended to widen a breach already too great, and provoke a controversy which planted many a thorn in the future path of the Reformation.

The Landgrave of Hesse undertook with characteristic ardour the reconciliation of the German and Swiss Protestants, who now began to be called respectively the *Lutheran* and the *Reformed*. Soon after his return from the Diet of Spires, he sent invitations to the heads of the two parties to repair to his Castle of Marburg,<sup>1</sup> and discuss their differences in his presence. Zwingli's heart leaped for joy when he received the invitation. To end the feud, close the gulf, and rally all the scattered forces of the Gospel into one phalanx, was to him a delightful thought, and a blessed presage of final victory.

The reception given at Wittenberg to the invitation was not so cordial. Luther hung back—declined, in short. He did not like that the landgrave should move in this matter; he suspected that there was under it the snake of a political alliance;<sup>2</sup> besides, although he did not confess it to his friends, nor perhaps to himself, he seemed to have a presentiment of defeat. This opinion of Zwingli's he said, was plausible, and had attractions for minds that loved things that they could understand. This mystery, this miracle of Christ's bodily presence in the Lord's Supper, had been left, he thought, in the Gospel as the test of our submission, as an exercise for our faith. This absurdity, which wears the guise of piety, had been so often uttered by great doctors that Luther could not help repeating it.

But second thoughts convinced Luther and Melanchthon that they could not decline the conference. Popish Christendom would say they were afraid, and Reformed Christendom would lay at their door the continuance of the breach which so many deplored, should they persist in their refusal. They had even suggested to the Elector of Saxony that he should interpose his veto

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> *Luth. Cor.*, Aug. 2, 1529—Michelet, bk. iii., ch. 1, p. 217.

upon their journey. The elector, however, disdained so discreditable a manoeuvre. They next proposed that a Papist should be chosen as umpire, assigning as the reason of this strange proposition that a Papist only would be an impartial judge, forgetting that the party of all others in Christendom pledged to the doctrine of the real presence was the Church of Rome. Every device failed; they must go to Marburg; they must meet Zwingli.

The pastor of Zurich, with a single attendant, stole away by night. The town council, having regard to the perils of the journey, which had to be gone in good part over the territories of the emperor, in the midst of foes, into whose hands should the Reformer fall, he would see Zurich no more, refused to give him leave to depart. Accordingly Zwingli took the matter into his own hands, willing to risk life rather than forego the opportunity of uniting the ranks of the Reformation. Leaving a letter behind him to explain his departure to the council, he set out, and reached Basle in five days. Embarking at this point on the Rhine, in company of Œcolampadius, he descended the river to Strasburg. Here the travellers lodged a night in the house of Matthew Zell, the cathedral preacher. On the morrow they again set out, and taking the most unfrequented paths, escorted by a troop of Hessian cavalry, they at length on the 29th September reached Marburg.

The Wittenbergers had not yet arrived; they appeared at Marburg the next day. With Luther came Melancthon, Jonas, and Cruciger; Zwingli was accompanied by Œcolampadius from Basle, Bucer and Hedio from Strasburg, and Osiander from Nuremberg.<sup>1</sup> The landgrave lodged them in his castle, an ancient fortress standing on the brow of a hill, and commanding a noble view of the valley of the Lahn. He made them sit together at table, and entertained them in right princely fashion. To look each other in the face might help, he thought, to melt the ice in the heart.

The affair was much spoken of. The issue was watched intently in the two camps of Rome and Protestantism. "Will the breach be healed?" asked the Romanists in alarm; the Protestants hoped that it would, and that from the conference chamber at Marburg a united band would come forth. From many lands came theologians, scholars, and nobles to Marburg to witness the discussion, and if need were to take part in it.<sup>2</sup> Thousands followed Luther and Zwingli with their prayers who could not come in person,

The first day, after dinner, Luther and Œcolampadius walked together in the castle yard. The converse of these two chiefs was familiar and affectionate. In Œcolampadius, Luther had found another Melancthon. The Reformer of Basle united an erudition almost as profound as that of the great scholar of Wittenberg, with a disposition nearly as sweet and gentle. But

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<sup>1</sup> Ruchat, tom. ii., p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 1'21. Seckendorf, lib ii., sec. 18; Additio.

when Bucer, who had once been intimate with Luther, and had now gone over to Zwingli's side, approached, the Reformer shook his fist in his face, and said half jocularly, half in earnest, "As for you, you are a good-for-nothing knave."<sup>1</sup>

It was thought that a private meeting between selected persons from the two sides would pave the way for the public conference. "But let us beware," said the landgrave, "of at once engaging Luther and Zwingli in combat; let us take the disputants two by two, mating the mildest with the hottest, and leave them alone to debate the matter between themselves." Ecolampadius was paired with Luther, Melanchthon was paired with Zwingli. They were then shown into separate chambers, and left to discuss with each other till dinner-time.<sup>2</sup> Although on some points, more especially those of the divinity of Christ, original sin, and the deference due to the first six Councils, the Swiss Reformers were able to clear themselves of some suspicions under which they lay in the eyes of the German Protestants, the progress made at these private meetings towards a reconciliation was not by any means so great as had been looked for. As the Swiss deputies rejoined each other on their way to the dinner-table, they briefly exchanged first impressions. Zwingli, whispering into the ear of Ecolampadius, said that Melanchthon was a very Proteus, so great was his dexterity in evading the point of his opponent's argument; and Ecolampadius, putting his mouth to Zwingli's ear, complained that in Luther he had found a second Dr. Eck.

On the day following, the 2nd October, the conference was opened in public. The landgrave Philip, in a plain dress, and without any show of rank, took his place at the head of a table which had been set in one of the rooms of the castle. Seated with him were Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, and Ecolampadius. Their friends sat on benches behind them; the rest of the hall was devoted to the accommodation of a few of the distinguished men who had flocked to Marburg from so many places to witness the discussion.

The proceedings opened with Luther's taking a piece of chalk, and proceeding to trace some characters upon the velvet cover of the table. When he had finished, it was found that he had written—"Hoc est meuin corpus." "Yes," said he, laying down the bit of chalk, and displaying the writing to those around the table, "these are the words of Christ—"This is my body.' From this rock no adversary shall dislodge me."

No one denied that these were the words of Christ, but the question was, what was their sense? The whole controversy, on which hung issues to Protestantism so momentous, turned on this. The fundamental principle of Protestantism was that the Word of God is the supreme authority, and that

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<sup>1</sup> Scultet., *Anna!.*, ad 1529.

<sup>2</sup> Scultet., tom. ii., p. 198. Ruchat . tom. ii., p. 143.

obscure and doubtful passages are to be interpreted by others more clear. If this principle were to be followed on the present occasion, there could be no great difficulty in determining the sense of the words of Christ, "*This is my body.*"

The argument of the Swiss was wholly in the line of the fundamental principle of Protestantism. Luther had but one arrow in his quiver. His contention was little else than a constant repetition of the words which he had written with chalk on the table-cover.

Æcolampadius asked Luther whether he did not admit that there are figures of speech in the Bible, as "I am the door," "John is Elias," "God is a rock," "The rock was Christ." The words, "This is my body," he maintained, were a like figure of speech.

Luther admitted that there were figures in the Bible, but denied that this was one of them.

A figure we must hold them, responded Æcolampadius, otherwise Christ teaches contradictory propositions. In His sermon in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, He says, "The flesh profiteth nothing;" but in the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, literally interpreted, He says the flesh profiteth everything. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper, according to that exegesis, overthrows the doctrine of the sermon. Christ has one dogma for the multitude at Capernaum, and another dogma for His disciples in the upper chamber. This cannot be; therefore the words "This is my body" must be taken figuratively.<sup>1</sup>

Luther attempted to turn aside the force of this argument by making a distinction. There was, he said, a material eating of Christ's flesh, and there was a spiritual eating of it. It was the former, the material eating, of which Christ declared that it profiteth nothing.<sup>2</sup>

A perilous line of argument for Luther truly! It was to affirm the spirituality of the act, while maintaining the materiality of the thing.

Æcolampadius hinted that this was in effect to surrender the argument. It admitted that we were to eat spiritually, and if so we did not eat bodily, the material manducation being in that case useless.

No, quickly retorted Luther, we are to eat bodily also. We are not to ask of what use. God has commanded it, and we are to do it. This was to come back to the point from which he had started; it was to reiterate, with a little periphrasis, the words "This is my body."

It is worthy of notice that the argument since so often employed in confutation of the doctrine of Christ's corporeal presence in the Lord's Supper, namely, that a body cannot be in two places at one and the same time, was

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<sup>1</sup> Scultet., ii. 217. Ruchat, ii. 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



employed by our Lord Himself at Capernaum. When He found that His hearers understood Him to say that they must “eat His flesh and drink His blood,” after a corporeal manner, He at once restricted them to the spiritual sense, by telling them that His body was to ascend to heaven. “What” (John vi. 62, 63) “and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

The hour to adjourn had now arrived, and the disputants retired with the prince to dinner. At table there came an hour’s familiar and friendly talk with their host and with one another. In the afternoon they again repaired to the public hall, where the debate was resumed by Zwingli. The Scriptures, science, the senses, all three repudiate the Lutheran and Popish doctrine of the Lord’s Supper. Zwingli took his stand first on the ground of Scripture. Applying the great Protestant rule that Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture, he pressed Luther with the argument which had been started by Œcolampadius, namely, the manifest contradiction between the teaching of our Lord in the sermon at Capernaum and His teaching in the Lord’s Supper, if the words of institution are to be taken literally. “If so taken,” said Zwingli, “Christ has given us, in the Lord’s Supper, what is useless to us. He added the stinging remark, “The oracles of the demons were obscure, not so are those of Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

“But,” replied Luther, “it is not His own flesh, but ours, of which Christ affirms that it profiteth nothing.” This, of course, was to maintain that Christ’s flesh profited.

Zwingli might have urged that Christ was speaking of “the flesh of the Son of Man;” that His hearers so understood Him, seeing they asked, “How can this man give us *His flesh* to eat?” and that to refute this view, Christ adduced the future fact of His ascension, and so limited them to the figurative or spiritual sense of His words. Waiving this argument, Zwingli simply asked how flesh could nourish the soul? With the spirit only can the soul be fed. “We eat the flesh of Christ bodily with the mouth,” rejoined Luther, “and spiritually with the soul.”

This appeared to Zwingli to be to maintain contradictions. It was another way of returning to the starting-point, “This is my body.” It was in fact to maintain that the words were to be taken neither figuratively nor literally, and yet that they were to be taken in both senses.

To travel further on this line was evidently impossible. An absurdity had been reached. Zwingli now allowed himself greater scope and range. He dwelt especially upon the numerous wider passages in the Scriptures in

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<sup>1</sup> D’Aubigne, bk, xiii.5 chap. 7.

which the *sign* is put for the *thing signified*, and maintained that we have Christ's authority in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel for saying that it is so here, that the bread and wine of the Eucharist are not the very body and blood, but only the representatives of that body and blood, through which there cometh eternal life to men. Not in vain did the Reformer of Zurich thus argue. Minds were opening around him. The simplicity of his views, and their harmony with the usual method by which the spirit acts upon the soul of man, recommended them to the listeners. The light of the Word let fall upon the Lord's Supper, its nature, its design, and its mode of operation came clearly out. The anomalous mysteriousness that had shrouded it departed, and it took its place beside the other institutions of the Economy of Grace, as working like them spiritual effects by spiritual means. They felt that the consistency of even Luther's scheme of salvation by faith demanded it, and though Luther himself remained as unconvinced as ever, there were not a few conversions in the audience. There was a notable one—the ex-Franciscan, Francis Lambert, formerly of Avignon, now the head of the Hessian Church. His spare figure and eager eye made him a marked object in the throng of listeners; and when the discussion closed, his admiration of Luther, whose friendship and respect he enjoyed in return, did not prevent his declaring himself to be of the opinion of Zwingli. The Wittenberg doctors bewailed his defection. They saw in it not a proof of the soundness of Zwingli's argument, but an evidence of the French' man's fickleness. "Have we not all left the Church of Rome?" asked Lambert. "Is that, too, the fruit of fickleness?" This ended the first day's discussion.

The contest was continued on the following day, Sunday. Abandoning the theological ground, the doctor of Zurich attempted to carry his point by weapons borrowed from science. A body cannot be in more places than one at the same time, urged Zwingli. Christ's body is like ours; how can it be at once in heaven and on the earth, at the right hand of God and in the bread of the Eucharist? How can it be at the same instant on every one of the thousand altars at which the Eucharist is being celebrated? But Luther refused to answer at the bar of mathematics. He would hold up the tablecloth and point to the words "This is my body." He would permit neither Scripture nor science to interpret them in any sense but that in which he understood them. He would assert that it was a matter not to be understood, but to be believed. It might be against nature, it might be unknown to science; that did not concern him. God had said it, Christ's body was in heaven, and it was in the Sacrament; it was in the Sacrament substantially as born of the Virgin. There was the proof of it, "This is my body."

"If the body of Christ can be in several places at one and the same time," rejoined Zwingli, "then our bodies likewise, after the resurrection, must

possess the power of occupying more places than one at a time, for it is promised that our bodies shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Lord.”

“That proves nothing,” Luther replied. “What the text affirms is, that our bodies in their outward fashion are to resemble Christ’s body, not that they are to be endowed with a like power.

“My dear sirs,” Luther continued, “behold the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘This is my body.’ That truth I cannot abandon. I must confess and believe that the body of Jesus Christ is there.”

“Ah, well, my dear doctor,” replied Zwingli, “you put the body of Jesus Christ locally in the Lord’s Supper, for you say, ‘It behoves the body of Jesus Christ to be there.’ *There* is an adverb of place.”

“I repeat simply the words of Jesus Christ,” said Luther. “But since you are captious, I must again say that I will have nothing to do with mathematical reasons. I throw away the adverb *there* for Christ says, ‘*This* [not *there*] is my body.’ Whether that body is confined to a place, or whether it fills all space, I prefer to be ignorant rather than to know, since God has not been pleased to reveal it, and no man in the world is able to decide the point.”

“But Christ’s body is finite, and bounded by place,” urged Zwingli.

“No,” responded Luther, “away with these mathematical novelties; I take my stand on the almightiness of God.”

“*The power* is not the point to be established,” replied Zwingli, “but the *fact* that the body is in divers places at the same moment.”

“That,” said Luther, “have proved by the words ‘This is my body.’”

Zwingli reproached him with always falling into the error of begging the question, and he adduced a passage from Fulgentius, a Father of the fifth century, to show that the Fathers held that the body of Christ could be in only one place at a time. “Hear his words,” said Zwingli. “The Son of God,” says Fulgentius, “took the attributes of true humanity, and did not lose those of true divinity. Born in time according to His mother, He lives in eternity according to His divinity that He holds from the Father; coming from man He is man, and consequently in a place; proceeding from the Father He is God, and consequently present in every place. According to His human nature, He was absent from heaven while He was upon the earth, and quitted the earth when He ascended into heaven but according to His divine nature He remained in heaven when He came down from thence, and did not abandon the earth when He returned thither.”

Luther put aside the testimony of Fulgentius, saying that this Father was not speaking of the Lord’s Supper; and he again betook him to his battle-horse, “This is my body “—”it is there in the bread.”

“If it is *there* in the bread,” said Zwingli, “it is *there* as in a place.”

"It is there," reiterated Luther, "but it is not there as in a place; it is at the right hand of God. He has said, 'This is my body,' that is enough for me."

"But that is not to reason," retorted Zwingli, "that is to wrangle. You might as well maintain because Christ, addressing His mother from the cross and pointing to St. John, said, 'Woman, behold thy son,' that therefore St. John was the son of Mary." To all arguments and proofs to the contrary, an obstinate controversialist might oppose an endless iteration of the words, "Woman, behold thy son—Woman, behold thy son." Zwingli further enforced his argument by quoting the words of Augustine to Dardanus. "Let us not think," says he, "that Christ according to His human form is present in every place. Christ is everywhere present as God, and yet by reason of His true body He is present in a definite part of heaven. That cannot be called a body of which place cannot be predicated."

Luther met the authority of Augustine as he had done that of Fulgentius, by denying that he was speaking of the Lord's Supper, and he wound up by saying that "Christ's body was present in the bread, but not as in a place."

The dinner-hour again interposed. The ruffled theologians tried to forget, at the table of their courteous and princely entertainer, the earnest tilting in which they had been engaged, and the hard blows they had dealt to one another in the morning's conference.

Æcolampadius had been turning over in his mind the words of Luther, that Christ's body was present in the Sacrament, but not as in a place. It was possible, he thought, that in these words common ground might be found on which the two parties might come together. On reassembling in the hall they became the starting-point of the discussion. Reminding Luther of his admission, Æcolampadius asked him to define more precisely his meaning. If Christ's body is present, but not as a body is present in a place, then let us inquire what is the nature of Christ's bodily presence.

"It is in vain you urge me," said Luther, who saw himself about to be dragged out of his circle, "I will not move a single step. Only Augustine and Fulgentius are with you; all the rest of the Fathers are with us."

"As, for instance—?" quietly inquired Æcolampadius.

"Oh, we will not name them," exclaimed Luther; "Christ's words suffice for us. When Augustine wrote on this subject he was a young man, and his statements are confused."

"If we cite the Fathers," replied Æcolampadius, "it is not to shelter our opinion under their authority, but solely to shield ourselves from the charge you have hurled against us that we are innovators."<sup>1</sup>

The day had worn away in the discussion. It was now evening. On the lawns and woods around the castle the shadows of an October twilight were

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<sup>1</sup> Scultet., ii. 220-228. Ruchat, ii. 148-155.

fast falling. Dusk filled the hall. Shall they bring in lights? To what purpose? Both sides feel that it is wholly useless to prolong the debate.

Two days had worn away in this discussion. The two parties were no nearer each other than at the beginning. The Swiss theologians had exhausted every argument from Scripture and from reason. Luther was proof against them all. He stood immovably on the ground he had taken up at the beginning; he would admit no sense of the words but the literal one; he would snatch up the cover from the table and, displaying triumphantly before the eyes of Zwingli and Ecolampadius the words he had written upon it—“This is my body”—he would boast that there he still stood, and that his opponents had not driven him from this ground, nor ever should. Zwingli, who saw the hope so dearly cherished by him of healing the schism fast vanishing, burst into tears. He besought Luther to come to terms, to be reconciled, to accept them as brothers. Neither prayers nor tears could move the doctor of Wittenberg. He demanded of the Helvetian Reformers unconditional surrender. They must accept the Lord’s Supper in the sense in which he took it; they must subscribe to the tenet of the real presence. This the Swiss Protestants declared they could not do. On their refusal, Luther declared that he could not regard them as having a standing within the Church, nor could he receive them as brothers. As a sword these words went to the heart of Zwingli. Again he burst into tears. Must the children of the Reformation be divided? must the breach go unhealed?

On the 12th October, 1529, Luther writes, in reference to this famous conference: “All joined in suing me for peace with the most extraordinary humility. The conference lasted two days. I responded to the arguments of Ecolampadius and Zwinglius by citing this passage, ‘This is my body;’ and I refuted all their objections.”

And again, “The whole of Zwinglius’ argument may be shortly reduced to the following summary:—That the body of our Lord cannot exist without occupying space and without dimensions [and therefore it was not in the bread]. Ecolampadius maintained that the Fathers styled the bread a symbol, and consequently that it was not the real body of Christ. They supplicated us to bestow upon them the title of ‘brothers.’ Zwinglius even implored the landgrave with tears to grant this. ‘There is no place on earth,’ said he, ‘where I so much covet to pass my days as at Wittenberg.’ We did not, however, accord to them this appellation of brothers. All we granted was that which charity enjoins us to bestow even upon our enemies. They, however, behaved in all respects with an incredible degree of humility and amiability.”<sup>1</sup>

Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, was unspeakably mortified by the issue of the conference. He had been at great pains to bring it about; he had built the

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<sup>1</sup> *Luth. Cor.*—Michelet, pp. 217., 218; Lond., 1846.

highest hopes upon it; now all these hopes had to be relinquished. Wherever he looked, outside the Protestant camp, he beheld union. All, from the Pope downwards, were gathering in one vast confederacy to crush both Wittenberg and Zurich, and yet Luther and Zwingli were still standing—the former haughtily and obstinately— apart! Every hour the storm lowers more darkly over Protestantism, yet its disciples do not unite! His disappointment was great.

All the time this theological battle was going on, a terrible visitant was approaching Marburg. The plague, in the form of the sweating sickness, had broken out in Germany, and was traversing that country, leaving on its track the dead in thousands. It had now reached the city where the conference was being held, and was committing in Marburg the same fearful ravages which had marked its presence in other towns. This was an additional reason for breaking up the conference. Philip had welcomed the doctors with joy, he was about to see them depart in sorrow. A terrible tempest was brewing on the south of the Alps, where Charles and Clement were nightly closeted in consultation over the extermination of Protestantism. The red flag of the Moslem was again displayed on the Danube, soon, it might be, to wave its bloody folds on the banks of the Elbe. In Germany thousands of swords were ready to leap from their scabbards to assail the Gospel in the persons of its adherents. All round the horizon the storm seemed to be thickening; but the saddest portent of all, to the eye of Philip, was the division that parted into two camps the great Reformed brotherhood, and marshalled in two battles the great Protestant army.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MARBURG CONFESSION.

Further Efforts of the Landgrave—Zwingli's Approaches —Luther's Repulse—The Landgrave's Proposal—Articles Drafted by Luther—Signed by Both Parties—Agreement in Doctrine—Only One Point of Difference, namely, the Manner of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament—The Marburg Confession—A Monument of the Real Brotherhood of all Protestants—Bond between Germany and Helvetia—Ends served by it.

YET before seeing the doctors depart, never perhaps to meet each other again, the landgrave asked himself, can nothing more be done to heal the breach? Must this one difference irreconcilably divide the disciples of the Gospel? Agreement on the Eucharist is, it seems, impossible; but is there not besides enough of common ground to permit of a union, of such sort as may lead to united counsels and united action, in the presence of those tremendous dangers which lower equally over Germany and over Switzerland?

"Are we not brethren, whether Luther acknowledge it or not?" was the question which Philip put to himself. "Does not Rome account both of us her enemies?" This is negative proof of brotherhood. Clearly Rome holds us to be brothers. Do not both look for salvation through the same sacrifice of the cross? and do not both bow to the Bible as the supreme authority of what they are to believe? Are not these strong bonds? Those between whom they exist can hardly be said to be twain.

Philip accordingly made another effort. He made the doctors go with him, one by one, into his cabinet. He reasoned, entreated, exhorted; pointed now to the storm that seemed ready to burst, and now to the advantages that union might secure. More from the desire to gratify the landgrave than from any lively hope of achieving union, the two parties agreed again to meet and to confer.

The interview was a most touching one. The circumstances amid which it took place were well fitted to humble pride, and to melt the hearts of men. Hundreds were dying of the plague around them. Charles and the Pope, Ferdinand and the princes, all were whetting their swords, eager to spill the blood alike of Zwinglian and of Lutheran. Only let the emperor be master of the position, and he will not spare Luther because he believes in the real presence, nor Zwingli because he differs on this point from Wittenberg. Both, in the judgment of Charles, are heretics, equally deserving of extermination. What did this mean? If they were hated of all men, surely it was for his name's sake; and was not this a proof that they were His children?

Taught by his instincts of Christian love, Zwingli opened the conference by enunciating a truth which the age was not able to receive. "Let us," said he, "proclaim our union in all things in which we agree; and as for the rest,

let us forbear as brothers; “<sup>1</sup> adding that never would peace be attained in the Church unless her members were allowed to differ on secondary points.

The Landgrave Philip, catching at this new idea, and deeming that now at last union had been reached, exclaimed, “Yes, let us unite; let us proclaim our union.”

“With none on earth do I more desire to be united than with you,” said Zwingli, addressing Luther and his companions. Œcolampadius, Bucer, and Hedio made the same declaration.

This magnanimous avowal was not without its effect. It had evidently touched the hearts of the opposing rank of doctors. Luther’s prejudice and obduracy were, it appeared, on the point of being vanquished, and his coldness melted. Zwingli’s keen eye discovered this: he burst into tears—tears of joy—seeing himself, as he believed, on the eve of an event that would gladden the hearts of thousands in all the countries of the Reformation, and would strike Rome with terror. He approached: he held out his hand to Luther: he begged him only to pronounce the word “brother.” Alas! what a cruel disappointment awaited him. Luther coldly and cuttingly replied, “Your spirit is different from ours.” It was indeed different: Zwingli’s was catholic, Luther’s sectarian.

The Wittenberg theologians consulted together. They all concurred in Luther’s resolution. “We,” said they to Zwingli and his friends, “hold the belief of Christ’s bodily presence in the Lord’s Supper to be essential to salvation, and we cannot in conscience regard you as in the communion of the Church.”<sup>2</sup>

“In that case,” replied Bucer, “it were folly to ask you to recognise us as brethren. But we, though we regard your doctrine as dishonouring to Christ, now on the right hand of the Father, yet, seeing in all things you depend on Him, we acknowledge you as belonging to Christ. We appeal to posterity.”<sup>3</sup> This was magnanimous.

The Zwinglians had won a great victory. They had failed to heal the schism, or to induce the Wittenbergers to acknowledge them as brethren; nevertheless, they had reared a noble monument to the catholicity of Christian love.

Their meekness was mightier than Luther’s haughtiness. Not only was its power felt in the conference chamber, where it made some converts, but throughout Germany. From this time forward the more spiritual doctrine of the Eucharist began to spread throughout the Lutheran Church. Even Luther bowed his head. The tide in his breast began to turn—to rise. Addressing the

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<sup>1</sup> Scult., p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> *Zwing. Opp.*, iv. 203.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.



Zwinglians, and speaking his last word, he said, "We acknowledge you as friends; we do not consider you as brothers. I offer you the hand of peace and charity."<sup>1</sup>

Overjoyed that something had been won, the Landgrave Philip proposed that the two parties should unite in making a joint profession of their faith, in order that the world might see that on one point only did they differ, namely, the manner in which Christ is present in the Lord's Supper, and that after all the great characteristic of the Protestant Churches was unity, though manifested in diversity. The suggestion recommended itself to both sides. Luther was appointed to draw up the articles of the Protestant faith. "I will draft them," said he, as he retired to his chamber to begin his task, "with a strict regard to accuracy, but I don't expect the Zwinglians to sign them."

The pen of Luther depicts the Protestant doctrine as evolved by the Reformation at Wittenberg; the rejection or acceptance of Zwingle will depict it as developed at Zurich. The question of brotherhood is thus about to be appealed from the bar of Luther to the bar of fact. It is to be seen whether it is a different Gospel or the same Gospel that is received in Germany and in Switzerland.

The articles, fourteen in number, gave the Wittenberg view of the Christian system—the Trinity, the person and offices of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, original sin, justification by faith, the authority of the Scriptures, rejection of tradition, baptism, holiness, civil order; in short, all the fundamental doctrines of revealed truth were included in the programme of Luther.<sup>2</sup>

The doctor of Wittenberg read his paper article by article. "We cordially say amen," exclaimed the Zwinglians, "and are ready to subscribe every one of them." Luther stood amazed. Were the men of Helvetia after all of one mind with the men of Wittenberg? Were Switzerland and Germany so near to each other? Why should man put asunder those whom the Holy Spirit had joined?

Still the gulf was not closed, or rather sectarianism again opened it. Luther had reserved the article on the Lord's Supper to the last.

"We all believe," Luther continued, "that the Sacrament of the altar is the Sacrament of the very body and very blood of Jesus Christ; and that the spiritual manducation of this body and blood is specially necessary to every true Christian."<sup>3</sup>

This brought the two parties once more in presence of the great impassable obstacle. It marked the furthest limit on the road to union the Church in

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<sup>1</sup> *Zwing. Opp.*, iv. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 1. Seckendorb lib. ii., sec. 17, p. 158. Ruchat, tom. ii., pp. 156–159.

<sup>3</sup> Scultet., p. 232.

that age had reached. Here she must halt. Both parties felt that advance beyond was impossible, till God should further enlighten them. But they resolved to walk together so far as they were agreed. And here, standing at the parting of the ways as it were, they entered into covenant with one another, to avoid all bitterness in maintaining what each deemed the truth, and to cherish towards one another the spirit of Christian charity.<sup>1</sup>

On the 4th October, 1529, the signatures of both parties were appended to this joint confession of Protestant faith. This was better than any mere protestation of brotherhood. It was actual brotherhood, demonstrated and sealed. The articles, we venture to affirm, are a complete scheme of saving truth, and they stand a glorious monument that Helvetia and Germany were one—in other words, a glorious monument to the Oneness of Protestantism.

This Confession of Marburg was the first well-defined boundary-line drawn around the Protestants. It marked them off as a distinct body from the enthusiasts on the one hand and the Romanists on the other. Their flag was seen to float on the middle ground between the camp of the visionaries and that of the materialists. “There is,” said Zwingli, in opposition to the former, who saw in the Sacrament only a commemoration, “there is a real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.” “Faith,” said Luther, in opposition to the *opus operatum* of the latter, “faith is necessary in order to our benefiting by the Sacrament.” We thus see that the middle camp has two opposing fronts, corresponding to the set of foes on either hand, but substantial oneness in itself. It is gathered round one King—Christ: round one expiation—the cross: round one law—the Bible.

But if the Church of the Reformation still remained outwardly divided, her members were thereby guarded against the danger of running into political alliances, and supporting their cause by force of arms. This line of policy the Landgrave Philip had much at heart, and it formed one of the objects he had in view in his attempts to conduct to a successful issue, the conferences at Marburg Union might have rendered the Protestants too strong. They might have leaned on the arm of flesh, and forgotten their true defence. The Reformation was a spiritual principle. From the sword it could derive no real help. Its conquests would end the moment those of force began. From that hour it would begin to decay, it would be powerless to conquer, and would cease to advance. But let its spiritual arm be disentangled from political armour, which could but weigh it down, let its disciples hold forth the truth, let them fight with prayers and sufferings, let them leave political alliances and the fate of battles to the ordering and overruling of their Divine Head—let them do this, and all opposition would melt in their path, and final victory

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 121.

would attest at once the truth of their cause, and the omnipotence of their King.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE EMPEROR, THE TURK, AND THE REFORMATION.

Charles's great Ambition, the Supremacy of Christendom—Protestantism his great Stumbling-Block—The Edict of Worms is to Remove that Stumbling-Block—Charles Disappointed—The Victory of Pavia Renews the Hope—Again Disappointed—The Diet of Spires, 1526—Again Baulked—In the Church, Peace: in the World, War—The Turk before Vienna—Terror in Germany—The Emperor again Laying the Train for Extinction of Protestantism—Charles Lands at Genoa—Protestant Deputies—Interview with Emperor at Piacenza—Charles's stern Reply—Arrest of Deputies—Emperor sets out for Bologna.

WE have traced the steps by which Charles V. climbed to the summit of power. It was his ambition to wield the supremacy of Europe without being under the necessity of consulting any will but his own, or experiencing impediment or restraint in any quarter whatever. The great stumbling-block in his path to this absolute and unfettered exercise of his arbitrary will, was the Protestant movement. It divided with him the government of Christendom, and by its empire of the conscience it set limits to his empire of the sword. In his onward march he thought that it was necessary to sweep Luther and Wittenberg from his path. But ever as he put his hand upon his sword's hilt to carry his purpose into effect, some hindrance or other prevented his drawing it, and made him postpone the execution of his great design. From Aix-la-Chapelle, where the much-coveted imperial diadem was placed on his brow, he went straight to Worms, where in assembled Diet he passed the edict consigning Luther to proscription and the stake. Now, he thought, had come the happy moment he had waited for. Rid of the monk and freed from the annoyance of his heresy, he is now supreme arbiter in Christendom. At that instant a war broke out between him and France. For four years, from 1521 to 1525, the emperor had to leave Luther in peace, translating the Scriptures, and propagating the Reformed doctrines throughout Germany, while he was waging an arduous and dubious contest with Francis I. But the victory of Pavia placed France and Italy at his feet, and left free his sword to do his will, and what does he will but to execute the Edict of Worms? Now he will strike the blow. The emperor's hand is again upon his poniard: Luther is a dead man: the knell of Wittenberg has rung out.

Not yet. Strange to say, at that moment opposition arose in a quarter where Charles was entitled to look for only zealous co-operation. The Pope, Clement VII., was seized with a sudden dread of the Spanish power. The Italians at the same moment became inflamed with the project of driving out the Spaniards, and raising their country from the vassalage of centuries to the independence and glory of early days. Francis I. was burning with a desire

to avenge the humiliation of his captivity, and these concurring causes led to a formidable league of sovereigns against the man who but a few months before had seen all opposition give way before him. The emperor unsheathed his sword, but not to strike where he so fondly hoped to inflict a deadly blow. The puissant Charles must still leave the monk of Wittenberg at peace, and while his doctrines are day by day striking a deeper root, the emperor is compelled to buckle on his armour, and meet the combination which Clement VII., Francis I., and Henry VIII. have entered into against him.

Then come three years (1526–1529) of distracting thought and harassing toil to the emperor. But if compelled to be absent in camps and on tented fields, may he not find others who will execute the edict, and sweep the obnoxious monk from his path? He will try. He convokes (1526) a Diet to meet at Spires, avowedly for the purpose of having the edict executed. It is their edict not less than his, for they had concurred with him in fulminating it; surely the princes will sleep no longer over this affair; they will now send home the bolt! Not yet. The Diet of Spires did exactly the opposite of what Charles meant it should do. The majority of the princes were friendly to Luther, though in 1521 they had been hostile to him; and they enacted that in the matter of religion every State should be at liberty to do as it judged best. The Diet that was to unchain the furies of Persecution, proclaims Toleration.

The war-clouds at this time hang heavy over Christendom, and discharge their lightnings first on one country, then on another; but there is a space of clear sky above Wittenberg, and in the interval of quiet which Saxony enjoys, we see commissioners going forth to set in order the Churches of the German Reformation. All the while this peaceful work of upbuilding is going on, the reverberations of the distant thunder-storm are heard rolling in the firmament. Now it is from the region of the Danube that the hoarse roar of battle is heard to proceed. There the Turk is closing in fierce conflict with the Christian, and the leisure of Ferdinand of Austria, which otherwise might be worse employed, is fully occupied in driving back the hordes of a Tartar invasion. Now it is from beyond the Alps that the terrible echoes of war are heard to roll. On the plains of Italy the legions of the emperor are contending against the arms of his confederate foes, and that land pays the penalty of its beauty and renown by having its soil moistened with the blood and darkened with the smoke of battle. And now comes another terrible peal, louder and more stunning than any that had preceded it, the last of that thunderstorm. It is upon the City of the Seven Hills that this bolt is discharged. How has it happened that the thunders have rolled thither? It was no arrangement of the emperor's that Rome should be smitten; the bolt he hoped would fall elsewhere. But the winds of the political, like those of the natural firmament, do not wait on the bidding of man. These winds, contrary to the expectation of all men, wafted that terrible war-cloud to where rose in proud magnificence

the temples and palaces of the Eternal City, and where stood the throne of her Pontiff. The riches and glory of ages were blighted in an hour.

With this terrific peal the air clears, and peace again returns for a little while to Christendom. The league against the emperor was now at an end; he had cut it in pieces with his sword. Italy was again at his feet; and the Pope, who in an evil hour for himself had so strangely revolted, was once more his ally. There is no king who may now stand up against Charles. It seemed as if, at last the hour had fully come for which the emperor had waited so long. Now he can strike with the whole force of the Empire. Now he will measure his strength with that mysterious movement, which he beholds, with a hatred not unmingled with dread, rising higher and extending wider every year, and which, having neither exchequer nor army, is yet rearing an empire in the world that threatens to eclipse his own.

Again darkness gathered round, and danger threatened the Protestant Church. Two terrible storms hung lowering in the skies of the world. The one darkened the East, the other was seen rising in the West. It was the Eastern tempest that would be first to burst, men thought, and the inhabitants of Germany turned their eyes in that direction, and watched with alarm and trembling the progress of the cloud that was coming towards them. The gates of Asia had opened, and had poured out the fierce Tartar hordes on a new attempt to submerge the rising Christianity and liberty of the West under a flood of Eastern barbarism. Traversing Hungary, the Ottoman host had sat down before the walls of Vienna a week before the Marburg Conference. The hills around that capital were white with their tents, and the fertile plains beneath its walls, which the hoof of Mussulman horse had never pressed till now, were trodden by their cavalry. The besiegers were opening trenches, were digging mines, were thundering with their cannon, and already a breach had been made in the walls. A few days and Vienna must succumb to the numbers, the impetuosity, and valour of the Ottoman warriors, and a desolate and blood-besprinkled heap would alone remain to mark where it had stood. The door of Germany burst open, the conquerors would pour along the valley of the Danube, and plant the crescent amid the sacked cities and devastated provinces of the Empire. The prospect was a terrible one. A common ruin, like avalanche on brow of Alp, hung suspended above all parties and ranks in Germany, and might at any moment sweep down upon them with resistless fury. "It is you," said the adherents of the old creed addressing the Lutherans, "who have brought this scourge upon us. It is you who have unloosed these angels of evil; they come to chastise you for your heresy. You have cast off the yoke of the Pope, and now you must bear the yoke of the Turk." "Not so," said Luther, "it is God who has unloosed this army, whose king is Abaddon the destroyer. They have been sent to punish us for our sins, our ingratitude for the Gospel, our blasphemies, and above all, our shedding of the

blood of the righteous.” Nevertheless, it was his opinion that all Germans ought to unite against the sultan for the common defence. It was no question of leagues or offensive war, but of country and of common safety: the Turk was at their hearths, and as neighbour assists neighbour whose house is on fire, so Protestant ought to aid Papist in repelling a foe that was threatening both with a common slaughter.

It was at this time that he preached his “Battle Sermon.” Its sound was like the voice of a great trumpet. Did ever general address words more energetic to his soldiers when about to engage in battle? “Mahomet,” said he, “exalts Christ as being without sin, but he denies that He is the true God; he is therefore His enemy. Alas! to this hour the world is such that it seems everywhere to rain disciples of Mahomet. Two men ought to oppose the Turks—the first is Christian, that is to say, prayer; the second is Charles, that is to say, the sword. I know my dear Germans well—fat and well-fed swine as they are; no sooner is the danger removed than they think only of eating and sleeping. Wretched man, if thou dost not take up arms, the Turk will come; he will carry thee away into his Turkey; he will sell thee like a dog; and thou shalt serve him night and day, under the rod and the cudgel, for a glass of water and a morsel of bread. Think on this, be converted, and implore the Lord not to give thee the Turk for thy schoolmaster.”<sup>1</sup>

Western freedom had never perhaps been in such extreme peril since the time when Xerxes led his myriad army to invade Greece. But the terrible calamity of Ottoman subjugation was not to befall Europe. The Turk had reached the furthest limits of his progress westward. From this point his slaughtering hordes were to be rolled back. While the cities and provinces of Germany waited in terror, the tramp of his war-horses and the gleam of his scimitars, there came the welcome tidings that the Asiatic warriors had sustained a severe repulse before Vienna (16th October, 1529), and were now in full retreat to the Bosphorus.<sup>2</sup> The scarcity of provisions to which the Turkish camp was exposed, and the early approach of winter, with its snow-storms, combined to effect the raising of the siege and the retreat of the invaders; but Luther recognised in this unexpected deliverance the hand of God, and the answer of prayer. “We Germans are always snoring,” he exclaimed, indignant at some whose gratitude was not so lively as he thought it ought to have been, “and there are many traitors among us. Pray,” he wrote to Myconius, “against the Turk and the gates of hell, that as the angel could not destroy one little city for the sake of one just soul in it, so we may be spared for the sake of the few righteous that are in Germany.”

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<sup>1</sup> “Heer predigt wider die Turken.”—*L. Opp.* (W) xx. 2691.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vi., p. 121.

But if the Eastern cloud had rolled away, and was fast vanishing in the distance, the one in the West had grown bigger than ever, and was coming rapidly onwards. “We have two Cæsars,” said Luther, “one in the East and one in the West, and both our foes.” The emperor is again victorious over the league which his enemies had formed against him. He has defeated the King of France; he has taught Henry of England to be careful of falling a second time into the error he committed in the affair of Cognac; he has chastised the Pope, and compelled Clement VII. to sue for peace with a great ransom and the offer of alliance; and now he looks around him and sees no opponent save one, and that one apparently the weakest of all. That opponent swept from his path, he will mount to the pinnacle of power. Surely he who has triumphed over so many kings will not have to lower his sword before a monk. The emperor has left Spain in great wrath, and is on his way to chastise those audacious Protestants, who are now, as he believes, fully in his power. The terror of the Turk was forgotten in the more special and imminent danger that threatened the lives and religion of the Protestants. “The Emperor Charles,” said Luther, “has determined to show himself more cruel against us than the Turk himself, and he has already uttered the most horrible threats. Behold the hour of Christ’s agony and weakness. Let us pray for all those who will soon have to endure captivity and death.”<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the work at Wittenberg, despite the gathering clouds and the mutterings of the distant thunder, does not for one moment stand still. Let us visit this quiet retreat of learned men and scholars. In point of size this Saxon town is much inferior to many of the cities of Germany. Neither among its buildings is there palatial edifice, nor in its landscape is there remarkable object to attract the eye, and awaken the admiration of the visitor, yet what a power is it putting forth! Here those mighty forces are at work which are creating the new age. Here is the fountain-head of those ideas which are agitating and governing all classes, from the man who is master of half the kingdoms of the world, to the soldier who fights in the ranks and the serf who tills the soil. In the autumn of 1529, Mathesius, the biographer of Luther, became a student in “the renowned university.” The next Sabbath after his admission, at vespers, he heard “the great man Dr. Luther preach” from the words of St. Peter (Acts ii. 38), enjoining repentance and baptism. What a sermon from the lips of “the man of God”—“for which all the days of his pilgrimage on earth, and throughout eternity, he should have to give God thanks.” At that period Melancthon lectured on Cicero’s *De Oratoribus*, and his oration *Pro Archia*; and before noon on the Epistle to the Romans, and every Wednesday on Aristotle’s *Ethics*, Bugenhagen lectured on the Epistles to the Corinthians; Jonas on the Psalms; Aurogallus on Hebrew

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<sup>1</sup> *Luth. Opp.*, iii. 324.



Grammar; Weimar on Greek; Tulich on Cicero's *Offices*; Bach on Virgil; Volmar on the theory of the planets; Mulich on astronomy; and Cruciger on Terence, for the younger students. There were besides private schools for the youth of the town and its neighbourhood, which were in vigorous operation.<sup>1</sup>

Over and above his lectures in the university, and his sermons in the cathedral, the Reformer toiled with his pen to spread the Protestant light over Germany and countries more remote. A boon beyond all price was his German Bible: in style so idiomatic and elegant, and in rendering so faithful, that the Prince of Anhalt said it was as if the original penmen had lived in Germany, and used the tongue of the Fatherland. Luther was constantly adding to the obligations his countrymen owed him for this priceless treasure, by issuing new editions carefully revised. He wrote, moreover, expositions on several of the Epistles; commentaries on the prophets; he was at this moment busy on Daniel; he had prefixed an explanatory preface to the Apocalypse; and his commentary on Jeremiah was soon to follow. Nor must we omit the humblest, but not the least useful, of all the works which issued from his study, his *Smaller and Larger Catechisms*.

When we pause to contemplate these two men— Luther and Charles— can we have the slightest doubt in saying which is immeasurably the greater? The one sitting in his closet sends forth his word, which runs speedily throughout the earth, shaking into ruin ancient systems of superstition to which the ages have done reverence, rending the shackles from conscience, and saying to the slave, "Be thou free;" giving sight to the blind, raising up the fallen, and casting down the mighty; leading hearts captive, and plucking up or planting kingdoms. It is a God-like power which he exercises.

When we turn to the emperor in his gorgeous palace, editing his edicts, and dispatching them by liveried couriers to distant nations, we feel that we have made an immense stride downward. We have descended to a lower region, where we find a totally different and far inferior set of forces at work. Before Charles can effect anything he must get together an army, he must collect millions of treasure, he must blow his trumpets and beat his kettledrums; and yet how little that is really substantial does he reap from all this noise and expense and blood! Another province or city, it may be, calls him master, but waits the first opportunity to throw off his yoke. His sword has effaced some of the old landmarks on the earth's surface, and has traced a few new ones; but what truth has he established which may mould the destinies of men, and be a fountain of blessing in ages to come? What fruit does Spain or the world reap today from all the battles of Charles? It is now that we see which of the two men wielded real power, and which of the two was the true monarch.

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<sup>1</sup> Worsley, *Life of Luther*, vol. ii., p. 193.

The emperor was on his way to Germany, where he was expected next spring. He had made peace with Francis, he had renewed his alliance with the Pope, the Turk had gone back to his own land. It was one of those moments in the life of Charles when Fortune shed her golden beams upon his path, and beckoned him onwards with the flattering hope that now he was on the eve of attaining the summit of his ambition. One step more, one little remaining obstruction swept away, and then he would stand on the pinnacle of power. He did not conceal his opinion that that little obstruction was Wittenberg, and that the object of his journey was to make an end of it.

But in consummating his grand design he must observe the constitutional forms to which he had sworn at his coronation as emperor. The cradle of the Reformation was placed precisely in that part of his dominions where he was not absolute master. Had it been placed in Spain, in Flanders—anywhere, in short, except Saxony—how easy would it have been to execute the Edict of Worms! But in Germany he had to consult the will of others, and so he proceeded to convoke another Diet at Augsburg. Charles must next make sure of the Pope. He could not have the crafty Clement tripping him up the moment he turned his back and crossed the Alps on his way to Germany. He must go to Italy and have a personal interview with the Pontiff.

Setting sail from Spain, and coasting along on the waters of the Mediterranean, the imperial fleet cast anchor in the Bay of Genoa. The youthful emperor gazed, doubtless, with admiration and delight on the city of the Dorias, whose superb palaces, spread out in concentric rows on the face of the mountains, embosomed in orange and oleander groves, rise from the blue sea to the summit of the craggy and embattled Apennines. The Italians, on the other hand, trembled at the approach of their new master, whose picture, as drawn by their imaginations, resembled those Gothic conquerors who in former times had sacked the cities and trampled into the dust the fertility of Italy. Their fears were dispelled, however, when on stepping ashore they beheld in Charles not an irate and ferocious conqueror, come to chastise them for their revolt, but a pale-faced prince, of winning address and gentle manners, followed by a train of nobles in the gay costume of Spain, and, like their master, courteous and condescending.<sup>1</sup> This amiable young man, who arrived among the Italians in smiles, could frown sternly enough on occasion, as the Protestant deputies, who were at this moment on their way to meet him, were destined to experience.

The Reformed princes, who gave in the famous protest to the Diet of Spires (1529), followed up their act by an appeal to the emperor. The Arch-Duke Ferdinand, the president of the Diet, stormed and left the assembly, but the protesters appealed to a General Council and to posterity. Their am-

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson., *Hist. Charles V.*, bk. v., p. 171; Edin., 1829.

bassadors were now on their way to lay the great Protest before Charles. Three burgesses, marked rather by their weight of character than by their eminence of position, had been selected for this mission. Their names were—John Ehinger, Burgomaster of Memmingen; Michael Caden, Syndic of Nuremberg; and Alexis Frauentrat, secretary to the Margrave of Brandenburg. Their mission was deemed a somewhat dangerous one, and before their departure a pension was secured to their widows in case of misfortune.<sup>1</sup> They met the emperor at Piacenza, for so far had he got on his way to meet the Pope at Bologna, to which city Clement had retired, to benefit, it may be, after his imprisonment, by its healthy breezes, and to forget the devastation inflicted by the Spaniards on Rome, of which the daily sight of its plundered museums and burned palaces reminded him while he resided in the capital. Informed of the arrival of the Protestant deputies, and of the object of their journey, Charles appointed the 12th of September<sup>2</sup> for an audience. The prospect of appearing in the imperial presence was no pleasant one, for they knew that they had come to plead for a cause which Charles had destined to destruction. Their fears were confirmed by receiving an ominous hint to be brief, and not preach a Protestant sermon to the emperor.

Unabashed by the imperial majesty and the brilliant court that waited upon Charles, these three plain ambassadors, when the day of audience came, discharged their mission with fidelity. They gave a precise narrative of all that had taken place in Germany on the matter of religion since the emperor quitted that country, which was in 1521. They specially instanced the edict of toleration promulgated by the Diet of 1526; the virtual repeal of that edict by the Diet of 1529; the Protest of the Reformed princes against that repeal; their challenge of religious freedom for themselves and all who should adhere to them, and their resolution, at whatever cost, never to withdraw from that demand, but to prosecute their Protest to the utmost of their power. In all matters of the Empire they would most willingly obey the emperor, but in the things of God they would obey no power on earth.<sup>3</sup> So they spoke. It was no pleasant thing, verily, for the victor of kings and the ruler of two hemispheres to be thus plainly taught that there were men in the world whose wills even he, with all his power, could not bend. This thought was the worm at the root of the emperor's glory. Charles deigned no reply; he dismissed the ambassadors with the intimation that the imperial will would be made known to them in writing.<sup>4</sup>

On the 13th October the emperor's answer was sent to the deputies through his secretary, Alexander Schweiss. It was, in brief, that the emperor

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 16; Additio, 134.

<sup>4</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 124. D'Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. I.

was well acquainted, through his brother Ferdinand and his colleagues, with all that had taken place in Germany; that he was resolved to maintain the edict of the last Diet of Spire —that, namely, which abolished the toleration inaugurated in 1526, and which laid the train for the extinction of the religious movement—and that he had written to the Duke of Saxony and his associates commanding him to obey the decree of the Diet, upon the allegiance which he owed to him and to the Empire; and that should he disobey, he would be necessitated for the maintenance of his authority, and for example's sake, to punish him.<sup>1</sup>

Guessing too truly what the emperor's answer would be, the ambassadors had prepared an appeal from it beforehand. This document they now presented to the secretary Schweiss in presence of witnesses. They had some difficulty in persuading the official to carry it to his master, but at length he consented to do so. We can imagine how the emperor's brow darkened as he read it. He ordered Schweiss to go and arrest the ambassadors. Till the imperial pleasure should be further made known to them, they were not to stir out of doors, nor write to their friends in Germany, nor permit any of their servants to go abroad, under pain of forfeiture of goods and life.<sup>2</sup>

It chanced that one of the deputies, Caden, was not in the hotel when the emperor's orders, confining the deputies to their lodgings, arrived. His servant slipped out and told him what had happened in his absence. The deputy, sitting down, wrote an account of the affair—their interview with the emperor, and his declared resolution to execute the Edict of Worms—to the Senate at Nuremberg, and dispatching it by a trusty messenger, whom he charged to proceed with all haste on his way, he walked straight to the inn to share the arrest of his colleagues.

Unless the compulsion of conscience comes in, mankind in the mass will be found too selfish and too apathetic to purchase, at the expense of their own toil and blood, the heritage of freedom for their children. Liberty says we may, religion says we must, die rather than submit. It is a noble sentiment of the poet, and finely expressed, that Freedom's battle, "bequeathed from bleeding sire to son," though often lost, is always won in the end, but therewith does not accord the fact. The history of Greece, of Rome, and of other nations, shows us, on a large view of matters, liberty dissociated from religion fighting a losing and not a winning battle. The more prominent instance, though not the only one, in modern times, is France. There we behold a brave nation fighting for "liberty" in contradistinction to, or rather as dissociated from "religion," and, after a conflict of well-nigh a century, liberty is not yet

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 124. Seckendorf, lib. ii., p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 125. Seckendorf, lib. ii., p. 133.

rooted in France.<sup>1</sup> The little Holland is an instance on the other side. It fought a great battle for religion, and in winning it won everything else besides. The only notable examples with which history presents us, of great masses triumphant over established tyrannies, are those of the primitive Christians, and the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Charles V. would have walked at will over Christendom, treading all rights and aspirations into the dust, had any weaker principle than conscience, evoked by Protestantism, confronted him at this epoch. The first to scale the fortress of despotism are ever the champions of religion; the champions of civil liberty, coming after, enter at the breach which the others had opened with their lives.

Setting out from Piacenza on the 23rd October, the emperor went on to meet the Pope at Bologna. He carried with him the three Protestant deputies as his captives. Travelling by slow stages he gave ample time to the Italians to mark the splendour of his retinue, and the number and equipments of his army. The city he was now approaching had already enjoyed two centuries of eminence. Bologna was the seat of the earliest of those universities which arose in Europe when the light of learning began again to visit its sky. The first foundation of this school was in A.D. 425, by Theodosius the younger; it rose to eminence under Charlemagne, and attained its full splendour in the fifteenth century, when the scholastic philosophy began to give place to more rational studies, and the youth of many lands flocked in thousands to study within its walls. It is in respect of this seat of learning that Bologna stamps upon its coin *Bononia docet*, to which is added, in its coat of arms, *libertas*, Bologna was the second city in the States of the Church, and was sometimes complimented with the epithet, "Sister of Rome." It rivalled the capital in the number and sumptuousness of its monasteries and churches. One of the latter contains the magnificent tomb of St. Dominic, the founder of the order of Inquisitors. It is remarkable for its two towers, both ancient in even the days of Charles—the Asinelli, and the Garisenda, which lean like the Tower of Pisa.

Besides its ecclesiastical buildings, the city boasted not a few palatial edifices and monuments. One of these had already received Pope Clement

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<sup>1</sup> The progress towards constitutional government which some Continental nations, and France in particular, have made since 1870, may be supposed to traverse the above argument, which may therefore be thought to require further explanation. The experience of only a few years is too limited to settle so large a question either way. For one decade may sweep away what had been won during its predecessors. One thing is certain, namely, that the permanent liberty of States must rest on a moral basis, and a moral basis true religion alone can create. France does well to dissociate her battle from Popery, the genius of which is so hostile to freedom, but her prospects of victory will be brighter according to the degree in which she allies herself with the religion of the Bible. The Continental nations are by no means at the end of their struggle. It is a great step to success to cast out the Papacy, but unless they fill its place by a Scriptural faith, Nihilism, or some other form of atheism, will rush in, and order and liberty will eventually perish.

under its roof, another was prepared for the reception of the emperor, whose sumptuous train was on the road. The site of Bologna is a commanding one. It leans against an Apennine, on whose summit rises the superb monastery of St. Michael in Bosco, and at its feet, stretching far to the south, are those fertile plains whose richness has earned for the city the appellation of *Bologna Grassa*. While the emperor, with an army of 20,000 behind him, advances by slow marches, and is drawing nigh its gates, let us turn to the Protestants of Germany.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### MEETING BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND POPE AT BOLOGNA.

Meeting of Protestants at Schmalkald—Complete Agreement in Matters of Faith insisted on—Failure to Form a Defensive League—Luther's Views on War—Division among the Protestants Over-ruled—The Emperor at Bologna—Interviews between Charles and Clement—The Emperor Proposes a Council—The Pope Recommends the Sword—Campeggio and Gattinara—The Emperor's Secret Thoughts—His Coronation—Accident—San Petronio and its Spectacle—Rites of Coronation—Significancy of Each—The Emperor sets out for Germany.

ON almost the same day on which Charles set out from Piacenza, Caden's letter, telling what reception the emperor had given their deputies, reached the Senate of Nuremberg. It created a profound sensation among the councillors. Their message had been repulsed, and their ambassadors arrested. This appeared to the Protestants tantamount to a declaration of hostilities on the part of the powerful and irate monarch. The Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse consulted together. They resolved to call a meeting of the Protestant princes and cities at an early day, to deliberate on the crisis that had arisen. The assembly met at Schmalkald on November 29, 1529. Its members were the Elector of Saxony; his son, John Frederick; Ernest and Francis, Dukes of Luneburg; Philip the Landgrave; the deputies of George, Margrave of Brandenburg; with representatives from the cities of Strasburg, Ulm, Nuremberg, Heilbronn, Reutlingen, Constance, Memmingen, Kempten, and Lindau.<sup>1</sup> The sitting of the assembly was marked by a striking incident. The emperor having released two of the ambassadors, and the third, Caden, having contrived to make his escape, they came to Schmalkald just as the Protestants had assembled there, and electrifying them by their appearance in the Diet, gave a full account of all that had befallen them at the court of the emperor. Their statement did not help to abate the fears of the princes. It convinced them that evil was determined, that it behoved them to prepare against it; and the first and most effectual preparation, one would have thought, was to be united among themselves.

The necessity of union was felt, but unhappily it was sought in the wrong way. The assembly put the question, which shall we first discuss and arrange, the matter of religion or the matter of defence? It was resolved to take the question of religion first; for, said they, unless we are of one mind on it we cannot be united in the matter of defence.<sup>2</sup> Luther and his friends had recently revised the articles of the Marburg Conference in a strictly Lutheran sense. This revised addition is known as the "Schmalkald Articles." Under the tenth

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 16; Additio.

head a very important change was introduced: it was affirmed, without any ambiguity, that the very body and blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament, and the notion was condemned that the bread is simply bread.<sup>1</sup> This was hardly keeping faith with the Reformed section of Christendom. But the blunder that followed was still greater. The articles so revised were presented to the deputies at Schmalkald, and their signatures demanded to them as the basis of a political league. Before combining for their common defence, all must be of one mind on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

This course was simply deplorable. Apart from religious belief, there was enough of clear political ground on which to base a common resistance to a common tyranny. But in those days the distinction between the citizen and the church-member, between the duties and rights appertaining to the individual in his political and in his religious character, was not understood. All who would enter the proposed league must be of one mind on the tenet of consubstantiation. They must not only be Protestant, but Lutheran.

The deputies from Strasburg and Ulm resisted this sectarian policy. "We cannot sign these articles," said they, "but are willing to unite with our brethren in a defensive league." The Landgrave of Hesse strongly argued that difference of opinion respecting the manner of Christ's presence in the Sacrament did not touch the foundations of Christianity, or endanger the salvation of the soul, and ought not to divide the Church of God; much less ought that difference to be made a ground of exclusion from such a league as was now proposed to be formed. But the Dukes of Saxony and Luneburg, who were strongly under Luther's influence, would hear of no confederation but with those who were ready to take the religious test. Ulm and Strasburg withdrew. The conference broke up, having first resolved that such as held Lutheran views, and only such, should meet at Nuremberg in the January following,<sup>2</sup> to concert measures for resisting the apprehended attack of the emperor and the Pope. Thus the gulf between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches was deepened at an hour when every sacrifice short of the principle of Protestantism itself ought to have been made to close it.

It was the views of Luther which triumphed at these discussions. He had beforehand strongly impressed his sentiments upon the Elector John, and both he and the Margrave of Brandenburg had come to be very thoroughly of one mind with regard to the necessity of being one in doctrine and creed before they could lawfully unite their arms for mutual defence. But to do Luther justice, he was led to the course he now adopted, not alone by his views on the Sacrament, but also by his abhorrence of war. He shrank in horror from unsheathing the sword in any religious matter. He knew that the

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<sup>1</sup> The articles are given in Walch, xvi., p. 681.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vit, p. 126. D'Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. 1.



religious federation would be followed by a military one. He saw in the background armies, battles, and a great effusion of the blood of man. He saw the religious life decaying amid the excitement of camps; he pictured the spiritual force ebbing away from Protestantism, and the strong sword of the Empire, in the issue, victorious over all. No, he said, let the sword rest in its scabbard; let the only sword unsheathed in a quarrel like this be the sword of the Spirit; let us spread the light. "Our Lord Christ," wrote he to the Elector of Saxony, "is mighty enough, and can well find ways and means to rescue us from danger, and bring the thoughts of the ungodly princes to nothing. The emperor's undertaking is a loud threat of the devil, but it will be powerless. As the Psalm says, 'it will fall on his own pate.' Christ is only trying us whether we are willing to obey His word or no, and whether we hold it for certain truth or not. We had rather die ten times over than that the Gospel should be a cause of blood or hurt by any act of ours. Let us rather patiently suffer, and as the Psalmist says, be accounted as sheep for the slaughter; and instead of avenging or defending ourselves, leave room for God's wrath." If then Luther must make his choice between the sword and the stake, between seeing the Reformation triumph on the field of war and triumph on the field of martyrdom, he infinitely prefers the latter. The Protestant Church, like that of Rome, wars against error unto blood; but, unlike Rome, she sheds not the blood of others, she pours out her own.

Had the Lutheran princes and the Zwinglian chiefs at that hour united in a defensive league, they would have been able to have brought a powerful army into the field. The enthusiasm of their soldiers, as well as their numbers, was to be counted on in a trial of strength between them and their opponents. The German princes who still remained on the side of Rome they would have swept from the field—even the legions of the emperor would have found it hard to withstand them. But to have transferred the cause of Protestantism at that epoch from the pulpit, from the university, and the press, to the battle-field, would not have contributed to its final success. Without justifying Luther in the tenacity with which he clung to his dogma of consubstantiation, till Reformed Christendom was rent in twain, and without endorsing the judgment of the Schmalkald Conference, that men must be at one in matters of faith before they can combine for the defence of their political and religious rights, we must yet acknowledge that the division between the *Lutheran* and the *Reformed*, although deplorable in itself, was ruled to ward off a great danger from Protestantism, and to conduct it into a path where it was able to give far sublimer proofs of its heroism, and to achieve victories more glorious and more enduring than any it could have won by arms. It was marching on, though it knew it not, to a battle-field on which it was to win a triumph the fruits of which Germany and Christendom are reaping at this hour. Not with "confused noise and garments rolled in blood" was to be the

battle to which the Protestants were now advancing. No wail of widow, no cry of orphan was to mingle with the pæans of its victors. That battle was to give to history one of its memorable days. There both the emperor and the Pope were to be routed. That great field was Augsburg.

We return to Bologna, which in the interval has become the scene of dark intrigues and splendid fêtes. The saloons are crowded with gay courtiers, legates, archbishops, ministers, and secretaries. Men in Spanish and Italian uniforms parade the streets; the church bells are ceaselessly tolled, and the roll of the drum continually salutes the ear for religious ceremonies and military shows proceed without intermission. The palaces in which the Pope and the emperor are lodged are so closely contiguous that a wall only separates the one from the other. The barrier has been pierced with a door which allows Charles and Clement to meet and confer at all hours of the day and night. The opportunity is diligently improved. While others sleep they wake. Protestantism it mainly is that occasions so many anxious deliberations and sleepless hours to these two potentates. They behold that despised principle exalting its stature strangely and ominously from year to year. Can no spell be devised to master it? can no league be framed to bind it? It is in the hope of discovering some such expedient or enchantment that Clement and Charles so often summon their “wise counsellors” by day, or meet in secret and consult together alone when deep sleep rests on the eyelids of those around them.

But in truth the emperor brought to these meetings a double mind. Despite the oath he had taken on the confines of the Ecclesiastical States never to encroach upon the liberties of the Papal See,<sup>1</sup> despite the lowly obeisance with which he saluted the Pope when Clement came forth to meet him at the gates of Bologna, and despite the edifying regularity with which he performed his devotions, Charles thought of the great Spanish monarchy of which he was the head in the first place, and the Pope in the second place. To tear up the Protestant movement by the roots would suit Clement admirably; but would it equally suit Charles? This was the question with the emperor. He was now coming to see that to extinguish Luther would be to leave the Pope without a rival. Clement would then be independent of the sword of Spain, and would hold his head higher than ever. This was not for Charles’s interests, or the glory of the vast Empire over which his sceptre was swayed. The true policy was to tolerate Wittenberg, taking care that it did not become strong, and play it off, when occasion required, against Rome. He would muzzle it: he would hold the chain in his hand, and have the unruly thing under his own control. Luther and Duke John and Landgrave Philip would dance when he piped, and mourn when he lamented; and when

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, vii. 126. Robertson, *Hist. Charles V.*, v. 171.

the Pope became troublesome, he would lengthen the chain in which he held the hydra of Lutheranism, and reduce Clement to submission by threatening to let loose the monster on him. By being umpire Charles would be master. This was the emperor's innermost thought, as we now can read it by his subsequent conduct. In youth Charles was politic: it was not till his later years that he became a bigot.

The statesmen of Charles's council were also divided on the point. The emperor was attended on this journey into Germany by two men of great experience and distinguished abilities, Campeggio and Gattinara, who advocated opposite policies. Campeggio was for dragging every Protestant to the stake and utterly razing Wittenberg. There is an "Instruction" of his to the emperor still extant, discovered by the historian Ranke at Rome, in which this summary process is strongly recommended to Charles.<sup>1</sup> "If there be any," said the legate Campeggio in this "Instruction," referring to the German princes—"If there be any, which God forbid, who will obstinately persist in this diabolical path, his majesty may put hand to fire and sword, and radically tear out this cursed and venomous plant."

"The first step in this process would be to confiscate property, civil or ecclesiastical, in Germany as well as in Hungary and Bohemia. For with regard to heretics, this is lawful and right. Is the mastery over them thus obtained, then must holy inquisitors be appointed, who shall trace out every remnant of them, proceeding against them as the Spaniards did against the Moors in Spain."<sup>2</sup> Such was the simple plan of this eminent dignitary of the Papal Church. He would set up the stake, why should he not? and it would continue to blaze till there was not another Protestant in all Christendom to burn. When the last disciple of the Gospel had sunk in ashes, then would the Empire enjoy repose, and the Church reign in glory over a pacified and united Christendom. If a little heretical blood could procure so great a blessing, would not the union of Christendom be cheaply purchased?

Not so did Gattinara counsel. He too would heal the schism and unite Christendom, but by other means. He called not for an army of executioners, but for an assembly of divines. "You (Charles) are the head of the Empire," said he, "you (the Pope) the head of the Church. It is your duty to provide, by common accord, against unprecedented wants. Assemble the pious men of all nations, and let a free Council deduce from the Word of God a scheme

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<sup>1</sup> *Instructio data Ccesari a Reverend<sup>mo</sup> Campeggio in Dieta Augustæ*, 1530. "I found it," says Ranke, "in a foot-note, in a Roman library, in the handwriting of the time, and beyond all doubt authentic." (Ranke, vol. i., p. 85; Bohn's edition, 1847.)

<sup>2</sup> Ranke, bk. i., chap. 3.

of doctrine such as may be received by every people.”<sup>1</sup> The policies of the two counsellors stood markedly distinct—the sword, a Council.

Clement VII. was startled as if a gulf had yawned at his feet. The word Council has been a name of terror to Popes in all ages. The mention of it conjured up before the Pontifical imagination an equal, or it might be a superior authority to their own, and so tended to obscure the glory and circumscribe the dominion of the Papal chair. Pius IX. has succeeded at last in laying that terrible bugbear by the decree of infallibility, which makes him absolute monarch of the Church. But in those ages, when the infallibility was assumed rather than decreed to be the personal attribute of the Popes, no threat was more dreadful than the proposal, sure to be heard at every crisis, to assemble a Council. But Clement had reasons peculiar to himself for regarding the proposition with abhorrence. He was a bastard; he had got possession of his chair by means not altogether blameless; and he had squandered the revenues of his see upon his family inheritance of Florence; and a reckoning would be exceedingly inconvenient. Though Luther himself had suddenly entered the council-chamber, Clement could not have been more alarmed and irritated than he was by the proposal of Gattinara. He did not see what good a Council would do, unless it were to let loose the winds of controversy all over Europe. “It is not,” said he, “by the decrees of Councils, but by the edge of the sword, that we should decide controversies.”<sup>2</sup>

But Gattinara had not made his proposal without previous consultation with the emperor, whose policy it suited. Charles now rose, and indicated that his views lay in the direction of those of his minister; and the Pope, concealing his disgust, seeing how the wind set, said that he would think further on the matter. He hoped to work upon the mind of the emperor in private.

These discussions were prolonged till the end of January. The passes of the Alps were locked, avalanches and snow-drifts threatened the man who would scale their precipices at that season, and the climate of Bologna being salubrious, Charles was in no haste to quit so agreeable an abode. The ecclesiastical potentate continued to advocate the sword, and the temporal monarch to call for a Council. It is remarkable that each distrusted the weapon with which he was best acquainted. “The sword will avail nought in this affair,” urged the emperor; “let us vanquish our opponents in argument.” “Reason,” exclaimed the Pope, “will not serve our turn; let us resort to force.” But, though all considerations of humanity had been put aside, the question of the practicability of bringing all the Protestants to the scaffold was a

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<sup>1</sup> *Oratio de Congressu Bononiensi*, in *Melanchthonis, Orationum*, iv. 87, and Cælestinus, *Hist. Council*, 1530. Augustæ, i. 10. D’Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> “Non concilii decretis sed armis controversias dirimendas.” Scultet., p. 248. Maimbourg, ii. 177, Fra Paolo Sarpi, *Histoire du Concile de Trent*, tom. i., pp. 95–97; 3 Basle, 1738.)

serious one. Was the emperor able to do this? He stood at the head of Europe, but it was prudent not too severely to test his superiority. The Lutheran princes were by no means despicable, either in spirit or resources. The Kings of France and England, though they disrelished the Protestant doctrines, had come to know that the Protestant party was an important political element; and it was just possible their majesties might prefer that Christendom should remain divided, rather than that its unity should be restored by a holocaust like that advocated by Campeggio. And then there was the Turk, who, although he had now retreated into his own domain, might yet, should a void so vast occur as would be created by the slaughter of the Protestants, transfer his standards from the shores of the Bosphorus to the banks of the Danube. It was clear that the burning of 100,000 Protestants or so would be only the beginning of the drama. The Pope would most probably approve of so kindly a blaze; but might it not end in setting other States besides Germany on fire, and the Spanish monarchy among the rest? Charles, therefore, stuck to his idea of a Council; and being master, as Gattinara reminded him, he was able to have the last word in the conferences.

Meanwhile, till a General Council could be convened, and as preparatory to it, the emperor, on the 20th January, 1530, issued a summons for a Diet of the States of Germany to meet at Augsburg on the 8th April.<sup>1</sup> The summons was couched in terms remarkably gracious, and surely, if conciliation was to be attempted, at least as a first measure, it was wise to go about it in a way fitted to gain the object the emperor had in view. "Let us put an end to all discord," he said; "let us renounce our antipathies; let us all fight under one and the same leader—Jesus Christ—and let us strive thus to meet in one communion, one Church, and one unity."<sup>2</sup>

What a relief to the Protestants of Germany! The great sword of the emperor which had hung over their heads, suspended by a single thread, was withdrawn, and the olive-branch was held out to them instead. "The heart of kings is in the hand of God."

One thing only was lacking to complete the grandeur of Charles, namely, that he should receive the imperial diadem from the hands of the Pope. He would have preferred to have had the ceremony performed in the Eternal City; the act would have borrowed additional lustre from the place where it was done; but reasons of State compelled him to select Bologna. The Pope, so Fra Paolo Sarpi hints, did not care to put so much honour upon Charles in the presence of a city which had been sacked by his soldiers just two years before; and Bologna lay, conveniently on the emperor's road to the Diet of Augsburg. Charles had already been crowned as Emperor of Germany at

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> D'Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. 1.

Aix-la- Chapelle. He now (22nd February) received the iron crown as King of Lombardy, and the golden one (24th February) as Emperor of the Romans. The latter day, that on which the golden crown was placed on his brow, he accounted specially auspicious. It was the anniversary of his birth, and also of the victory of Pavia, the turning-point of his greatness. The coronation was a histrionic sermon upon the theological and political doctrines of the age, and as such it merits our attention.

Charles received his crown at the foot of the altar. The sovereignty thus gifted was not however absolute; it was conditioned and limited in the manner indicated by the ceremonies that accompanied the investiture, each of which had its meaning. In the great Cathedral of San Petronio—the scene of the august ceremony—were erected two thrones. That destined for the Pope rose half-a-foot higher than the one which the emperor was to occupy. The Pontiff was the first to take his seat; next came the emperor, advancing by a foot-bridge thrown across the piazza which separated the palace in which he was lodged from the cathedral where he was to be crowned.<sup>1</sup> The erection was not strong enough to sustain the weight of the numerous and magnificent suite that attended him. It broke down immediately behind the emperor, precipitating part of his train on the floor of the piazza, amid the debris of the structure and the crowd of spectators. The incident, so far from discomposing the monarch, was interpreted by him into an auspicious omen. He had been rescued, by a Power whose favourite he was, from possible destruction, to wield those high destinies which were this day to receive a new sanction from the Vicar of God. He surveyed the scene of the catastrophe for a moment, and passed on to present himself before the Pontiff.

The first part of the ceremony was the investiture of the emperor with the office of deacon. The government of those ages was a theocracy. The theory of this principle was that the kingdoms of the world were ruled by God in the person of His Vicar, and no one had a valid right to exercise any part of that Divine jurisdiction unless he were part and parcel of that sacred class to whom this rule had been committed. The emperor, therefore, before receiving the sceptre from the Pope, had to be incorporated with the ecclesiastical estate. Two canons approached, and stripping him of the signs of royalty, arrayed him in surplice and amice. Charles had now the honour of being a deacon of St. Peter's and of St. John Lateranus. The Pope leaving his throne

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<sup>1</sup> In front of the palace at Bologna is a tablet with an inscription, in which this and other particulars of the coronation are mentioned: "Fenestra hæc ad dextrum fuit porta Pretoria; et egressus Cæsar per pontem sublicium, in Ædem D. Petronii deductus. Sacris ritibus peractis a Pont. Max. auream coronam Imperii caeteraque insignia accepit." (The window on the right was the Prætorian gate, out of which Cæsar passed by a wooden bridge to the temple of San Petronio. The sacred rites being performed by the supreme Pontiff, he received the golden crown and the rest of the imperial insignia.)— Maximilian Misson, *Travels*, vol. ii., part 1; Lond., 1739.

proceeded to the altar and sang mass, the new deacon waiting upon him, and performing the customary services. Then kneeling down the emperor received the Sacrament from the Pope's hands.

Charles now reseated himself on his throne, and the princess approaching him removed his deacon's dress, and robed him in the jewelled mantle which, woven on the looms of the East, had been brought from Constantinople for the coronation of the Emperors of Germany.

The emperor now put himself on bended knee before Clement VII. First the Pontiff, taking a horn of oil, anointed Charles; then he gave him a naked sword; next he put into his hands the golden orb; and last of all he placed on his head the imperial crown, which was studded all round with precious stones. With the sword was the emperor to pursue and smite the enemies of the Church; the orb symbolised the world, which he was to govern by the grace of the Holy Father; the diadem betokened the authority by which all this was to be done, and which was given of him who had put the crown upon his head; the oil signified that Divine puissance which, shed upon him from the head of that anointed body of which Charles had now become a member, would make him invincible in fighting the battles of the faith. Kissing the white cross that adorned the Pope's red slipper, Charles swore to defend with all his powers the rights and liberties of the Church of Rome.

When we examine the magnificent symbolisation acted out in the Cathedral of Bologna, what do we see? We behold but one ruler, the head of all government and power, the fountain of all virtues and graces—the Vicar of the Eternal King. Out of the plenitude of his great office he constitutes other monarchs and judges, permitting them to take part with him in his superhuman Divine jurisdiction. They are *his* vicars just as he is the Vicar of the Eternal Monarch. They govern by him, they rule for him, and they are accountable to him. They are the vassals of his throne, the lictors of his judgment-seat. To him appertains the power of passing sentence, to them the humble office of using the sword he has put into their hands in executing it. In this one immense monarch, the Pope namely, all authority, rights, liberties are comprehended. The State disappears as a distinct and independent society: it is absorbed in the Church as the Church is absorbed in her head—occupying the chair of St. Peter. It was against this hideous tyranny that Protestantism rose up. It restored to society the Divine monarchy of conscience. The theocracy of Rome was uprooted, and with it sank the Divine right of priests and kings, and all the remains of feudalism.

It was now the beginning of March. Spring had opened the passes of the Alps, and Charles and his men-at-arms went on their way to meet the Diet he had summoned at Augsburg.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE AUGSBURG DIET.

Charles Crosses the Tyrol—Looks down on Germany—Events in his Absence—His Reflections—Fruitlessness of his Labours—Opposite Realisations—All Things meant by Charles for the Hurt turn out to the Advantage of Protestantism—An Unseen Leader—The Emperor Arrives at Innsprück—Assembling of the Princes to the Diet—Journey of the Elector of Saxony—Luther's Hymn—Luther left at Coburg—Courage of the Protestant Princes—Protestant Sermons in Augsburg—Popish Preachers—The Torgau Articles—Prepared by Melanchthon—Approved by Luther.

THE emperor was returning to Germany after an absence of nine years. As, in the first days of May, he slowly climbed the summits of the Tyrolese Alps, and looked down from their northern slopes upon the German plains, he had time to reflect on all that had happened since his departure. The years which had passed since he last saw these plains had been full of labour, and yet how little had he reaped from all the toil he had undergone, and the great vexation he had experienced. The course affairs had taken had been just the opposite of that which he had wished and fully expected. By some strange fatality the fruits of all his campaigns had eluded him. His crowning piece of good fortune had been Pavia; that event had brought his rival Francis as a captive to Madrid, and placed himself for a moment at the head of Europe; and yet this brilliant victory had turned out in the end more damaging to the victor than to the vanquished. It had provoked the League of Cognac, in which the kings of Europe, with the Pontiff at their head, united to resist a power which they deemed dangerous to their own, and curb an ambition that they now saw to be boundless. The League of Cognac, in its turn, had recoiled on the head of the man who was its chief deviser. The tempest it had raised, and which those who evoked it intended should burst on the headquarters of Lutheranism, rolled away in the direction of Rome, and discharged its lightning-bolts on the City of the Seven Hills, inflicting on the wealth and glory of the Popes, on the art and splendour of their capital, a blow which no succeeding age has been able to repair.

For the moment all was again quiet. The Pope and the King of France had become the friends of the emperor. The Turks who had appeared in greater numbers, and penetrated farther into Europe than they had ever before been able to do, had suddenly retreated within their own dominions, and thus all things conspired to remove every obstacle out of Charles's path that might prevent his long-meditated visit to Germany. The emperor was now going to consolidate the peace that had so happily followed the tempest, and put the top-stone upon his own power by extinguishing the Wittenberg movement, a task not quite so hard, he thought, as that from which he was at this moment returning, the destruction of the League of Cognac.



And yet when he thought of the Wittenberg movement, which he was advancing to confront, he must have had some misgivings. His former experience of it must have taught him that instead of being the easiest to settle of the many matters he had on hand, it was precisely the one of all others the most difficult. He had won victories over Francis, he had won victories over the Pope, but he had won no victory over the monk. The dreaded Soliman had vanished at his approach, but Luther kept his ground and refused to flee. Why was this? Nay, not only had the Reformer not fallen before him, but every step the emperor had taken against him had only lifted Luther higher in the sight of men, and strengthened his influence in Christendom. At the Diet of Worms, 1521, he had fulminated his ban against the heresiarch. He did not for a moment doubt that a few weeks, or a few months at the most, and he would have the satisfaction of seeing that ban executed, and the Rhine bearing the ashes of Luther, as a hundred years before it had done those of Huss, to the ocean, there to bury him and his cause in an eternal sepulchre. Far different had the result been. The emperor's ban had chased the Reformer to the Wartburg, and there, exempt from every other distraction, Luther had prepared an instrumentality a hundred times more powerful than all his other writings and labours for the propagation of his movement. The imperial ban, if it consigned Luther to a brief captivity, had liberated the Word of God, imprisoned in a dead language, and now it was traversing the length and breadth of the Fatherland, and speaking to prince and peasant, to baron and burgher in their own mother tongue. This, as Charles knew to his infinite chagrin, was all that he had reaped as yet from the Edict of Worms.

He essayed a second time to extinguish but in reality to strengthen the movement. He convoked a Diet of the Empire at Spires in 1526, to take steps for executing the edict which had been passed with their concurrence five years before at Worms. Now it will be seen whether the bolt does not fall and crush the monk. Again the result is exactly the opposite of what the emperor had so confidently anticipated. The Diet decreed that, till a General Council should meet, every one should be at liberty to act in religious matters as he pleased. This was in fact an edict of toleration, and henceforward the propagation of Protestant truth throughout the dominions of the princes was to go on under sanction of the Diet. The movement was now surrounded by legal securities. How irritating to the potentate who thought that he was working skilfully for its overthrow!

Twice had Charles miscarried; but he will make a third attempt and it will prosper; so he assures himself. In 1529 he convokes the Diet anew at Spires. He sent a threatening message from Spain commanding the princes, by the obedience they owed him as emperor, and under peril of ban, to execute the edict against Luther. It was now that the Lutheran princes unfurled their great Protest, and took up that position in the Empire and before all

Christendom which they have ever since, through all variety of fortune, maintained. Every time the emperor puts forth his hand, it is not to kill but to infuse new life into the movement; it is to remove impediments from its path and help it onward.

Even the dullest cannot fail to perceive that these most extraordinary events, in which everything meant for the destruction of the Protestant movement turned out for its furtherance, did not originate with Luther. He had neither the sagacity to devise them nor the power to control them. Nor did they take their rise from Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony; nor from Philip the Magnanimous, Landgrave of Hesse. Much less did they owe their origin to Charles, for nothing did he less intend to accomplish than what really took place. Let us then indulge in no platitudes about these men. Luther indeed was wise, and not less courageous than wise; but in what did his wisdom consist? It consisted in his profound submission to the will of One whom he saw guiding the movement through intricacies where his own counsels would have utterly wrecked it. And in what lay his courage? In this: in his profound faith in One whose arm he saw shielding Protestantism in the midst of dangers where, but for this protection, both the Reformer and the cause would have speedily perished. In these events Luther beheld the footprints of One whom an ancient Hebrew sage styles “wonderful in counsel, excellent in working.”

The emperor and his suite, a numerous and brilliant one, arrived at Innsprück in the beginning of May. He halted at this romantic little town that he might make himself more closely acquainted with the state of Germany, and decide upon the line of tactics to be adopted. The atmosphere on this side of the Alps differed sensibly from the fervid air which he had just left on the south of them. All he saw and heard where he now was told him that Lutheranism was strongly entrenched in the Fatherland, and that he should need to put forth all the power and craft of which he was master in order to dislodge it.

The appearance of the emperor on the heights of the Tyrol revived the fears of the Protestants. As, when the vulture is seen in the sky, and there is silence and cowering in the groves, so was it with the inhabitants of the plains, now that the mailed cohorts of Rome were seen on the mountains above them. And there was some cause for alarm. With the emperor came Campeggio, as his evil genius, specially commissioned by the Pope to take care of Charles,<sup>1</sup> and see that he did not make any compromise with the Lutherans, or entangle himself by any rash promise of a General Council. The legate had nothing but the old cure to recommend for the madness which had infected the Germans—the sword. Gattinara, who had held back the hand of

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<sup>1</sup> Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., p. 99.

Charles from using that weapon against Protestantism, and who had come as far as Innsprück, here sickened and died.<sup>1</sup> Melanchthon mourned his death as a loss to the cause of moderate counsels. "Shall we meet our adversary with arms?" asked the Protestant princes in alarm. "No," replied Luther. "let no man resist the emperor: if he demands a sacrifice, lead me to the altar."<sup>2</sup> Even Maimbourg acknowledges that "Luther conducted himself on this occasion in a manner worthy of a good man. He wrote to the princes to divert them from their purpose, telling them that the cause of religion was to be defended, not by the force of arms, but by sound arguments, by Christian patience, and by firm faith in the omnipotent God."<sup>3</sup> The Reformer strove at the same time to uphold the hearts of all by directing their eyes to heaven. His noble hymn, "A strong Tower is our God," began to be heard in all the churches in Germany.<sup>4</sup> Its heroic strains, pealed forth by thousands of voices, and swelling grandly aloft, kindled the soul and augmented the confidence and courage of the Protestant host. It continued to be sung in the public assemblies during all the time the Diet was in session.

The emperor, dating from Bologna, January 21st, 1530, had summoned the Diet to meet on April 8th. The day was now at hand, and the Protestant princes began to prepare for their journey to Augsburg. On Sunday, April 3rd, the Elector of Saxony, and the nobles and theologians who were to accompany him, assembled in the castle-church, Torgau, to join in prayer that God would inspire them with a spirit becoming the crisis that had arrived. Luther preached from the text, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven."<sup>5</sup> The key-note struck by the sermon was worthily sustained by the magnanimity of the princes at Augsburg. On the afternoon of the same day the elector set out, accompanied by John Frederick, his son; Francis, Duke of Lüneburg; Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt; and Albert, Count of Mansfeld. The theologians whom the elector took with him to advise with at the Diet were Luther, Melanchthon, and Jonas. To these Spalatin was afterwards added. They made a fine appearance as they rode out of Torgau, escorted by a troop of 160 horsemen,<sup>6</sup> in scarlet cloaks embroidered with gold. But the spectators saw them depart with many anxious thoughts. They were going to confess a faith which the emperor had proscribed. Would they not draw upon themselves the tempest of his wrath? Would they return in like fashion as they had seen them go? The hymn, "A strong Tower is our God," would burst forth at intervals

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, vii., 127. Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 21; Additio iv.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf., lib. ii., sec. 20, pp. 150, 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 20, pp. 150, 151.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. x. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 21. p. 152.

from the troop, and rising in swelling strains which drowned the tramp of their horses and the clang of their armour, increased yet more the courage in which their journey was begun, continued, and ended.

On the eve of Palm Sunday they arrived at Weimar. They halted here over Sunday, and Luther again preached. Resuming their journey early in the week, they came at the close of it to the elector's Castle of Coburg, on the banks of the Itz; the Reformer delivering an address, or preaching a sermon, at the end of every day's march.<sup>1</sup> Starting from Coburg on the 23rd of April, the cavalcade proceeded on its way, passing through the towns of Bamberg and Nuremberg, and on the 2nd of May the elector and his company entered the gates of Augsburg. It had been confidently predicted that Prince John of Saxony would not attend the Diet. He was too obnoxious to the emperor, it was said, to beard the lion in his den. To the amazement of every one,<sup>2</sup> the elector was the first of all the princes to appear on the scene.

Soon the other princes, Popish and Protestant, began to arrive. Their entrance into Augsburg was with no little pomp. They came attended by their retainers, whose numbers and equipments were on a scale that corresponded with the power and wealth of the lord they followed. Clad in armour, bearing banners blazoned with devices, and proclaiming their approach with sound of drum and clarion, they looked more like men mustering for battle than assembling for the settlement of the creed of Christendom, the object specified in the Emperor's summons. But in those days no discussion, even on religious questions, was thought to have much weight unless it was conducted amid the symbols of authority and the blaze of power. On the 12th of May the Landgrave of Hesse entered Augsburg, accompanied by 120 horsemen. And three days thereafter the deputies of the good town of Nuremberg arrived to take part in the deliberations, bringing with them Osiander, the Protestant pastor of that place.

Since the memorable Diet at Worms, 1521, Germany had not been so deeply and universally agitated as it was at this hour. A decisive trial of strength was at hand between the two parties. Great and lasting issues must come out of the Diet. The people followed their deputies to Augsburg with their prayers. They saw the approach of the tempest in that of the emperor and his legions; but the nearer he came the louder they raised the song in all their churches and assemblies, "A strong Tower is our God." The fact that Charles was to be present, as well as the gravity of the crisis, operated in the way of bringing out a full attendance of princes and deputies. Over and above the members of the Diet there came a vast miscellaneous assemblage, from all the cities and provinces of Germany: bishops, scholars, citizens, soldiers,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 21. n. 153.

idlers, all flocked thither, drawn by a desire to be present on an occasion which had wakened the hopes of some, the fears of others, and the interest of all.

“Is it safe to trust ourselves in a walled city with the emperor?” asked some of the more timid Protestants. They thought that the emperor was drawing all the Lutherans into his net; and, once entrapped, that he would offer them all up in one great holocaust to Clement, from whose presence, the anointing oil still fresh upon him, the emperor had just come. Charles, to do him justice, was too humane and too magnanimous to think of such a thing. The venom which in after years vented itself in universal exterminations, had not yet been engendered, unless in solitary bosoms such as Campeggio’s. The leaders of the Protestants refused to entertain the unworthy suspicion. The aged John, Elector of Saxony, set the example of courage, being the first to arrive on the scene.<sup>1</sup> The last to arrive were the Roman Catholic princes, Duke George of Saxony, Duke William of Bavaria, and the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg. They had this excuse, however, that before repairing to Augsburg they had gone to pay their respects to the emperor at Innsprück, and to encourage him to persevere in his resolution of putting down the Wittenberg movement, by soft measures if possible, by strong ones if need were.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, till the Diet should be opened, occasion was taken of the vast concourse at Augsburg, assembled from the most distant parts, and embracing men of all conditions, to diffuse more widely a knowledge of the Protestant doctrines. Scattered on this multitude the seeds of truth would be borne wide over all Germany, and floated to even remoter lands. The elector and the landgrave opened the cathedrals and churches, and placed in their pulpits the preachers who had accompanied them from Saxony and Hesse. Crowded congregations, day by day, hung upon their lips. They fed eagerly on the bread of the Word. The preachers were animated by the thought that they had all Germany, in a sense, for their audience. Although the emperor had sought to inflict a deadly wound on Catholicism, no more effectual way could he have taken than to summon this Diet. The Papists were confounded by the courage of the Lutherans; they trembled when they thought what the consequences must be, and they resolved to counteract the effects of the Lutheran sermons by preaching a purer orthodoxy. To this there could be no possible objection on the part of the Protestants. The suffragan and chaplain of the bishop mounted the pulpit, but only to discover when there that they had not learned how to preach. They vociferated at their utmost pitch; but the audience soon got tired of the noise, and remarking, with a significant shrug,

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 21; Additio ii.

that “these predicants were blockheads,”<sup>1</sup> retreated, leaving them to listen to the echoes of their own voice in their empty cathedrals.

When the elector set out for Augsburg, his cavaliers, in their scarlet cloaks, were not his only attendants. He invited, as we have seen, Luther, Melanchthon, and Jonas<sup>2</sup> to accompany him to the Diet. On these would devolve the chief task of preparing the weapons with which the princes were to do battle, and directing the actual combatants how to deal the blow. On the journey, however, it occurred to the elector that over Luther there still hung the anathema of the Pope and the ban of the Empire. It might not, therefore, be safe to carry the Reformer to Augsburg while the Edict of Worms was still unrepealed. Even granting that the elector should be able to shield him from harm, might not Charles construe Luther’s appearance at the Diet into a personal affront?<sup>3</sup> It was resolved accordingly that Luther should remain at Coburg. Here it was easy to keep him informed of all that was passing in the Diet, and to have his advice at any moment. Luther would thus be present, although invisible, at Augsburg.

The Reformer at once acquiesced in this arrangement. The Castle of Coburg, on the banks of the river Itz, overlooking the town, was assigned him for his residence. From this place we find him, on April the 22nd, writing to Melanchthon: “I shall make a Zion of this Sinai; I shall build here three tabernacles—one to the Psalms, another to the Prophets, and a third to Æsop.” He was at that time diversifying his graver labours by translating Æsop’s fables. “I reside,” he continues, “in a vast abode which overlooks the city; I have the keys of all its apartments. There are scarcely thirty persons within the fortress, of whom twelve are watchers by night, and two others, sentinels, who are constantly posted on the castle heights.”

The Elector John, with statesman-like sagacity as well as Christian zeal—a fine union, of which that age presents many noble examples—saw the necessity of presenting to the Diet a summary of Protestant doctrine. Nothing of the sort as yet existed. The Protestant faith was to be learned, first of all in the Scriptures, next in the numerous and widely-diffused writings of Luther and the theologians, and lastly in the general belief and confession of the Christian people. But, over and above these, it was desirable to have some systematised, accurate, and authoritative statement of the Protestant doctrines to present to the Diet now about to convene. It was due to the Reformers themselves, to whom it would serve as a bond of union, and whose apology or defence it would be to the world and it was due to their foes, who it was to be supposed in charity were condemning what, to a large extent, they

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<sup>1</sup> *Corpus Ref.*, ii. 86: “Audires bomines stupidissimos atque etiam sensu communi carentes.”

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 3, p. 193. Seckendorf, lib. sec. 21, p. 153.

were ignorant of. It is worthy of notice that the first suggestion of what has since become so famous, under the name of the Augsburg Confession, came, not from the clergy of the Protestant Church, but from the laity. When political actors appear before us on this great stage, we do them only justice to say that they were inspired by Christian motives, and aimed at gaining great spiritual ends. John of Saxony and Philip of Hesse did not covet the spoils of Rome: they sought the vindication of the truth and the reformation of society.

The Elector of Saxony issued an order the middle of March (1530) to the theologians of Wittenberg to draw up a summary of the Protestant faith.<sup>1</sup> It was meant to set forth concisely the main doctrines which the Protestants held, and the points in which they differed from Rome. Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, and Pomeranus jointly undertook the task. Their labours were embodied in seventeen articles,<sup>2</sup> and were delivered to the elector at Torgau, and hence their name, the "Torgau Articles." These articles, a few weeks afterwards, were enlarged and remodelled by Melancthon, with a view to their being read in the Diet as the Confession of the Protestants.<sup>3</sup> The great scholar and divine devoted laborious days and nights to this important work, amid the distractions and din of Augsburg. Nothing did he spare which a penetrating judgment and a lovely genius could do to make this Confession, in point of its admirable order, its clearness of statement, and beauty of style, such as would charm the ears and lead captive the understandings and hearts of the Roman Catholics in the Diet. "They must listen," said he, "in spite of themselves." Everything was put in the least offensive form. Wittenberg and Rome were brought as near to each other as the eternal barrier between the two permitted.

The document when finished was sent to Luther and approved by him. In returning it, the Reformer accompanied it with a letter to the elector, in which he spoke of it in the following terms: "I have read over Master Philip's apology: it pleases me right well, and I know not how to better or alter anything in it, and will not hazard the attempt; for I cannot tread so softly and gently. Christ our Lord help that it bear much and great fruit; as we hope and pray. Amen."

Will the Diet listen? Will the genius of Melancthon triumph over the conqueror of Pavia, and induce him to withdraw his ban and sit down at the feet of Luther, or rather of Holy Scripture? These were the questions men were eagerly asking.

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 20, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Confessio Christianæ Doctrinæ et Fidei*, per D. Martinum Lutherum; edita a P. Mulero, Lipsæ et Jenæ, 1705.

<sup>3</sup> *Corpus Ref.*, ii. 40.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ARRIVAL OF THE EMPEROR AT AUGSBURG AND OPENING OF THE DIET.

Arrivals—The Archbishop of Cologne, &c.—Charles—Pleasantries of Luther—Diet of the Crows—An Allegory—Intimation of the Emperor's Coming—The Princes Meet him at the Torrent Lech—Splendour of the Procession—Seckendorf's Description—Enters Augsburg—Accident—Rites in the Cathedral—Charles's Interview with the Protestant Princes—Demands the Silencing of their Preachers—Protestants Refuse—Final Arrangement—Opening of Diet—Procession of Corpus Christi—Shall the Elector Join the Procession?—Sermon of Papal Nuncio—The Turk and Lutherans Compared—Calls on Charles to use the Sword against the Latter.

SCARCELY a day passed in these stirring weeks without some stately procession entering at the gates of Augsburg. On the 17th of May came the Archbishop of Cologne, and on the day following the Archbishop of Mainz. A few days later, George, Margrave of Brandenburg, the ally of the elector, passed through the streets, with an escort of 200 horsemen in green liveries and armour. A German wagon, filled with his learned men and preachers, brought up the rear. At last came the crown and flower of all these grand spectacles. Charles, on whose head were united the crown of Spain, the iron crown of Lombardy, and the imperial diadem, now twice bestowed, made his entry into Augsburg with great pomp on the 15th of June, 1530. It was long past the day (April 8th) for which the Diet had been summoned ; but the emperor will journey as his many weighty affairs will permit, and the princes must wait.

While the emperor delayed, and the Diet was not opened, and the courier from Augsburg posted along the highway, which ran close to the foot of the Castle of Coburg, without halting to send in letter or message to its occupant, the anxieties of Luther increased from one day to another. The Reformer, to beguile his thoughts, issued his edict convoking a Diet at Coburg. The summons was instantly obeyed. Quite a crowd of members assembled, and Luther does ample justice to their eloquence. "You are about to go to Augsburg," says he, writing to Spalatin (May 9th), "without having examined the auspices, and not knowing as yet when they will permit you to commence. As for me, I am in the thick of another Diet. Here I see magnanimous kings, dukes, and nobles consult over the affairs of their realm, and with unremitting clang proclaim their decrees and dogmas through the air. They do not meet in caves, or dens of courts called palaces ; but the spacious heaven is their roof, verdant grass and foliage their pavement, and their walls are wide as the ends of the earth. They are not arrayed in gold and silk, but all wear a vestment black, have eyes of a grey hue, and speak in the same music, save the diversity of youth and age. Horses and harness they spurn at, and move on the rapid wheels of wings. As far as I understand the herald of their



decrees, they have unanimously resolved to wage this whole year a war on barley, oats, and every kind of grain ; and great deeds will be done. Here we sit, spectators of this Diet, and, to our great joy and comfort, observe and hear how the princes, lords, and Estates of the Empire are all singing so merrily and living so heartily. But it gives us especial pleasure to remark with what knight-like air they swing their tails, stroke their bills, tilt at one another, and strike and parry ; so that we believe they will win great honour over the wheat and barley.”

So far the allegory. It is told with much naive pleasantry. But the Reformer appends a moral, and some who may have enjoyed the story may not quite relish the interpretation. “It seems to me,” says he, “that these rooks and jackdaws are after all nothing else but the sophists and Papists, with their preachings and writings, who will fain present themselves in a heap, and make us listen to their lovely voices and beautiful sermons.” This correspondence he dates from “the Region of the Birds,” or “the Diet of the Jackdaws.”

This and other similar creations were but a moment's pause in the midst of Herculean labours and of anxious and solemn thoughts. But Luther's humour was irrepressible, and its outburst was never more likely to happen than when he was encompassed by tragic events. These sallies were like the light breaking in golden floods through the dark thunder-clouds. They revealed, moreover, a consciousness on the part of the Reformer of the true grandeur of his position, and that the drama, at the centre of which he stood, was far more momentous than that in which Charles was playing his part. From his elevation, he could look down upon the pomp of thrones and the pageantries of empire, and make merry with them. He had but to touch them with his satire, and straightway their glory was gone, and their hollowness laid bare. It was not so with the spiritual forces he was labouring to set in motion in the world. These forces needed not to array themselves in scarlet and gold embroideries to make themselves grand, or to borrow the help of cannon and armed cohorts to give them potentiality.

At last Charles moved from Innsbruck, and set out for Augsburg. On the 6th of June he reached Munich, and made his entry through streets hung with tapestry, and thronged with applauding crowds. On the 15th of June a message reached Augsburg that on that day the emperor would. make his entrance into the city.

The electors, counts, and knights marshalled early in the afternoon and set out to meet Charles, They halted on the banks of the torrent Lech, which rolls down from the Alps and falls into the Danube. They took up their position on a rising ground, whence they might descry the imperial approach. The aspect of the road told that something extraordinary was going forward. There rolled past the princes all the afternoon, as had been the case from an

early hour in the morning, a continuous stream of horses and baggage trains, of wagons and foot-passengers, of officers of the emperor's household, and strangers hastening to enjoy the spectacle ; the crack of whip, the note of horn, and the merry laugh of idle sight-seer enlivening their march. Three hours wore away, still the emperor was not in sight. The sun was now nearing the horizon. At length a cloud of dust was seen in the distance ; its dusky volume came nearer and nearer ; as it approached the murmur of voices grew louder, and now, close at hand, its opening folds disclosed to view the first ranks of the imperial cavalcade. The princes leaped from their saddles, and awaited Charles's approach. The emperor, on seeing the princes, courteously dismounted and shook hands with them, and the two companies blended into one on the bank of the stream. Apart, on a low eminence, seated on his richly caparisoned mule, was seen the Papal legate, Campeggio. He raised his hands to bestow his benediction on the brilliant multitude. All knelt down, save the Protestants, whose erect figures made them marked objects in that great assembly, which awaited, with bowed heads, the Papal blessing. The mighty emperor had his first intimation that he should not be able to repeat at Augsburg the proud boast of Caesar, whose successor he affected to be—"I came, I saw, I conquered."

The procession now set forward at a slow pace. "Never," says Seckendorf, "had the grandeur and power of the Empire been illustrated by so magnificent a spectacle."<sup>1</sup> There defiled past the spectator, in long and glittering procession, not only the ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries of Spain and Italy, but representatives of nearly all the nationalities which formed the vast Empire of Charles. First came two companies of lansquenets. Next came the six electors, with the noblemen of their courts, in rich dresses of velvet and silk, and their armed retainers in their red doublets, steel helmets and dancing plumes. There were bishops in violet and cardinals in purple. The ecclesiastics were seated on mules, the princes and counts bestrode prancing coursers. The Elector John of Saxony marched immediately before the emperor, bearing the naked imperial sword, an honour to which his rank in the electoral college entitled him.

"Last came the prince," says Seckendorf, "on whom all eyes were fixed. Thirty years of age, of distinguished port and pleasing features, robed in golden garments that glittered all over with precious stones, wearing a small Spanish hat on the crown of his head, mounted on a beautiful Polish hackney of the most brilliant whiteness, riding beneath a rich canopy of red white and green damask borne by six senators of Augsburg, and casting around him looks in which gentleness was mingled with gravity, Charles excited the liveliest enthusiasm, and every one exclaimed that he was the hand-

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 24, p. 160.

somest man in the Empire, as well as the mightiest prince in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

His brother, the King of Austria, accompanied Charles. Ferdinand advanced side by side with the Papal legate, their place being immediately behind the emperor.<sup>2</sup> They were succeeded by an array of cardinals, bishops, and the ambassadors of foreign Powers, in the insignia of their rank and office. The procession was swollen, moreover, by a miscellaneous throng of much lesser personages—pages, heralds, equerries, trumpeters, drummers, and cross-bearers—whose variegated dresses and flaring colours formed a not unimportant though vulgar item in the magnificence of the cavalcade.<sup>3</sup> The Imperial Guards and the Augsburg Militia brought up the rear.

It was nine o'clock in the evening when the gates of Augsburg were reached. The thunder of cannon on the ramparts, and the peals of the city bells, informed the people of Augsburg that the emperor was entering their city. The dusk of a summer evening hid somewhat the glory of the procession, but torches were kindled to light it through the streets, and permit the citizens a sight of its grandeur. The accident of the bridge at Bologna was nearly repeated on this occasion. As the cavalcade was advancing to the sound of clarion and kettledrum, six canons, bearing a huge canopy, beneath which they were to conduct the emperor to the cathedral, approached Charles. His horse, startled at the sight, suddenly reared, and nearly threw him headlong upon the street.<sup>4</sup> He was rescued, however, a second time. At length he entered the minster, which a thousand blazing torches illuminated. After the *Te Deum* came the chanting of prayers, and Charles, putting aside the cushion offered to him, kneeled on the bare floor during the service. The assembly, following the emperor's example, threw themselves on their knees—all save two persons, the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, who remained standing.<sup>5</sup> Their behaviour did not escape the notice of Duke George and the prelates; but they consoled themselves doubtless by thinking that they would make them bow low enough by-and-by.

When the services in the cathedral were ended, the procession re-formed, and again swept along through the streets of Augsburg. The trumpets sounded, and the bells were tolled. The torches were again lighted to illuminate the night. Their rays glittered on the helmets of the guard, flashed on the faces of the motley crowd of sight seers, and catching the fronts of the houses, lighted them up in a gloomy grandeur, and transformed the street through which the procession was advancing into a long, a picturesque, and a most impressive. vista of red lights and black shadows. Through a scene

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 24, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 24, p. 161,

<sup>4</sup> Urkunden, i. 26. D'Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> D'Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 143.

of this sort was Charles conducted to the archiepiscopal Palace of the Palatinate, which he entered about ten o'clock.

This assembly, comprising the pride and puissance of the great Spanish monarchy, were here to be the witnesses of the triumph of Rome—so they imagined. The Pope and the emperor had resolved to tolerate the religious schism no longer. Charles, as both Pallavicino and Sarpi testify, came to Augsburg with the firm purpose of putting forth all the power of the Empire in the Diet, in order to make the revolted princes re-enter the obedience of the Roman See.<sup>1</sup> The Protestants must bow the head—so have two Puissances decreed. There is a head that is destined to bow down, but it is one that for ten centuries has been lifted up in pride, and has not once during all that time been known to bend—Rome.

The emperor's entry into Augsburg took place on Corpus Christi eve. It was so timed in order that a pretext might be had for the attempts which were to be made for corrupting the Protestants. The programme of the imperial and ecclesiastical managers was a short one—wiles; but if these did not prosper they were quite prepared to resort to arms. The Protestant princes were specially invited to take their place in the solemn procession of tomorrow, that of Corpus Christi. It would be hard for the Lutheran chiefs to find an excuse for absence. Even on Lutheran principles it was the literal body of Christ that was to be carried through the streets; surely they would not refuse this token of homage to their Saviour, this act of courtesy to their emperor. They declined, however, saying that the body of Christ was in the Sacrament not to be worshipped, but fed on by faith. The legate professed to be highly displeased at their contumacy;<sup>2</sup> and even the emperor was not a little chafed. He had nothing for it, however, but to put up with the slight, for attendance on such ceremonies was no part of the duty which they owed him as emperor.

The next assault was directed against the Protestant sermons. The crowds that gathered round the preachers were as great as ever. The emperor was galled by the sight of these enthusiastic multitudes, and all the more so that not more than a hundred of the citizens of Augsburg had joined in the grand procession of the day previous, in which he himself had walked bareheaded, carrying a lighted taper.<sup>3</sup> That the heresy which he had crossed the Alps to extinguish should be proclaimed in a score of churches, and within earshot of him, was more than he could endure. He sent for the Lutheran princes, and charged them to enjoin silence on their preachers. The princes replied that they could not live without the preaching of the Gospel,<sup>4</sup> and that the

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<sup>1</sup> Sarpi, tom. i., lib. i. Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., p. 99. Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 3, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, ii. 115.

citizens of Augsburg would not willingly consent to have the churches closed. When Charles insisted that it should be so, the Margrave George exclaimed in animated tones, "Rather than let the Word of God be taken from me, and deny my God, I would kneel down and have my head struck off." And suiting the action to the words, he struck his neck with his hand. "Not the head off," replied Charles, evidently moved by the emotion of the margrave, "dear prince, not the head off." These were the only German words Charles was heard to utter.<sup>1</sup> After two days' warm altercation it was concluded on the part of the Protestants—who feared to irritate too greatly the emperor, lest he should forbid the reading of their Confession in the Diet—that during the sitting of the Senate the Protestant sermons should be suspended; and Charles on his part agreed to appoint preachers who should, impugn neither creed in their sermons, but steer a Middle course between the old and the new faiths. An edict to this effect was next day proclaimed through Augsburg by a herald.<sup>2</sup> The citizens were curious to hear the emperor's preachers. Those who went to witness the promised feat of preaching something that was neither Popery nor Protestantism, were not a little amused by the performances of this new sort of preachers. "Their sermons," said they, "are innocent of theology, but equally innocent of sense."

At length the 20th of June arrived. On this day the Diet was to be opened by a grand procession and a solemn mass. This furnished another pretext for renewing the attempts to corrupt the fidelity, or, as the Papists called it, vanquish the obstinacy of the Protestants. The emperor on that day would go in state to mass. It was the right or duty of the Elector of Saxony, as Grand Marshal of the Empire, to carry the sword before Charles on all occasions of state. "Let your majesty," said Campeggio, "order the elector to perform his office."<sup>3</sup> If John should obey, he would compromise his profession by being present at mass; if he should refuse, he would incur a derogation of dignity, for the emperor would assign the honour to another. The aged elector was in a strait.

He summoned the divines who were present in Augsburg, that he might have their advice. "It is," said they, "in your character of Grand Marshal, and not in your character of Protestant, that you are called to bear the sword before his majesty. You assist at a ceremony of the Empire, and not at a ceremony of religion. You may obey with a safe conscience." And they fortified their opinion by citing the example of Naaman, the prime minister of the King of Damascus, who, though a disciple of Elisha, accompanied his lord

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, Lb. ii., sec. 25, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 127.. Polano, *Hist. Conc. Trent*, lib. i., p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., p. 99.

when he went to worship in the temple of Baal.<sup>1</sup>

The Zwinglian divines did not concur in the opinion expressed by their Lutheran brethren. They called to mind the instance of the primitive Christians who submitted to martyrdom rather than throw a few grains of incense upon the altar. Any one, they said, might be present at any rite of another religion, as if it were a civil ceremony, whenever the fear of loss, or the hope of advantage, tempted one to institute this very dangerous distinction. The advice of the Lutheran divines, however, swayed the elector, and he accordingly took his place in the procession, but remained erect before the altar when the host was elevated.<sup>2</sup>

At this mass Vincenzo Pompinello, Archbishop of Rosano, and nuncio of the Pope, made an oration in Latin before the offertory. Three Romish historians—Pallavicino, Sarpi, and Polano—have handed down to us the substance of his sermon. Beginning with the Turk, the archbishop “upbraided Germany for having so meekly borne so many wrongs at the hands of the barbarian. In this craven spirit had not acted the great captains of ancient Rome, who had never failed to inflict signal chastisement upon the enemies of the Republic.” At this stage of his address, seized it would seem with a sudden admiration of the Turk, the nuncio set sail on a new tack, and began to extol the Moslem above the German : “The disadvantage of Germany is,” he said, “that the Turk obeys one prince only, whereas in Germany many obey not at all; that the Turks live in one religion, and the Germans every day invent a new religion, and mock at the old, as if it were become mouldy. Being desirous to change the faith, they had not found out one more holy and more wise.” He exhorted them that “imitating Scipio, Cato, the people of Rome and their ancestors, they should observe the Catholic religion, forsake these novelties, and give themselves to the war.”<sup>3</sup>

His eloquence reached its climax only when he came to speak of the “new religion” which the Germans had invented. “Why,” exclaimed he, “the Senate and people of Rome, though Gentiles and the worshippers of false gods, never failed to avenge the insults offered to their rites by fire and sword; but ye, O Germans, who are Christians, and the worshippers of the true and omnipotent God, condemn the rites of holy mother Church by leaving unpunished the great audacity and unheard-of wickedness of enemies. Why do ye rend in pieces the seamless garment of the Saviour? why do you abandon the doctrine of Christ, established with the consent of the Fathers, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost, for a devilish belief, which leads to every

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino. lib. iii., cap. 3, p. 191. Fra-Paolo Sarpi, tam. i., pp. 99, 100. Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 27, 167.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 127. Polano, lib. i., pp. 52, 53. D'Aubigné, vol. iv., pp. 156, 157.

<sup>3</sup> Polano, lib. i., p. 53. Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., p. 100.

buffoonery and obscenity?”<sup>1</sup> But the sting of this address was in its tail. “Sharpen thy sword, O magnanimous prince,” said he, turning to the emperor, “and smite these opposers. Peace there never will be in Germany till this heresy shall have been utterly extirpated.” Rising higher still he invoked the Apostles Peter and Paul to lend their powerful aid at this great crisis of the Church.

The zeal of the Papal nuncio, as was to be expected, was at a white heat. The German princes, however, were more cool. This victory with the sword which the orator promised them was not altogether to their mind, especially when they reflected that whereas the archbishop's share in the enterprise was the easy one of furnishing eloquence for the crusade, to them would remain the more arduous labour of providing arms and money with which to carry it out.

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<sup>1</sup> “Con una diabolica persuasione abandiscono e traggono ad ogni schema ed impudicizia.” (Pallavicino, tom. i., lib. iii., cap 3, p. 192.)

## CHAPTER XXII.

### LUTHER IN THE COBURG AND MELANCHTHON AT THE DIET.

The Emperor Opens the Diet—Magnificence of the Assemblage—Hopes of its Members—The Emperor's Speech—His Picture of Europe—The Turk—His Ravages—The Remedy—Charles Calls for Execution of Edict of Worms—Luther at Coburg—His Labours—Translation of the Prophets, &c.—His Health—His Temptations—How he Sustains his Faith—Melanchthon at Augsburg—His Temporisings—Luther's Reproofs and Admonitions.

FROM the cathedral the princes adjourned to the town-hall, where the sittings of the Diet were to take place. The emperor took his seat on a throne covered with cloth of gold. Immediately in front of him sat his brother Ferdinand, King of Austria. On either hand of him were ranged the electors of the Empire. Crowding all round and filling every part of the hall was the rest of this august assembly, including forty-two sovereign princes, the deputies of the cities, bishops, ambassadors—in short, the flower not of Germany only, but of all Christendom.

This assemblage—the representative of so much power, rank, and magnificence—had gathered here to deliberate, to lay their plans, and to proclaim their triumphs: so they firmly believed. They were quite mistaken, however. They were here to suffer check after check, to endure chagrin and discomfiture, and to see at last that cause which they had hoped to cast into chains and drag to the stake, escaping from their hands, mounting gloriously upward, and beginning to fill the world with its splendour.

The emperor rose and opened the Diet with a speech. We turn with a feeling of relief from the fiery harangue of the fanatical nuncio to the calm words of Charles. Happily Sleidan has handed down to us the speech of the emperor at considerable length. It contains a sad picture of the Christendom of that age. It shows us the West, groaning under the twin burdens of priestcraft and despotism, ready to succumb to the Turk, and the civilisation and liberty of the world on the point of being overwhelmed by the barbarous arms of the East. It shows us also that this terrible catastrophe would most surely have overtaken the world, if that very Christianity which the emperor was blindly striving to put down had not come at that critical moment, to rekindle the all but extinct fires of patriotism and valour. If Charles had succeeded in extirpating Protestantism, the Turk would have come after him and gathered the spoils. The seat of Empire would have been transferred from Spain to Constantinople, and the dominant religion in the end would have been not Romanism, but Mohammedanism.

The emperor, who did not speak German, made his address be read by the count-palatine. "Sacrificing my private injuries and interests to the



common good,” said Charles, “I have quitted the most flourishing kingdom of Spain, with great danger, to cross the seas into Italy, and, after making peace with my enemies, to pass thence into Germany. Not only,” continued the emperor, “were there great strifes and dissensions in Germany about religion, but also the Turks had invaded Hungary and the neighbouring countries, putting all to fire and sword. Belgrad and several other castles and forts being lost. King Lewis and several of the nobles had sent ambassadors to desire the assistance of the Empire. The enemy having taken Rhodes, the bulwark of Christendom on that side, marched further into Hungary, overcame King Lewis in battle, and took, plundered, and burned all the towns and places between the rivers Save and Drave, with the slaughter of many thousands of men. They had afterwards made an incursion into Sclavonia, and there having plundered, burned, and slain, and laid the whole country waste, they had carried away about thirty thousand of men into miserable slavery, and killed those poor creatures that could not follow after with the carriages. They had again, the year before, advanced with an innumerable army into Austria, and laid siege to Vienna, the chief city thereof, having wasted the country far and near, even as far as Linz, where they had practised all kinds of cruelty and barbarity. . . . That now, though the enemy could not take Vienna,<sup>1</sup> yet the whole country had sustained great damage, which could hardly be in long time repaired again. And although the Turk had drawn off his army, yet he had left garrisons and commanders upon the borders to waste and destroy not only Hungary, but Austria also, and Styria, and the places adjoining; and whereas now his territory in many places bordered upon ours, it was not to be doubted but upon the first occasion he would return again with far greater force, and drive on his designs to the utter ruin chiefly of Germany. It was well known how many places he had taken from us since he was master of Constantinople, how much Christian blood he had shed, and into what straits he had reduced this part of the world, that it ought rather to be lamented and bewailed than enlarged on in discourse. If his fury be not resisted with greater forces than hitherto, we must expect no safety for the future, but one province after another being lost, all at length, and that shortly too, will fall under his power and tyranny. The design of this most cruel enemy was to make slaves of, nay, to sweep off all Christians from the face of the earth.”

The emperor having drawn this picture of the Turk, who every year was projecting a longer shadow over Christendom, proceeded next to counsel his hearers to trample out that spirit which alone was capable of coping with this enemy, by commanding them to execute the Edict of Worms.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Turks had made a breach in the walls of Vienna, and were on the point of entering and taking the city, when a mysterious panic seized them and they fled.

<sup>2</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., pp. 127-129.

While the Diet is proceeding to business, let us return to Luther, whom we left, as our readers will recollect, in the Castle of Coburg. Alone in his solitary chamber, he is, rightly looked at, a grander sight than the magnificent assemblage we have been contemplating. He is the embodiment of that great power, which Charles has assembled his princes and is about to muster his armies to combat, but before which he is destined to fall, and with him that mighty Empire over which he so proudly sways the sceptre, and which, nine years before, at the Diet of Worms, he had publicly staked on the issue.

Luther is again shut up with his thoughts and his books. From the scene of labour and excitement which Wittenberg had become, how refreshing and fascinating the solitude of the Coburg! The day was his own, with scarce an interruption, from dawn till dusk. The Reformer needed rest, and all things around him seemed to invite him to it—the far-extending plains, the quiet woods, the cawing of the rooks, and the song of the birds; but Luther was incapable of resting. Scarcely had the tramp of the elector's horsemen, continuing their journey to Augsburg, died away in the distance, than he sat down, and wrote to Wittenberg for his books. By the end of April they had arrived, and he immediately set to work. He returned to his version of Jeremiah, and completed it before the end of June. He then resumed the Minor Prophets, and before the middle of August all had been translated, with the exception of Haggai and Malachi. He wrote an exposition of several of the Psalms—the 2nd, the 113th, and 117th—a discourse on the necessity of schools for children, and various tracts—one on purgatory, another on the power of the “keys,” and a third on the intercession of saints. With untiring labour he forged bolt after bolt, and from his retreat discharged them at the enemy.

But the too active spirit wore out the body. Luther was seized with vertigo. The plains, with their woods and meadows, seemed to revolve around the Castle of Coburg; his ears were stunned with great noises; at times it was as if a thunder-peal were resounding in his head. Then, perforce, the pen was laid down. But again he would snatch it up, and give Philip the benefit of his dear-bought experience, and bid him “take care of his own precious little body, and not commit homicide.” “God,” he said, “is served by rest, by nothing more than rest, and therefore He has willed that the Sabbath should be so rigidly kept”—thus anticipating Milton's beautiful lines:

“God doth not need  
Either man's work, or His own gifts; who best  
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state  
Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest.

*They also serve who only stand and wait.”<sup>1</sup>*

But worse symptoms supervened. In the unstrung condition of his nervous system, impressions became realities to him. His imagination clothed the dangers which he apprehended in a palpable form and shape, and they stood before him as visible existences. His Old Enemy of the Wartburg comes sailing, like black night, to the Castle of Coburg. The Reformer, however, was not to be overcome, though the Prince of Darkness had brought all hell behind him. He wrote texts of Scripture upon the walls of his apartment, upon his door, upon his bed—“I will lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou, O Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.” Within this “fortress” he felt he could defy the Prince of Spain and the Prince of the Power of the Air.

Three hours of every day did Luther devote to prayer; to this he added the assiduous perusal of the Scriptures.<sup>2</sup> These were the fountains at which he refreshed his soul, and whence he recruited his strength. Nay, more, the intercessions that ascended from the Coburg came back, we cannot doubt, upon his friends in Augsburg in needed supplies of wisdom and courage, and thus were they able to maintain the battle in the presence of their numerous and powerful adversaries. For days together Luther would be left without intelligence from the Diet. Post after post arrived from Augsburg. “Do you bring me letters?” he would eagerly inquire. “No,” was the answer, with a uniformity that severely tried his patience, and also his temper. At times he became a prey to fear not for himself; his life he held in his hand, ready at any moment to lay it down for the truth; it was for his friends. He feared in these intervals of silence, lest perchance some disaster had befallen them. Retiring into his closet, he would again send up his cry to the throne in the heavens. Straightway the clouds of melancholy would roll away, and the light of coming triumphs would break in upon his soul. He would go to the window and look forth upon the midnight sky. The mighty vault, studded with glorious stars, became to him a sign that helped his faith. “How magnificent! how lofty!” he would exclaim. “Where are the strong pillars that support this immense dome? I nowhere behold them. Yet the heavens do not fall.” Thus the firmament, upheld by a Hand he could not see, preached to him peace and prophesied of triumph. It said to him, “Why, Luther, are you disquieted and in trouble? Be at rest.” He saw around him a work in progress as stupendous as the fabric of the heavens. But why should he take that work upon himself as if it were his, and as if he must charge himself with its standing or its falling? As well might he take upon his shoulder the burden of the firmament. The heavens did not fall although his hand was not steadying its pillars, and this work would go on whether he lived or died. He saw the Pope

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<sup>1</sup> *Sonnets*, No. xix. (on his blindness).

<sup>2</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, ii. 159.

and the emperor and the Prince of Hell fighting against it with all their might; nevertheless, it was borne up and carried forward. It was not he that was causing it to advance, nor was it Melanchthon, nor the Elector John; agencies so feeble were wholly inadequate to effects so grand. There was an omnipotent Hand guiding this movement, although to him it was invisible; and if that Hand was there, was his weak arm needed? and if it should be withdrawn, was it Luther's that could uphold it? In that Hand, the Hand of the God-man, of Him who made and who upholds the world, would he leave this cause. If it should fall, it was not Luther that would fall, but the Monarch of heaven and earth; and he would rather fall with Christ than stand with Charles. Such was the train of courageous thoughts that would awaken in the mind of Luther. In this way did he strengthen his faith, and being strengthened himself he strengthened his brethren.

Nor were the counsels and encouragements of Luther unneeded at Augsburg. Melanchthon, constitutionally timid, with a mind to penetrate rather than to dare, a soul to expatiate on the beauty of truth rather than to delight in the rude gusts and tempests of opposition, at all times bending under apprehensions, was at this time bowed down to almost the very ground. In fact, he was trying to uphold the heavens. Instead of leaving the cause in the hands of Him whose it was, as Luther did, he was taking it upon his own shoulder, and he felt its weight crushing him. He was therefore full of thoughts, expedients, and devices. Every day he had some new explanation, some subtle gloss, or some doubtful compromise which he thought would gain the Catholics. He kept running about continually, being now closeted with this bishop, now with that; now dancing attendance on the legate, and now on the emperor.<sup>1</sup> Melanchthon never had the same clear and perfect conviction as Luther that there were two diametrically opposite Churches and faiths in the matter he was handling, and that he was but wasting time and risking character, and, what was infinitely more, truth, in these attempts to reconcile the two. He had no fruit of these efforts, save the consuming anxiety which they caused him now, and the bitter mortification which their failure gave him afterwards. "I dwell in perpetual tears,"<sup>2</sup> wrote he to Luther. In reply Luther points out, with admirable fidelity and skill, at once the malady and its cure. The cure is expressed in one word—Faith.

"Grace and peace in Christ! in Christ, I say and not in the world. Amen. I hate with exceeding hatred those extreme cares which consume you. If the cause is unjust, abandon it; if the cause is just, why should we belie the promises of Him Who commands us to sleep without fear? Can the devil do more than kill us? Christ will not be wanting to the work of justice and of

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<sup>1</sup> *Zwing. Epp* ii 473. D'Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, ii. 140.

truth. He lives; He reigns: what fear then can we have? God is powerful to upraise His cause if it is overthrown, to make it proceed if it remains motionless; and, if we are not worthy of it, He will do it by others.

“I have received your Apology,<sup>1</sup> and I cannot understand what you mean when you ask what we must concede to the Papists. We have already conceded too much. Night and day I meditate on this affair, turning it over and over, diligently searching the Scriptures, and the conviction of the truth of our doctrine becomes every day stronger in my mind. With the help of God, I will not permit a single letter of all that we have said to be torn from us.

“The issue of this affair torments you, because you cannot understand it. But if you could, I would not have the least share in it. God has put it in a ‘common-place’ that you will not find in either your rhetoric or your philosophy. That place is called Faith. It is that in which subsist all things that we can neither understand nor see. Whoever wishes to touch them, as you do, will have tears for his sole reward.

“If Christ is not with us, where is He in the whole universe? If we are not the Church, where, I pray, is the Church? Is it the Duke of Bavaria? is it Ferdinand? is it the Pope? is it the Turk who is the Church? If we have not the Word of God, who is it that possesses it?

“Only we must have faith, lest the cause of faith. should be found to be without faith.

“If we fall, Christ falls with us—that is to say, the Master of the world. I would rather fall with Christ than remain standing with Cæsar.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Confession, afterwards read in the Diet.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib, ii. sec. 32, p. 182.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### READING OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

The Religious Question First—Augsburg Confession—Signed by the Princes—The Laity—Princes Demand to Read their Confession in Public Diet—Refusal—Demand Renewed—Granted—The Princes Appear before the Emperor and Diet—A Little One become a Thousand—Mortification of Charles—Confession Read in German—Its Articles—The Trinity—Original Sin—Christ—Justification—The Ministry—Good Works—The Church—The Lord's Supper, &c.—The Mass, &c.—Effect of Reading the Confession—Luther's Triumph.

THE Diet was summoned for two causes—first, the defence of Christendom against the Turk; secondly, and mainly, the settlement of the religious question. It was resolved to take into consideration first the matter of religion.

In order to an intelligent decision on this question, it seemed equitable, and indeed indispensable, that the Diet should hear from the Protestants a statement of the doctrine which they held. Without this, how could the Diet either approve or condemn? Such a manifesto, based on the "Torgau Articles," had been drawn up by Melanchthon, approved by Luther, and was now ready to be presented to the Diet, provided the emperor would consent to the public reading of it.

On the morning of the 23rd of June, the Protestants met in the apartments of the Elector of Saxony to append their signatures to this important deed. It was first read in German. The Elector John took the pen, and was about to append his name, when Melanchthon interposed. "It was the ministers of the Word, and not the princes of the State," he said, "that ought to appear in this matter. This was the voice of the Church." "God forbid," replied the elector, "that you should exclude me from confessing my Lord. My electoral hat and my ermine are not so precious to me as the cross of Jesus Christ." On this Melanchthon suffered him to proceed, and John, Duke of Saxony, was the first whose name was appended to this document.

After the Elector of Saxony had subscribed, George, Margrave of Brandenburg, and Ernest, Duke of Luneburg, appended their signatures, and then the pen was handed to Philip of Hesse. The landgrave accompanied his signature with an intimation that he dissented from the article on the Lord's Supper. He stood with Zwingli in this matter.<sup>1</sup> Then followed John Frederick, son of the Elector of Saxony; and Francis, Duke of Luneburg. Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, came last. "I would rather renounce my subjects and my States," said he, when he took the pen to sign, "I would rather quit the country of my fathers staff in hand, than receive any other doctrine than that which

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<sup>1</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, ii. 155.

is contained in this Confession.”<sup>1</sup> The devotion of the princes inspirited the theologians.

Of the cities only two as yet subscribed the Confession, Nuremberg and Reutlingen. Those we have mentioned were the nine original subscribers. The document received a number of signatures afterwards; princes, ecclesiastics, and cities pressed forward to append their names to it. The ministers, one may think, ought to have had precedence in the matter of subscription. But the only names which the deed bore when carried to the Diet were those of the seven princes and the two cities, all lay signatures. One great end, however, was gained thereby: it gave grand prominence to a truth which for ages had been totally lost sight of, and purposely as profoundly buried. It proclaimed the forgotten fact that the laity form part of the Church. Rome practically defined the Church to be the priesthood. This was not a body Catholic, it was a caste, a third party, which stood between God and the laity, to conduct all transactions between the two. But when the Church revives at this great era, she is seen to be not a mutilated body, a mere fragment; she stands up a perfect, a complete society.

The Protestants agreed to demand that their Confession should be read publicly in the Diet. This was a vital point with them. They had not kindled this light to put it under a bushel, but to set it in a very conspicuous place; indeed, in the midst even of the princedoms, hierarchies, and powers of Christendom now assembled at Augsburg. To this, however, obstacles were interposed, as it was foreseen there would be. The Confession was subscribed on the 23rd of June; it was to be presented on the 24th. On that day the Diet met at three o’clock of the afternoon. The Protestant princes appeared and demanded leave to read their Confession. The legate Campeggio rose and began to speak. He painted the bark of Peter struggling in a tempestuous sea, the great billows breaking over it, and ready every moment to engulf it; but it was his consolation to know that a strong arm was near, able to still these mighty waves, and rescue that imperilled bark from destruction.<sup>2</sup> The strong arm to which he referred was that of the emperor. He ran on a long while in this vein of rhetoric. The legate was speaking against time. Next came deputies from Austria, who had a long and doleful recital of the miseries the Turk had inflicted upon them to lay before the Diet.<sup>3</sup> This scene had all been arranged beforehand.

It came at length to an end. The Protestant princes rose again and craved permission to read their paper. “It is too late,” was the emperor’s reply.

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<sup>1</sup> We have taken the names and order of the subscribers to this memorable deed from the *Augustana Confessio*, printed at Leipsic and Jena (1705), and carefully edited by Philip Mullero, from the first printed copy at Leipsic, 1580.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., g. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Corp. Ref., ii. 154.

“But,” insisted the princes, “we have been publicly accused, and we must be permitted publicly to justify ourselves.” “Then,” said the emperor, who felt it would be well to make a show of yielding, “tomorrow at the Palatinate Chapel.” The “Palatinate Chapel” was not the usual place of the Diet’s meeting, but an apartment in the emperor’s own palace, capable of containing about two hundred persons.<sup>1</sup> It was seen that the emperor wished the audience to be select.

The morrow came, the 25th of June, 1530. Long before the hour of the Diet a great crowd was seen besieging the doors of the Palatinate. At three o’clock the emperor took his seat on his throne. Around him was gathered all that his vast Empire could furnish of kingly power, princely dignity, august station, brilliant title, and gorgeous munificence. There was one lofty head missing, one seat vacant in that brilliant assembly. Campeggio stayed away,<sup>2</sup> and his absence anticipated a decree afterwards passed in a consistory of the cardinals at Rome disapproving the Diet’s entering on the religious question, seeing that was a matter the decision of which appertained exclusively to the Pope. The eventful moment was now come. The princes stood up at the foot of the emperor’s throne to present their Confession—John of Saxony, John Frederick, his son, Philip of Hesse, George of Brandenburg, Wolfgang of Anhalt, Ernest and Francis of Luneburg, and the two deputies of Nuremberg and Reutlingen. All eyes were fixed upon them. “Their air was animated,” says Scultet, “and their faces radiant with joy.”<sup>3</sup> It was impossible but that the scene of nine years ago should forcibly present itself at this moment to the emperor’s mind. Then, as now, he sat upon his throne with the princes of his kingdom around him, and a solitary monk stood up in his presence to confess his faith. The astounding scene was reproducing itself. The monk again stands up to confess his faith; not, indeed, in his own person, but in that of confederate princes and cities, inspired with his spirit and filled with his power. Here was a greater victory than any the emperor had won, and he had gained not a few since the day of Worms. Charles, ruler of two worlds, could not but feel that the monk was a greater sovereign than himself. Was not this the man and the cause against which he had fulminated his ban? Had he not hoped that, long ere this day, both would have sunk out of sight, crushed under its weight? Had he not summoned Diet after Diet to deal this cause the finishing blow? How, then, did it happen that each new Diet gave it a new triumph? Whence did it derive that mysterious and wondrous life, which the more it was oppressed the more it grew? It embittered his state to see this “Mordecai” sitting at the gate

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<sup>1</sup> Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., lib. i., p. 101. Polano, lib. i., p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Scultet., tom. i., p. 273.



of his power, and refusing to do obeisance; nor could he banish from his mind the vaticinations which “his wise men, and Zeresh his wife,” addressed to an ambitious statesman of old: “If thou hast begun to fall before him, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.”

The two chancellors of the elector, Bruck and Bayer, rose, holding in their hand, the one a German and the other a Latin copy of the “Chief Articles of the Faith.” “Read the Latin copy,” suggested the emperor. “No,” replied the Elector of Saxony respectfully, “we are Germans, and on German soil we crave to speak in German.”<sup>1</sup> Bayer now began to read, and he did so in a voice so clear and strong that every word was audible to the vast crowd of eager listeners that filled the ante-chambers of the hall.

“Most invincible Emperor, Caesar Augustus, most gracious lord,” so spoke the chancellor, “we are here in obedience to the summons of your Majesty, ready to deliberate and confer on the affairs of religion, in order that, arriving at one sincere and true faith, we may fight under one Christ, form one Christian Church, and live in one unity and concord.” As their contribution to this great work of pacification, the Protestants went on to say, through Bayer, that they had prepared and brought with them to the Diet a Summary of the doctrines which they held, agreeable to Holy Scripture, and such as had aforetime been professed in their land, and taught in their Church. But should, unhappily, the conciliation and concord which they sought not be attained, they were ready to explain their cause in a “free, general Christian Council.”<sup>2</sup>

The reading of the Confession proceeded in deep silence.

Article I. confessed the TRINITY. “There is one Divine essence who is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness; and there are three persons of the same essence and power and co-eternity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

Article II. confessed ORIGINAL SIN. “Since the fall of Adam all men descending from him by ordinary generation are born in sin, which places under condemnation and bringeth eternal death to all who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Ghost.”

Article III. confessed the PERSON AND OFFICE OF CHRIST. “The Son of God assumed humanity and has thus two natures, the divine and human, in His one person, inseparably conjoined: one Christ, very God and very man. He was born of the Virgin, He truly suffered, was crucified, died and was buried, that He might reconcile us to the Father, and be the sacrifice, not only for the original sin, but also for all the actual transgressions of men.”

Article IV. confessed the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION. “Men cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Augustana Confessio*—Præfatio ad Cæsarem; Lipsiæ et Jenæ 1705

justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. They are justified freely on Christ's account through faith, when they believe in the free pardon of their sins for the sake of Christ, Who has made satisfaction for them by His death. This faith God imputes to them for righteousness."

The "antithesis" or condemnation of the opposite doctrines professed by the Arians, Pelagians, Anabaptists, and more ancient heretical sects, was not stated under this article, as under the previous ones. We see in this omission the prudence of Melancthon.

Article V. confessed the institution of the MINISTRY. "For by the preaching of the Word, and the dispensation of the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit is pleased to work faith in the heart."

Article VI. confessed GOOD WORKS. "Faith ought to bear good fruits, not that these may justify us before God, but that they may manifest our love to God."

Article VII. confessed the CHURCH, "which is the congregation of the holy, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered. To the real unity of the Church it is sufficient that men agree in the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments; nor is it necessary that the rites and ceremonies instituted by men should be everywhere the same."

Article VIII. confessed the CHURCH VISIBLE. "Although the Church is properly the assembly of saints and true believers, yet in this life there are mixed up in it many hypocrites and manifest sinners."<sup>1</sup>

Article IX. set forth the necessity of BAPTISM to salvation, "for through baptism is offered the grace of God," and the lawfulness of infant baptism.

Article X. set forth the doctrine of the LORD'S SUPPER. "We teach that the body and blood of Christ are really present, and administered to those who partake of the Lord's Supper."<sup>2</sup>

Articles XI. and XII. stated the doctrine of the Lutheran confessors on confession and penance.

Article XIII. set forth more explicitly the nature and use of the Sacraments, affirming that they were not mere "notes of profession" among men, but "signs and testimonies of the good-will of God toward us;" and that therefore to the "use of the Sacrament" faith must be added, which takes hold of the promises exhibited and held forth by the Sacrament. And in the antithesis to this article they condemned those who taught that the Sacrament accomplishes its end *ex opere operate*, and that faith is not required in order to the remission of sins.

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<sup>1</sup> "Quamquam ecclesia," &c., "cum in hac vita multi hypocrite et mali admixti sent." (*Augustana Confessio*.)

<sup>2</sup> "De Coena Domini docent, quoci corpus et sanguis Christi vere adsint, et distribuantur vescentibus in Coena Domini." (*Ibid.*)

The articles that follow to the end are occupied with church order and rites, civil government, the final judgment, free will, and good works. On the latter the framers of the Confession were careful to distinguish between the power which man has to do “good or evil,” within the sphere of natural and civil justice, and the sphere of holiness.

Man can do many things, they said. He can love his children, his neighbours, his country; he can study an art, practise a profession, or guide the State; he can bless society by his virtues and talents, or afflict it by his vices and crimes; but those actions only are righteous in the sight of God which spring from a gracious principle, implanted by the Holy Spirit, and which are directed to a heavenly end. To love God, and love and labour for man for God’s sake, is a power, they taught, which fallen man does not possess, and which must be given him from above; according to the saying of Ambrose, that “Faith is the mother of good desires and holy actions”—words which are but the echo of those of a greater Teacher, “Without me ye can do nothing.”<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, the Protestants returned in their Confession to their grand cardinal doctrine, salvation by grace. They especially attacked the mass, on which Rome had suspended the salvation of the world, making the priest, and not Christ, the saviour of men; the sacrifice on the altar, and not the sacrifice on the cross, the real propitiation; thus compelling men to come to her and not to God for pardon, making merchandise of heaven, changing worship into mountebankery, and the Church into a fair. “If the mass,” said they, “takes away the sins of the living and the dead, *ex opere operato*, then justification hangs on a mere rite,” and Christ died in vain.<sup>2</sup> With the Bible they would know no sacrifice for sin but that made by Christ, once for all, on Calvary, everlasting, and never needing to be repeated, inasmuch as its efficacy is wide as the populations of the globe, and lasting as eternity. Nor would they put any conditions upon the enjoyment of these merits other than had been put upon them by Him whose they were. These merits they would not give as the wages of work, nor as the equivalent of gold; they would give them on the same terms on which the Gospel offered them, “without money and without price.” Thus they laboured to overthrow the mass, with that whole system of salvation by works of which it was the pre-eminent symbol, and to restore the cross.

We have said that under the Fourth Article, that relating to justification, the antithesis was not formally stated. The Confession did not say, “We condemn Papists, &c., who hold a doctrine opposed to justification by

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<sup>1</sup> Augustana *Confessio*, art. xx., De Donis Operibus.

<sup>2</sup> Si missa tout peccata vivorum et mortuorum ex opere operato contingit justificatio ex opere Missarum, non ex fide.” (*Augustan Confessio*, art. xxiv., De Missa.)

faith.” This omission arose from no want of courage, for in what follows we find the errors of Romanism boldly attacked. The mass, as we have seen, was not spared; but the Protestants did not single out the mass alone. There was scarcely an abuse or error of the system that was not passed in review, and dismissed with the brand of reprobation upon it. On one and all was the sentence pronounced, “Unknown to Scripture and to the Fathers.” Priestly absolution, distinction of meats, monastic vows, feast-days, the pernicious mixing up of ecclesiastical and civil authority, so hurtful to the character of the ministers of the Word, and so prolific of wars and bloodshed to the world—all were condemned on many grounds, but on this above all others, that they “obscured the doctrine of grace, and of the righteousness of faith, which is the cardinal article, the crowning glory of the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

The Confession—with conspicuous boldness, when we think that it was read before an assembly in which so many prince-bishops had a seat—condemned one of the grand errors of the Middle Ages, namely, the confusion of Church and State, and the blending of things spiritual and secular, which had led to such corruption in the Church and inflicted so many calamities upon the world. It explained, with great clearness and at considerable length, that Church and State are two distinct societies, and, although co-related, each has its own boundaries, its own rights and duties, and that the welfare of both requires the maintenance of the independence of each.

“Many,” Bayer continued, “have unskilfully confounded the episcopal and the temporal power; and from this confusion have resulted great wars, revolts, and seditions. It is for this reason, and to reassure men’s consciences, that we find ourselves constrained to establish the difference which exists between the power of the Church and the power of the sword.

“We, therefore, teach that the power of the keys or of the bishops is, conformably with the Word of the Lord, a commandment emanating from God, to preach the Gospel, to remit or retain sins, and to administer the Sacraments. This power has reference only to eternal goods, is exercised only by the minister of the Word, and does not trouble itself with political administration. The political administration, on the other hand, is busied with everything else but the Gospel. The magistrate protects, not souls, but bodies and temporal possessions. He defends them against all attacks from without, and by making use of the sword and of punishment, compels men to observe civil justice and peace.

“For this reason we must take particular care not to mingle the power of the Church with the power of the State. The power of the Church ought

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<sup>1</sup> “Primo obscurata est doctrina de gratis et justitia quæ est præcipua pars evangelii.” (Augustan *Confessio*, art. xxvi.)

never to invade an office that is foreign to it; for Christ Himself said: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' And again: 'Who made me a judge over you?' St. Paul said to the Philippians: 'Our citizenship is in heaven.' And to the Corinthians: 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.'

"It is thus that we distinguish the two governments and the two powers, and that we honour both as the most excellent gifts that God has given us here on earth.

"The duty of the bishops is therefore to preach the Gospel, to forgive sins, and to exclude from the Christian Church all who rebel against the Lord, but without human power, and solely by the Word of God. If the bishops act thus, the Churches ought to be obedient to them, according to this declaration of Christ: 'Whoever heareth you heareth Me.'

"But if the bishops teach anything that is contrary to the Gospel, then the Churches have an order from God which forbids them to obey (Matt. vii. 15, Gal. i., and 2 Cor. xiii. 8, 10). And St. Augustine himself, in his letter against Pertilian, writes: We must not obey the Catholic bishops, if they go astray, and teach anything contrary to the canonical Scriptures of God."

Bayer then came to the epilogue of the Confession.

"It is not from hatred that we have spoken," said he, "nor to insult any one, but we have explained the doctrines that we maintain to be essential, in order that it may be understood that we admit of neither dogma nor ceremony which is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and to the usage of the Universal Church."

"Such," said Bayer, having finished the document, "is a summary of our faith. Other things might have been stated, but for brevity's sake they are omitted. But what has been said is sufficient to show that in our doctrines and ceremonies nothing has been admitted which is inconsistent with Scripture, or with the Church catholic."<sup>1</sup>

The reading of the Confession occupied two hours. Not a word was spoken all that time.

This assembly of princes and warriors, statesmen and ecclesiastics, sat silent, held fast in the spell, not of novelty merely, but of the simplicity, beauty, and majesty of the truths which passed before them in the grand spiritual panorama which Melanchthon's powerful hand had summoned up. Till now they had known the opinions of the Protestants only as rumour had exaggerated, or ignorance obscured, or hatred misrepresented and vilified them: now they learned them from the pen of the clearest intellect and most accomplished scholar in the Lutheran host. Melanchthon, knowing that he had to speak to an audience that were dull of ear, and yet more dull of heart,

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<sup>1</sup> *Augustana Confessio*—Epilogus.

had put forth all his powers to throw the charm of an elegant style and lucid illustration around his theological theses; and such was his success that he was alike intelligible to layman and ecclesiastic, to warrior, baron, and scholar in the Diet. But this was the least of Melanchthon's triumphs.

In the two hours which the reading of the Confession occupied, what a work had been accomplished, what an advance made in the great cause of the Reformation! The errors which had been growing up during the course of ages had sentence of doom pronounced upon them, and from that hour began to wither away; such was the clearness and pertinency of the proofs with which Melanchthon confirmed the Protestant doctrines. It was as when the morning dawns, and the clouds which all night long had rested on the sides of the Alps break up, and rolling away disclose the stupendous, snow-clad, glorious peaks: so now, the fogs of medievalism begin to scatter, and lo! in majestic and brilliant array, those eternal verities which the Holy Spirit had revealed in ancient times for the salvation of men—those Alps of the spiritual world, those mountain-peaks that lift their heads into heaven, bathed with the light of the throne of God—are seen coming forth, and revealing themselves to man's ravished eye. The Confession, moreover, added not a few influential converts to the ranks of Protestantism. The effect on some was surprise; on others, conviction; on most, it was the creation of a more conciliatory spirit towards the Lutherans.

Thirteen years before (1517) a solitary monk, bearing a scroll in one hand and a hammer in the other, is seen forcing his way through a crowd of pilgrims, and nailing his scroll, with its ninety-five theses, to the door of the castle-church of Wittenberg. The scene repeats itself, but on a grander scale. Now a phalanx of princes and free cities is beheld pressing through the throng of the Diet of Augsburg, and, in presence of the assembled prince-doms and hierarchies of Christendom, it nails the old scroll—for what is the Confession of Augsburg but the monk's scroll enlarged, and more impreg-nably supported by proof?—it nails this scroll to the throne of Charles V.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AFTER THE DIET OF AUGSBURG.

The Great Protest—The Cities asked to Abandon it—The Augsburg Confession—Theological Culmination of Reformation in Germany—Elation of the Protestants—Three Confessions—Harmony—New Converts—Consultations and Dialogues in the Emperor's Ante-chamber—The Bishop of Salzburg on Priests—Translation of the Confession into French—The Free Protesting Towns—Asked to Abandon the Protest of 1529—Astonishment of the Deputies—The Vanquished affecting to be the Victor—What the Protest of 1529 enfolded—The Folly of the Emperor's Demand.

WE are now arrived at a stage where we can look around and take a survey of this great movement of regeneration as it develops itself in other countries. Everywhere, on the right and on the left, from the Baltic to the Alps, and from the Atlantic to the gates of Vienna, the doctrines of Protestantism are being scattered and are taking vigorous root. Nay, even beyond the mountains that wall in Italy and Spain, Protestant movements are springing up, and Borne is beginning to be assailed in those countries where she deemed her power to be so deeply seated in the traditional beliefs, the blind devotion, and the pleasure-loving habits of the people, that no one would be mad enough to attack her. But before withdrawing our eyes from Germany, let us briefly note the events immediately consequent on the Confession of Augsburg.

The presentation of the Confession to the Diet<sup>1</sup> was the culmination of the movement on German soil. It was the proudest hour of the Lutheran Church. To this point the labours of Luther and of the forces that operated around him had tended, and now that it was reached, the crown was put upon the theological development. The Augsburg Confession was not a perfectly accurate statement of Scripture truth by any means, but as a first attempt, made before the Reformation had completed its second decade, it was a marvellous effort, and has not been cast into the shade by even the noblest of those Confessions which have since followed it, and for which it so largely helped to prepare the way. When this Confession was laid on the imperial table, the movement had no longer Luther as its sole or chief embodiment. The Reformation now stood before the world in a body of Articles, drawn from the Bible, and comprehensively embracing those principles which God has made known as a basis of justice and order to nations, and the means of renewal and eternal life to individuals; and whatever might become of Luther, though he were this moment to be offered as a martyr, or, which was

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<sup>1</sup> "You may see in the bishop's palace the chamber where the famous Confession of Augsburg was presented to the Emperor Charles V. From thence we went to the cathedral, where there is a gate of brass, over which many places of the sacred history are represented in *basso Mier*°, and they made us observe in the history of the creation that it was the Virgin Mary who created Eve, and formed her out of one of Adam's ribs." (*Misson*, p. 135.)

possible but hardly conceivable, were to apostatise, and destroy the faith he once preached, here was a greater preacher of the truth, standing before the nations, and keeping open to them the road to a glorious future.

Was the Confession of Augsburg to come in the room of the Bible to the Protestants? Far from it. Let us not mistake the end for which it was framed, and the place it was intended to occupy. The Confession did not create the faith; it simply confessed it. The doctrines it contained were in the Confession because they were first of all in the Bible. A terrestrial chart has authority and is to be followed only when for every island and continent marked on it there is a corresponding island and continent on the surface of the globe; a manual of botany has authority only when for every term on its page there is a living flower or tree in the actual landscape; and a map of the heavens is true only when for every star named in it there is an actual star shining in the sky. So of the Augsburg Confession, and all Confessions, they are true, and of authority, and safe guides only when every statement they contain has its corresponding doctrine in the Scriptures. Their authority is not in themselves, but in the Word of God. Therefore they do not fetter conscience, or tyrannise over it, except when perverted; they but guard its liberty, by shielding the understanding from the usurpation of error, and leaving the conscience free to follow the light of the Word of God.

Both parties felt the vast consequences that must needs follow from what had just taken place. The Protestants were elated. They had carried their main object, which was nothing less than to have their faith published in presence of the Diet, and so of all Christendom. “By the grace of God,” exclaimed Pontanus, as he handed the Latin copy to the emperor’s secretary, “this Confession shall prevail in spite of the gates of hell.” “Christ has been boldly confessed at Augsburg,” said Luther, when the news reached him. “I am overjoyed that I have lived to this hour.” The Churches, as we have seen, had been closed against the Protestant ministers; but now we behold the pulpit set up in the Diet itself, and great princes becoming preachers of the Gospel.

The Popish members were dismayed and confounded when they reflected on what had been done. The Diet had been summoned to overthrow the Reformation; instead of this it had established it. In the wake of this Confession came other two, the one written by Bucer, and signed by four cities which in the matter of the Lord’s Supper leaned to the Zwinglian rather than to the Lutheran view—Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau;<sup>1</sup> hence its name, the *Tetrapolitan Confession*; and the other presented in the name of Zwingli, and containing a statement of his individual views. Thus the movement, instead of shrinking into narrower dimensions, or hiding itself from view, was coming boldly out in the presence of its opponents, and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, p. 187. Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 130.



feeble hope which the Romanists founded upon the circumstance that there were three representations, or "a schism in the schism," as they termed it, vanished when these several documents were examined, and it was seen that there was substantial agreement among them; that on one point only did they differ,<sup>1</sup> and that all were united in their repudiation and condemnation of Rome.

Moreover, powerful princes were passing from the Romanist to the Protestant side. The Archbishop Hermann, Elector of Cologne, the Count Palatine Frederick, Duke Eric of Brunswick-Luneburg, Duke Henry of Mecklenburg, and the Dukes of Pomerania were gained to the truth, and their accession wellnigh doubled the political strength of the Reformation. These trophies of the power of the Confession were viewed as pledges of more numerous conversions to be effected in time to come. Nor were these hopes disappointed. The Confession was translated into most of the languages of Europe, and circulated in the various countries; the misrepresentations and calumnies which had obscured and distorted the cause were cleared away; and Protestantism began to be hailed as a movement bringing with it renovation to the soul and new life to States.

It was the morning of the day following that on which the Confession had been read, the 26th of June. The emperor had just awoke. He had slept badly, and was wearied and irritable. The affair of yesterday recurred to his mind, and a feeling of melancholy began to weigh upon him. He had made a bad beginning of the enterprise arranged between himself and the Pope at Bologna. Lutheranism stood better in the eyes of the world, and had more adherents around it now than when he entered Augsburg. He must bethink him how he can correct his first false move. At that moment the count palatine, looking as much out of sorts as his master, entered the imperial apartment. His eye caught the anxious face of the emperor, and divining the cause of his uneasiness, "We must," said he, "yield something to the Lutheran princes." A feeling of relief to the mind of Charles accompanied these words; and the count went on to say that it might not be ungraceful to make the concessions which the Emperor Maximilian was willing to grant. "What were they?" inquired the monarch. "These three: communion in both kinds, the marriage of priests, and freedom with regard to fasts," rejoined the count palatine. The thing pleased Charles. It left untouched the mass and the authority of the Church. It was a small sacrifice to prevent a great evil.

In a little while Granvelle and Campeggio arrived. They were told the counsel which the count palatine had given, and which seemed good in the eyes of the emperor. It was not equally good in the eyes of these Churchmen. At the conferences at Bologna, Campeggio, as we have seen, had only one

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<sup>1</sup> Fra Paolo Sarpi, tom. i., lib. i., p. 102.

course to recommend, one remedy for all the heresies of the day—the sword. He was of the same opinion at Augsburg as at Bologna. Concession would only lead to greater concessions. “The counsel of the count palatine was not good,” said the cardinal, and Campeggio had the art to persuade Charles to reject it.

Other arrivals soon followed, mainly ecclesiastics, who reinforced the legate in the position he had taken up. “I stay with the mother,” exclaimed the Bishop of Wurzburg. “Spoken like a true and obedient son,” said the courtier Brentz; “but pray, my lord, do not, for the mother, forget either the father or the son.” “It is not the cure, but the physician who prescribes it, that I dislike,” said the Archbishop of Salzburg, who had been peculiarly bitter against the Reformers. “I would oblige the laity with the cup, and the priests with wives, and all with a little more liberty as regards meats, nor am I opposed to some reformation of the mass; but that it should be a monk, a poor Augustine, who presumes to reform us all, is what I cannot get over.”<sup>1</sup> “Nor I,” responded another bishop, “that a little town should teach all the world; and that the ancient and orthodox waters of Rome should be forsaken for the heretical and paltry stream that Wittenberg sends forth, is not to be thought of.” It was the old objection, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth “

Of the men now assembling around Charles, some blamed themselves as well as the Lutherans. The Bishop of Salzburg, whom we have just mentioned as more than ordinarily hostile to the Reformation, was by no means blind to the degeneracy of Rome, and made a very frank confession on that head one day to Melancthon, who was insisting on a reformation in the lives of the clergy. The archbishop could not help expressing his opinion of the hopelessness of such a thing, not because it was not needed, but simply because it was chimerical. “What,” he exclaimed abruptly, “reform us? we priests have always been good for nothing.” The archbishop was of opinion that there was not left enough of backbone in the priesthood to stand the process. The cure would certainly kill it. A Greater had pronounced the same judgment on the corrupt priesthood of a former age. “If the salt have lost its savour, . . . it is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill, but men cast it out and it is trodden under foot.”

Charles had got the Diet which he had summoned in so high hopes, and to which he had come in such magnificent state, not doubting that he was advancing to a scene of victory; he had got more: he had got the Lutheran Confession—not a confession of trespass against their mother the Church, and a cry for the pardon of the Pope and the emperor, which he had prepared himself to hear, but a bold justification of all the doctrines the princes had professed, and all the steps they had taken—in short, a flag of revolt unfurled

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<sup>1</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, ii. 155.

at the very foot of the imperial throne. Before punishing the offences of nine years ago by executing the Edict of Worms, he must deal with this new development of Lutheranism. If he should pass it over in silence, on the pretext that it was an affair of dogmas merely, he would be virtually tolerating the Protestant faith, and must nevermore mention the Worms proscription. If, on the other hand, he should call on the princes to retract, he must be prepared with something like reasonable grounds for demanding their submission, and, if need were, extorting it. He must steer between the Scylla of coercion and the Charybdis of toleration. This was all as yet the Diet had done for him. It had brought him new perplexities--more sleepless nights. It was mortifying to have to write to Clement VII. that the project they had spent a winter together at Bologna in concocting was speeding so ill--was, in fact, marching backwards.

Every hour was precious. Before sitting down to breakfast, steps had to be taken. Of the two courses open to him--*tolerate* or *coerce* was clear that the latter was the one that must be taken in the last resort. But the emperor's edicts must be backed by reasons; and now it was that Charles painfully felt his unskilfulness in theology. Distracted rather than aided by the conflicting opinions and contrary counsels of the men around him, he resolved to look a little into this matter for himself, and for this end he ordered his secretary to prepare a French translation of the Confession. Two copies, as we have said, had been handed to Charles, the one in Latin and the other in German; but he thought he could better see the theological bearings of Lutheranism and the idiomatic beauties of Melancthon in French than in either of the other two languages. He required perfect accuracy of his secretary. "See," said he, "that not a word be wanting." The Lutheran princes who heard these words were pleased with the emperor's wish to be well-informed in their cause; and took them as a sign that he leaned to their side--a somewhat narrow foundation for so great a conclusion. The courtiers who knew the emperor better, shook their heads when they learned that the Lutherans were reckoning Charles among the converts of the eloquent document of Melancthon. It had already made some illustrious disciples among the lay princes; and one or two prince-bishops, as Cologne and Augsburg, it had almost persuaded to be Lutherans; but the head that wore the diadem was not to be numbered among those that were to bow to the force of truth.

While the emperor is seated at the breakfast table, the ante-chamber begins to be filled with a crowd of deputies. Who are they, and why are they here at this early hour? They are the ambassadors from the imperial cities, and they are here by command of the emperor. Before beginning his first lesson in Lutheran divinity, Charles will try what can be done with the towns.

Free towns have in all ages been objects of special jealousy and dislike

to despots. The free cities of Germany were no exception to this rule. Charles viewed them with suspicion and abhorrence. They were the great stumbling-blocks in his path to that universal monarchy which it was his ambition to erect. But of the free imperial towns fourteen had given special cause of displeasure to the emperor. They had refused to submit to the Recess of the last Diet of Spires, that of 1529. The names of the offending cities were Strasburg, Nuremberg, Constance, Ulm, Reutlingen, Heilbronn, Memmingen, Lindau, Kempten, Windsheim, Isny, and Weissenberg. Their non-adherence to the Recess of the Diet had created a split in the Empire. An attempt must be made to heal the breach, and bring back the contumacious cities before their evil example had been followed by the others. Their deputies were now gathered, along with the rest, into the imperial ante-chamber. Frederick, count palatine, was sent to them to say, "that in the last Diet of Spires (1529) a decree had been made, which had been obeyed by most of the States, much to the emperor's satisfaction, hut that some of the cities had rejected it, to the weakening of the Empire, and that Charles now called on them to submit to the Diet."<sup>1</sup>

Little had they expected, when they assembled that morning in the ante-chamber of the monarch, to have a demand like this made upon them. The eloquent words of Melanchthon were still ringing in their ears; they felt more convinced than ever, after listening to his beautifully perspicuous and powerfully convincing exposition, that their faith was founded on the Word of God, and that they could not abandon it without peril to their souls; they had witnessed, only the day before, the elation of their brethren at this triumphant vindication, and they had shared their feelings. They had marked, too, the obvious perplexity into which the reading of the Confession had thrown the Romanists, how troubled their faces, how uneasy their attitudes, how significant the glances they exchanged with one another, and how frankly some of them had confessed that Melanchthon's paper contained only the truth! A concession or an overture of conciliation would not have surprised them; but that the minister of Charles should on the morrow after this great triumph be the bearer of such a demand from the emperor did beyond measure astonish them. They had won the field; with them had remained the moral victory; but the vanquished suddenly put on the air of a conqueror.

The Protestant cities were asked to submit to the edict of the Diet of 1529. Let us see how much was involved in that demand. The Diet of 1529 abolished the toleration of 1526. Not only so: it placed an arrest upon the Protestant movement, and enacted that it should advance not a foot-breadth beyond the limits it had reached when the Recess of the Diet was published. As regarded all who were already Protestants, it graciously permitted them

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, vii., p. 130.

to remain so; but from this day forward, while Germany stood, not a prince, not a city, not an individual could enrol his name in the Protestant ranks or leave the Church of Rome, whatever his convictions or wishes might be. It went further; it provided for the re-introduction of the mass, and the whole machinery of Romanism, into Protestant provinces and cities. While it stringently forbade all proselytising on the Protestant side, it gave unbounded licence to it on the Popish. What could happen, under an arrangement of this sort, but that Protestantism should wither and disappear? One could prognosticate the year, almost the very day, when it would be extinct. It was at this hour, with the Augsburg Confession lying on the emperor's table, that the free cities were asked to assist in arranging for the funeral obsequies of Protestantism.

Nor does even this fully bring out the folly which Charles committed in making such a demand, and the treason of which the free cities would have been guilty against the truth and the world, had they yielded to it. The Recess of 1529 was the act that had led them to send forth the great Protest from which they took their name. To adhere to the Recess was to abandon their Protest—was to pull down their flag as it floated before the eyes of all Christendom, a sign and promise to the nations of a glorious redemption from a great slavery.

They had not thought much of the act at the time; but the more they pondered it, the more they saw they had been led by a wisdom not their own, to take up a position that was one of the most comprehensive and sublime in all history. With their Protest had come new liberties to the soul of man, and new rights and powers to human society. Their Protest had deposited in Christendom the one everlasting corner-stone of freedom and virtue—an emancipated conscience. But an emancipated conscience did not mean a lawless conscience, or a conscience guided by itself. Above conscience their Protest placed the Word of God—the light—the voice saying, "This is the way." Above the Word they placed the Spirit that speaks in it. They gave to no man and no Church the power of authoritatively interpreting the Scriptures; and they took care to guard against the tyranny of which Scripture had been made the instrument in the hands of infallible interpreters; for he who can interpret the law as he pleases, can make the law to be what it suits him. Scripture alone, they said, can interpret Scripture. Thus they proclaimed the supremacy of Scripture, not as a fetter on the understanding, but a Divine bulwark around it. Above the Supremacy of Scripture they placed the supremacy of the Spirit Who inspired it; and in doing so they reared another rampart around the liberty of the understanding.

An emancipated conscience they committed to the guardianship of the Bible: and the supremacy of the Bible they placed under the sovereignty of

God. Thus they brought conscience in immediate contact with her Lord, and human society they placed under the rule of its rightful and righteous king.

The Protest of 1529 was thus a grand era of restoration and reconciliation. It restored society to God. Rome had divorced the two. She had come in between God and society by her assumed exclusive and infallible power of interpreting the Scriptures. She made the law speak what she pleased, and thus for the government of God she had substituted her own. Protestantism came to reinstate the Divine government over the world. It did so by placing the authority of Scripture above the chair of the Pope, and lifting the crown of Christ above the throne of the emperor.

So grand a restoration could not be evolved in a day, or even in a century. But the Protest of 1529 had all this in it. The stable basis, the majestic order, the ever-expanding greatness and power of Protestant States lay all enfolded in its three mighty principles—Conscience, the Scriptures, the Spirit—each in its order and subordination. This simple Protest contained all, as the acorn contains the oak, or as the morning contains the noonday.

## CHAPTER XXV,

### ATTEMPTED REFUTATION OF THE CONFESSION.

What is to be done with the Confession?—Perplexity of the Romanists—The Confession to be Refuted—Eck and Twenty Others chosen for this Work—Luther's Warnings—Melanchthon's and Charles's Forecast—Wrestlings in the Coburg—The Fourteen Protestant Free Cities—Refutation of the Confession—Vapid and Lengthy—Rejected by the Emperor—A Second Attempt—The Emperor's Sister—Her Influence with Charles—The Play of the Masks.

"ADHERE to the Recess of 1529 and abandon your Protest," was the message delivered from Charles to the ambassadors of the fourteen free cities, gathered in the imperial ante-chamber on the morning of the 26th June, 1530. When we think that that Protest meant a new age, which was bearing in with it Luther and the Protestant princes and cities, instead of being borne in by them, how foolish does that demand look, even when it comes from one who wore so many crowns, and had so numerous armies at his command! The deputies made answer that in a matter of so great moment time must be given them to deliberate. They retired, to return with their answer in writing only on the 7th of July. While the cities are preparing their reply, another matter calls for consideration. What is to be done with the Confession lying on the emperor's table? and what steps are to be taken to bring over the Elector John and the other Protestant princes?

We have seen the emperor dismiss the representatives of the Protestant cities with an injunction to take counsel and bring him word how they meant to act in the matter of the Decree of Spires, and whether they were prepared to abandon their Protest of 1529. Scarcely have they left his presence when he summons a council of the Popish members of the Diet. They have been called together to give advice respecting another matter that claims urgent attention from the emperor. The Confession of the Protestant princes is lying on his table; what is to be done with it? Lutheranism is not at Wittenberg only: it is here, in the Palatinate Palace of Augsburg: protesting with eloquent voice against the tyranny that would suppress it: crying aloud before the Diet, as by-and-by, if not silenced, it will cry before all Christendom, that Rome has corrupted the faith, and is become apostate. "What shall we do?" asked the emperor, of the princes and bishops now gathered round him, "how shall we dispose of this document?"

The emperor's interrogatory was the signal for the expression of a number of contrary opinions. It was not wise guidance, but distraction and embarrassment, that Charles found in the multitude of his counsellors. There were three distinct parties in the body around him. "We shall not," said one party, "chop logic with our opponents; while we are entangled in a

theological labyrinth, they may escape. We have but one course to pursue, namely, to execute the Edict of Worms.”<sup>1</sup> Another party, better acquainted with the secret wishes of Charles, said, “Let us refer the matter to the decision of the emperor.” There came yet a third, formed of those who were somewhat vain of their traditional lore, and not unwilling to show it. “Let a few doctors,” said they, “be appointed to write a Refutation of the Lutheran Confession, which may be read to the princes, and ratified by the emperor. “It was not the bishops who urged the emperor to extreme and violent courses. They rather, on the whole, employed their influence to check the sanguinary zeal of others. “I cannot advise his majesty to employ force,” said Albert of Mainz, but the reason he assigned for his temperate counsels somewhat detracts from their generosity, “lest when the emperor retires the Lutherans retaliate upon the priests, and the Turk come in, in the end of the day, and reap with his scimitar what the Lutheran sword may have left.” The Bishop of Augsburg drew upon himself the suspicion of a heretic in disguise by the lengths he was willing to go in conciliating the Protestants. The Sacraments in both kinds, and the marriage of the priests, he was prepared to concede; even more, were it necessary—pointing evidently to private masses. “Masses!” exclaimed some; “abolish masses! why not say at once the kitchens of the cardinals?” All the ecclesiastics, however, were not so conciliatory. The Archbishop of Salzburg said tartly, “The Lutherans have laid before us a Confession written with black ink on white paper. Well, if I were emperor, I would answer them with red *ink*.”<sup>2</sup>

Some of the lay princes were the most fanatical and fiery in the council. George of Saxony and Joachim of Brandenburg outdid the most violent of the priests. The former hated Luther with a fervour that seemed to increase with his years, and the latter was known as a hare-brained fool, whom the mere mention of the word “Lutheran” sufficed to kindle into a rage. These two nobles pressed forward and gave their voices for war. Argument was tedious and uncertain, they urged, especially with sophists like those of Wittenberg; the sword was summary and much more to be relied upon. There was present a certain Count Felix of Werdenberg, whom the word *war* seemed to electrify. Scenting the battle from afar, he started up, and said, “If there is to be fighting against the Lutherans, I offer any sword, and I swear not to return it to its scabbard till the stronghold of Luther has been laid in the dust.” Count Felix doubtless would have backed these valorous words by not less valorous deeds but for the circumstance that, regaling himself with too copious draughts from the wine-flagon, he died a few days thereafter. It was the fanatical men who carried it in the council. Even the proposal of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Corp. Ref.*, ii. 154—D’Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 147—D’Aubigné.



middle party was rejected, which was to leave the matter to the adjudication of the emperor. That implied, the extreme men argued, that there were two parties and two causes. This was to misapprehend the matter wholly, said they. There was but one party—the Empire—and but one cause; for that of the Lutherans was rebellion, and to be dealt with only by the sword.

But before unsheathing the sword, they would first make trial with the pen. They would employ violence with all the better grace afterwards. They agreed that a Refutation of the Confession should be drawn up.

Of course the theologians of the party were the men who were looked to, to undertake this task an impossible one if the Bible was to count for anything, but at Augsburg the Bible had about as little standing as the Confession. Most of the Popish princes had brought their divines and learned men with them to the Diet. “Some,” said Jonas, “have brought their ignoramuses.” Cochlæus, Jonas ranks in this class. Faber and Eck held a better position, being men of some learning, though only of second-rate ability, if so much. There was but one man of surpassing talent and scholarship outside the Protestant pale, Erasmus, and he was not at Augsburg. He had been invited by both parties, but their solicitations failed to woo him from his retreat at Basle. The great scholar sent characteristic excuses of absence to both. To the Protestants he wrote, “Ten councils could not unravel the deep plot of your tragedy, much less could I. If any one starts a proposition that has common sense on its side, it is at once set down as Lutheranism.” But, changing his tactics when he addressed himself to the other side, he found for the Romanists a few pleasant words at the expense of the Lutherans. What a memorable example is Erasmus of the difference between the Renaissance and the Reformation—the revival of letters and the revival of principles!

But the Confession must be refuted, and for the preparation of such a work Rome can employ only such theologians as she possesses. Faber, who had been promoted to the Archbishopric of Vienna; Eck, the opponent and vituperator of Luther; Cochlæus, the Archdeacon of Frankfort, with seventeen others, mostly Dominican monks, twenty in all, were told off to write an answer to the Confession of the Protestant princes.

These were all extreme Romanists. It was clear what sort of instrument would issue from such a workshop. That these men would make any attempt to meet the views of the Lutherans, or that they would look candidly at the reasonings of Melanchthon, and grapple seriously with them, much less overturn them, was what no one expected. Campeggio is believed to have been the man who gave in this list of names; but no one knew better than himself the utter futility of what he was setting his nominees to do. The decided character of the committee was a virtual declaration that there was to be no concession, and that Rome was meditating no surrender. Those who feared conciliation were now able to dismiss their fears, and those who

wished for it were compelled to lay aside their vain hopes. “Doctor,” inquired the Duke of Bavaria, addressing Eck, “can you confute that paper out of the Bible?” “No,” replied he, “but it may be easily done from the Fathers and Councils.” “I understand,” rejoined the duke, “I understand; the Lutherans are in Scripture, and we are outside.”<sup>1</sup> The worthy Chancellor of Ingolstadt was of the same opinion with another of his co-religionists, that nothing is to be made of Protestants so long as they remain within the castle of the Bible; but bring them from their stronghold down into the level plain of tradition, and nothing is easier than to conquer them.

The clear eye of Luther saw what was coming. He knew that it was not in Dr. Eck, and the whole cohort of his coadjutors to boot, to refute the Confession of Melancthon, and that there was but one alternative, namely, that the strong sword of Charles should come in to repress what logic could not confute. “You are waiting for your adversaries’ answer,” wrote he to his friends at Augsburg; “it is already written, and here it is: The Fathers, the Fathers, the Fathers; the Church, the Church, the Church; usage, custom; but of the Scriptures—nothing.”<sup>2</sup> Then the emperor, supported by the testimony of these arbiters, will pronounce against you; and then will you hear boastings on all sides that will ascend up to heaven, and threatenings that will descend even to hell.”

The same issue was now shaping itself to the eye of other two men—Melancthon and the Emperor Charles. But though all three—Luther, Melancthon, and Charles—had arrived at this conclusion, they had arrived at it by different roads. Luther in the Coburg, like the astronomer in his watchtower, with eyes uplifted from earth and fixed on heaven, deduced the future course of affairs from the known laws of the Divine government, and the known facts of the Protestant and Popish systems. Melancthon came to his conclusion to a large extent by sense. At Augsburg he had a close view of the parties arrayed against him; he heard their daily threats, and knew the intrigues at work around him, and felt that they could have only a violent end. The emperor divined the *denouement* on grounds peculiar to himself. He had sounded Luther as to whether he was willing to abide by his decision of the question. The Reformer replied through the Elector John: “If the emperor wish it, let him be judge. But let him decide nothing contrary to the Word of God. Your highness cannot put the emperor above God Himself.”<sup>3</sup> This was Luther’s way of saying that in spiritual things the State possessed no jurisdiction. This swept away a hope to which till now the emperor had clung—that the matter would be left to his arbitration. This he saw could not now be. On the other hand, the extreme party among the Romanists were the majority

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<sup>1</sup> Mathesius, *Hist.*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Luth. Opp.*, iv. 96.—D’Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 83.—D’Aubigné.

at Augsburg. They were ruling in the Diet; they were ruling at Rome also; and they would no more leave the final determination of the question in the hands of Charles than the Protestants would. To the emperor nothing would remain but the by no means enviable and dignified task of executing the resolve on which he saw the fanatical advisers of the Papacy were determined to precipitate the controversy—namely, the employment of force.

This forecast of the issue on the Part of all three affected each of them very differently. Melanchthon it almost overwhelmed in despair; Charles it stung into a morose and gloomy determination to avenge himself on a cause which had thrust itself into the midst of his great projects to thwart and vex him; Luther, on the other hand, it inspired with courage, we might say with defiance, if we can so characterise that scornful yet holy disdain in which he held all who were warring against Protestantism, from Charles down to Dr. Eck and Cochlæus. As regards Luther and Melanchthon, the difference between them was this: Melanchthon thought that the sword of the emperor would kill the cause, Luther knew that it would kill only its adherents, and through their death give life to the cause. The cause was God's: of this he had the firmest possible conviction. That surely meant victory. If not, it came to this, that the King of Heaven could do only what the King of Spain permitted Him to do; and that Christ must go forward or, must turn back, must uphold this cause and abandon that, as the emperor willed—in other words, that Charles and not God was the ruler of the world.

We are compelled to ask, when we see the courageous man shut up in the Coburg, and the timid and trembling one sent into the field, was this the best arrangement? Was the right man in the right place? The arrangement we would have made would have been exactly the reverse. We would have sent the strong man to fight the battle, and withdrawn the weak and feeble one into the retreat of the Coburg, there to commune and to pray. But in this, as in other instances, we are taught that God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. The actual arrangement was the best. It was the strong man that was needed to pray; it was the weak one that was fitted to receive and act upon the answer. It is only the prayer of faith that prevails, and it is only to a great faith that great blessings are given. Melanchthon, therefore, would have been out of place in the Coburg: but his weakness in the field illustrated the power of his Master, and showed who was doing the work. Besides, the lengths he was willing to go to meet the Papists—and he went much further than Luther would have done, only the more manifestly put Rome in the wrong, and left the blame of the final rupture with her.

But if Luther with uplifted hands drew down daily strength from the skies, as the conductor draws down the electric fire from the clouds, it was to send on the Divine influence, which descended from above, to those who had so much need of it at Augsburg. Faith begets faith, and Luther became

as God to Melanchthon and the men around him. Let us enter the Coburg. The voice as of a man in a great agony falls on our ear. He groans, he cries; he cries yet more earnestly. Whose voice is it? Listen. It is Luther's. We need not enter his chamber; we can distinctly hear every word where we stand outside his closet door in the corridor. "I have once heard him praying," wrote Veit Dietrich, a friend, who at times visited the Reformer in the castle, "communing with God as a Father and Friend, and reminding Him of His own promises from the Psalms, which he was certain would be made good — 'I know, O God, Thou art our dear God and Father: therefore am I certain that Thou wilt destroy the persecutors of Thy Church. If Thou dost not destroy them, Thou art in like danger with us. It is Thy own cause. The enemies of the cross of Christ assault us. It appertains to Thee and the honour of Thy name to protect Thy confessors at Augsburg. Thou hast promised, Thou wilt do it; for Thou hast done it from the beginning. Let Thine help shine forth in this extremity.'"

The prayer has gone up; it has knocked at the gates of the eternal temple; it has unlocked the fountains of God's power; and now an air celestial fills the chamber of the Coburg, and a Divine strength is infused into the soul of its inmate. What Luther has freely received he freely gives to others. He sends it onward to Augsburg thus:—"What is the meaning," writes he to Melanchthon, "of fearing, trembling, caring, and sorrowing? Will He not be with us in this world's trifles who has given us His own Son? In private troubles I am weak, and you are strong—if, at least, I can call private the conflicts I have with Satan—but in public trials I am what you are in private. The cause is just and true—it is Christ's cause. Miserable saintling that I am! I may well turn pale and tremble for myself, but I can never fear for the cause." "I pray, have prayed, and shall pray for thee, Philip," he wrote in another letter, "and I have felt the Amen in my heart." "Our Lord Jesus Christ," he wrote to Jonas, "is King of kings and Lord of lords. If He disown the title at Augsburg, He must disown it in heaven and earth. Amen."<sup>1</sup>

So did the battle proceed on the two sides. Wiles, frowns, threats, with the sword as the last resort, are seen on the one side—prayers, tears, and faith on the other. The Emperor Charles, the legate Campeggio, and the Popish theologians at Augsburg saw only Melanchthon. They beheld him dejected, bending under a load of anxieties, and coming to them each day with a new concession or explanation, if haply it might end the battle. The adversary with whom they were all the while contending, however, was one they saw not—one who was out of their reach—the man of prayer in the Coburg, or rather the God-man at the right-hand of Power in heaven—the Ancient of

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 32, p. 182.

Days.

We have seen the emperor send away two commissions, with instructions to each to deliberate on the matter referred to it, and return on a future day with the answer. They are here, in the presence of the emperor, to give in their report. First come the representatives of the fourteen cities which had refused adherence to the Edict of Spire, 1529. Of these cities some were of Zwingli's sentiments on the Sacrament, while others agreed with the Augsburg Confession. This difference of opinion had introduced the wedge of discord, and had raised the hopes of the emperor. Nevertheless, in the presence of the common foe, they were united and firm. They replied to Charles "that they were not less desirous than their ancestors had been to testify all loyalty and obedience to his imperial majesty, but that they could not adhere to the Recess of Spire without disobeying God, and compromising the salvation of their souls."<sup>1</sup> Thus the hope vanished which the emperor had cherished of detaching the cities from the princes, and so weakening the Protestant front.

The next body to appear at the foot of the emperor's throne, with an account of their labours, were the twenty theologians to whom had been entrusted the important matter of preparing an answer to the Protestant Confession. They had gone to work with a will, meeting twice a day; and we can do justice to their zeal only when we reflect that it was now on the eve of the dog-days. Eck and his company showed themselves experts at producing what they understood to be wanted, a condemnation rather than a refutation. Eck had declared beforehand that the latter could not be forthcoming if Scripture were allowed a hearing. This very considerably simplified and lightened the task, and in a fortnight Eck and his coadjutors gave in a document of not less than 280 pages. in point of bulk this performance might have sufficed to refute not one but a dozen such Confessions as that of Augsburg. Charles surveyed the ponderous Refutation with dismay. He appeared to divine that it would only fortify that which it was meant to overthrow, and overthrow that which it was intended to fortify. It did not improve on closer acquaintance. It was vapid as well as bulky. It was pointless as a "Refutation," and vigorous only in its abuse. Its call for "blood" was unmistakable.<sup>2</sup> Charles saw that it would never do to give the world an opportunity of contrasting the lumbering periods and sanguinary logic of Eck, with the terse and perspicuous style and lofty sentiments of Melancthon. Her worst foe could not do Rome a more unkindly act, or Wittenberg a greater service, than to publish such a document. Another Refutation must be prepared; yet even this inspired but little hope, for to whom could the emperor commit the task, except

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Corp. Ref., ii. 193-198.

to the old hands? Letters, too, alas! were going over to the side of Wittenberg; and soon nothing would remain with Rome but one thing—the sword.

But the Reformation was not yet able to endure persecution, and meanwhile friends of the Gospel were placed one after another near Charles, to pluck away his hand when it was laid on his sword's hilt, with intent to unsheathe and use it against the Gospel. He had buried Gattinara, the friend of toleration, at Innsprück. This left the legate Campeggio without a rival in the imperial councils. But only three days after the reading of the Confession two ladies of high rank came to Augsburg, whose quiet but powerful influence restored the balance broken by the death of Gattinara. The one was Mary, the sister of the emperor, and widow of Louis, King of Hungary; the other was her sister-in-law, the Queen of Bohemia, and wife of Ferdinand of Austria. The study of the Scriptures had opened to both the way to peace. Their hearts had been won for the Gospel, and when Campeggio approached to instil his evil counsel into the ear of the emperor, these two ladies were able, by a word fitly spoken, to neutralise its effects upon the mind of their brother, and draw him back from the paths of violence to which, at the instigation of the legate, he seemed about to commit himself.<sup>1</sup>

In those days truth could sometimes be spoken to princes in a figure when it dared not be told them in plain language. One day, during his stay in Augsburg, as Charles sat at dinner with his lords, a message was brought to him that some comedians wished to amuse him and his guests. Instant permission was given, for the request was in accordance with the manners of the age, and excited no suspicion. First an old man, in a doctor's gown, tottered across the floor, carrying burden of sticks, some long, some short. Throwing down the sticks on the hearth in confusion, he turned to retire. On his back; now displayed to the courtiers, was the name—JOHN REUCHLIN. A second mask now entered, also attired as a doctor. He went up to the hearth, and began deftly arranging the sticks. He worked assiduously for a little while, but, despite his pains, the long and short, the crooked and the straight, would not pair; so, giving up his task, with a sardonic smile on his countenance, he made his exit. Charles and his lords, as he walked out, read on his back—ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM. The comedy was beginning to have interest. A third now entered: this time it was a monk, in the frock and cowl of the Augustines. With keen eye and firm step he crossed the hall, bearing a brazier filled with live coals. He raked the sticks together, not waiting to sort them, put a coal underneath the heap, blew it up, and soon a blazing fire was roaring on the hearth. As he withdrew he showed on his back—MARTIN LUTHER. The plot was thickening.

A fourth appeared—a stately personage, covered with the insignia of

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, lib. ii., sec. 32, p. 183.

empire. He gazes with displeasure at the fire. He draws his sword, and plunges it in amongst the burning faggots; the more they are stirred the more fiercely they blaze. He strikes again and again; the flame mounts higher, and the red sparks fall thicker around. It is plain that he is feeding, not quenching, the fire. The mask turns and strides across the hall in great anger. He has no name, nor is it necessary; every one divines it, though no one utters it.

Yet another—a fifth! He comes forward with solemn and portly air. His robes, which are of great magnificence, are priestly. He wears a triple crown on his head, and the keys of St. Peter are suspended from his girdle. On seeing the fire this great personage is seized with sudden anguish, and wrings his hands. He looks round for something with which to extinguish it. He espies at the farther end of the hall two vessels, one containing water and the other oil. He rushes eagerly to get hold of the one containing the water; in his hurry he clutches the wrong vessel, that filled with the oil, and empties it on the fire.<sup>1</sup> The fire blazes up with a fury that singes his priestly robe, and compels its unfortunate wearer to escape for his safety. The comedy is at an end.

The authors of this play never came forward to receive the praise due to their ingenuity, or to claim the pecuniary reward usually forthcoming on such occasions. They doubtless held it would be reward enough if the emperor profited by its moral. “Let thy gifts be to thyself,” said the prophet, when he read the writing on the wall of the king’s palace. So said the men who now interpreted in the Palatinate Palace of Augsburg the fate of the Empire and the Papacy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This, of course, was before the Vatican decree of 1870. Such a mistake is not conceivable now; although it perplexes one to think that the Popes of the age of Leo X. were, according to the decree, as infallible as those of the days of Pío Nono; seeing the latter—with greater generosity than prudence—admitted all his predecessors to partnership with him in his attribute of infallibility.

<sup>2</sup> D’Aubigné, bk. xiv., chap. 9. Worsley, *Life of Luther*, vol. ii., pp. 226, 227.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### END OF THE DIET OF AUGSBURG.

Diplomacy—The Protestant Princes—John the Steadfast—Bribes and Threatenings—Second Refutation of the Confession—Submission Demanded from the Protestants—They Refuse—Luther's Faith—Romanists resume Negotiations—Melanchthon's Concessions—Melanchthon's Fall—All Hopes of Reconciliation Abandoned—Recess of the Diet—Mortification and Defeat of the Emperor.

CHARLES V. laughed at the humour of the comedy, but did not ponder the wisdom of its moral. He went on poking amongst the red faggots, first with diplomacy and next with the sword, but with no other result than that which the nameless authors of the piece acted in the Palace of the Palatinate had warned him would ensue, that of kindling a fire on the wide hearth of Europe, which would in the end not merely singe the hem of the Pontifical robe and the fringe of the Imperial mantle, but would consume the body of both Empire and Papacy.

The emperor had endeavoured to introduce the thin end of the wedge, which he hoped would split up the Protestant free cities: an attempt, however, which came to nothing. The Lutheran princes were to be next essayed.

They were taken one by one, in the hope that they would be found less firm when single than they were when taken together. Great offers—loftier titles, larger territories, more consideration—were made to them, would they but return to the Church.<sup>1</sup> When bribes failed to seduce them, threats were had recourse to. They were given to understand that, stripped of title and territory, they would be turned adrift upon the world as poor as the meanest of their subjects. They were reminded that their religion was a new one; that their adherence to it branded all their ancestors as heretics; that they were a minority in the Empire; and that it was madness in them to defy the power and provoke the ire of the emperor. Neither were threats able to bend them to submission. They had come to the Diet of 1526 with the words written upon their shields, *Verbum Domini manet in eternum*—the word of the Lord endureth for ever—and, steadfast to their motto, their faith taught them not to fear the wrath of the powerful Charles. No efforts were spared to compel the Elector John to bow the neck. If he should yield, the strength of the confederacy would be broken—so it was thought—and the emperor would make short work with the theologians. Why the latter should be so obstinate the emperor could not imagine, unless it were that they stood behind the broad shield of the elector. Charles sent for John, and endeavoured to shake him by promises. When it was found that these could not detach him from the Protestant Confession, the emperor strove to terrify him by threats. He would

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk. vii., pp. 132, 133.



take from him his electoral hat; he would chase him from his dominions; he would let loose against him the whole power of the Empire, and crush him as a potsherd. John saw himself standing on the brink of an abyss. He must make his choice between his crown and his Saviour. Melanchthon and all the divines conjured the elector not to think of them. They were ready that moment to endure any manner of death the emperor might decree against them, if that would appease his wrath. The elector refused to profit by this magnanimous purpose of self-devotion. He replied with equal magnanimity to the theologians that “he also must confess his Lord.” He went back to the emperor, and calmly announced his resolution by saying that “he had to crave of his majesty that he would permit him and his to render an account to God in those matters that concerned the salvation of their souls.” John risked all; but in the end he retained all, and amply vindicated his title to the epithet given him—“John the Constant.”

After six weeks, the trio—Faber, Eck, and Cochläus—produced, with much hard labour and strain of mind, another Refutation of the Confession, or rather the former remodelled and abbreviated. Charles could show no less honour to the work of his doctors than had been shown to the Confession of Melanchthon. On the 3rd September he sat down upon his throne, and calling his princes round him, commanded the Refutation to be read in their presence. In those doctrines which are common to both creeds, such as the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, the Refutation agreed with the Confession. It also made an admission which would, but for the statement that followed, and which largely neutralised it, have been a most important one, namely, that faith is necessary in the Sacrament.<sup>1</sup> But it went on to affirm that man is born with the power of performing good works, and that these works co-operate with faith in the justification of the sinner: thus rearing again the old fabric of salvation by works, which the former admission respecting the necessity of faith appeared to have thrown down. On another vital point the Refutation and the Confession were found to be in direct and fatal antagonism. Eck and his colleagues maintained the Divine authority of the hierarchy, and of course the correlative duty of absolute submission to it; the Protestants acknowledged no infallible rule on earth but the Scriptures. The two Churches, after very laborious effort on both sides, had come as near to each other as it appeared possible to come; but neither could conceal from itself the fact that there was still a gulf between them—an impassable gulf, for neither could pass to the other without ceasing to be what it had hitherto been. Should the Papacy pass over, it left ten centuries behind it; the moment it touched the Wittenberg shore it threw off its allegiance to Councils and traditions, and became the subject of another power. Should Protestantism pass over, it left

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<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigné, iv. 209.

the Bible behind it, and submitting to the old yoke of the Seven Hills, confessed that the Wittenberg movement had been a rebellion.

When the reading was finished the emperor addressed the elector and the other Protestant princes to the effect that, seeing their Confession had now been refuted, it was their duty to restore peace to the Church, and unity to the Empire, by returning to the Roman obedience. He demanded, in fine, consent to the articles now read, under pain of the ban of the Empire.

The Protestant princes were not a little surprised at the emperor's peremptoriness. They were told that they had been refuted, but unless they should be pleased to take the emperor's word for it, they had no proof or evidence that they had been so. Their own understandings did not tell them so. The paper now read had assented to some of the articles of their Confession, it had dissented from a good many others, but as to confuting even one of them, this, to the best of their judgment, it had not done; and as they knew of no power possessed by the emperor of changing bad logic into good, or of transforming folly into wisdom, the Protestant princes—a copy of the Refutation having been denied them—intimated to Charles that they still stood by their Confession.

The design for which the Diet had been summoned was manifestly mis-carrying. Every day the Protestants were displaying fresh courage, and every day their cause was acquiring moral strength. In the same proportion did the chagrin, anger, and perplexities of the Romanists increase. Every new movement landed them in deeper difficulties. For the emperor to fulminate threats which those against whom they were directed openly defied, and which the man who uttered them dared not carry into execution, by no means tended to enhance the imperial dignity. The unhappy Charles was at his wits' end; he knew not how to hide his mortification and discomfiture; and, to complete the imbroglio, an edict arrived from a consistory of cardinals held at Rome, 6th July, 1530, disallowing and forbidding the ultimatum of the Protestants as "opposed to the religion and prejudicial to the discipline and government of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Ere this an event had taken place which helped to expedite the business. On the night of Saturday, the 6th of August, Philip of Hesse made his escape from Augsburg. Amid the cajoleries and threatenings of the Diet he was firm as a rock amid the waves, but he saw no purpose to be served by longer attendance at the Assembly. Chafed by continual delays, indignant at the dissimulations of the Papists, tempted today by brilliant offers from the emperor, and assailed tomorrow by as terrible threats; moreover looked askance upon by the Lutheran princes, from his known leaning to Zwingli on the question of the Lord's Supper—thoroughly wearied out from all these

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, bk. iii., chap. 4, p. 135.

causes, he resolved on quitting the city. He had asked leave of the emperor, but was refused it. Donning a disguise, he slipped out at the gate at dusk, and, attended by a few horsemen, rode away. Desirous of preventing his flight, the emperor gave orders over-night to have the gates watched, but before the guards had taken their posts the landgrave was gone, and was now many leagues distant from Augsburg.

All was consternation at the court of the emperor when the flight of the landgrave became known next morning. The Romanists saw him, in imagination, returning at the head of an army. They pictured to themselves the other Protestant princes making their escape and sounding the tocsin of war. All was alarm, and terror, and rage in the Popish camp. The emperor was not yet prepared for hostilities; he shrank back from the extremity to which he had been forcing matters, and from that day his bearing was less haughty and his language less threatening to the Protestants. Luther, apart in his Castle of Coburg, was full of courage and joy. He was kept informed of the progress of affairs at Augsburg, and of the alternate fears and hopes that agitated his friends. Like the traveller in the Alps, who sees the clouds at his feet and hears the thunder rolling far beneath him, while around him is eternal sunshine, the Reformer, his feet planted on the mountain of God's power, looked down upon the clouds that hung so heavily above his friends in Augsburg, and heard far beneath the mutterings of imperial wrath; but neither could the one darken the sunshine of his peace, nor the other shake his confidence in that throne to which, in faith and prayer, his eyes were continually uplifted. His letters at this time show a singular elevation of faith, and a corresponding assurance of victory. To take an instance, "I beheld," says he, writing to his friends, "thick clouds hanging above us like a vast sea; I could neither perceive ground on which they reposed, nor cords by which they were suspended; and yet they did not fall upon us, but saluted us rapidly and passed away." Emperors and armies, and all the array of earthly power, what are they? black vapours, which seem charged with tempest and destruction, but, just as they are about to burst, they are driven away by the breath of the Almighty, as clouds are driven before the wind. But fully to realise this we must mount to Luther's elevation. We must stand where we have the cloud beneath, not above us.

Meanwhile in the Diet promises had been tried and failed; threats had been tried and failed; negotiations were again opened, and now the cause had wellnigh been wrecked. Luther lived above the cloud, but unhappily Melancthon, who had to sustain the chief part in the negotiations, lived beneath it, and, not seeing the cords that held it up, and imagining that it was about to fall, was on the point of surrendering the whole cause to Rome. During the slow incubation of the Refutation, seven men were chosen (13th August)

on each side, to meet in conference and essay the work of conciliation.<sup>1</sup> They made rapid progress up to a certain point; but the moment they touched the essentials of either faith, they were conclusively stopped. The expedient was tried of reducing the commission to three on each side, in the hope that with fewer members there would be fewer differences. The chief on the Protestant side was Melanchthon, of whom Pallavicino says that “he had a disposition not perverse, although perverted, and was by nature as desirous of peace as Luther was of contention.”<sup>2</sup> Well did Melanchthon merit this compliment from the pen of the Catholic historian. For the sake of peace he all but sacrificed himself, his colleagues, and the work on which he had spent so many years of labour and prayer. His concessions to the Romanists in the Commission were extraordinary indeed. He was willing to agree with them in matters of ceremony, rites, and feasts. In other and more important points, such as the mass, and justification by faith, findings were come to in which both sides acquiesced, being capable of a double interpretation. The Papists saw that they had only to bide their time to be able to put their own construction on these articles, when all would be right. As regarded the marriage of priests, communion in both kinds, and some similar matters, the Romanists agreed to allow these till the meeting of the next General Council. Touching the government of the Church, Melanchthon, and his colleagues in the Commission, were willing to submit to the restored jurisdiction of the bishops, and to acknowledge the Pope as Head of the Church, by human right. There was not much behind to surrender; a concord on this basis would have been the burial of the Reformation. Melanchthon, in fact, was building unconsciously a sepulchre in which to entomb it. The lay Christians in Augsburg felt as if they were witnessing its obsequies.<sup>3</sup> Consternation and grief took possession of the Swiss Protestants. “They are preparing their return to Rome,” said Zwingli. Luther was startled and confounded. He read the proposed concessions, took his pen, and wrote forthwith to Augsburg as follows:—

“I learn that you have begun a marvellous work, namely, to reconcile Luther and the Pope; but the Pope will not be reconciled, and Luther begs to be excused. And if in despite of them you succeed in this affair, then, after your example, I will bring together Christ and Belial.”<sup>4</sup>

This, one would think, should have torn the bandage from the eyes of

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<sup>1</sup> Sleidan, bk vii., p. 132. Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 4, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 4, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> Pallavicino says that Melanchthon “had fallen into hatred and reproach with his own party” (*in odio ed in biasimo de’ suoi*), and Sleidan informs us that when chosen one of the Committee of Three it was on the condition that he should make no more concessions (Pallavicino, p. 196; Sleidan, p. 132). Pallavicino (lib. iii., cap. 4, p. 135) gives a letter of Melanchthon’s addressed to Campeggio, which is all but an unqualified submission to Rome. Its genuineness has been questioned, but D’Aubigne sees no reason to doubt it.

<sup>4</sup> *Luth. Opp.*, iv., pp. 144-51.

Melanchthon, and revealed to him the abyss towards which he was advancing. He was not to be counselled even by Luther. His patience was fretted, his temper soured. He began to browbeat his colleagues, and was about to consummate his work of conciliation as he termed it, but in reality of surrender, when deliverance came from another quarter.

Smitten with madness in their turn the Romanists drew back when on the very point of grasping the victory. The matters in dispute between the two parties had been reduced to three points nominally, really to one—Does man merit by his good works? The Protestants maintained the negative, and the Papists the affirmative, on this point. The first briefly sums up the Protestant theology; the last is the corner-stone of the Roman faith. Neither party would yield, and the conferences were broken off.<sup>1</sup> Thus Rome lost the victory, which would in the end have fallen to her, had she made peace on the basis of Melanchthon's concessions. Her pride saved the German Reformation.

It now remained only for the emperor to draw up the Recess of the Diet. The edict was promulgated on the 22nd September, and was to the following effect:—That the Protestant princes should be allowed till the 15th April next to reconcile themselves to the Pope and to the rest of Christendom, and that meanwhile they should permit in their dominions no innovations in religion, no circulation of Protestant books, and no attempts at proselytism, and that they should assist the emperor in reducing the Anabaptists and Zwinglians.<sup>2</sup> This edict Charles would have enforced at once with the sword, but the spirit displayed by the Protestant princes, the attitude assumed by the Turk, and the state of the emperor's relations with the other sovereigns of Europe put war out of his power; and the consequence was that the monarch who three months before had made his entry into Augsburg with so much pomp, and in so high hopes of making all things and parties bend to his will, retired from it full of mortification and chagrin, disappointed in all his plans, and obliged to conceal his discomfiture under a show of moderation and leniency.

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavicino, lib. iii.j cap. 4, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Pallavicino, lib. iii., cap. 4. Sleidan, bk. vii.j 135.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A RETROSPECT—1517–1530—PROGRESS.

Glance back—The Path continually Progressive—The Gains of Thirteen Years—Provinces and Cities Evangelised in Germany—Day Breaking in other Countries—German Bible—German Church—A Saxon Paradise—Political Movements—Their Subordination to Protestantism—Wittenberg the Centre of the Drama—Charles V. and his Campaigns—Attempts to Enforce the Edict of Worms—Their Results—All these Attempts work in the Opposite Direction—Onward March of Protestantism—Downward Course of every Opposing Interest—Protestantism as distinguished from Primitive Christianity—The Two Bibles.

BEFORE the curtain rises on a new development of the great drama, let us pause, and cast a glance back on the track over which we have passed. The few moments we may spend in this retrospect will amply repay us by disclosing, more clearly perhaps than we saw them while we were narrating them, the successive and ascending stages of the movement. It may well amaze us to think how short our journey has been, measured by the time it has occupied; yet how long it is, measured by the progress which has been made. It was but yesterday that the monk's hammer awakened the echoes of the streets of Wittenberg, and now it seems as if centuries had rolled away since that day, and brought with them the new world in which we find ourselves. On ordinary occasions, many years, it may be ages, must pass before an idea can establish for itself a universal dominion in the minds of men. Hardly has Luther uttered his great idea when, like the light, it breaks out on the right hand and on the left, and shines from one end of heaven even unto the other.

How notable, too, the circumstance that our journey has been a continually progressive one! Steps backward there have been none. The point reached today has ever been in advance of that arrived at on the day before. How wonderful is this when we think that no one had marked out the Church's path from her house of bondage to a land of liberty! And still more wonderful is it when we reflect that those who were the first to tread that path often found their wisdom at fault. Ever and anon their courage failed and their faith faltered; and never were more than a few steps of their road visible at one time. All beyond lay hid in night, overhung by lowering clouds that seemed charged with thunder. But ever as the little Wittenberg band went forward, the cloud removed and stood further off. One, unseen but mighty, walked before them. And if at times the clouds returned, and the storm threatened to burst, they heard a sublime Voice speaking to them out of the darkness and saying, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon

thee.”<sup>1</sup>

Of these thirteen fruitful years between the 31st October, 1517, when Luther posted up his Theses, and the 25th June, 1530, when the Augsburg Confession was read in presence of the emperor, how surprising the gains when we come to reckon them up! Electoral Saxony is Reformed, and its sovereign is seen marching in the van of the Reforming princes. Hesse is evangelised, and its magnanimous landgrave has placed himself by the side of the elector as his companion in arms in the great battle of Protestantism.

In Franconia, Silesia, East Friesland, Prussia, Brunswick, Luneburg, and Anhalt the light is spreading. The Gospel has been welcomed in the free towns of Nuremberg, Ulm, Augsburg, Strasburg, Lubeck, Bremen, Hamburg, and many others, bringing with it a second morning to the arts, the commerce, and the liberties of these influential communities. Every day princes, counts, and free cities press forward to enrol themselves in the Protestant host and serve under the Protestant banner; and in many cases where the ruler remains on the side of Rome, a not inconsiderable portion of his subjects have forsaken the old faith and embraced the Reformation.

Wider still does the light spread. It breaks out on all sides. The skies of Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary have brightened anew, and already in these countries have been laid the foundations of a powerful Protestant Church, destined, alas! to sink all too soon under the gathering tempests of persecution. In Denmark and Sweden the Reformation is marching on to its establishment. The Protestant standard has been planted on the shores of Zurich, and the neighbouring cantons are rallying round it.. The Alps brighten from one hour to another, and the radiance with which they glow is reflected on the plains of Northern Italy. In France, at the court of Francis I., and in the Sorbonne, so jealous of its fame for orthodoxy, there are men who are not ashamed to confess that they have bowed to the authority of the Gospel, and consecrated their lives to its service. In England the Lollard movement, which appeared to have gone to sleep with the ashes of its martyrs, is awakening from slumber, and girding itself for a second career more glorious than the first. In Scotland the light of the new day is gladdening the eyes, and its breath stirring the souls of men. Luther’s tracts and Tyndale’s New Testaments have entered that country.<sup>2</sup> In 1528 the die is cast, and Scotland is secured for the Reformation; for now Patrick Hamilton is burned at the stake at St. Andrews, and his martyr-pile becomes the funeral torch of the Papacy in that country. So wide is the sphere which thirteen short years have sufficed to fill with the light of Protestantism.

Nor must we omit to note that in the midst of the German nation, like a

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. xliii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See *Scottish Reformation*, by Peter Lorimer, D.D., Professor of Theology, English Presbyterian College, London. Loud., 1860.

pillar of light, now stands the German Bible. The eye that sees this Light rejoices in it; the ear that hears this Voice blesses it. In the presence of this Divine teacher, human authority, which had so long held the understanding in chains, is overthrown, and the German people, escaping from the worst of all bondage, enter on possession of the first and highest of all liberty, the liberty of conscience.

Further, in Saxony and Hesse there is now an organised Church. The ground, cleared of monasteries, convents, indulgence-boxes, and other noxious growths of mediævalism, begins to be covered with congregations, and planted with schools. Pastors preach the Gospel, for whom salaries have been provided; and an ecclesiastical board administers Church discipline and exercises a general supervision over the clergy. Protestantism, no longer a system of abstract doctrines, has now found an instrumentality through which to elevate the lives of men and reform the constitutions of society. Germany, from the wilderness it was a few years ago, is becoming a garden. Luther luxuriates over the rich verdure that begins to clothe Saxony. His pen has left us a fascinating description of it, and his words have all the warm colouring of the sacred idyll from which indeed his imagery would appear to be borrowed: "I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded."<sup>1</sup> "It gives me great and singular pleasure," says the Reformer, writing to the elector, 22nd May, 1530, "when I see that boys and girls can now understand and speak better concerning God and Christ, than formerly could have been done by the colleges, monasteries, and schools of the Papacy, or than they can do even yet. There is thus planted in your highness's dominions a very pleasant Paradise, to which there is nothing similar in the whole world. It is as if God should say, Most beloved Prince John, I commend these children to thee, as My most precious treasure; they are My celestial Paradise of pleasant plants. Be thou a father to them. I place them under thy protection and rule, and honour thee by making thee the president and patron of this heavenly garden."

Nor can we fail to mark, in fine, how entire and complete, all through this epoch, is the subordination of political events to the Protestant movement. If we take our stand at Wittenberg and cast our eyes over the wide field around us, attentively observing the movements, the plots, the combinations, and the battles that mark the progress of the great drama, our convictions become only the stronger the longer we gaze, that we are standing in the centre of the field, and that this is the heart of the action. From any other point of view all is confusion; from this, and from this alone, all is order. Events far and near, on the Bosphorus and on the Tagus, in the land of the

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<sup>1</sup> Song of Solomon vi. 11.



Moslem and in the dominions of the Spaniard, find here their common point of convergence. Emperors and kings, dukes and princes, Popes and bishops, all move around Luther, and all have been given into his hand to be used by him as the work may require. We see Charles waging great campaigns and fighting great battles; all this hard service is for Romanism, he believes, but Protestantism comes in and gathers the spoils. In truth the emperor is about as helpful to the movement as the Reformer himself; for never does he put his hand upon his sword-hilt to strike it but straightway it bounds forward. His touch, so far from paralysing it, communicates new life to it. Let us mark how all things work in the reverse order, and establish the very thing which the emperor wishes to overthrow. Of this the Edict of Worms is a striking example. It was promulgated in the confident hope that it would effect the extinction of Protestantism: it becomes, on the contrary, one of the main means of establishing it. Each successive attempt to enforce that edict only resulted in lifting up Protestantism to a higher platform. The first effort made to execute it, in 1521, sent Luther to the Wartburg. No greater service could any one have done the Reformation at that hour. The Reformer is out of sight indeed, but only to do a most essential work. A few months elapse, and the German Bible is seen at the hearths of the German people.

The second attempt to put this edict in force at the Diet of Nuremberg, 1522, evoked the "Hundred Grievances" of the German nation. This was a second great advance, inasmuch as it identified the Protestant movement with the cause of Germany's independence. The third attempt, at the Diet of Nuremberg, 1524, to enforce the edict led to the virtual toleration of Protestantism. All that the princes could promise the emperor was that they would execute his decree against the Reformer if possible, but they had previously declared that this was not possible. Thus, under the tutelage of Protestantism a public opinion had been formed so powerful as to bring the imperial authority into a dead-lock.

The fourth attempt to execute the Edict of Worms, made at the Diet of Spires, 1526, led to another most important concession to the reformers. The virtual toleration of Protestantism by the previous Diet was now changed into a legal toleration, the princes agreeing by a majority of votes that, till a General Council should assemble, the States should take order about religion as each might judge right. Yet another attempt, the fifth, to enforce the edict, was made at the Diet of Spires, 1529. This most of all was helpful to it, for it evoked the famous Protest of the Lutheran princes. Protestantism had now become the public creed of the princes, States, and Churches of one half of Germany. It was idle longer to talk of the Edict of Worms; from this time forward Protestantism could be suppressed only at the cost of a civil war.

Nevertheless, the emperor did make another attempt, the sixth, to execute the redoubtable edict, which so far had been formidable only to himself.

Charles had just triumphed over the “Holy League,” and sealed his new alliance with the Pope by the promise of turning the whole influence of his policy, and should that not suffice, the whole force of his arms, to the extermination of Protestantism. In order to fulfil that promise he convokes the Diet of Augsburg, 1530, and goes thither in person to make sure that this time his project shall not miscarry. It is now that he puts the top-stone upon the fabric which he had hoped to raze. The Augsburg Confession, prepared in prospect of this assembly, and read before the emperor and the Diet, formed the culmination of the German Reformation. Protestantism in Germany was now in its zenith; it shone with a splendour it had never before and has never since attained. Thus at every new attempt to put the ban of the Empire in motion in order to crush Luther and extirpate Protestantism, it recoils on the throne of Charles himself. The sword unsheathed at Worms in 1521, instead of dealing the fatal stroke to the great movement which the man who drew it forth most firmly believed it would, becomes the instrument to open the Reformation’s way through innumerable difficulties, and lead it on step by step to its consummation and glory.

Protestantism, then, is no petty cause which stole upon the stage of the world at this supreme hour, and which, intruding itself unbidden and without occasion amongst the great affairs of kings and emperors, was unable from its insignificance to make its influence be felt on the great issues then being determined. This is the only position which some historians of name have been able to find for it. According to them, Charles is the great master-spirit of the age; his battles are the great events that constitute its history; and his closet is the source and spring of all those influences that are changing the world, and moulding the destinies of the nations. How superficial this view is we need not say. Our history has lifted the veil, and placed us in presence of a mightier Power. Protestantism is the master; Charles is but the servant. It is as Protestantism wills that he sheathes or unsheathes the sword, that he makes peace or war: and as it is to serve its interests so is the emperor lifted up or cast down; so are his arms made resplendent with victory, or darkened with disaster and defeat. All men and things exist for the Reformation. It is this Power that originates, that controls, and that extorts the service of all around it. Every one who has eyes to see, and a heart to understand, must acknowledge that Protestantism stands at the very centre of the field, lifting its head king-like above all other actors, and looking serenely down upon the hosts of its foes. It girds itself with no weapons of war, it leads forth no armed hosts, it brandishes no battle-axe in its defence; yet it alone is safe. The lightnings flash, but their bolts pass without striking it. The thunder-cloud gathers, but rolls away and bursts in another quarter of the sky. The powers that struggle and fight around it are smitten, one after another, first with decadence and in the end with ruin; but this grand cause is seen marching steadily

onward to triumph. France is humiliated; her sovereign's head is bowed on the field of Pavia, not again to be lifted up with the knightly grace that adorned it of yore. A sudden bolt lays the glory of Rome in the dust, and the queen-like beauty then marred is fated nevermore to flourish in the same high degree. The mighty Empire of Charles V. is shattered by the rude shocks it sustains, and before going to the tomb that monarch is destined to see that consumption of the Spanish power setting in, which was to continue till Spain should become the wreck which for many generations it remained. But as regards Protestantism, its progress is like that of a monarch going to be crowned. Every step carries it into a wider arena, and every year lifts it to a higher platform, till at length on the 25th of June, 1530, the crowning honour is placed on its brow, in presence of the assembled puissances, spiritual and temporal, of the Empire, with the emperor at their head, who, here to assist at its obsequies, becomes the unintentional witness of its triumph.

The characteristic of the Reformation as distinguished from primitive Christianity was its power of originating social action. It put forth on nations an influence of a kind so powerful, that nothing like it is to be found in any previous age of the world. As the Gospel, in early times, held on its way among the nations, it called one individual here and another there to be its disciple. Those whom it thus gathered out of the mass it knit into a holy brotherhood, an evangelical Church. Still, though a great multitude, comprehending men of every kindred and tongue, these disciples remained blended with their several nationalities: they did not stand out before the world as a distinct social and political community. They were a spiritual kingdom only. When the magistrate permitted them the open profession of their faith, they thankfully accepted the privilege; when they were denied it, they were content to die for the Gospel: they never thought of combining to demand as a right the open and unchallenged profession of their faith.

But the Reformation, by quickening and evolving the social instinct in man, brought with it a new order of things. It gave birth not merely to regenerated individuals, like primitive Christianity, but to regenerated societies. No doubt the Gospel in the sixteenth century began where the Gospel in the first century had begun—with the renewal of the individual; but it did not end there. It called bodies corporate into being, it communicated to them the idea of social rights, and supplied an organisation for the acquisition and the exercise of these rights. The Reformation thus erected a platform on which it was possible to develop a higher civilisation, and achieve a more perfect liberty, than the human race had yet known. Even leaving out of view the Christian graces, which formed of course the basis of that civilisation, the civic virtues now shot up into a stature, and blazed forth with a splendour, which far transcended anything of the kind that Greece and Rome had witnessed in their short-lived heroic age. Whereever the Reformation came, the

world seemed to be peopled with a new race. Fired with the love of liberty, and with the yet more sacred love of truth, men performed deeds which brightened the lands in which they were done with their glory. Whatever country it made its home it ennobled by its valour, enriched by its industry, and sanctified by its virtues. The fens of Holland, the mountains of Switzerland, and the straths of Scotland became its seat, and straightway, though till now rude and barbarous, these regions were illumined with a glory brighter than that which letters and arms had shed on Italy and France. There it converted burghers and artizans, weavers and tillers of the soil into heroes and martyrs. Such was the new life which the Reformation gave, and such the surprising and hitherto unknown transformations which it wrought on the world.

Under the Reformation society attained its manhood. The manhood of the individual Christian was reached under primitive Christianity, but the manhood of society was not realised till the Reformation came. Till that time society was under tutors and governors. Despotism flourished previous to that epoch, as being the only form of government compatible in those ages with the peace and good order of States. Till the Reformation permeated nations with the Gospel, they had absolutely no basis for freedom. The two great necessities of States are liberty and order. The Gospel is the only power known to man that can bestow these two indispensable gifts. Atheism, by emancipating the conscience from superstitious thralldom, can give liberty, but in giving liberty it destroys order. Despotism and superstition can give order, but in maintaining order they extinguish liberty. But Christianity gives both. Inasmuch as it sets free the conscience, it gives liberty; and inasmuch as it rules the conscience, it maintains order. Thus the Reformation, making the influence of the Bible operative over the whole domain of society, was the first to plant in nations a basis for freedom; and along with liberty and order it bestowed the capacity of a terrestrial immortality. The nations of antiquity, after a short career of splendour and crime, followed each other to the grave. If atheism did not precipitate them into anarchy, and so cause them to perish in their own violence, superstition held them in her chains till they sunk in rottenness and disappeared from the earth. The balance, in their case, was ever being lost between the restraint which conscience imposes and the liberty which knowledge gives, and its loss was ever followed by the penalty of death; but the Gospel is able to maintain that balance for ever, and so to confer on nations a terrestrial, even as it confers on the individual a celestial, immortality.

History is just a second Bible, with this difference, that it is written, not like the first in letters, but in great facts. The letters and the facts, however, are charged with the same meaning. In the first Bible—that written in letters—the Creator has made known the attributes of His character, and the

great principles on which He conducts His government of His creatures; and He has warned nations that, if they would aspire to greatness and seek to be happy, they must base their power on the principles of truth and righteousness on which He rules the world. In harmony with His government theirs cannot be other wise than stable and prosperous; but if they place themselves in opposition to it, by adopting as their fundamental and guiding maxims those principles which He has condemned, they will inevitably, sooner or later, come into collision with His omnipotent and righteous rule, and be broken in pieces by the shock and ground to powder. This great truth we read in the one Bible in words plain and unmistakable; we read it in the other in those beacons of warning and examples for imitation that rise on every side of us—in this nation overthrown, and covered with the darkness of ruin; in that seated on the foundations of truth, and rising sublime with the lights of liberty and morality shining around it.

Five lines, or five words, may suffice to announce a great principle; but five centuries or ten centuries may pass away before a nation has made full proof of the truth or the falsehood of that principle. The nation selects it as its corner-stone; it frames its law and policy according to it; its national spirit and action are simply the development of that principle; it goes on, working out its problem, for centuries; the end comes at last; the nation rises, we shall suppose, to wealth, to liberty, to renown; how manifest is it that the principle was true, and that in selecting it the nation chose “the better part!” Or it brings disaster, disgrace, and overthrow; equally manifest is it that the principle was false, and that in selecting it the nation chose “the worse part.”

Let us take an instance illustrating each side of the principle. Spain fallen from the summit of power, her sierras treeless and flowerless, her plains a desert, her towns hastening to decay, her people steeped in ignorance, in poverty, and in barbarism, proclaims the supreme folly of which she was guilty when she chose to rest her greatness upon a conscience governed by the Inquisition.

Britain, the seat of law, the sanctuary of justice, the fountain of knowledge, the emporium of commerce, and the bulwark of order and liberty, proclaims not less emphatically the wisdom of her choice when she made her first requisite a conscience emancipated and guided by the Bible.

Providence ever sends its instructors into the world, as the first preachers of Christianity were sent into it, by twos. Here have we Spain and Britain, the two great instructors of the world. They differ in that each is representative of a different principle; but they agree in that each teaches, the one negatively and the other positively, the self-same lesson to mankind. They are a tree of the knowledge of good and evil to the nations, as really as was the tree in the midst of the garden of old. How manifest is it that a fertilising dew has descended upon the one, and that a silent malediction has smitten the

other! The Mount Ebal of Christendom, with the curse upon its top, stands over against the Mount Gerizim, from whose summit the blessing, like a star, beams out before the nations.

With history's page open before us, we have verily no need that one should demonstrate to us that there is a God, and that the Bible is a revelation of His character and will. The latter truth is continually receiving authentication and fulfilment in acts of righteousness and dispensations of terror; for what are the annals of the world and the chronicles of the race but a translation into fact of the laws and principles made known in Holy Writ? God in no age, and in no land, leaves Himself without a witness. The facts of history are the testimony of His being, and the proof of His Word. They are the never-ceasing echo of that awful Voice, which at the very dawn of national history proclaimed the attributes of the Divine character, and the principles of the Divine government, from the top of Sinai. In history that Voice is speaking still.

END OF VOL. I.

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