LUTHER
BEFORE THE LEGATE
(1518)

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Chapter 1

The Resolutions

Truth at last had raised her head in the midst of Christendom. Victorious over the inferior ministers of the papacy, she was now to enter upon a struggle with its chief in person. We are about to contemplate Luther contending with Rome.

It was after his return from Heidelberg that he took this bold step. His early theses on the indulgences had been misunderstood. He determined to explain their meaning with greater clearness. From the clamors that a blind hatred extorted from his enemies, he had learnt how important it was to win over the most enlightened part of the nation to the truth: he therefore resolved to appeal to its judgment, by setting forth the bases on which his new convictions were founded. It was requisite at once to challenge the decision of Rome: he did not hesitate to send his explanations thither.

While he presented them with one hand to the enlightened and impartial readers of his nation, with the other he laid them before the throne of the sovereign pontiff.

These explanations of his theses, which he styled Resolutions, were written in a very moderate tone. Luther endeavored to soften down the passages that had occasioned the greatest irritation, and thus gave proof of genuine humility. But at the same time he showed himself to be unshaken in his convictions, and courageously defended all the propositions which truth obliged him to maintain. He repeated once more, that every truly penitent christian possesses remission of sins without papal indulgences; that the pope, like the lowliest priest, can do no more than simply declare what God has already pardoned; that the treasury of the merits of the saints, administered by the pope, was a pure chimera, and that the Holy Scriptures were the sole rule of faith. But let us hear his own statement on some of these points.

He begins by establishing the nature of real

repentance, and contrasts that act of God which regenerates man with the mummeries of the church of Rome. “The Greek word Metanoia,” said he, “signifies, put on a new spirit, a new mind, take a new nature, so that ceasing to be earthly, you may become heavenly.....Christ is a teacher of the spirit and not of the letter, and his words are spirit and life. He teaches therefore a repentance in spirit and in truth, and not those outward penances that can be performed by the proudest sinners without humiliation; he wills a repentance that can be effected in every situation of life, — under the kingly purple, under the priest’s cassock, under the prince’s hat, — in the midst of those pomps of Babylon where a Daniel lived, as well as under the monk’s frock and the beggar’s rags.” Further on we meet with this bold language: “I care not for what pleases or displeases the pope. He is a man like other men. There have been many popes who loved not only errors and vices, but still more extraordinary things. I listen to the pope as pope, that is to say, when he speaks in the canons, according to the canons, or when he decrees some article in conjunction with a council, but not when

he speaks after his own ideas. Were I to do otherwise, ought I not to say with those who know not Christ, that the horrible massacres of Christians by which Julius II was stained, were the good deeds of a gentle shepherd towards Christ's flock? "I cannot help wondering," continues Luther, "at the simplicity of those who have asserted that the two swords of the Gospel represent, one the spiritual, the other the secular power. Yes! the pope wields a sword of iron; it is thus he exhibits himself to Christendom, not as a tender father, but as a formidable tyrant.

Alas! an angry God has given us the sword we longed for, and taken away that which we despised. In no part of the world have there been more terrible wars than among Christians.....Why did not that acute mind which discovered this fine commentary, interpret in the same subtle manner the history of the two keys intrusted to St. Peter, and lay it down as a doctrine of the Church, that one key serves to open the treasures of heaven, the other the treasures of earth?" "It is impossible," says Luther in another place, "for a man to be a

Christian without having Christ; and if he has Christ, he possesses at the same time all that belongs to Christ. What gives peace to our consciences is this — by faith our sins are no longer ours, but Christ's, on whom God has laid them all; and, on the other hand, all Christ's righteousness belongs to us, to whom God has given it.

Christ lays his hand on us, and we are healed. He casts his mantle over us, and we are sheltered; for he is the glorious Savior, blessed for evermore." With such views of the riches of salvation by Jesus Christ, there was no longer any need of indulgences.

While Luther attacks the papacy, he speaks honorably of Leo X. "The times in which we live are so evil," said he, "that even the most exalted individuals have no power to help the Church. We have at present a very good pope in Leo X. His sincerity, his learning, inspire us with joy. But what can be done by this one man, amiable and gracious as he is? He was worthy of being pope in better

days. In our age we deserve none but such men as Julius II and Alexander VI." He then comes to the point: "I will say what I mean, boldly and briefly: the Church needs a reformation. And this cannot be the work either of a single man, as the pope, or of many men, as the cardinals and councils; but it must be that of the whole world, or rather it is a work that belongs to God alone. As for the time in which such a reformation should begin, he alone knows who has created all time.....The dike is broken, and it is no longer in our power to restrain the impetuous and overwhelming billows." This is a sample of the declarations and ideas which Luther addressed to his enlightened fellow-countrymen. The festival of Whitsuntide was approaching; and at the same period in which the apostles gave to the risen Savior the first testimony of their faith, Luther, the new apostle, published his spirit-stirring book, in which he ardently called for a resurrection of the Church. On Saturday, 22nd May 1518, the eve of Pentecost, he sent the work to his ordinary the bishop of Brandenburg with the following letter: — "Most worthy Father in God! It is now some time since a new and unheard-of

doctrine touching the apostolic indulgences began to make a noise in this country; the learned and the ignorant were troubled by it; and many persons, some known, some personally unknown to me, begged me to declare by sermon or by writing what I thought of the novelty, I will not say the impudence, of this doctrine. At first I was silent and kept in the background. But at last things came to such a pass, that the pope's holiness was compromised.

"What could I do? I thought it my duty neither to approve nor condemn these doctrines, but to originate a discussion on this important subject, until the holy Church should decide.

"As no one accepted the challenge I had given to the whole world, and since my theses have been considered, not as matters for discussion, but as positive assertions, I find myself compelled to publish an explanation of them. Condescend therefore to receive these trifles, which I present to you, most merciful bishop. And that all the world may see that I do not act presumptuously, I entreat

your reverence to take pen and ink, and blot out, or even throw into the fire and burn, anything that may offend you. I know that Jesus Christ needs neither my labors not my services, and that he will know how to proclaim his glad tidings to the Church without my aid. Not that the bulls and the threats of my enemies alarm me; quite the contrary. If they were not so impudent, so shameless, no one should hear of me; I would hide myself in a corner, and there study alone for my own good. If this affair is not God's, it certainly shall no longer be mine or any other man's, but a thing of nought. Let the honor and the glory be his to whom alone they belong!" Luther was still filled with respect for the head of the Church. He supposed Leo to be a just man and a sincere lover of the truth. He resolved, therefore, to write to him. A week after, on Trinity Sunday, 30th May 1518, he penned a letter, of which we give a few specimens.

"To the most blessed Father Leo X sovereign bishop, Martin Luther, an Augustine friar, wishes eternal salvation.

“I am informed, most holy Father, that wicked reports are in circulation about me, and that my name is in bad odor with your holiness. I am called a heretic, apostate, traitor, and a thousand other insulting names. What I see fills me with surprise, what I learn fills me with alarm. But the only foundation of my tranquillity remains, — a pure and peaceful conscience. Deign to listen to me, most holy Father, — to me who am but a child and unlearned.” After relating the origin of the whole matter, Luther thus continues: — “In all the taverns nothing was heard but complaints against the avarice of the priests, and attacks against the power of the keys and of the sovereign bishop. Of this the whole of Germany is a witness. When I was informed of these things, my zeal was aroused for the glory of Christ, as it appeared to me; or, if another explanation be sought, my young and warm blood was inflamed.

“I forewarned several princes of the Church; but some laughed at me, and others turned a deaf ear. The terror of your name seemed to restrain every one. I then published my disputation.

“And behold, most holy Father, the conflagration that is reported to have set the whole world on fire.

“Now what shall I do? I cannot retract, and I see that this publication draws down upon me an inconceivable hatred from every side. I have no wish to appear before the world; for I have no learning, no genius, and am far too little for such great matters; above all, in this illustrious age, in which Cicero himself, were he living, would be compelled to hide himself in some dark corner. “But in order to quiet my adversaries, and to reply to the solicitations of many friends, I here publish my thoughts. I publish them, holy Father, that I may be in greater safety under the shadow of your wings. All those who desire it will thus understand with what simplicity of heart I have called upon the ecclesiastical authority to intrust me, and what respect I have shown to the power of the keys. If I had not behaved with propriety, it would have been impossible for the most serene lord Frederick, duke and elector of Saxony, who shines among the

friends of the apostolic and christian truth, to have ever endured in his university of Wittenberg a man so dangerous as I am asserted to be.

“For this reason, most holy Father, I fall at the feet of your holiness, and submit myself to you, with all that I have and with all that I am. Destroy my cause, or espouse it: declare me right or wrong; take away my life or restore it, as you please. I shall acknowledge your voice as the voice of Jesus Christ, who presides and speaks through you. If I have merited death, I shall not refuse to die; the earth is the Lord’s, and all that is therein. May He be praised through all eternity! Amen. May he uphold you forever!

Amen.

“Written the day of the Holy Trinity, in the year 1518.

“Martin Luther, Augustine Friar.” What humility and truth in Luther’s fear, or rather in the avowal he makes that his warm young blood was

perhaps too hastily inflamed! In this we behold the sincerity of a man who, presuming not on himself, dreads the influence of his passions in the very acts most in conformity with the Word of God. This language is widely different from that of a proud fanatic. We behold in Luther an earnest desire to gain over Leo to the cause of truth, to prevent all schism, and to cause the Reformation, the necessity of which he proclaims, to proceed from the head of the church. Assuredly it is not he who should be accused of destroying that unity in the Western Church which so many persons of all parties have since regretted. He sacrificed everything to maintain it; — everything except truth. It was not he, it was his adversaries, who, by refusing to acknowledge the fullness and sufficiency of the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ, rent our Savior's vesture, even at the foot of the cross.

After writing this letter, and on the very same day, Luther wrote to his friend Staupitz, vicargeneral of his order. It was by his instrumentality that he desired the Solutions and letter should reach Leo.

“I beg of you,” says he, “to accept with kindness these trifles that I send you, and to forward them to the excellent Pope Leo X.

Not that I desire by this to draw you into the peril in which I am involved; I am determined to encounter the danger alone. Jesus Christ will see if what I have said proceeds from Him or from me — Jesus Christ, without whose will the pope’s tongue cannot move, and the hearts of kings cannot decide.

“As to those who threaten me, I reply in the words of Reuchlin: ‘He who is poor has nothing to fear, since he has nothing to lose.’ I have neither property nor money, and I do not desire any. If formerly I possessed any honor, any reputation, let Him who has begun to deprive me of them complete his task. All that is left to me is a wretched body, weakened by many trials. Should they kill me by stratagem or by force, to God be the glory! They will thus, perhaps, shorten my life by an hour or two. It is enough for me that I have a

precious Redeemer, a powerful High Priest, Jesus Christ my Lord. As long as I live will I praise him. If another will not unite with me in these praises, what is that to me?" In these words we read Luther's inmost heart.

While he was thus looking with confidence towards Rome, Rome already entertained thoughts of vengeance against him. As early as the 3rd of April, Cardinal Raphael of Rovera had written to the Elector Frederick, in the pope's name, intimating that his orthodoxy was suspected, and cautioning him against protecting Luther. "Cardinal Raphael," said the latter, "would have had great pleasure in seeing me burnt by Frederick." Thus was Rome beginning to sharpen her weapons against Luther. It was through his protector's mind that she resolved to aim the first blow. If she succeeded in destroying that shelter under which the monk of Wittenberg was reposing, he would become an easy prey to her.

The German princes were very tenacious of their reputation for orthodoxy. The slightest

suspicion of heresy filled them with alarm. The court of Rome had skillfully taken advantage of this disposition. Frederick, moreover, had always been attached to the religion of his forefathers, and hence Raphael's letter made a deep impression on his mind. But it was a rule with the elector never to act precipitately. He knew that truth was not always on the side of the strongest. The disputes between the empire and Rome had taught him to mistrust the interested views of that court. He had found out that to be a christian prince, it was not necessary to be the pope's slave.

"He was not one of those profane persons," said Melancthon, "who order all changes to be arrested at their very commencement. Frederick submitted himself to God. He carefully perused the writings that appeared, and did not allow that to be destroyed which he believed to be true." It was not from want of power; for, besides being sovereign in his own states, he enjoyed in the empire a respect very little inferior to that which was paid to the emperor himself.

It is probable that Luther gained some information of this letter of Cardinal Raphael's, transmitted to the elector on the 7th July. Perhaps, it was the prospect of excommunication which this Roman missive seemed to forebode, that induced him to enter the pulpit of Wittenberg on the 15th of the same month, and to deliver a sermon on that subject, which made a deep impression. He drew a distinction between external and internal excommunication; the former excluding only from the services of the Church, the latter from communion with God. "No one," said he, "can reconcile the fallen sinner with God, except the Eternal One. No one can separate man from God, except man himself by his own sins. Blessed is he who dies under an unjust excommunication! While he suffers a grievous punishment at the hands of men for righteousness' sake, he receives from the hand of God the crown of everlasting happiness." Some of the hearers loudly commended this bold language; others were still more exasperated by it.

But Luther no longer stood alone; and although his faith required no other support than that of God,

a phalanx which defended him against his enemies had grown up around him. The German people had heard the voice of the reformer. From his sermons and writings issued those flashes of light which aroused and illumined his contemporaries. The energy of his faith poured forth in torrents of fire on their frozen hearts. The life that God had placed in this extraordinary mind communicated itself to the dead body of the Church. Christendom, motionless for so many centuries, became animated with religious enthusiasm. The people's attachment to the Romish superstitions diminished day by day; there were always fewer hands that offered money to purchase forgiveness; and at the same time Luther's reputation continued to increase. The people turned towards him, and saluted him with love and respect, as the intrepid defender of truth and liberty. Undoubtedly, all men did not see the depth of the doctrines he proclaimed. For the greater number it was sufficient to know that he stood up against the pope, and that the dominion of the priests and monks was shaken by the might of his word. In their eyes, Luther's attack was like those beacon fires kindled on the mountains, which

announce to a hole nation that the time to burst their chains has arrived. The reformer was not aware of what he had done, until the noble-minded portion of the nation had already hailed him as their leader. But for a great number also, Luther’s coming was something more than this. The Word of God, which he so skillfully wielded, pierced their hearts like a two-edged sword. In many bosoms was kindled an earnest desire of obtaining the assurance of pardon and eternal life. Since the primitive ages, the Church had never witnessed such hungering and thirsting after righteousness. If the eloquence of Peter the Hermit and of St. Bernard had inspired the people of the Middle Ages to assume a perishable cross, the eloquence of Luther prevailed on those of his day to take up the real cross, — the truth which saves. The scaffolding which then encumbered the Church had stifled everything; the form had destroyed the life. The powerful language given to this man diffused a quickening breath over the soil of Christendom. At the first outburst, Luther’s writings had carried away believers and unbelievers alike: the unbelievers, because the positive doctrines that

were afterwards to be settled had not been as yet fully developed; the believers, because their germs were found in that living faith which his writings proclaimed with so much power. Accordingly, the influence of these writings was immense; they filled in an instant Germany and the world. Everywhere prevailed a secret conviction that men were about to witness, not the establishment of a sect, but a new birth of the Church and of society. Those who were then born of the breath of the Holy Ghost rallied around him who was its organ.

Christendom was divided into two parties: the one contended with the spirit against the form, and the other with the form against the spirit. On the side of the form were, it is true, all the appearances of strength and grandeur; on the side of the spirit, is but a feeble body, which the first breath of wind may throw down. Its apparent power serves but to excite hostility and to precipitate its destruction. Thus, the simple Word of truth had raised a powerful army for Luther.

Chapter 2

Diet at Augsburg

This army was very necessary, for the nobles began to be alarmed, and the empire and the Church were already uniting their power to get rid of this troublesome monk. If a strong and courageous prince had then filled the imperial throne, he might have taken advantage of this religious agitation, and in reliance upon the Word of God and upon the nation, have given a fresh impulse to the ancient opposition against the papacy. But Maximilian was too old, and he had determined besides on making every sacrifice in order to maintain the great object of his life, the aggrandizement of his house, and consequently the elevation of his grandson. The emperor was at that time holding an imperial diet at Augsburg. Six electors had gone thither in person at his summons. All the Germanic states were there represented. The kings of France, Hungary, and Poland had sent their ambassadors. These princes and envoys displayed great magnificence. The Turkish war was

one of the causes for which the diet had been assembled.

The legate of Leo X earnestly urged the meeting on this point. The states, learning wisdom from the bad use that had formerly been made of their contributions, and wisely counselled by the Elector Frederick, were satisfied with declaring they would reflect on the matter, and at the same time produced fresh complaints against Rome. A Latin discourse, published during the diet, boldly pointed out the real danger to the German princes. “You desire to put the Turk to flight,” said the author. “This is well; but I am very much afraid that you are mistaken in the person. You should look for him in Italy, and not in Asia.” Another affair of no less importance was to occupy the diet. Maximilian desired to have his grandson Charles, already king of Spain and Naples, proclaimed king of the Romans, and his successor in the imperial dignity.

The pope knew his own interests too well to desire to see the imperial throne filled by a prince

whose power in Italy might be dangerous to himself. The emperor imagined he had already won over most of the electors and of the states; but he met with a vigorous resistance from Frederick. All solicitations proved unavailing; in vain did the ministers and the best friends of the elector unite their entreaties to those of the emperor; he was immovable, and showed on this occasion (as it has been remarked) that he had firmness of mind not to swerve from a resolution which he had once acknowledged to be just. The emperor's design failed.

Henceforward this prince sought to gain the good-will of the pope, in order to render him favorable to his plans; and, to give a more striking proof of his attachment, he wrote to him as follows, on the 5th August: "Most holy Father, we have learnt these few days since that a friar of the Augustine order, named Martin Luther, has presumed to maintain certain propositions on the traffic of indulgences; a matter that displeases us the more because this friar has found many protectors, among whom are persons of exalted

station. If your holiness, and the very reverend fathers of the Church (i.e. the cardinals) do not soon exert your authority to put an end to these scandals, these pernicious teachers will not only seduce the simple people, but they will involve great princes in their destruction. We will take care that whatever your holiness may decree in this matter for the glory of God Almighty shall be enforced throughout the whole empire." This letter must have been written immediately after some warm discussion between Maximilian and Frederick. On the same day, the elector wrote to Raphael of Rovera. He had learnt, no doubt, that the emperor was writing to the Roman pontiff, and to parry the blow, he put himself in communication with Rome.

"I shall never have any other desire," says he, "than to show my submission to the universal Church.

"Accordingly, I have never defended either the writings or the sermons of Doctor Martin Luther. I learn, besides, that he has always offered to appear,

under a safe-conduct, before impartial, learned, and christian judges, in order to defend his doctrine, and to submit, in case he should be convicted of error by the Scriptures themselves." Leo X, who up to this time had let the business follow its natural course, aroused by the clamors of the theologians and monks, nominated an ecclesiastical commission at Rome empowered to try Luther, and in which Sylvester Prierio, the reformer's great enemy, was at once accuser and judge. The case was soon prepared, and the court summoned Luther to appear before it in person within sixty days.

Luther was tranquilly awaiting at Wittenberg the good effects that he imagined his submissive letter to the pope would produce, when on the 7th August, two days only after the letters of Maximilian and of Frederick were sent off, he received the summons of the Roman tribunal. "At the very moment I was expecting a blessing," said he, "I saw the thunderbolt fall upon me. I was the lamb that troubled the water the wolf was drinking.

Tetzel escaped, and I was to permit myself to be devoured." This summons caused general alarm in Wittenberg; for whatever course Luther might take he could not escape danger. If he went to Rome, he would there become the victim of his enemies. If he refused to appear, he would be condemned for contumacy, as was usual, without the power of escaping; for it was known that the legate had received orders to do everything he could to exasperate the emperor and the German princes against the doctor. His friends were filled with consternation. Shall the preacher of truth risk his life in that great city drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus? Shall a head be raised in the midst of enslaved Christendom, only to fall? Shall this man also be struck down — this man whom God appears to have formed to withstand a power that hitherto nothing had been able to resist? Luther himself saw that no one could save him but the elector; yet he would rather die than compromise his prince. At last his friends agreed on an expedient that would not endanger Frederick. Let him refuse Luther a safeconduct, and then the reformer would have a legitimate

excuse for not appearing at Rome.

On the 8th August, Luther wrote to Spalatin begging him to employ his influence with the elector to have his cause heard in Germany. “See what snares they are laying for me,” wrote he also to Staupitz, “and how I am surrounded with thorns. But Christ lives and reigns, the same yesterday, today, and forever. My conscience assures me that I have been teaching the truth, although it appears still more odious because I teach it. The Church is the womb of Rebecca. The children must struggle together, even to the risk of the mother’s life. As for the rest, pray the Lord that I feel not too much joy in this trial. May God not lay this sin to their charge.” Luther’s friends did not confine themselves to consultations and complaints. Spalatin wrote, on the part of the elector, to Renner the emperor’s secretary: “Doctor Martin Luther willingly consents to be judged by all the universities of Germany, except Leipsic, Erfurth, and Frankfort-on-the-Oder, which have shown themselves partial. It is impossible for him to appear at Rome in person.” The university of

Wittenberg wrote a letter of intercession to the pope: “The weakness of his frame,” they said, speaking of Luther, “and the dangers of the journey, render it difficult and even impossible for him to obey the order of your holiness. His distress and his prayers incline us to sympathize with him.

We therefore entreat you, most holy Father, as obedient children, to look upon him as a man who has never been tainted with doctrines opposed to the tenets of the Roman Church.” The university, in its solicitude, wrote the same day to Charles of Miltitz, a Saxon gentleman and the pope’s chamberlain, in high estimation with Leo X. In this letter they gave Luther a more decided testimony than they had ventured to insert in the first. “The reverend father Martin Luther, an Augustine,” it ran, “is the noblest and most distinguished member of our university. For many years we have seen and known his talents, his learning, his profound acquaintance with the arts and literature, his irreproachable morals, and his truly christian behavior.” This active charity shown by all who surrounded Luther is his noblest panegyric. While

men were anxiously looking for the result of this affair, it was terminated more easily than might have been expected. The legate De Vio, mortified at his ill success in the commission he had received to excite a general war against the Turks, wished to exalt and give lustre to his embassy in Germany by some other brilliant act. He thought that if he could extinguish heresy he should return to Rome with honor. He therefore entreated the pope to intrust this business to him. Leo for his part was highly pleased with Frederick for his strong opposition to the election of the youthful Charles. He felt that he might yet stand in need of his support. Without farther reference to the summons, he commissioned the legate, by a brief dated 23rd August, to investigate the affair in Germany.

The pope lost nothing by this course of proceeding; and even if Luther could not be prevailed on the retract, the noise and scandal that his presence at Rome must have occasioned would be avoided.

“We charge you,” said Leo, “to summon

personally before you, to prosecute and constrain without any delay, and as soon as you shall have received this paper from us, the said Luther, who has already been declared a heretic by our dear brother Jerome, bishop of Ascoli.” The pope then proceeded to utter the severest threats against Luther: “Invoke for this purpose the arm and the aid of our very dear son in Christ, Maximilian, and of the other princes of Germany, and of all the communities, universities, and potentates, ecclesiastic or secular. And, if you get possession of his person, keep him in safe custody, that he may be brought before us.” We see that this indulgent concession from the pope was only a surer way of inveigling Luther to Rome. Next followed milder measures: “If he return to his duty, and beg forgiveness for so great a misdeed, of his own accord and without solicitation, we give you power to receive him into the unity of our holy mother the Church.” The pope soon returned to his maledictions: “If he persist in his obstinacy, and you cannot secure his person, we authorize you to proscribe him in every part of Germany; to banish, curse, and excommunicate all those who are

attached to him; and to order all Christians to flee from their presence." Still this was not enough: "And in order that this contagious disease may be the more effectually eradicated," continued the pope, "you will excommunicate all prelates, religious orders, universities, communities, counts, dukes, and potentates (the Emperor Maximilian always excepted), who shall not aid in seizing the aforesaid Martin Luther and his adherents, and send them to you under good and safe guard. — And if, which God forbid, the said princes, communities, universities, and potentates, or any belonging to them, shall in any manner offer an asylum to the said Martin and his adherents, give him privately or publicly, by themselves or by others, succor and counsel, we lay under interdict all these princes, communities, universities, and potentates, with their cities, towns, countries, and villages, as well as the cities, towns, countries, and villages in which the said Martin may take refuge, so long as he shall remain there, and three days after he shall have quitted them." This audacious see, which claims to be the earthly representative of him who said: God sent not his Son into the

world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, continues its anathemas; and after pronouncing the penalties against ecclesiastics, goes on to say: “As for the laymen, if they do not immediately obey your orders without delay or opposition, we declare them infamous (the most worthy emperor always excepted), incapable of performing any lawful act, deprived of christian burial, and stripped of all the fiefs they may hold either from the apostolic see, or from any lord whatsoever.” Such was the fate destined for Luther. The monarch of Rome has invoked everything for his destruction. Nothing was spared, not even the quiet of the grave. His ruin appears certain. How can he escape from this vast conspiracy? But Rome was deceived; the movement, begun by the Spirit of God, cannot be checked by the decrees of her chancery.

The pope had not even preserved the appearances of a just and impartial examination. Luther had been declared a heretic, not only before he had been heard, but even before the expiration of the time allowed for his appearance. The

passions, and never do they show themselves more violently than in religious discussions, overleap all forms of justice. It is not only in the Roman church, but in the Protestant churches that have turned aside from the Gospel, and wherever the truth is not found, that we meet with such strange proceedings in this respect. Everything is lawful against the Gospel. We frequently see men who in every other case would scruple to commit the least injustice, not fearing to trample under foot all rule and law, whenever Christianity, or the testimony that is paid to it, is concerned.

When Luther became acquainted with this brief, he thus expressed his indignation: “This is the most remarkable part of the affair: the brief was issued on the 23rd August — I was summoned on the 7th — so that between the brief and the summons sixteen days elapsed. Now, make the calculation, and you will find that my Lord Jerome, bishop of Ascoli, proceeded against me, pronounced judgment, condemned me, and declared me a heretic, before the summons reached me, or at the most within sixteen days after it had

been forwarded to me. Now, where are the sixty days accorded me in the summons? They began on the 7th August, they should end on the 7th October.....Is this the style and fashion of the Roman court, which on the same day summons, exhorts, accuses, judges, condemns, and declares a man guilty who is so far from Rome, and who knows nothing of all these things? What reply can they make to this? No doubt they forgot to clear their brains with hellebore before having recourse to such trickery." But while Rome secretly deposited her thunders in the hands of her legate, she sought by sweet and flattering words to detach from Luther's cause the prince whose power she dreaded most. On the same day (23rd August 1518), the pope wrote to the Elector of Saxony. He had recourse to the wiles of that ancient policy which we have already noticed, and endeavored to flatter the prince's vanity.

"Dear son," wrote the pontiff, "when we think of your noble and worthy family; of you who are its ornament and head; when we call to mind how you and your ancestors have always desired to

uphold the christian faith, and the honor and dignity of the holy see, we cannot believe that a man who abandons the faith can rely upon your highness's favor, and daringly give the rein to his wickedness. Yet it is reported to us from every quarter that a certain friar, Martin Luther, hermit of the order of St. Augustine, has forgotten, like a child of the evil one and despiser of God, his habit and his order, which consists in humility and obedience, and that he boasts of fearing neither the authority nor the punishment of any man, being assured of your favor and protection.

"But as we know that he is deceived, we have thought fit to write to your highness, and to exhort you in the Lord to watch over the honor of your name, as a christian prince, the ornament, glory, and sweet savor of your noble family; to defend yourself from these calumnies; and to guard yourself not only from so serious a crime as that imputed to you, but still further even from the suspicion that the rash presumption of this friar ends to bring upon you." Leo X at the same time informed the elector that he had commissioned the

cardinal of St. Sixtus to investigate the matter, and requested him to deliver Luther into the legate's hands, "for fear," added he, still returning to his first argument, "the pious people of our own or of future times should one day lament and say: The most pernicious heresy with which the Church of God has been afflicted sprung up under the favor and support of that high and worthy family." Thus had Rome taken her measures. With one hand she scattered the intoxicating incense of flattery; in the other she held concealed her terrors and revenge.

All the powers of the earth, emperor, pope, princes, and legates, began to rise up against this humble friar of Erfurth, whose internal struggles we have already witnessed. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel against the Lord, and against his anointed.

Chapter 3

The Armorer Schwartzerd

Before this letter and the brief had reached Germany, and while Luther was still afraid of being compelled to appear at Rome, a fortunate event brought consolation to his heart. He needed a friend into whose bosom he could pour out his sorrows, and whose faithful affection would comfort him in his hours of dejection. God gave him such a friend in Melancthon.

George Schwartzerd was a skillful master-armorer of Bretten, a small town in the palatinate. On the 14th of February 1497, his wife bore him a son, who was named Philip, and who became famous in after-years under the name of Melancthon. George, who was highly esteemed by the palatine princes, and by those of Bavaria and Saxony, was a man of perfect integrity. Frequently he would refuse from purchasers the price they offered him; and if he found they were poor, would compel them to take back their money. It was his

habit to leave his bed at midnight, and offer a fervent prayer upon his knees. If the morning came without his having performed this pious duty, he was dissatisfied with himself all the rest of the day. His wife Barbara was the daughter of a respectable magistrate named John Reuter. She possessed a tender disposition, rather inclined to superstition, but in other respects discreet and prudent. To her we are indebted for these well-known German rhymes: — Alms-giving impoverisheth not.

Church-going hindereth not.

To grease the car delayeth not.

Ill-gotten wealth profiteth not.

God’s book deceiveth not.

And the following rhymes also: — Those who love to squander More than their fields render, Will surely come to ruin, Or a rope be their undoing. Philip was not eleven years old when his father died. Two days before he expired, George called

his son to his bedside, and exhorted him to have the fear of God constantly before his eyes. “I foresee,” said the dying armorer, “that terrible tempests are about to shake the world. I have witnessed great things, but greater still are preparing. May God direct and guide thee!” After Philip had received his father’s blessing, he was sent to Spire that he might not be present at his parent’s death. He departed weeping bitterly.

The lad’s grandfather, the worthy bailiff Reuter, who himself had a son, performed a father’s duty to Philip, and took him and his brother George into his own house. Shortly after this he engaged John Hungarus to teach the three boys. The tutor was an excellent man, and in after-years proclaimed the Gospel with great energy, even to an advanced age. He overlooked nothing in the young man. He punished him for every fault, but with discretion: “It is thus,” said Melancthon in 1554, “that he made a scholar of me. He loved me as a son, I loved him as a father; and we shall meet, I hope, in heaven.” Philip was remarkable for the excellence of his understanding, and his facility in

learning and explaining what he had learnt. He could not remain idle, and was always looking for some one to discuss with him the things he had heard. It frequently happened that well-educated foreigners passed through Bretten and visited Reuter. Immediately the bailiff's grandson would go up to them, enter into conversation, and press them so hard in the discussion that the hearers were filled with admiration. With strength of genius he united great gentleness, and thus won the favor of all.

He stammered; but like the illustrious Grecian orator, he so diligently set about correcting this defect, that in after-life no traces of it could be perceived.

On the death of his grandfather, the youthful Philip with his brother and his young uncle John, was sent to the school at Pforzheim. These lads resided with one of their relations, sister to the famous Reuchlin. Eager in the pursuit of knowledge, Philip, under tuition of George Simmler, made rapid progress in learning, and

particularly in Greek, of which he was passionately fond. Reuchlin frequently came to Pforzheim. At his sister's house he became acquainted with her young boarders, and was soon struck with Philip's replies. He presented him with a Greek Grammar and a Bible. These two books were to be the study of his whole life.

When Reuchlin returned from his second journey to Italy, his young relative, then twelve years old, celebrated the day of his arrival by representing before him, with the aid of some friends, a Latin comedy which he had himself composed. Reuchlin, charmed with the young man's talents, tenderly embraced him, called him his dear son, and placed sportively upon his head the red hat he had received when he had been made doctor. It was at this time that Reuchlin changed the name of Schwartzerd into that of Melancthon; both words, the one in German and the other in Greek, signifying black earth. Most of the learned men of that age thus translated their names into Greek or Latin.

Melancthon, at twelve years of age, went to the University of Heidelberg, and here he began to slake his ardent thirst for knowledge. He took his bachelor's degree at fourteen. In 1512, Reuchlin invited him to Tubingen, where many learned men were assembled. He attended by turns the lectures of the theologians, doctors, and lawyers. There was no branch of knowledge that he deemed unworthy his study. Praise was not his object, but the possession and the fruits of learning.

The Holy Scriptures especially engaged his attention. Those who frequented the church of Tubingen had remarked that he frequently held a book in his hands, which he was occupied in reading between the services.

This unknown volume appeared larger than the prayer books, and a report was circulated that Philip used to read profane authors during those intervals. But the suspected book proved to be a copy of the Holy Scriptures, printed shortly before at Basle by John Frobenius. All his life he continued this study with the most unceasing

application. He always carried this precious volume with him, even to the public assemblies to which he was invited. Rejecting the empty systems of the schoolmen, he adhered to the plain word of the Gospel. “I entertain the most distinguished and splendid expectations of Melancthon,” wrote Erasmus to Oecolampadius about this time; “God grant that this young man may long survive us. He will entirely eclipse Erasmus.” Nevertheless, Melancthon shared in the errors of his age. “I shudder,” he observed at an advanced period of his life, “when I think of the honor I paid to images, while I was yet a papist.” In 1514, he was made doctor of philosophy, and then began to teach. He was seventeen years old. The grace and charm that he imparted to his lessons, formed the most striking contrast to the tasteless method which the doctors, and above all the monks, had pursued till then. He took an active part in the struggle in which Reuchlin was engaged with the learninghaters of the day. Agreeable in conversation, mild and elegant in his manners, beloved by all who knew him, he soon acquired great authority and solid reputation in the learned world.

It was at this time that the elector formed the design of inviting some distinguished scholar to the university of Wittenberg, as professor of the ancient languages. He applied to Reuchlin, who recommended Melancthon.

Frederick foresaw the celebrity that this young man would confer on an institution so dear to him, and Reuchlin, charmed at beholding so noble a career opening before his young friend, wrote to him these words of the Almighty to Abraham: “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, and I will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. Yea,” continued the old man, “I hope that it will be so with thee, my dear Philip, my handiwork and my consolation.” In this invitation Melancthon acknowledged a call from God. At his departure the university was filled with sorrow; yet it contained individuals who were jealous and envious of him. He left his native place, exclaiming: “The Lord’s will be done!” He was then twenty-one years of age.

Melancthon traveled on horseback, in company with several Saxon merchants, as a traveler joins a caravan in the deserts; for, says Reuchlin, he was unacquainted both with the roads and the country. He presented his respects to the elector, whom he found at Augsburg. At Nuremberg he saw the excellent Pirckheimer, whom he had known before; at Leipsic he formed an acquaintance with the learned hellenist Mosellanus. The university of this last city gave a banquet in his honor.

The repast was academical. The dishes succeeded one another in great variety, and at each new dish one of the professors rose and addressed Melancthon in a Latin speech he had prepared before hand. The latter immediately replied extemporaneously. At last, wearied with so much eloquence, he said: “Most illustrious men, permit me to reply to your harangues once for all; for, being unprepared, I cannot put such varieties into my answers as you have done in your addresses.” After this, the dishes were brought in without accompaniment of a speech. Reuchlin’s youthful relative arrived in Wittenberg on the 25th August

1518, two days after Leo X had signed the brief addressed to Cajetan, and the letter to the elector.

The Wittenberg professors did not receive Melancthon so favorably as those of Leipsic had done. The first impression he made on them did not correspond with their expectations. They saw a young man, who appeared younger than he really was, of small stature, and with a feeble and timid air. Was this the illustrious doctor whom Erasmus and Reuchlin, the greatest men of the day, extolled so highly? Neither Luther, with whom he first became acquainted, nor his colleagues, entertained any great hopes of him when they saw his youth, his shyness, and his diffident manners.

On the 29th August, four days after his arrival, he delivered his inaugural discourse. All the university was assembled. This lad, as Luther, calls him, spoke in such elegant latinity, and showed so much learning, an understanding so cultivated, and a judgment so sound, that all his hearers were struck with admiration.

When the speech was finished, all crowded round him with congratulations; but no one felt more joy than Luther. He hastened to impart to his friends the sentiments that filled his heart. “Melancthon,” wrote he to Spalatin on the 31st August, “delivered four days after his arrival so learned and so beautiful a discourse, that every one listened with astonishment and admiration. We soon recovered from the prejudices excited by his stature and appearance; we now praise and admire his eloquence; we return our thanks to you and to the prince for the service you have done us. I ask for no other Greek master. But I fear that his delicate frame will be unable to support our mode of living, and that we shall be unable to keep him long on account of the smallness of his salary. I hear that the Leipsic people are already boasting of their power to take him from us. O my dear Spalatin, beware of despising his age and his personal appearance. He is a man worthy of every honor.” Melancthon began immediately to lecture on Homer and the Epistle of St.

Paul to Titus. He was full of ardor. “I will make

every effort," wrote he to Spalatin, "to conciliate the favor of all those in Wittenberg who love learning and virtue." Four days after his inauguration, Luther wrote again to Spalatin: "I most particularly recommend to you the very learned and very amiable Grecian, Philip. His lecture-room is always full. All the theologians in particular go to hear him. He is making every class, upper, lower, and middle, begin to read Greek." Melancthon was able to respond to Luther's affection. He soon found in him a kindness of disposition, a strength of mind, a courage, a discretion, that he had never found till then in any man. He venerated, he loved him.

"If there is any one, said he, "whom I dearly love, and whom I embrace with my whole heart, it is Martin Luther." Thus did Luther and Melancthon meet; they were friends until death. We cannot too much admire the goodness and wisdom of God, in bringing together two men so different, and yet so necessary to one another. Luther possessed warmth, vigor, and strength; Melancthon clearness, discretion, and mildness. Luther gave energy to

Melancthon, Melancthon moderated Luther. They were like substances in a state of positive and negative electricity, which mutually act upon each other. If Luther had been without Melancthon, perhaps the torrent would have overflowed its banks; Melancthon, when Luther was taken from him by death, hesitated and gave way, even where he should not have yielded. Luther did much by power; Melancthon perhaps did less by following a gentler and more tranquil method. Both were upright, open-hearted, generous; both ardently loved the Word of eternal life, and obeyed it with a fidelity and devotion that governed their whole lives.

Melancthon's arrival at Wittenberg effected a revolution not only in that university, but in the whole of Germany and in all the learned world. The attention he had bestowed on the Greek and Latin classics and on philosophy had given a regularity, clearness, and precision to his ideas, which shed a new light and an indescribable beauty on every subject that he took in hand. The mild spirit of the Gospel fertilized and animated his

meditations, and in his lectures the driest pursuits were clothed with a surpassing grace that captivated all hearers. The barrenness that scholasticism had cast over education was at an end. A new manner of teaching and of studying began with Melancthon. “Thanks to him,” says an illustrious German historian, “Wittenberg became the school of the nation.” It was indeed highly important that a man who knew Greek thoroughly should teach in that university, where the new developments of theology called upon masters and pupils to study in their original language the earliest documents of the christian faith. From this time Luther zealously applied to the task. The meaning of a Greek word, of which he had been ignorant until then, suddenly cleared up his theological ideas. What consolation and what joy did he not feel, when he saw, for instance, that the Greek word metanoia, which, according to the Latin Church, signifies a penance, a satisfaction required by the Church, a human expiation, really meant in Greek a transformation or conversion of the heart! A thick midst was suddenly rolled away from before his eyes. The two significations given

to this word suffice of themselves to characterize the two Churches.

The impulse Melancthon gave to Luther in the translation of the Bible is one of the most remarkable circumstances of the friendship between these two great men. As early as 1517, Luther had made some attempts at translation. He had procured as many Greek and Latin books as were within his reach. And now, with the aid of his dear Philip, he applied to his task with fresh energy. Luther compelled Melancthon to share in his researches; consulted him on the difficult passages: and the work, which was destined to be one of the great labors of the reformer, advanced more safely and more speedily.

Melancthon, on his side, became acquainted with the new theology. The beautiful and profound doctrine of justification by faith filled him with astonishment and joy; but he received with independence the system taught by Luther, and molded it to the peculiar form of his mind; for, although he was only twenty-one years old, he was

one of those precocious geniuses who attain early to a full possession of all their powers, and who think for themselves from the very first.

The zeal of the teachers was soon communicated to the disciples. It was decided to reform the method of instruction. With the elector’s consent, certain courses that possessed a merely scholastic importance were suppressed; at the same time the study of the classics received a fresh impulse. The school of Wittenberg was transformed, and the contrast with other universities became daily more striking. All this, however, took place within the limits of the Church, and none suspected they were on the eve of a great contest with the pope.

Chapter 4

Sentiments of Luther and Staupitz

No doubt Melancthon's arrival at a moment so critical brought a pleasing change to the current of Luther's thoughts; no doubt, in the sweet outpourings of a dawning friendship, and in the midst of the biblical labors to which he devoted himself with fresh zeal, he sometimes forgot Rome, Prierio, Leo, and the ecclesiastical court before which he was to appear.

Yet these were but fugitive moments, and his thoughts always returned to that formidable tribunal before which his implacable enemies had summoned him. With what terror would not such thoughts have filled a soul whose object had been anything else than the truth! But Luther did not tremble; confident in the faithfulness and power of God, he remained firm, and was ready to expose himself alone to the anger of enemies more terrible

than those who had kindled John Huss's pile.

A few days after Melancthon's arrival, and before the resolution of the pope transferring Luther's citation from Rome to Augsburg could be known, the latter wrote to Spalatin: "I do not require that our sovereign should do the least thing in defense of my theses; I am willing to be given up and thrown into the hands of my adversaries. Let him permit all the storm to burst upon me. What I have undertaken to defend, I hope to be able to maintain, with the help of Christ. As for violence, we must needs yield to that, but without abandoning the truth." Luther's courage was infectious: the mildest and most timid men, as they beheld the danger that threatened this witness to the truth, found language full of energy and indignation. The prudent, the pacific Staupitz wrote to Spalatin on the 7th September: "Do not cease to exhort the prince, your master and mine, not to allow himself to be frightened by the roaring of the lions. Let him defend the truth, without anxiety either about Luther, Staupitz, or the order. Let there be one place at least where men may speak freely

and without fear. I know that the plague of Babylon, I was nearly saying of Rome, is let loose against whoever attacks the abuses of those who sell Jesus Christ. I have myself seen a preacher thrown from the pulpit for teaching the truth; I saw him, although it was a festival, bound and dragged to prison. Others have witnessed still more cruel sights. For this reason, dearest Spalatin, prevail upon his highness to continue in his present sentiments." At last the order to appear before the cardinal-legate at Augsburg arrived.

It was now with one of the princes of the Roman church that Luther had to deal. All his friends entreated him not to set out. They feared that even during the journey snares might be laid for his life. Some busied themselves in finding an asylum for him. Staupitz himself, the timid Staupitz, was moved at the thought of the dangers to which brother Martin would be exposed — that brother whom he had dragged from the seclusion of the cloister, and whom he had launched on that agitated sea in which his life was now endangered. Alas! would it not have been better for the poor

brother to have remained for ever unknown! It was too late. At least he would do everything in his power to save him. Accordingly he wrote from his convent at Salzburg, on the 15th September, soliciting Luther to flee and seek an asylum with him. “It appears to me,” said he, “that the whole world is enraged and combined against the truth. The crucified Jesus was hated in like manner. I do not see that you have any thing else to expect but persecution. Erelong no one will be able without the pope’s permission to search the Scriptures, and therein look for Jesus Christ, which Jesus Christ however commands. You have but few friends: I would to God that fear of your adversaries did not prevent those few from declaring themselves in your favor! The wisest course is for you to abandon Wittenberg for a season and come to me. Then we shall live and die together. This is also the prince’s opinion,” adds Staupitz. From different quarters Luther received the most alarming intelligence.

Count Albert of Mansfeldt bid him beware of undertaking the journey, for several powerful lords had sworn to seize his person, and strangle or

drown him. But nothing could frighten him. He had no intention of profiting by the vicar-general's offer. He will not go and conceal himself in the obscurity of a convent at Salzburg; he will remain faithfully on that stormy scene where the hand of God has placed him. It is by persevering in despite of his adversaries, by proclaiming the truth aloud in the midst of the world, that the reign of truth advances. Why then should he flee? He is not one of those who draw back to perish, but of those who keep the faith to the saving of their souls. This expression of the Master whom he desires to serve, and whom he loves more than life, re-echoes incessantly in his heart: Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. At all times do we find in Luther and in the Reformation this intrepid courage, this exalted morality, this infinite charity, which the first advent of Christianity had already made known to the world. "I am like Jeremiah," says Luther at the time of which we are speaking, "a man of strife and contention; but the more their threats increase, the more my joy is multiplied. My wife and my children are well provided for; my

fields, my houses, and my goods are in order. They have already destroyed my honor and my reputation. One single thing remains; it is my wretched body: let them take it; they will thus shorten my life by a few hours. But as for my soul, they cannot take that.

He who desires to proclaim the Word of Christ to the world, must expect death at every moment; for our husband is a bloody husband to us." The elector was then at Augsburg. Shortly before quitting the diet in that city, he had paid the legate a visit. The cardinal, highly flattered with this condescension from so illustrious a prince, promised Frederick, that if the monk appeared before him, he would listen to him in a paternal manner, and dismiss him kindly. Spalatin, by the prince's order, wrote to his friend, that the pope had appointed a commission to hear him in Germany; that the elector would not permit him to be dragged to Rome; and that he must prepare for his journey to Augsburg. Luther resolved to obey. The notice he had received from the count of Mansfeldt induced him to ask a safe-conduct from

Frederick. The latter replied that it was unnecessary, and sent him only letters of recommendation to some of the most distinguished councillors of Augsburg. He also provided him with money for the journey; and the poor defenseless reformer set out on foot to place himself in the hands of his enemies. What must have been his feelings as he quitted Wittenberg and took the road to Augsburg, where the pope's legate awaited him! The object of this journey was not like that to Heidelberg, a friendly meeting; he was about to appear before the Roman delegate without a safe-conduct perhaps he was going to death. But his faith was not one of mere outward show; with him it was a reality. Hence it gave him peace, and he could advance without fear, in the name of the Lord of hosts, to bear his testimony to the Gospel.

He arrived at Weimar on the 28th September, and lodged in the Cordeliers' monastery. One of the monks could not take his eyes off him; it was Myconius. He then saw Luther for the first time; he wished to approach him, to say that he was indebted to him for peace of mind, and that his

whole desire was to labor with him. But Myconius was too strictly watched by his superiors: he was not allowed to speak to Luther. The Elector of Saxony was then holding his court at Weimar, and it is on this account probably that the Cordeliers gave the doctor a welcome. The day following his arrival was the festival of St. Michael. Luther said mass, and was invited to preach in the palace-chapel. This was a mark of favor his prince loved to confer on him. He preached extempore, in presence of the court, selecting his text (Matthew, chap. 18:verses 1 to 11) from the gospel of the day. He spoke forcibly against hypocrites, and those who boast of their own righteousness. But he said not a word about angels, although such was the custom of St. Michael's day.

The courage of the Wittenberg doctor, who was going quietly and on foot to answer a summons which had terminated in death to so many of his predecessors, astonished all who saw him. Interest, admiration, and sympathy prevailed by turns in their hearts. John Kestner, purveyor to the Cordeliers, struck with apprehension at the thought

of the dangers which awaited his guest, said to him: “Brother, in Augsburg you will meet with Italians, who are learned men and subtle antagonists, and who will give you enough to do. I fear you will not be able to defend your cause against them. They will cast you into the fire, and their flames will consume you.” Luther solemnly replied: “Dear friend, pray to our Lord God who is in heaven and put up a paternoster for me and for his dear Son Jesus, whose cause is mine, that he may be favorable to him. If He maintains his cause, mine is maintained; but if he will not maintain it, of a truth it is not I who can maintain it, and it is he who will bear the dishonor.” Luther continued his journey on foot, and arrived at Nuremberg. As he was about to present himself before a prince of the Church, he wished to appear in a becoming dress. His own was old, and all the worse for the journey. He therefore borrowed a frock from his faithful friend Wenceslas Link, preacher at Nuremberg.

Luther doubtless did not confine his visits to Link; he saw in like manner his other Nuremberg friends, Scheurl the town-clerk, the illustrious

painter Albert Durer (to whose memory that city has recently erected a statue), and others besides. He derived strength from the conversation of these excellent ones of the earth, while many monks and laymen felt alarm at his journey, and endeavored to shake his resolution, beseeching him to retrace his steps. The letters he wrote from this city show the spirit which then animated him: “I have met,” said he, “with pusillanimous men who wish to persuade me not to go to Augsburg; but I am resolved to proceed. The Lord’s will be done! Even at Augsburg, even in the midst of his enemies, Christ reigns. Let Christ live; let Luther die, and every sinner, according as it is written! May the God of my salvation be exalted! Farewell! persevere, stand fast; for it is necessary to be rejected either by God or by man: but God is true, and man is a liar.” Link and an Augustine monk named Leonard could not make up their minds to permit Luther to go alone to face the dangers that threatened him.

They knew his disposition and were aware that, abounding as he did in determination and courage, he would probably be wanting in prudence.

They therefore accompanied him. When they were about five leagues from Augsburg, Luther, whom the fatigues of the journey and the various agitations of his mind had probably exhausted, was seized with violent pains in the stomach. He thought he should die. His two friends in great alarm hired a wagon in which they placed the doctor. On the evening of the 7th October they reached Augsburg, and alighted at the Augustine convent.

Luther was very tired; but he soon recovered. No doubt his faith and the vivacity of his mind speedily recruited his weakened body.

Chapter 5

De Vio

Immediately on his arrival, and before seeing any one, Luther, desirous of showing the legate all due respect, begged Link to go and announce his presence. Link did so, and respectfully informed the cardinal, on the part of the Wittenberg doctor, that the latter was ready to appear before him whenever he should give the order. The legate was delighted at this news.

At last he had this impetuous heretic within his reach, and promised himself that the reformer should not quit the walls of Augsburg as he had entered them. At the same time that Link waited upon the legate, the monk Leonard went to inform Staupitz of Luther's arrival. The vicar-general had written to the doctor that he would certainly come and see him as soon as he knew that he had reached Augsburg. Luther was unwilling to lose a minute in informing him of his presence. The diet was over. The emperor and the electors had already

separated.

The emperor, it is true, had not yet quitted the place, but was hunting in the neighborhood. The ambassador of Rome remained alone in Augsburg. If Luther had gone thither during the diet, he would have met with powerful supporters; but everything now seemed destined to bend beneath the weight of the papal authority.

The name of the judge before whom Luther was to appear was not calculated to encourage him. Thomas de Vio, surnamed Cajetan, from the town of Gaeta in the kingdom if Naples, where he was born in 1469, had given great promise from his youth. At sixteen, he had entered the Dominican order, contrary to the express will of his parents. He had afterwards become general of his order, and cardinal of the Roman Church.

But what was worse for Luther, this learned doctor was one of the most zealous defenders of that scholastic theology which the reformer had always treated during her pregnancy that St.

Thomas in person would instruct the child to which she was about to give birth, and would introduce him into heaven. Accordingly De Vio, when he became a Dominican, had changed his name from James to Thomas. He had zealously defended the prerogatives of the papacy, and the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, whom he looked upon as the pearl of theologians. Fond of pageantry and show, he construed almost seriously the Roman maxim, that legates are above kings, and surrounded himself with a brilliant train. On the 1st August, he had performed a solemn mass in the cathedral of Augsburg, and, in the presence of all the princes of the empire, had placed the cardinal's hat on the head of the Archbishop of Mentz, who knelt before him, and had delivered to the emperor himself the hat and sword which the pope had consecrated. Such was the man before whom the Wittenberg monk was about to appear, dressed in a frock that did not belong to him. Further, the legate's learning, the austerity of his disposition, and the purity of his morals, ensured him an influence and authority in Germany that other Roman courtiers would not easily have obtained. It was no doubt to

this reputation for sanctity that he owed this mission. Rome perceived that it would admirably forward her designs.

Thus even the good qualities of Cajetan rendered him still more formidable.

Besides, the affair intrusted to him was by no means complicated. Luther was already declared a heretic. If he would not retract, the legate must send him to prison; and if he escaped, whoever should give him an asylum was to be excommunicated. This was what the dignitary of the Church, before whom Luther was summoned, had to perform on behalf of Rome. Luther had recovered his strength during the night. On Saturday morning (8th October), being already reinvigorated after his journey, he began to consider his strange position. He was resigned, and awaited the manifestation of God’s will by the course of events. He had not long to wait. A person, unknown to him, sent to say (as if entirely devoted to him) that he was about to pay him a visit, and that Luther should avoid appearing

before the legate until after this interview. The message proceeded from an Italian courtier named Urban of Serra Longa, who had often visited Germany as envoy from the Margrave of Montferrat. He had known the Elector of Saxony, to whom he had been accredited, and after the margrave's death, he had attached himself to the Cardinal de Vio.

The art and address of this individual presented the most striking contrast with the noble frankness and generous integrity of Luther. The Italian soon arrived at the Augustine monastery. The cardinal had sent him to sound the reformer, and prepare him for the recantation expected from him. Serra Longa imagined that his sojourn in Germany had given him a great advantage over the other courtiers in the legate's train; he hoped to make short work with this German monk. He arrived attended by two domestics, and professed to have come of his own accord, from friendship towards a favorite of the Elector of Saxony, and from attachment to the holy Church. After having most cordially saluted Luther, the diplomatist added in

an affectionate manner: “I am come to offer you good advice. Be wise, and become reconciled with the Church. Submit to the cardinal without reserve.

Retract your offensive language. Remember the Abbot Joachim of Florence: he had published, as you know, many heretical things, and yet he was declared no heretic, because he retracted his errors.” Upon this Luther spoke of justifying what he had done.

Serra Longa. — “Beware of that!”.....Would you enter the lists against the legate of his holiness?” Luther. — “If they convince me of having taught anything contrary to the Roman Church, I shall be my own judge, and immediately retract. The essential point will be to know whether the legate relies on the authority of St. Thomas more than the faith will sanction. If he does so, I will not yield.” Serra Longa.

— “Oh, oh! You intend to break a lance then!” The Italian then began to use language which Luther styles horrible. He argued that one might

maintain false propositions, provided they brought in money and filled the treasury; that all discussion in the universities against the pope's authority must be avoided; that, on the contrary, it should be asserted that the pope could, by a single nod, change or suppress articles of faith; and so he ran on, in a similar strain. But the wily Italian soon perceived that he was forgetting himself; and returning to his mild language, he endeavored to persuade Luther to submit to the legate in all things, and to retract his doctrine, his oaths, and his theses. The doctor, who was at first disposed to credit the fair professions of the orator Urban (as he calls him in his narrative), was now convinced that they were of little worth, and that he was much more on the legate's side than on his. He consequently became less communicative, and was content to say, that he was disposed to show all humility, to give proofs of his obedience, and render satisfaction in those things in which he might have erred. At these words Serra Longa exclaimed joyfully: "I shall hasten to the legate; you will follow me presently. Everything will go well, and all will soon be settled." He went away.

The Saxon monk, who had more discernment than the Roman courtier, thought to himself: “This crafty Sinon has been badly taught and trained by his Greeks.” Luther was in suspense between hope and fear; yet hope prevailed. The visit and the strange professions of Serra Longa, whom he afterwards called a bungling mediator, revived his courage.

The councillors and other inhabitants of Augsburg, to whom the elector had recommended Luther, were all eager to see the monk whose name already resounded throughout Germany. Peutinger, the imperial councillor, one of the most eminent patricians of the city, who frequently invited Luther to his table; the councillor Langemantel; Doctor Auerbach of Leipsic; the two brothers of Adelmann, both canons, and many more, repaired to the Augustine convent. They cordially saluted this extraordinary man, who had undertaken so long a journey to place himself in the hands of the Roman agents. “Have you a safe-conduct?” asked they.

— “No,” replied the intrepid monk. “What boldness!” they all exclaimed. — “It was a polite expression,” says Luther, “to designate my rashness and folly.” All unanimously entreated him not to visit the legate before obtaining a safe-conduct from the emperor himself. It is probable the public had already heard something of the pope’s brief, of which the legate was the bearer. “But,” replied Luther, “I set out for Augsburg without a safeconduct, and have arrived safely.” “The elector has recommended you to us; you ought therefore to obey us, and do all that we tell you,” answered Langemantel affectionately but firmly.

Doctor Auerbach coincided with these views, and added: “We know that at the bottom of his heart the cardinal is exceedingly irritated against you. One cannot trust these Italians.” The canon Adelmann urged the same thing: “You have been sent without protection, and they have forgotten to provide you with that which you needed most.” His friends undertook to obtain the requisite safeconduct from the emperor. They then told

Luther how many persons, even in elevated rank, had a leaning in his favor. “The minister of France himself, who left Augsburg a few days ago, has spoken of you in the most honorable manner.” This remark struck Luther, and he remembered it afterwards.

Thus several of the most respectable citizens in one of the first cities of the Empire were already gained over to the Reformation.

The conversation had reached this point when Serra Longa returned.

“Come,” said he to Luther, “the cardinal is waiting for you. I will myself conduct you to him. But you must first learn how to appear in his presence: when you enter the room in which he is, you will prostrate yourself with your face to the ground; when he tells you to rise, you will kneel before him; and you will wait his further orders before you stand up.

Remember you are about to appear before a

prince of the Church. As for the rest, fear nothing: all will speedily be settled without difficulty." Luther, who had promised to follow this Italian as soon as he was invited, found himself in a dilemma. However, he did not hesitate to inform him of the advice of his Augsburg friends, and spoke of a safe-conduct.

"Beware of asking for anything of the kind," immediately replied Serra Longa; "you do not require one. The legate is kindly disposed towards you, and ready to end this business in a friendly manner.

If you ask for a safe-conduct, you will ruin everything." "My gracious lord, the Elector of Saxony," replied Luther, "recommended me to several honorable men in this city. They advise me to undertake nothing without a safe-conduct: I ought to follow their advice. For if I did not, and anything should happen, they will write to the elector, my master, that I would not listen to them." Luther persisted in his determination, and Serra Longa was compelled to return to his chief, and

announce the shoal on which his mission had struck, at the very moment he flattered himself with success.

Thus terminated the conferences of that day with the orator of Montferrat.

Another invitation was sent to Luther, but with a very different view.

John Frosch, prior of the Carmelites, was an old friend. Two years before, as licentiate in theology, he had defended some theses, under the presidence of Luther. He came to see him, and begged him earnestly to come and stay with him. He claimed the honor of entertaining the doctor of Germany as his guest. Already men did not fear to pay him homage even in the face of Rome; already the weak had become stronger. Luther accepted the invitation, and left the convent of the Augustines for that of the Carmelites.

The day did not close without serious reflections. Serra Longa’s eagerness and the fears

of the councillors alike pointed out the difficulties of Luther's position. Nevertheless, he had God in heaven for his protector; guarded by Him he could sleep without fear.

The next day was Sunday, on which he obtained a little more repose.

Yet he had to endure fatigues of another kind. All the talk of the city was about Doctor Luther, and everybody desired to see, as he wrote to Melancthon, "this new Erostratus, who had caused so vast a conflagration." They crowded round him in his walks, and the good doctor smiled, no doubt, at this singular excitement.

But he had to undergo importunities of another kind. If the people were desirous of seeing him, they had a still greater wish to hear him. He was requested on all sides to preach. Luther had no greater joy than to proclaim the Gospel. It would have delighted him to preach Jesus Christ in this large city, and in the solemn circumstances in which he was placed. But he evinced on this

occasion, as on many others, a just sentiment of propriety, and great respect for his superiors. He refused to preach, for fear the legate should think he did it to annoy and to brave him. This moderation and this discretion were assuredly as good as a sermon.

The cardinal's people, however, did not permit him to remain quiet. They renewed their persuasions. "The cardinal," said they, "gives you assurances of his grace and favor: what are you afraid of?" They employed a thousand reasons to persuade him to wait upon De Vi. "He is a very merciful father," said one of these envoys. But another approached and whispered in his ear: "Do not believe what they tell you. He never keeps his word." Luther persisted in his resolution.

On Monday morning (10th October), Serra Longa again returned to the charge. The courtier had made it a point of honor to succeed in his negotiation. He had scarcely arrived when he said in Latin: "Why do you not wait upon the cardinal? He is expecting you most indulgently: the whole

matter lies in six letters: Revoca, retract. Come! you have nothing to fear.” Luther thought to himself that these six letters were very important ones; but without entering into any discussion on the merits of the things to be retracted, he replied: “I will appear as soon as I have safe-conduct.” Serra Longa lost his temper on hearing these words. He insisted — he made fresh representations; but Luther was immovable. Becoming still more angry, he exclaimed: “You imagine, no doubt, that the elector will take up arms in your defense, and for you sake run the risk of losing the territories he received from his forefathers?” Luther. — “God forbid!” Serra Longa. — “When all forsake you, where will you take refuge?” Luther, looking to heaven with an eye of faith, “Under heaven.” Serra Longa was silent for a moment, struck with the sublimity of this unexpected answer. He then resumed the conversation: “What would you do if you held the legate, pope, and cardinals in your hands, as they have you now in theirs?” Luther. — “I would show them all possible honor and respect. But with me, the Word of God is before everything.” Serra

Longa, smiling, and snapping his fingers in the manner of the Italians: “Eh, eh! all honor!.....I do not believe a word of it.” He then went out, sprung into his saddle, and disappeared.

Serra Longa did not return to Luther; but he long remembered the resistance he had met with from the reformer, and that which his master was soon after to experience in person. We shall find him at a later period loudly calling for Luther’s blood.

Serra Longa had not long quitted the doctor when the safe-conduct arrived.

Luther’s friends had obtained it from the imperial councillors. It is probable that the latter had consulted the emperor on the subject, as he was not far from Augsburg. It would even appear from what the cardinal said afterwards, that from unwillingness to displease him, his consent also had been asked. Perhaps this was the reason why Serra Longa was set to work upon Luther; for open opposition to the security of a safe-conduct would

have disclosed intentions that it was desirable to keep secret. It was a safer plan to induce Luther himself to desist from the demand. But they soon found out that the Saxon monk was not a man to give way.

Luther was now to appear. In demanding a safe-conduct, he did not lean upon an arm of flesh; for he was fully aware that an imperial safe-conduct had not preserved John Huss from the stake. He only wished to do his duty by submitting to the advice of his master's friends. The Lord will decide his faith. If God should require his life he is ready joyfully to resign it. At this solemn moment he felt the need of communing once again with his friends, above all with Melancthon, who was so dear to his heart, and he took advantage of a few moments of leisure to write to him.

"Show yourself a man," said he, "as you do at all times. Teach our beloved youths what is upright and acceptable to God. As for me, I am going to be sacrificed for you and for them, if such is the Lord's will. I would rather die, and even (which

would be my greatest misfortune) be for ever deprived of your sweet society, than retract what I felt in my duty to teach, and thus ruin perhaps by my own fault the excellent studies to which we are now devoting ourselves.

“Italy, like Egypt in times of old, is plunged in darkness so thick that it may be felt. No one in that country knows anything of Christ, or of what belongs to him; and yet they are our lords and our masters in faith and in morals. Thus the wrath of God is fulfilled among us, as the prophet saith: I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. Do your duty to God, my dear Philip, and avert his anger by pure and fervent prayer.” The legate, being informed that Luther would appear before him on the morrow, assembled the Italians and Germans in whom he had the greatest confidence, in order to concert with them the method he should pursue with the Saxon monk. Their opinions were divided. We must compel him to retract, said one; we must seize him and put him in prison, said another; it would be better to put him out of the way, thought

a third; they should try to win him over by gentleness and mildness, was the opinion of a fourth. The cardinal seems to have resolved on beginning with the last method.

Chapter 6

First Appearance

The day fixed for the interview arrived at last. The legate knowing that Luther had declared himself willing to retract everything that could be proved contrary to the truth, was full of hope; he doubted not that it would be easy for a man of his rank and learning to reclaim this monk to obedience to the Church.

Luther repaired to the legate’s residence, accompanied by the prior of the Carmelites, his host and his friend; by two friars of the same convent; by Doctor Link and an Augustine, probably the one that had come from Nuremberg with him. He had scarcely entered the legate’s palace, when all the Italians who formed the train of this price of the Church crowded round him; every one desired to see the famous doctor, and they thronged him so much that he could with difficulty proceed. Luther found the apostolic nuncio and Serra Longa in the hall where the

cardinal was waiting for him. His reception was cold, but civil, and conformable with Roman etiquette. Luther, in accordance with the advice he had received from Serra Longa, prostrated himself before the cardinal; when the latter told him to rise, he remained on his knees; and at a fresh order from the legate, he stood up. Many of the most distinguished Italians in the legate's court found their way into the hall in order to be present during the interview; they particularly desired to see the German monk humble himself before the pope's representative.

The legate remained silent. He hated Luther as an adversary of the theological supremacy of St. Thomas, and as the chief of a new, active, and hostile party in a rising university, whose first steps had disquieted the Thomists. He was pleased at seeing Luther fall down before him, and thought, as a contemporary observes, that he was about to recant. The doctor on his part humbly waited for the prince to address him; but as he did not speak, Luther understood this silence as an invitation to begin, and he did so in these words: "Most worthy

Father, in obedience to the summons of his papal holiness, and in compliance with the orders of my gracious lord the Elector of Saxony, I appear before you as a submissive and dutiful son of the holy Christian Church, and acknowledge that I have published the propositions and theses ascribed to me. I am ready to listen most obediently to my accusation, and if I have erred, to submit to instruction in the truth." The cardinal, who had determined to assume the appearance of a tender and compassionate father towards an erring child, then adopted the most friendly tone; he praised and expressed his delight at Luther's humility, and said to him: "My dear son, you have disturbed all Germany by your dispute on indulgences. I understand that you are a very learned doctor in the Holy Scriptures, and that you have many followers. For this reason, if you desire to be a member of the Church, and to find a gracious father in the pope, listen to me." After this prelude, the legate did not hesitate to declare at once what he expected of him, so confident was he of Luther's submission. "Here are three articles," said he, "which by the command of our holy Father, Pope Leo X, I have to set before

you. First, You must bethink yourself, own your faults, and retract your errors, propositions, and sermons; secondly, You must promise to abstain in future from propagating your opinions; and, thirdly, Bind yourself to behave with greater moderation, and avoid everything that may grieve or disturb the Church." Luther. — "Most holy Father, I beg you will show me the pope's brief, by virtue of which you have received full powers to treat of this matter." Serra Longa and the other Italians opened their eyes with astonishment at this demand, and although the German monk had already appeared to them a very strange kind of man, they could not conceal their amazement at such a daring request. Christians, accustomed to ideas of justice, desire that justice should be observed towards others and towards themselves; but those who act habitually in an arbitrary manner, are surprised when they are called upon to proceed according to the usual rules, formalities, and laws.

De Vio. — "This request, my dear son, cannot be granted. You must confess your errors, keep a strict watch upon your words for the future, and not

return like a dog to his vomit, so that we may sleep without anxiety or disturbance; then, in accordance with the order and authorization of our most holy Father the Pope, I will arrange the whole business." Luther. — "Condescend, then, to inform me in what I have erred." At this new request, the Italian courtiers, who had expected to see the poor German fall down on his knees and beg pardon, were still more astonished than before. None of them would have deigned to reply to so impertinent a question. But De Vio, who thought it ungenerous to crush this petty monk with the weight of his authority, and who, besides, trusted to gain an easy victory by his learning, consented to tell Luther of what he was accused, and even to enter into discussion with him. We must do justice to the general of the Dominicans. We must acknowledge that he showed more equity, a greater sense of propriety, and less passion, than have been often shown in similar matters since. He replied in a condescending tone: "Most dear son! here are two propositions that you have advanced, and which you must retract before all: 1st, The treasure of indulgences does not consist of the sufferings and

merits of our Lord Jesus Christ; 2nd, The man who receives the holy sacrament must have faith in the grace that is presented to him." Each of these propositions, in truth, struck a mortal blow at the Romish commerce. If the pope had not the power of dispensing at his pleasure the merits of the Savior; if, in receiving the drafts which the brokers of the Church negotiated, men did not receive a portion of this infinite righteousness, this paper-money would lose its value, and would be as worthless as a heap of rags. It was the same with the sacraments.

Indulgences were more or less an extraordinary branch of Roman commerce; the sacraments were a staple commodity. The revenue they produced was of no small amount. To assert that faith was necessary before they could confer a real benefit on the soul of a Christian, took away all their charms in the eyes of the people; for it is not the pope who gives faith: it is beyond his province; it proceeds from God alone. To declare its necessity was therefore depriving Rome both of the speculation and the profit. By attacking these two doctrines,

Luther had imitated Jesus Christ, who at the very beginning of his ministry had overthrown the tables of the money-changers, and driven the dealers out of the temple.

Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise, he had said.

"In confuting your errors," said Cajetan, "I will not appeal to the authority of St. Thomas and other doctors of the schools; I will rely entirely on Holy Scripture, and talk with you in all friendliness." But De Vio had scarcely begun to bring forward his proofs before he departed from the rule he had declared that he would follow. He combated Luther's first proposition by an Extravagance of Pope Clement, and the second by all sorts of opinions from the schoolmen. The discussion turned first on this papal constitution in favor of indulgences.

Luther, indignant at hearing what authority the legate ascribed to a decree of Rome, exclaimed:—"I cannot receive such constitutions as sufficient

proofs on matters so important. For they pervert the Holy Scriptures, and never quote them to the purpose.” De Vio. — “The pope has power and authority over all things.” Luther, quickly. — “Except Scripture!” De Vio, sneering. — “Except Scripture!.....Do you not know that the pope is above councils; he has recently condemned and punished the Council of Basle.” Luther. — “The university of Paris has appealed from this sentence.” De Vio. — “These Paris gentlemen will receive their deserts.” The dispute between the cardinal and Luther then turned upon the second point, namely, the faith that Luther declared necessary for the efficacy of the sacraments. Luther, accordingly to his custom, quoted various passages of Scripture in favor of the opinion he maintained; but the legate treated them with ridicule. “It is of faith in general that you are speaking,” said he.

— “No,” replied Luther. — One of the Italians, the legate’s master of the ceremonies, irritated at Luther’s resistance and replies, was burning with the desire to speak. He continually endeavored to

put in a word, but the legate imposed silence on him. At last he was compelled to reprimand him so sharply, that the master of the ceremonies quitted the hall in confusion. “As for indulgences,” said Luther to the legate, “if it can be shown that I am mistaken, I am very ready to receive instruction. We may pass over that and yet be good Christians. But as to the article of faith, if I made the slightest concession, I should renounce Jesus Christ. I cannot — I will not yield on this point, and with God’s grace I will never yield.” De Vio, growing angry. — “Whether you will, or whether you will not, you must retract that article this very day, or, upon that article alone, I shall reject and condemn your whole doctrine.” Luther. — “I have no will but the Lord’s. Let him do with me as seemeth good to him. But if I had four hundred heads, I would rather lose them all than retract the testimony which I have borne to the holy Christian faith.” De Vio. — “I did not come here to dispute with you. Retract, or prepare to suffer the penalty you have deserved.” Luther saw clearly that it was impossible to put an end to the subject by a conference. His opponent sat before him as if he

were himself pope, and pretended that he would receive humbly and submissively all that was said to him; and yet he listened to Luther's replies, even when they were founded on Holy Scripture, with shrugging of shoulders, and every mark of irony and contempt. He thought the wise plan would be to answer the cardinal in writing. This means, thought he, gives at least one consolation to the oppressed. Others will be able to judge of the matter, and the unjust adversary, who by his clamors remains master of the field of battle, may be frightened at the consequences. Luther having shown a disposition to retire, the legate said, "Do you wish me to give you a safe-conduct to go to Rome?" Nothing would have pleased Cajetan better than the acceptance of this offer. He would thus have been freed from a task of which he now began to perceive the difficulties; and Luther, with his heresy, would have fallen into hands that would soon have arranged everything. But the reformer, who saw the dangers that surrounded him, even in Augsburg, took care not to accept an offer that would have delivered him up, bound hand and foot, to the vengeance of his enemies. He therefore

rejected it, as often as De Vio proposed it; and he did so very frequently. The legate dissembled his vexation at Luther's refusal; he took refuge in his dignity, and dismissed the monk with a compassionate smile, under which he endeavored to conceal his disappointment, and at the same time with the politeness of a man who hopes for better success another time.

Luther had scarcely reached the court of the palace before that babbling Italian, the master of the ceremonies, whom his lord's reprimands had compelled to quit the hall of conference, overjoyed at being able to speak without being observed by Cajetan, and burning with desire to confound the abominable heretic with his luminous reasonings, ran after him, and began, as he walked along, to deal out his sophisms. But Luther, disgusted with this foolish individual, replied to him by one of those sarcasms which he had so much at command, and the poor master slunk away abashed, and returned in confusion to the cardinal's palace.

Luther did not carry away a very exalted

opinion of his adversary. He had heard from him, as he wrote afterwards to Spalatin, propositions quite opposed to sound theology, and which in the mouth of another would have been considered arch-heresies. And yet De Vio was reckoned the most learned of the Dominicans. Next after him was Prierio. “We may conclude from this,” says Luther, “what they must be who are in the tenth or the hundredth rank.” On the other hand, the noble and decided bearing of the Wittenberg doctor had greatly surprised the cardinal and his courtiers. Instead of a poor monk asking pardon as a favor, they had found a man of independence, a firm Christian, an enlightened doctor, who required that unjust accusations should be supported by proofs, and who victoriously defended his own doctrine. Every one in Cajetan’s palace cried out against the pride, obstinacy, and effrontery of the heretic. Luther and De Vio had learned to know each other, and both prepared for their second interview.

A very agreeable surprise awaited Luther on his return to the Carmelite convent. The vicar-general of the Augustine order, his friend and father,

Staupitz, had arrived at Augsburg. Unable to prevent Luther's journey to that city, Staupitz gave his friend a new and touching proof of his attachment by going thither himself in the hope of being useful to him.

This excellent man foresaw that the conference with the legate might have the most serious consequences. He was equally agitated by his fears and by his friendship for Luther. After so painful an interview, it was a great comfort to the doctor to embrace so dear a friend. He told him how impossible it had been to obtain an answer of any value, and how the cardinal had insisted solely upon a recantation, without having essayed to convince him. "You must positively," said Staupitz, "reply to the legate in writing." After what he had learnt of the first interview, Staupitz entertained but little hopes from another. He therefore resolved upon an act which he now thought necessary; he determined to release Luther from the obligations of his order. By this means Staupitz thought to attain two objects: if, as everything seemed to forebode, Luther should fail

in this undertaking, he would thus prevent the disgrace of his condemnation from being reflected on the whole order; and if the cardinal should order him to force Luther to be silent or to retract, he would have an excuse for not doing so. The ceremony was performed with the usual formalities. Luther saw clearly what he must now expect. His soul was deeply moved at the breaking of those bonds which he had taken upon him in the enthusiasm of youth. The order he had chosen rejects him; his natural protectors forsake him. He is already become a stranger among his brethren. But although his heart was filled with sadness at the thought, all his joy returned when he directed his eyes to the promises of a faithful God, who has said: I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

The emperor’s councillors having informed the legate, through the Bishop of Trent, that Luther was provided with an imperial safe-conduct, and having at the same time enjoined him to take no proceedings against the doctor, De Vio lost his temper, and abruptly answered in this truly Romish language: “It is well; but I will execute the pope’s

orders.” We know what they were.

Chapter 7

Second Interview

The next day both parties prepared for a second interview, which it seemed would be decisive. Luther’s friends, who were resolved to accompany him to the legate’s palace, went to the Carmelite convent.

Peutinger and the Dean of Trent, both imperial councillors, and Staupitz, arrived successively. Shortly after, the doctor had the pleasure of seeing them joined by the knight Philip of Feilitzsch and Doctor Ruhel, councillors of the elector, who had received their master’s order to be present at the conferences, and to protect Luther’s liberty. They had reached Augsburg the previous evening. They were to keep close to him, says Mathesius, as the knight of Chlum stood by John Huss at Constance.

The doctor moreover took a notary, and, accompanied by all his friends, he repaired to the legate’s palace.

At this moment Staupitz approached him: he fully comprehended Luther's position; he knew that unless his eyes were fixed on the Lord, who is the deliverer of his people, he must fall. "My dear brother," said he, seriously, "bear constantly in mind that you have begun these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus did God environ his humble servant with consolation an encouragement.

When Luther arrived at the cardinal's, he found a new adversary: this was the prior of the Dominicans of Augsburg, who sat beside his chief. Luther, conformably with the resolution he had taken, had written his answer. The customary salutations being finished, he read the following declaration with a loud voice: — "I declare that I honor the holy Roman Church, and that I shall continue to honor her. I have sought after truth in my public disputations, and everything that I have said I still consider as right, true, and christian. Yet I am but a man, and may be deceived.

I am therefore willing to receive instruction and correction in those things wherein I may have erred. I declare myself ready to reply orally or in writing to all the objections and charges that the lord legate may bring against me. I declare myself ready to submit my theses to the four universities of Basle, Friburg in Brisgau, Louvain, and Paris, and to retract whatever they shall declare erroneous. In a word, I am ready to do all that can be required of a Christian. But I solemnly protest against the method that has been pursued in this affair, and against the strange pretension of compelling me to retract without having refuted me." Undoubtedly nothing could be more reasonable than these propositions of Luther's, and they must have greatly embarrassed a judge who had been tutored beforehand as to the judgment he should pronounce. The legate, who had not expected this protest, endeavored to hide his confusion by affecting to smile at it, and by assuming an appearance of mildness. "This protest," said he to Luther, with a smile, "is unnecessary; I have no desire to dispute with you either privately or publicly; but I propose arranging

this matter with the kindness of a parent.” The sum of the cardinal’s policy consisted in laying aside the stricter forms of justice, which protect the accused, and treating the whole affair as one of mere administration between a superior and an inferior: a convenient method, that opens a wider field for arbitrary proceedings.

Continuing with the most affectionate air, De Vio said: “My dear friend, abandon, I beseech you, so useless an undertaking; bethink yourself, acknowledge the truth, and I am prepared to reconcile you with the Church and the sovereign bishop.....Retract, my friend, retract; such is the pope’s wish. Whether you will or whether you will not, is of little consequence. It would be a hard matter for you to kick against the pricks.” Luther, who saw himself treated as if he were already a rebellious child and an outcast from the Church, exclaimed “I cannot retract! but I offer to reply, and that too in writing. We had debating enough yesterday.” De Vio was irritated at this expression, which reminded him that he had not acted with sufficient prudence; but he recovered himself, and

said with a smile: “Debated! my dear son, I have not debated with you: besides, I have no wish to debate; but, to please the most serene Elector Frederick, I am ready to listen to you, and to exhort you in a friendly and paternal manner.” Luther could not understand why the legate was so much scandalized at the term he employed; for (thought he), if I had not wished to speak with politeness, I ought to have said, not debated, but disputed and wrangled, for that is what we really did yesterday.

De Vio, who felt that in the presence of the respectable witnesses who attended this conference, he must at least appear anxious to convince Luther, reverted to the two propositions, which he had pointed out as fundamental errors, being firmly resolved to permit the reformer to speak as little as possible. Availing himself of his Italian volubility, he overwhelmed the doctor with objections, without waiting for any reply.

At one time he jeered, at another scolded; he declaimed with passionate warmth; mingled together the most heterogeneous matters; quoted

St.

Thomas and Aristotle; clamored, stormed against all who thought differently from himself; and apostrophized Luther. More than ten times did the latter try to speak; but the legate immediately interrupted him and overwhelmed him with threats. Retract! retract! this was all that was required of him. He raved, he domineered, he alone was permitted to speak. Staupitz took upon himself to check the legate. “Pray, allow brother Martin time to reply to you,” said he. But De Vio began again; he quoted the Extravagances and the opinions of St. Thomas; he had resolved to have all the talk to himself during this interview. If he could not convince, and if he dared not strike, he would do his best to stun by his violence.

Luther and Staupitz saw very clearly that they must renounce all hope, not only of enlightening De Vio by discussion, but still more of making any useful confession of faith. Luther therefore reverted to the request he had made at the beginning of the sitting, and which the cardinal had then eluded.

Since he was not permitted to speak, he begged that he might at least be permitted to transmit a written reply to the legate. Staupitz seconded this petition; several of the spectators joined their entreaties to his, and Cajetan, notwithstanding his repugnance to everything that was written, for he remembered that such writings are lasting (scripta manent) at length consented. The meeting broke up. The hopes that had been entertained of seeing the matter arranged at this interview were deferred; they must wait and see the issue of the next conference.

The permission which the general of the Dominicans had given Luther to take time for his reply, and to write his answer, to the two distinct accusations touching indulgences and faith, was no more than strict justice required, and yet we must give De Vio credit for this mark of moderation and impartiality.

Luther quitted the cardinal, delighted that his request had been granted. On his way to Cajetan, and on his return, he was the object of public

attention. All enlightened men were as much interested in his affair as if they were to be tried themselves. It was felt that the cause of the Gospel, of justice, and of liberty, was then pleading at Augsburg. The lower classes alone held with Cajetan, and they no doubt gave the Reformer some significant proofs of their sentiments, for he took notice of them. It became more evident every day that the legate would hear no other words from Luther that these: “I retract,” and Luther was resolved not to pronounce them. What will be the issue of so unequal a struggle? How can it be imagined that all the power of Rome matched against a single man should fail to crush him? Luther sees this; he feels the weight of that terrible hand under which he has voluntarily placed himself; he loses all hope of returning to Wittenberg, of seeing his dear Philip again, of mingling once more with those generous youths in whose hearts he so delighted to scatter the seeds of life. He beholds the sentence of excommunication suspended over his head, and doubts not that it will soon fall upon him.

These prospects afflict his soul, but he is not cast down. His trust in God is not shaken. God can break the instrument he has been pleased to make use of until this hour; but he will uphold the truth. Happen what may, Luther must defend it to the last. He therefore begins to prepare the protest that he intends presenting to the legate. It would appear that he devoted part of the 13th October to this task.

Chapter 8

Treasure of Indulgences

On Friday (14th October), Luther returned to the cardinal, accompanied by the elector's councillors. The Italians crowded around him as usual, and were present at the conference in great numbers. Luther advanced and presented his protest to the cardinal. His courtiers regarded this paper with astonishment — a paper so presumptuous in their eyes. This is what the Wittenberg doctor declared to their master: — "You attack me on two points. First, you oppose to me the constitution of Pope Clement VI, in which it is said that the treasure of indulgences is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the saints — which I deny in my theses.

"Panormitanus declares in his first book, that in whatever concerns the holy faith, not only a general council, but still further, each believer, is above the pope, if he can bring forward the declarations of Scripture and allege better reasons

than the pope.

The voice of our Lord Jesus Christ is far above the voice of all men, whatever be the names they bear.

“My greatest cause of grief and of serious reflection is, that this constitution contains doctrines entirely at variance with the truth.

It declares that the merits of the saints are a treasure, while the whole of Scripture bears witness that God rewards us far more richly than we deserve. The prophet exclaims: Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified! ‘Woe be to men, however honorable and however praiseworthy their lives may have been,’ says Augustine, ‘if a judgment from which mercy was excluded should be pronounced upon them!’ “Thus the saints are not saved by their merits, but solely by God’s mercy, as I have declared. I maintain this, and in it I stand fast. The words of Holy Scripture, which declare that the saints have not merit enough, must

be set above the words of men, which affirm that they have an excess. For the pope is not above the words of men, which affirm that they have an excess. For the pope is not above the Word of God, but below it." Luther does not stop here: he shows that if indulgences cannot be the merits of the saints, they cannot any the more be the merits of Christ. He proves that indulgences are barren and fruitless, since their only effect is to exempt men from performing good works, such as prayer and alm-giving.

"No," exclaims he, "the merits of Jesus Christ are not a treasure of indulgence exempting man from good works, but a treasure of grace which quickeneth. The merits of Christ are applied to the believer without indulgences, without the keys, by the Holy Ghost alone, and not by the pope. If any one has an opinion better founded than mine," adds he, terminating what referred to this first point, "let him make it known to me, and then will I retract." "I affirm," said he, coming to the second article, "that no man can be justified before God if he has not faith; so that it is necessary for a man to believe

with a perfect assurance that he has obtained grace. To doubt of this grace is to reject it. The faith of the righteous is his righteousness and his life." Luther proves his proposition by a multitude of declarations from Scripture.

"Condescend, therefore, to intercede for me with our most holy father the pope," adds he, "in order that he may not treat me with such harshness. My soul is seeking for the light of truth. I am not so proud or so vainglorious as to be ashamed of retracting if I have taught false doctrines. My greatest joy will be to witness the triumph of what is according to God's Word. Only let not men force me to do anything that is against the voice of my conscience." The legate took the declaration from Luther's hands. After glancing over it, he said coldly: "You have indulged in useless verbiage; you have penned many idle words; you have replied in a foolish manner to the two articles, and have blackened your paper with a great number of passages from Scripture that have no connection with the subject." Then, with an air of contempt, De Vio flung Luther's protest aside, as if it were of

no value, and recommencing in the tone which had been so successful in the previous interview, he began to exclaim with all his might that Luther ought to retract. The latter was immovable. “Brother! brother!” then cried De Vio in Italian, “on the last occasion you were very tractable, but now you are very obstinate.” The cardinal then began a long speech, extracted from the writings of St. Thomas; he again extolled the constitution of Clement VI; and persisted in maintaining that by virtue of this constitution it is the very merits of Jesus Christ that are dispensed to the believer by means of indulgences. He thought he had reduced Luther to silence: the latter sometimes interrupted him; but De Vio raved and stormed without intermission, and claimed, as on the previous day, the sole right of speaking.

This method had partially succeeded the first time; but Luther was not a man to submit to it on a second occasion. His indignation bursts out at last; it is his turn to astonish the spectators, who believe him already conquered by the prelate’s volubility. He raises his sonorous voice, seizes upon the

cardinal’s favorite objection, and makes him pay dearly for his rashness in venturing to enter into discussion with him. “Retract, retract!” repeated De Vio, pointing to the papal constitution. “Well, if it can be proved by this constitution,” said Luther, “that the treasure of indulgences is the very merits of Jesus Christ, I consent to retract, according to your Eminence’s good-will and pleasure.” The Italians, who had expected nothing of the kind, opened their eyes in astonishment at these words, and could not contain their joy at seeing their adversary caught in the net. As for the cardinal, he was beside himself; he laughed aloud, but with a laugh in which anger and indignation were mingled; he sprang forward, seized the book which contained this famous constitution; looked for it, found it, and exulting in the victory he thought certain, read the passage aloud with panting eagerness. The Italians were elated; the elector’s councillors were uneasy and embarrassed; Luther was waiting for his adversary. At last, when the cardinal came to these words: “The Lord Jesus Christ has acquired this treasure by his sufferings,” Luther stopped him: “Most worthy father,” said he,

“pray, meditate and weigh these words carefully: He has acquired. Christ has acquired a treasure by his merits; the merits, therefore, are not the treasure; for, to speak philosophically, the cause and effect are very different matters. The merits of Jesus Christ have acquired for the pope the power of giving certain indulgences to the people; but it is not the very merits of our Lord that the hand of the pontiff distributes. Thus, then, my conclusion is the true one, and this constitution, which you invoke with so much noise, testifies with me to the truth I proclaim.” De Vio still held the book in his hands, his eyes resting on the fatal passage; he could make no reply. He was caught in the very snare he had laid, and Luther held him there with a strong hand, to the inexpressible astonishment of the Italian courtiers around him. The legate would have eluded the difficulty, but had not the means: he had long abandoned the testimony of Scripture and of the Fathers; he had taken refuge in this Extravagance of Clement VI, and lo! he was caught. Yet he was too cunning to betray his confusion. Desirous of concealing his disgrace, the prince of the Church suddenly quitted this subject,

and violently attacked other articles. Luther, who perceived this skillful manoeuvre, did not permit him to escape; he tightened and closed on every side the net in which he had taken the cardinal, and rendered all escape impossible. “Most reverend Father,” said he, with an ironical, yet very respectful tone, “your eminence cannot, however, imagine that we Germans are ignorant of grammar: to be a treasure, and to acquire a treasure, are two very different things.” “Retract!” said De Vio; “retract! or if you do not, I shall send you to Rome to appear before judges commissioned to take cognizance of your affair. I shall excommunicate you with all your partisans, with all who are or who may be favorable to you, and reject them from the Church. All power has been given me in this respect by the holy apostolic see. Think you that your protectors will stop me? Do you imagine that the pope cares anything for Germany? The pope’s little finger is stronger than all the German princes put together.” “Deign,” replies Luther, “to forward to Pope Leo X, with my humble prayers, the answer which I have transmitted you in writing.” At these words, the legate, highly pleased at

finding a moment’s release, again assumed an air of dignity, and said to Luther with pride and anger: “Retract, or return no more.” These words struck Luther. This time he will reply in another way than by speeches: he bowed and left the hall, followed by the elector’s councillors. The cardinal and the Italians, remaining alone, looked at one another in confusion at such a result.

Thus the Dominican system, covered with the brilliancy of the Roman purple, had haughtily dismissed its humble adversary. But Luther was conscious that there was a power — the Christian doctrine, the truth — that no secular or spiritual authority could ever subdue. Of the two combatants, he who withdrew remained master of the field of battle.

This is the first step by which the Church separated from the papacy.

Luther and De Vio did not meet again; but the reformer had made a deep impression on the legate, which was never effaced. What Luther had said

about faith, what De Vio read in the subsequent writings of the Wittenberg doctor, greatly modified the cardinal's opinions. The theologians of Rome beheld with surprise and discontent the sentiments he advanced on justification in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. The Reformation did not recede, did not retract; but its judge, he who had not ceased from crying, Retract! retract! changed his views, and indirectly retracted his errors. Thus was crowned the unshaken fidelity of the Reformer.

Luther returned to the monastery where he had been entertained. He had stood fast; he had given testimony to the truth; he had done his duty. God will perform the rest! His heart overflowed with peace and joy.

Chapter 9

De Vio and Staupitz

Yet the rumors that reached him were not very encouraging: it was reported in the city, that if he did not retract, he was to be seized and thrown into a dungeon. The vicar-general of his order, Staupitz himself, it was affirmed, had given his consent. Luther cannot believe what is said of his friend. No! Staupitz will not deceive him! As for the cardinal's designs, to judge from his words, there could be no doubt about them. Yet he will not flee from the danger; his life, like the truth itself, is in powerful hands, and, despite the threatening peril, he is resolved not to quit Augsburg.

The legate soon repented of his violence; he felt that he had gone beyond his part, and endeavored to retrace his steps. Staupitz had scarcely finished his dinner (on the morning of the interview, and the dinner-hour was noon), before he received a message from the cardinal, inviting him to his palace. Staupitz went thither attended by

Wenceslas Link. The vicar-general found the legate alone with Serra Longa. De Vio immediately approached Staupitz, and addressed him in the mildest language.

“Endeavour,” said he, “to prevail upon your monk, and induce him to retract. Really, in other respects, I am well pleased with him, and he has no better friend than myself.” Staupitz. — “I have already done so, and I will again advise him to submit to the Church in all humility.” De Vio. — “You will have to reply to the arguments he derives from the Holy Scriptures.” Staupitz. — “I must confess, my lord, that is a task beyond my abilities; for Doctor Martin Luther is superior to me both in genius and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.” The cardinal smiled, no doubt, at the vicar-general’s frankness. Besides, he knew himself how difficult it would be to convince Luther. He continued, addressing both Staupitz and Link: — “Are you aware, that, as partisans of an heretical doctrine, you are yourselves liable to the penalties of the Church?” Staupitz. — “Condescend to resume the conference with Luther, and order a public

discussion on the controverted points." De Vio, alarmed at the very thought. — "I will no longer dispute with that beast, for it has deep eyes and wonderful speculations in its head." Staupitz at length prevailed on the cardinal to transmit to Luther in writing what he was required to retract.

The vicar-general returned to Luther. Staggered by the representations of the cardinal, he endeavored to persuade him to come to an arrangement.

"Refute, then," said Luther, "the declarations of Scripture that I have advanced." — "It is beyond my ability," said Staupitz. — "Well then!" replied Luther, "it is against my conscience to retract, so long as these passages of Scripture are not explained differently. What!" continued he, "the cardinal professes, as you inform me, that he is desirous of arranging this affair without any disgrace or detriment to me! Ah! these are Roman expressions, which signify in good German that it will be my eternal shame and ruin. What else can he expect who, through fear of men and against the

voice of his conscience, denies the truth?” Staupitz did not persist; he only informed Luther that the cardinal had consented to transmit to him in writing the points which he would be required to retract. He then no doubt informed him also of his intention of quitting Augsburg, where he had no longer anything to do. Luther communicated to him a plan he had formed for comforting and strengthening their souls. Staupitz promised to return, and they separated for a short time.

Alone in his cell, Luther turned his thoughts towards the friends dearest to his heart. His ideas wandered to Weimar and to Wittenberg. He desired to inform the elector of what was passing; and, fearful of being indiscreet by addressing the prince himself, he wrote to Spalatin, and begged the chaplain to inform his master of the state of affairs. He detailed the whole transaction, even to the promise given by the legate to send him the controverted points in writing, and finished by saying: “This is the posture of affairs; but I have neither hope nor confidence in the legate. I will not retract a syllable. I will publish the reply I gave

him, in order that, if he should proceed to violence he may be covered with shame in all Christendom." The doctor then profited by the few moments that still remained to write to his Wittenberg friends.

"Peace and happiness," wrote he to Doctor Carlstadt. "Accept these few words as if they were a long letter, for time and events are pressing. At a better opportunity I will write to you and others more fully. Three days my business has been in hand, and matters are now at such a point that I have no longer any hope of returning to you, and I have nothing to look for but excommunication. The legate positively will not allow me to dispute either publicly or privately. He desires not to be a judge," says he, "but a father to me; and yet he will hear no other words from me than these: 'I retract, and acknowledge my error.' And these I will not utter.

"The dangers of my cause are so much the greater that its judges are not only implacable enemies, but, still further, men incapable of understanding it. Yet the Lord God lives and

reigns: to his protection I commit myself, and I doubt not that, in answer to the prayers of a few pious souls, he will send me deliverance; I imagine I feel them praying for me.

“Either I shall return to you without having suffered any harm; or else, struck with excommunication, I shall have to seek a refuge elsewhere.

“However that may be, conduct yourself valiantly, stand fast, and glorify Christ boldly and joyfully.....

“The cardinal always styles me his dear son. I know how much I must believe of that. I am nevertheless persuaded that I should be the most acceptable and dearest man to him in the world, if I would pronounce the single word Revoco, I retract. But I will not become a heretic by renouncing the faith by which I became a Christian. I would rather be exiled, accursed, and burnt to death.

“Farewell, my dear doctor; show this letter to

our theologians, to Amsdorff, to Philip, to Otten, and the rest, in order that you may pray for me and also for yourselves; for it is your cause that I am pleading here. It is that of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the grace of God." Sweet thought, which ever fills with consolation and with peace all those who have borne witness to Jesus Christ, to his divinity, to his grace, when the world pours upon them from every side its judgments, its exclusions, and its disgrace: "Our cause is that of faith in the Lord!" And what sweetness also in the conviction expressed by the reformer: "I feel that they are praying for me!" The Reformation was the work of piety and prayer. The struggle between Luther and De Vio was that of a religious element which reappeared full of life with the expiring relics of the wordy dialectics of the middle ages.

Thus did Luther converse with his absent friends. Staupitz soon returned; Doctor Ruhel and the Knight of Feilitzsch, both envoys from the elector, also called upon Luther after taking leave of the cardinal. Some other friends of the Gospel joined them. Luther, seeing thus assembled these

generous men, who were on the point of separating, and from whom he was perhaps to part for ever, proposed that they should celebrate the Lord's Supper together. They agreed, and this little band of faithful men communicated in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. What feelings swelled the hearts of the reformer's friends at the moment when, celebrating the Eucharist with him, they thought it was perhaps the last time they would be permitted to do so! What joy, what love animated Luther's heart, as he beheld himself so graciously accepted by his Master at the very moment that men rejected him! How solemn must have been that communion! How holy that evening! The next day Luther waited for the articles the legate was to send him; but not receiving any message, he begged his friend Wenceslas Link to go to the cardinal. De Vio received Link in the most affable manner, and assured him that he had no desire but to act like a friend. He said, "I no longer regard Luther as a heretic. I will not excommunicate him this time, unless I receive further orders from Rome. I have sent his reply to the pope by an express." And then, to show his friendly intentions,

he added: “If Doctor Luther would only retract what concerns indulgences, the matter would soon be finished: for as to what concerns faith in the sacraments, it is an article that each one may understand and interpret in his own fashion.” Spalatin, who records these words, adds this shrewd but just remark: “It follows clearly that Rome looks to money rather than to the holy faith and the salvation of souls.” Link returned to Luther: he found Staupitz with him, and gave them an account of his visit. When he came to the unexpected concession of the legate: “It would have been well,” said Staupitz, “if Doctor Wenceslas had had a notary and witnesses with him to take down these words in writing; for, if such a proposal were made known, it would be very prejudicial to the Romans.” However, in proportion to the mildness of the prelate’s language, the less confidence did these worthy Germans place in him. Many of the good men to whom Luther had been recommended held counsel together: “The legate,” said they, “is preparing some mischief by this courier of whom he speaks, and it is very much to be feared that you will all be

seized and thrown into prison." Staupitz and Wenceslas therefore resolved to quit the city; they embraced Luther, who persisted in remaining at Augsburg, and departed hastily for Nuremberg, by two different roads, not without much anxiety respecting the fate of the courageous witness they were leaving behind them.

Sunday passed off quietly enough. But Luther in vain waited for the legate's message: the latter sent none. At last he determined to write.

Staupitz and Link, before setting out, had begged him to treat the cardinal with all possible respect. Luther had not yet made trial of Rome and of her envoys: this is his first experiment. If deference did not succeed, he would take a warning from it. Now at least he must make the attempt. For his own part, not a day passed in which he did not condemn himself, and groan over his facility in giving utterance to expressions stronger than the occasion required: why should he not confess to the cardinal what he confessed daily to God? Besides, Luther's heart was easily moved, and he

suspected no evil. He took up his pen, and with a sentiment of the most respectful goodwill, wrote to the cardinal as follows: — “Most worthy Father in God, once more I approach you, not in person, but by letter, entreating your paternal goodness to listen to me graciously. The reverend Dr. Staupitz, my very dear father in Christ, has called upon me to humble myself, to renounce my own sentiments, and to submit my opinions to the judgment of pious and impartial men. He has also praised your fatherly kindness, and has thoroughly convinced me of your favorable disposition towards me. This news has filled me with joy.

“Now, therefore, most worthy Father, I confess, as I have already done before, that I have not shown (as has been reported) sufficient modesty, meekness, or respect for the name of the sovereign pontiff; and, although I have been greatly provoked, I see that it would have been better for me to have conducted my cause with greater humility, mildness, and reverence, and not to have answered a fool according to his folly, lest I should be like unto him.

“This grieves me very much, and I ask forgiveness. I will publicly confess it to the people from the pulpit, as indeed I have often done before. I will endeavor, by God’s grace, to speak differently.

Nay more: I am ready to promise, freely and of my own accord, not to utter another word on the subject of indulgences, if this business is arranged. But also, let those who made me begin, be compelled on their part to be more moderate henceforth in their sermons, or to be silent.

“As for the truth of my doctrine, the authority of St. Thomas and other doctors cannot satisfy me. I must hear (if I am worthy to do so) the voice of the bride, which is the Church. For it is certain that she hears the voice of the Bridegroom, which is Christ.

“In all humility and submission, I therefore entreat your paternal love to refer all this business, so unsettled up to this day, to our most holy lord

Leo X, in order that the Church may decide, pronounce, and ordain, and that I may retract with a good conscience, or believe with sincerity." As we read this letter, another reflection occurs to us. We see that Luther was not acting on a preconceived plan, but solely by virtue of convictions impressed successively on his mind and on his heart. Far from having any settled system, any well arranged opposition, he frequently and unsuspectingly contradicted himself. Old convictions still reigned in his mind, although opposite convictions had already entered it. And yet, it is in these marks of sincerity and truth that men have sought for arguments against the Reformation; it is because it followed the necessary laws of progression which are imposed upon all things in the human mind, that some have written the history of its variations; it is in these very features, that show its sincerity and which consequently make it honorable, that one of the most eminent christian geniuses has found his strongest objections!

Inconceivable perversity of the human mind!

Luther received no answer to his letter. Cajetan and his courtiers, after being so violently agitated, had suddenly become motionless. What could be the reason? Might it not be the calm that precedes the storm? Some persons were of Pallavicini's opinion: "The cardinal was waiting," he observes, "until this proud monk, like an inflated bellows, should gradually lose the wind that filled him, and become thoroughly humble." Others, imagining they understood the ways of Rome better, felt sure that the legate intended to arrest Luther, but that, not daring to proceed to such extremities on his own account, because of the imperial safe-conduct, he was waiting a reply from Rome to his message. Others could not believe that the cardinal would delay so long. The Emperor Maximilian, said they (and this may really be the truth), will have no more scruple to deliver Luther over to the judgment of the Church, notwithstanding the safeconduct, than Sigismond had to surrender Huss to the Council of Constance. The legate is perhaps even now negotiating with the emperor.

Maximilian’s authorization may arrive every minute. The more he was opposed to the pope before, the more will be seem to flatter him now, until the imperial crown encircles his grandchild’s head. There is not a moment to be lost. “Draw up an appeal to the pope,” said the nobleminded men who surrounded Luther, “and quit Augsburg without delay.” Luther, whose presence in this city had been useless during the last four days and who had sufficiently proved, by his remaining after the departure of the Saxon councillors sent by the elector to watch over his safety, that he feared nothing, and that he was ready to answer any charge, yielded at length to his friends’ solicitations. But first he resolved to inform De Vio of his intention: he wrote to him on Tuesday, the eve of his departure.

This second letter is in a firmer tone than the other. It would appear that Luther, seeing all his advances were unavailing, began to lift up his head in the consciousness of his integrity and of the injustice of his enemies.

“Most worthy Father in God,” wrote he to De Vio, “your paternal kindness has witnessed, — I repeat it, witnessed and sufficiently acknowledged my obedience. I have undertaken a long journey, through great dangers, in great weakness of body, and in spite of my extreme poverty; at the command of our most holy lord, Leo X, I have appeared in person before your eminence; lastly, I have thrown myself at the feet of his holiness, and I now wait his good pleasure, ready to submit to his judgement, whether he should condemn or acquit me. I therefore feel that I have omitted nothing which it becomes an obedient child of the Church to do.

“I think, consequently, that I ought not uselessly to prolong my sojourn in this town; besides, it would be impossible; my resources are failing me; and your paternal goodness has loudly forbidden me to appear before you again, unless I will retract.

“I therefore depart in the name of the Lord, desiring, if possible, to find some spot where I may

dwell in peace. Many persons, of greater importance than myself, have requested me to appeal from your paternal kindness, and even from our most holy lord, Leo X, ill informed, to the pope when better informed. Although I know that such an appeal will be far more acceptable to our most serene highness the elector than a retractation, nevertheless, if I had consulted my own feelings only, I should not have done so.....I have committed no fault; I ought therefore to fear nothing." Luther having written this letter, which was not given to the legate until after his departure, prepared to quit Augsburg. God had preserved him till this hour, and he praised the Lord for it with all his heart; but he must not tempt God. He embraced his friends Peutinger, Langemantel, the Adelmanns, Auerbach, and the prior of the Carmelites, who had shown him such christian hospitality. On Wednesday, before daybreak, he was up and ready to set out. His friends had recommended him to take every precaution for fear that he should be prevented, if his intentions were known. He followed their advice as far as possible. A pony, that Staupitz had left for him, was brought

to the door of the convent. Once more he bids his brethren adieu; he then mounts and sets off, without a bridle for his horse, without boots or spurs, and unarmed. The magistrate of the city had sent him as a guide one of the horse-police who was well acquainted with the roads. This servant conducts him in the dark through the silent streets of Augsburg. They direct their course to a small gate in the wall of the city. One of the councillors, Langemantel, had given orders that it should be opened. He is still in power of the legate. The hand of Rome may grasp him yet. No doubt if the Italians knew their prey was escaping them, they would utter a cry of rage. Who can say that the intrepid adversary of Rome will not yet be seized and thrown into a dungeon?.....At length Luther and his guide arrive at the little gate; they pass through. They are out of Augsburg; and soon they put their horses to a gallop, and ride speedily away.

Luther, on his departure, had left his appeal to the pope in the hands of Pomesaw. His friends had recommended that it should not be transmitted to the legate. The prior was commissioned to have it

posted upon the cathedral gates two or three days after the doctor’s departure, in the presence of a notary and witnesses. This was done.

In this paper, Luther declares that he appeals from the most holy Father the Pope, ill informed, to the most holy lord and Father in Christ, Leo X of that name, by the grace of God, better informed. This appeal had been drawn up in the customary form and style, by the aid of the imperial notary, Gall of Herbrachtingen, in the presence of two Augustine monks, Bartholomew Utzmair, and Wenzel Steinbies. It was dated the 16th October.

When the cardinal was informed of Luther’s departure, he was thunderstruck, and even frightened and alarmed, as he assured his elector in his letter. Indeed there was good cause to be annoyed. This departure, which so abruptly terminated the negotiations, disconcerted the hopes with which he had so long flattered his pride. He had been ambitious of the honor of healing the Church, of restoring the tottering influence of the pope in Germany; and the heretic had escaped not

only unpunished, but even without being humbled. The conference had served only to exhibit in a stronger light, on the one hand, Luther’s simplicity, integrity, and firmness; and, on the other, the imperious and unreasonable proceedings of the pope and his ambassador. Since Rome had gained nothing, she had lost; her authority, not having been strengthened, had received a fresh check.

What will they say in the Vatican? What messages will be received from Rome? The difficulties of his position will be forgotten; the unlucky issue of this affair will be attributed to his want of skill. Serra Longa and the Italians were furious at seeing themselves, with all their dexterity, outwitted by a German monk. De Vio could hardly conceal his irritation.

Such an insult called for vengeance, and we shall soon witness him breathing out his wrath in a letter to the elector.

Chapter 10

Luther’s Flight

Luther and his guide continued their flight far from the walls of Augsburg.

He spurred his horse, and galloped as fast as the poor animal’s strength would permit. He called to mind the real or supposed flight of John Huss, the manner in which he was caught, and the assertion of his adversaries, who pretended that Huss having by his flight annulled the emperor’s safeconduct, they had the right of condemning him to the flames. These anxious thoughts, however, did not long occupy Luther’s mind. Having escaped from a city in which he had passed ten days under the terrible hand of Rome, which had already crushed so many thousand witnesses to the truth, and sprinkled all around it with blood, — now that he is free, now that he inhales the fresh breezes of the country, traverses the villages and rural districts, and beholds himself wonderfully delivered by the arm of the Lord, his whole being

returns thanks to the Almighty. It is truly he who can now say: Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Thus was Luther's heart overflowing with joy. But his thoughts were turned on De Vio also: "The cardinal would have liked to have me in his hands to send me to Rome. He is vexed, no doubt, at my escape. He imagined I was in his power at Augsburg; he thought he had me; but he was holding an eel by the tail. Is it not disgraceful that these people set so high a value upon me? They would give a heap of crowns to have me in their clutches, while our Lord Jesus Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver." The first day he traveled fourteen leagues. When he reached the inn where he was to pass the night, he was so fatigued (his horse was a very hard trotter, an historian tells us) that, when he dismounted, he could not stand upright, and lay down upon a bundle of straw. He nevertheless obtained some repose. On the morrow he continued his journey. At Nuremberg he met with Staupitz, who was visiting the convents of his

order. It was in this city that he first saw the brief sent by the pope to Cajetan about him.

He was indignant at it, and it is very probable that if he had seen this brief before leaving Wittenberg, he would never have gone to the cardinal. “It is impossible to believe,” said he, “that anything so monstrous could have proceeded from any sovereign pontiff.” All along the road Luther was an object of general interest. He had not yet yielded in any one point. Such a victory, gained by a mendicant monk over the representative of Rome, filled every heart with admiration. Germany seemed avenged of the contempt of Italy. The eternal Word had received more honor than the word of the pope. This vast power, which for so many centuries tyrannized over the world, had received a formidable check. Luther’s journey was like a triumph. Men rejoiced at the obstinacy of Rome, in the hope that it would lead to her destruction. If she had not insisted on preserving her shameful gains; if she had been wise enough not to despise the Germans; if she had reformed crying abuses: perhaps, according to human views,

all would have returned to that death-like state from which Luther had awakened. But the papacy will not yield; and the doctor will see himself compelled to bring to light many other errors, and to go forward in the knowledge and manifestation of the truth.

On the 26th October Luther reached Graefenthal, on the verge of the Thuringian forests. Here he met with Count Albert of Mansfeldt, the same person who had so strongly dissuaded him from going to Augsburg. The count, laughing heartily at his singular equipage, compelled him to stop and be his guest. Luther soon resumed his journey.

He hastened forward, desiring to be at Wittenberg on the 31st October, under the impression that the elector would be there for the festival of All- Saints, and that he should see him. The brief which he had read at Nuremberg had disclosed to him all the perils of his situation. In fact, being already condemned at Rome, he could not hope either to stay at Wittenberg, to obtain an

asylum in a convent, or to find peace and security in any other place. The elector's protection might perhaps be able to defend him; but he was far from being sure of it. He could no longer expect anything from the two friends whom he had possessed hitherto at the court of this prince. Staupitz had lost the favor he had so long enjoyed, and was quitting Saxony. Spalatin was beloved by Frederick, but had not much influence over him. The elector himself was not sufficiently acquainted with the doctrine of the Gospel to encounter manifest danger for its sake. Luther thought, however, that he could not do better than return to Wittenberg, and there await what the eternal and merciful God would do with him. If, as many expected, he were left unmolested, he resolved to devote himself entirely to study and to the education of youth.

Luther re-entered Wittenberg on the 30th of October. All his expedition had been to no purpose. Neither the elector nor Spalatin had come to the feast. His friends were overjoyed at seeing him again amongst them. He hastened to inform

Spalatin of his arrival. “I returned to Wittenberg to-day safe and sound, by the grace of God.” said he, “but how long I shall stay here I do not know.....I am filled with joy and peace, and can hardly conceive that the trial which I endure can appear so great to so many distinguished personages.” De Vio had not waited long after Luther’s departure to pour forth all his indignation to the elector. His letter breathes vengeance. He gives Frederick an account of the conference with an air of assurance. “Since brother Martin,” says he in conclusion, “cannot be induced by paternal measures to acknowledge his error, and remain faithful to the catholic Church, I beg your highness will send him to Rome, or expel him from your states. Be assured that this difficult, mischievous, and envenomed business cannot be protracted much longer; for so soon as I have informed our most holy lord of all this artifice and wickedness, it will be brought to an end.” In a postscript, written with his own hand, the cardinal entreats the elector not to tarnish his honor and that of his illustrious ancestors for the sake of a miserable little friar. Never perhaps did Luther’s soul feel a nobler indignation than when

he read the copy of this letter forwarded to him by the elector. The thought of the sufferings he is destined to undergo, the value of the truth for which he is contending, contempt inspired by the conduct of the Roman legate, — all agitated his heart together. His reply, written in the midst of this agitation, is full of that courage, sublimity, and faith which he always displayed in the most trying circumstances of his life. He gives, in his turn, an account of the Augsburg conference; and after describing the cardinal's behavior, he continues thus: — "I should like to answer the legate in the place of the elector: "Prove that you speak of what you understand," I would say to him; "let the whole matter be committed to writing: then I will send brother Martin to Rome, or else I will myself seize him and put him to death. I will take care of my conscience and of my honor, and will permit no stain to tarnish my glory. But so long as your positive knowledge shuns the light, and is made known by its clamors only, I can put no faith in darkness.

"It is thus I would reply, most excellent prince.

“Let the reverend legate, or the pope himself, specify my errors in writing; let them give their reasons; let them instruct me, for I am a man who desires instruction, who begs and longs for it, so that even a Turk would not refuse to grant it. If I do not retract and condemn myself when they have proved that the passages which I have cited ought to be understood in a different sense from mine, then, most excellent elector, let your highness be the first to prosecute and expel me; let the university reject me, and overwhelm me with its anger.....Nay more, and I call heaven and earth to witness, may the Lord Jesus Christ cast me out and condemn me!.....The words that I utter are not dictated by vain presumption, but by an unshaken conviction. I am willing that the Lord God withdraw his grace from me, and that every one of God’s creatures refuse me his countenance, if, when a better doctrine has been shown me, I do not embrace it.

“If they despise me on account of my low estate, me a poor little medicant friar, and if they

refuse to instruct me in the way of truth, then let your highness entreat the legate to inform you in writing wherein I have erred. It will cost them less to instruct me when absent by writing, than to put me to death by stratagem when among them.

“I resign myself to banishment. My adversaries are laying their snares on every side, so that I can nowhere live in security. In order that no evil may happen to you on my account, I leave your territories in God’s name. I will go wherever the eternal and merciful God will have me. Let him do with me according to his pleasure!

“Thus then, most serene Elector, I reverently bid you farewell. I commend you to the everlasting God, and give you eternal thanks for all your kindness towards me. Whatever be the people among whom I shall dwell in future, I shall ever remember you, and pray continually and gratefully for the happiness of yourself and of your family .....I am still, thanks to God, full of joy; and praise him because Christ, the Son of God, thinks me worthy to suffer in such a cause. May he ever

protect your illustrious highness!

Amen.” This letter, so abounding in truth, made a deep impression of the elector.

“He was shaken by a very eloquent letter,” says Maimbourg. Never could he have thought of surrendering an innocent man to the hands of Rome; perhaps he would have desired Luther to conceal himself for a time, but he resolved not to appear to yield in any manner to the legate’s menaces. He wrote to his councillor Pfeffinger, who was at the emperor’s court, telling him to inform this prince of the real state of affairs, and to beg him to write to Rome, so that the business might be concluded, or at least that it might be settled in Germany by impartial judges. A few days after, the elector replied to the legate: “Since Doctor Martin has appeared before you at Augsburg, you should be satisfied. We did not expect that you would endeavor to make him retract, without having convinced him of his errors. None of the learned men in our principality have informed me that Martin’s doctrine is impious,

anti-christian, or heretical." The prince refused, moreover, to send Luther to Rome, or to expel him from his states.

This letter, which was communicated to Luther, filled him with joy.

"Gracious God!" wrote he to Spalatin, "with what delight I have read it again and again! I know what confidence may be put in these words, at once so forcible and moderate. I fear that the Romans will not understand their full bearing; but they will at least understand that what they think already finished is as yet hardly begun. Pray, return my thanks to the prince. It is strange that he (De Vio) who, a short time ago, was a mendicant monk like myself, does not fear to address the mightiest princes disrespectfully, to call them to account, to threaten, to command them, and to treat them with such inconceivable haughtiness. Let him learn that the temporal power is of God, and that its glory may not be trampled under foot." What had doubtless encouraged the elector to reply to the legate in a tone the latter had not expected, was a

letter addressed to him by the university of Wittenberg. It had good reason to declare in the doctor’s favor; for it flourished daily more and more, and was eclipsing all the other schools. A crowd of students flocked thither from all parts of Germany to hear this extraordinary man, whose teaching appeared to open a new era to religion and learning. These youths who came from every province, halted as soon as they discovered the steeples of Wittenberg in the distance; they raised their hands to heaven, and praised God for having cause the light of truth to shine forth from this city, as from Sion in times of old, and whence it spread even to the most distant countries. A life and activity till then unknown animated the university. “Our students here are as busy as ants,” wrote Luther.

Chapter 11

Thoughts on Departure

Luther, imagining he might soon be expelled from Germany, was engaged in publishing a report of the Augsburg conference. He desired that it should remain as a testimony of the struggle between him and Rome. He saw the storm ready to burst, but did not fear it. He waited from day to day for the anathemas that were to be sent from Italy; and he put everything in order, that he might be prepared when they arrived. “Having tucked up my robe and girt my loins,” said he, “I am ready to depart, like Abraham, without knowing whither I go; or rather well knowing, since God is everywhere.” He intended leaving a farewell letter behind him. “Be bold enough,” wrote he to Spalatin, “to read the letter of an accursed and excommunicated man.” His friends felt great anxiety and fear on his account. They entreated him to deliver up himself as a prisoner into the elector’s hands, in order that this prince might keep him somewhere in security. His enemies could not

understand whence he derived his confidence. One day as the conversation turned upon him at the court of the Bishop of Brandenburg, and it was asked on what support he could rely: “On Erasmus,” said some; “on Capito, and other learned men who are in his confidence.” — “No, no,” replied the bishop, “the pope would care very little about those folks. It is in the university of Wittenberg and the Duke of Saxony that he trusts.” Thus both parties were ignorant of the stronghold in which the reformer had taken refuge.

Thoughts of departure passed through Luther’s mind. They did not originate in fear of danger, but in foresight of the continually increasing obstacles that a free confession of the truth would meet with in Germany.

“If I remain here,” said he, “the liberty of speaking and writing many things will be torn from me. If I depart, I shall freely pour forth the thoughts of my heart, and devote my life to Christ.” France was the country where Luther hoped to have the power of announcing the truth without

opposition. The liberty enjoyed by the doctors and university of Paris, appeared to him worthy of envy. Besides, he agreed with them on many points. What would have happened had he been removed from Wittenberg to France? Would the Reformation have been established there, as in Germany? Would the power of Rome have been dethroned there; and would France, which was destined to see the hierarchical principles of Rome and the destructive principles of an irreligious philosophy long contend within her bosom, have become a great center of evangelical light? It is useless to indulge in vain conjectures on this subject; but perhaps Luther at Paris might have changed in some degree the destinies of Europe and of France.

Luther’s soul was deeply moved. He used to preach frequently in the city church, in the room of Simon Heyens Pontanus, pastor of Wittenberg, who was almost always sick. He thought it his duty, at all events, to take leave of that congregation to whom he had so frequently announced salvation.

He said in the pulpit one day: “I am a very unstable and uncertain preacher. How often already have I not left you without bidding you farewell?.....If this case should happen again, and that I cannot return, accept my farewell now.” Then, after adding a few words, he concluded by saying with moderation and gentleness: “Finally, I warn you not to be alarmed, should the papal censures be discharged upon me. Do not blame the pope, or bear any ill-will, either to him or to any other man; but trust all to God.” The moment seemed to have come at last. The prince informed Luther that he desired him to leave Wittenberg. The wishes of the elector were too sacred for him not to hasten to comply with them. He therefore made preparations for his departure, without well knowing whither he should direct his steps. He desired however to see his friends once more around him, and with this intent prepared a farewell repast. Seated at the same table with them, he still enjoys their sweet conversation, their tender and anxious friendship. A letter is brought to him....It comes from the court.

He opens it and reads; his heart sinks; it contains a fresh order for his departure. The prince inquires, “why he delays so long.” His soul was overwhelmed with sadness. Yet he resumed his courage, and raising his head, said firmly and joyfully, as he turned his eyes on those about him: “Father and mother abandon me, but the Lord takes me up.” Leave he must. His friends were deeply moved. What would become of him? If Luther’s protector rejects him, who will receive him? And the Gospel, the truth, and this admirable work...all will doubtless perish with its illustrious witness. The Reformation seems to hang upon a thread, and at the moment Luther quits the walls of Wittenberg, will not this thread break? Luther and his friends said little. Struck with the blow that had fallen upon their brother, tears roll down their cheeks. But shortly after, a new messenger arrives. Luther opens the letter, not doubting that it contains a fresh order.

But, O powerful hand of the Lord! for a time he is saved. Everything is changed. “Since the pope’s

new envoy hopes that all may be arranged by a conference, remain for the present.” How important was this hour! and what would have happened if Luther, ever anxious to obey his sovereign’s will, had left Wittenberg immediately on receiving the first letter? Never were Luther and the cause of the Reformation lower than at this moment.

It appeared that their fate was decided: an instant sufficed to change it.

Having reached the lowest degree of his career, the Wittenberg doctor rose rapidly, and his influence from this time continued increasing. The Almighty commands (in the language of the prophet), and his servants go down to the depths, and mount up again to heaven.

By Frederick’s order Spalatin summoned Luther to Lichtemberg, to have an interview with him. They conversed a long time on the situation of affairs. “If the censures arrive from Rome,” said Luther, “certainly I shall not stay at Wittenberg.”

— “Beware,” said Spalatin, “of being too precipitate in going to France!” He left him, telling him to wait for further orders. “Only commend my soul to Christ,” said Luther to his friends. “I see that my adversaries are still more determined in their designs to ruin me; but meanwhile Christ strengthens me in my resolution to concede nothing.” Luther now published his Report of the Conference at Augsburg. Spalatin had written to him, on the part of the elector, not to do so; but the letter came too late. As soon as the publication had taken place, the prince gave his sanction: “Great God!” said Luther in his preface, “what a new, what an amazing crime to seek for light and truth!....and above all in the Church, that is to say, in the kingdom of truth.” — “I send you my Report,” wrote he to Link: “it is keener no doubt than the legate expects; but my pen is ready to produce much greater things. I do not know myself whence these thoughts arise. In my opinion, the work is not yet begun, so far are the great ones at Rome mistaken in looking for the end. I will send you what I have written, in order that you may judge whether I have guessed rightly that the

antichrist of whom St. Paul speaks now reigns in the court of Rome. I think I shall be able to show that he is worse now-a-days than the Turks themselves." Sinister reports reached Luther from every side. One of his friends wrote to him that the new envoy from Rome had received an order to lay hold of him and deliver him up to the pope. Another related, that while travelling he had met with a courtier, and that the conversation turning on the matters that were now occupying all Germany, the latter declared that he had undertaken to deliver Luther into the hands of the sovereign pontiff.

"But the more their fury and their violence increase," wrote the reformer, "the less I tremble." At Rome they were much displeased with Cajetan. The vexation felt at the ill-success of this business was at first vented on him. The Roman courtiers thought they had reason to reproach him for having been deficient in that prudence and address which, if we must believe them were the chief qualities in a legate, and for not having relaxed, on so important an occasion, the strictness of his

scholastic theology. It is all his fault, said they. His clumsy pedantry spoiled all. Why did he exasperate Luther by insults and threats, instead of alluring him by the promise of a rich bishopric, or even of a cardinal's hat? These mercenaries judged of the reformer by themselves. Still the failure must be retrieved. On the one hand, Rome must declare herself; on the other, she must conciliate the elector, who might be very serviceable to her in the choice they would soon have to make of an emperor. As it was impossible for Roman ecclesiastics to suspect whence Luther derived his courage and his strength, they imagined that the elector was implicated more deeply in the affair than he really was. The pope therefore resolved to pursue another course. He caused a bull to be published in Germany by his legate, in which he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences, precisely in the points attacked, but in which he made no mention either of Luther or of the elector. As the reformer had always declared that he would submit to the decision of the Roman church, the pope imagined that he would now either keep his word, or exhibit himself openly as a disturber of the

peace of the Church, and a contemner of the holy apostolic see. In either case the pope could not but gain; no advantage however is derived by obstinately opposing the truth. In vain had the pope threatened with excommunication whoever should teach otherwise than he ordained; the light is not stopped by such orders. It would have been wiser to moderate by certain restrictions the pretensions of the sellers of indulgences. This decree from Rome was therefore a new fault. By legalizing crying abuses, it irritated all wise men, and rendered Luther's reconciliation impossible. "It was thought," says a Roman-catholic historian, a great enemy to the Reformation, "that this bull had been issued solely for the benefit of the pope and the begging friars, who began to find that no one would purchase their indulgences." Cardinal De Vio published the decree at Lintz, in Austria, on the 13th December 1518; but Luther had already placed himself beyond its reach.

On the 28th November, he had appealed, in the chapel of Corpus Christi, at Wittenberg, from the pope to a general council of the Church. He

foresaw the storm that was about to burst upon him; he knew that God alone could disperse it; but he did what it was his duty to do. He must, no doubt, quit Wittenberg, if only on the elector's account, as soon as the Roman anathemas arrive: he would not, however, leave Saxony and Germany without a striking protest. He therefore drew one up, and that it might be ready for circulation as soon as the Roman thunders reached him, as he expresses it, he had it printed under the express condition that the bookseller should deposit all the copies with him. But this man, covetous of gain, sold almost every one, while Luther was calmly waiting to receive them, The doctor was vexed, but the thing was done. This bold protest was soon circulated everywhere. In it Luther declared anew that he had no intention of saying any thing against the holy Church or the authority of the apostolic see, and of the pope when well-advised. "But," continues he, "seeing that the pope, who is God's vicar upon earth, may, like any other man, err, sin, and lie, and that an appeal to a general council is the only means of safety against that injustice which it is impossible to resist, I am obliged to

have recourse to this step.” Here we see the Reformation launched on a new career. It is no longer made dependent of the pope and on his resolutions, but on a general council. Luther addresses the whole Church, and the voice that proceeds from the chapel of Corpus Christi must be heard throughout all the Lord’s fold. The reformer is not wanting in courage; of this he has just given a new proof. Will God be wanting to him? This we shall learn from the different periods of the Reformation that still remain to be displayed before our eyes.